

The Offices of Magnesia

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Abstract

In this article, I attempt to provide a complete and exhaustive list of all of the offices and major political roles proposed within the constitution of Magnesia, detailing the title of the office, number of offices, method of appointment, age or gender restrictions, length of term, and explicit responsibilities assigned to that office. This tabulation is intended to be useful for new readers of the *Laws* and to scholars of various methodological approaches interested in the political arrangements of Magnesia.

Keywords

Plato – Plato's *Laws* – constitution – offices – voting – term-limits

1 Preface

In order to understand Plato's political philosophy, it is crucial to pay attention the details of his proposed constitutions. My goal here is to specify, in as neutral a way as possible, the explicit duties and specifications of the offices in Plato's *Laws*, tabulated in such a way as to aid easy reference and comparison across the offices, and to provide a brief overview of the more general organization of Magnesia as context. It will thus be helpful to readers of Plato who are new to the *Laws* and who find the discussion of offices daunting, and to scholars who may find it useful to have the source texts collected in one place.¹

¹ Scholars in the latter category should thus find this a helpful update of R. F. Stalley's appendix on the offices (*An Introduction to Plato's Laws* (Oxford, Hackett Publishing, 1983, pp. 186-191), but without rising to the detail of analysis in G. Morrow, *Plato's Cretan City* (Princeton:

Of course, interpretative and textual difficulties are in places unavoidable. I have endeavored to flag the passages where my choices are not uncontroversial, and I offer my own views here as informed but tentative suggestions, recognizing that some key claims will need to be more fully argued elsewhere in conversation with the relevant literature. My goal here is not to provide the final word on the details of the Magnesian constitution, but to provide an access point for further research. Please note that this article neither summarizes existing scholarship on the offices, nor seeks to resolve issues raised in that scholarship.

In what follows, I note the particular assumptions and methodologies I employ. Firstly, I rely on Melissa Lane's exemplary recent scholarship in taking the discussion of *archontes* to refer not merely to *rulers* but to *office-holders*, and thus interpret *archai* as constitutionally specified *offices*.² This entails *inter alia* that office-holders are legally appointed, with specific powers, and are subject to scrutiny before holding office and are accountable by means of audit at the end of their term. A consequence of this general approach is that it is not clear that every *role* in Magnesia is an *office*. For example, the assistants to the country wardens are too young to be office-holders, but are nonetheless given specific tasks. More controversially, it is not clear to me that the Ambassadors and Nocturnal Council are offices, strictly speaking.³ The Council and Assembly are also difficult cases in that they are clearly offices, but it is not obvious that every participant would undergo scrutiny and audit. Plato himself seems to recognize the ambiguities in the concept of 'office-holder'

Princeton University Press, 1960), or M. Pierart, *Platon et la cité grecque: Théorie et réalité dans la constitution des Lois* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, Brussels: Palais des Académies, [1974] 2008).

2 See especially Lane's recent Carlyle Lectures, entitled 'Constitutions Before Constitutionalism: Classical Greek Ideas of Office and Rule', delivered at Oxford University 16 Jan-20 Feb 2018 (and book manuscript in progress). Lane defends the importance of office as a normative political idea in Plato and Aristotle in M. Lane, 'Political Expertise and Political Office in Plato's *Statesman*' in A. Havlíček, J. Jirsa & K. Thein, *Plato's Statesman: Proceedings of the Eighth Symposium Platonicum Pragense*, (Prague: OIKOYMENH, 2013), pp. 51-79; M. Lane, 'Popular Sovereignty as Control of Office Holder: Aristotle on Greek Democracy', in R. Bourke & Q. Skinner eds. *Popular Sovereignty in Historical Perspective*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 52-72; M. Lane, 'Placing Plato in the History of Liberty', *History of European Ideas*, 44 (2018), pp. 702-718; M. Lane, 'Antianarchia: Interpreting Political Thought in Plato', *Plato Journal: The Journal of the International Plato Society*, 16 (2017), pp. 59-74. See also 'Politics as Architectonic Expertise? Against taking the so-called "architect" (ἀρχιτέκτων) in Plato's *Statesman* to prefigure this Aristotelian View' in this issue.

3 The Nocturnal Council is especially difficult and contested, given that it clearly involves participation from office-holders but may not itself be an office. For further discussion see J. Reid, 'Changing the Laws of the *Laws*', *Ancient Philosophy* (forthcoming).

with respect to judges (767a5-9). For my purposes here, I set such technicalities aside, as these various roles are certainly part of the organization of the city and are thus worthy of inclusion and consideration here in ecumenical spirit.

I have tried to follow the order of offices as they appear in the text and similarly with the duties they are assigned. There is much to be said about how the specified roles might be more helpfully ordered (for example, sorting the legislative and judicial functions of the Guardians of the Law) but I leave open the possibility of further systematization here.

No doubt some will object to the spirit of this project. There are many ways to read a Platonic dialogue and I have taken the description of the Magnesian constitution at face value – indeed, I have removed it from its dialogical context.⁴ Though I think this approach is helpful for understanding what the *Laws* would amount to if it were implemented with the text close at hand, I am not suggesting that this was Plato's intention or even that this is the best way to understand the philosophical function of the *Laws*. That being said, I find the *Laws* to be a remarkably consistent text in its constitutional provisions and appreciating how the details of the city hang together will likely improve our vision of the image Plato sketches. Thus I hope that the categorization here can provide a good basis for future scholarship on the philosophical import of the text as a whole.

I have worked primarily from the Budé Greek texts of Diès and Des Places, in consultation with Burnet's Oxford Classical Text.⁵ I generally start from Griffith's recent translation, though I use Saunders, Pangle, Bury, Taylor, Diès, and Des Places' translations regularly.⁶ Readers should be aware that my German is limited and, given the number of relevant passages for this project, there are likely important insights from Schöpsdau regarding particular passages that I have not yet had a chance to appreciate.⁷

4 Thanks to an anonymous reviewer at *Polis* for suggesting I highlight this implication of my methodology. For an alternative interpretative strategy, see for example M. Bartels, *Plato's Pragmatic Project* (Franz Steiner Verlag, 2017).

5 E. Des Places, É. *Platon: Les Lois (livres 1-6)* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1951); A. Diès, *Platon: Les Lois (livres 7-12)* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres: 1956); J. Burnet, *Platonis Opera V: Minos, Leges, Epinomis, Epistulae, Definitiones* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1922).

6 T. Saunders 'Laws' in J. Cooper (ed.) *Plato Complete Works* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett, 1997); T. Pangle, *The Laws of Plato* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); R. G. Bury, *Plato: Laws* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1926); A. E. Taylor, *Plato: The Laws* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1960).

7 K. Schöpsdau, *Platon, Nomoi Buch IV-VII. Übers. und Komm.* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003); K. Schöpsdau, *Platon, Nomoi Buch VIII-XII. Übers. und Komm.* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

2 General Introduction to the Constitution of Magnesia

Magnesia is on the island of Crete, 80 stades (between 9-10 miles or about 15 kilometres) inland. The city limits likely form a circle, divided into 12 wedged areas – one for each ‘tribe’ (746a7, 760b2-e2, 778c5, 848e6). Each area has a village in the center, and the main city is at the very center of the circle where the wedges meet (848c7-e7).

There are 5040 households (737e1, 740d4), which constitute the citizen body. Each household has a dwelling in the city, but also owns a farm in the country which supports the household economically. Slaves, however, are the people who work the farms, and citizens are not permitted to have crafts (*technai*) as jobs – these roles are left to foreigners in the city (806d7-e2);⁸ the Magnesian citizen’s *technê* is to preserve the order of the city (846d1-7).

Ideally, everybody would arrive in Magnesia with the same level of wealth, but because this is impossible, there are four property classes (744b1-d1): the lower limit on property is the original allocation for each household of colonists (as equal as possible distributions of land *value* – so one household might have a larger tract of land of lesser quality and another might have a smaller tract of land of higher quality, 745c2-d4); the third property class has double the value of the original allocation, the second property class has three times this amount, and the upper property class has four times this amount; wealth acquired above quadruple the lower threshold (acquired in any way) is to be given to the city. The property levels of each household are recorded publicly and easily accessible for anybody involved in property-related court cases (744c4-745b2).

All officials are subject to scrutiny before taking office and are subject to audit once their term is complete (761e5-6). The Athenian gives general age requirements for holding office: the males must be at least 30,⁹ and the females at least 40 (785b5-6). Men can be active in military service between the ages of 20 and 60, and women from the time when she bears children to the age of 50 (785b6-9). The Athenian thus claims explicitly and assumes throughout the *Laws* that women will also hold office and be educated (see especially 804d6-806c7). There are specific provisions based on gender though: the

8 Thanks to Susan Sauvé Meyer for stressing this point to me.

9 Griffith seems to have made a typographical error here, writing ‘50’ though the Greek text is unproblematic.

Auditors are said to be men (946a1),¹⁰ the Officer of Education has to be a father, whereas the offices concerning marriage and the supervision of children are said to be women; after the age of 6, boys and girls are also separated in education (794c3-d3); different sorts of music and dance are apparently more fitting for the manly and for the womanly virtues (802e8-11); communal mess halls are also divided by gender (806e2-3); adult women can only bring legal action against someone if she has no husband, otherwise she can only act as a witness (937a5-8).

Voting is normally done in the open by show of hands, rather than by using anonymized voting tablets. Unless otherwise specified, it is probably safe to assume that elections occur in the Assembly, as that is where the citizens gather as a whole. A notable exception to open voting by show of hands is the election of the Officer of Education, which is done by secret ballot at the temple of Apollo (766b1-c1).

Magnesia is protected by citizen-soldiers. Ensuring that the city is guarded is said to be the responsibility of the generals, infantry colonels, cavalry commanders, cavalry colonels, the active members of the council, but also the urban commissioners and market commissioners (760a6-b1). Perhaps the latter two are responsible for making sure their particular parts of the city are guarded, while the former offices are responsible for the city's territory and farmland more generally.

Magnesia has three levels of courts: the neighborhood court, the tribal court, and the high court (766d3-767a4). Minor cases normally begin in the neighborhood court (basically local arbitration), and if the parties are unhappy with the result they can appeal the decision to the higher court; serious cases (like homicide) go straight to the high court. Cases can be brought before the courts either for private injuries or for the public interest (767b4-c2). There is scholarly dispute about the second court, the tribal court. Some scholars take it to mean that there are courts for each tribal area (see especially 956c2-3), but these are perhaps better understood as general courts of Magnesia, composed of jurors from all the tribes.¹¹ At any rate, most cases are likely first heard at the local level, then, if the result is appealed, at the level of the village or city, then

10 Plato not infrequently says 'men' when he might have more precisely said 'people' or 'humans' (see, e.g., 770c7-d2). This makes determining his exact views on gender restrictions difficult, especially given that 'man' is problematic default.

11 Morrow, *Plato's Cretan City* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), pp. 257-261; Pierart, *Platon et la cité grecque*, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, [1974] 2008, pp. 392-393).

in the high court. For further speculation about the details of the court system, see note p.

Magnesia has three prisons: a general prison near the marketplace, a prison near the location where the Nocturnal Council meets, and a prison in the middle of the countryside (908a1-a7). Imprisonment was not a usual method of punishment in classical Athens.

It is clear that citizens will know the laws in Magnesia, but how are they publicized? Some are clearly carved into stone (917e6, 918a4); moreover, the *Laws* as whole is taught to the citizens as an educational text (811d5-e1), so presumably much of the general lawcode will be accessible as a book. Those acting as judges will have acquired and studied written copies of the laws for themselves (957c3).

3 The Offices

Because they have by far the most extensive responsibilities in Magnesia, the Guardians of the Law are listed first separately:

Title: Guardians of the Law (*nomophulakes*, 752e1)

Number of Officers: 37 (originally 19 new colonists with 18 from Knossos, 752e7-753a1)¹²

Method of Appointment: Originally chosen by 100 people of Knossos and 100 of the new colonists (752e6-7, 754c6-7). Once the city is established, those who are serving or have served in the cavalry or infantry 'in their prime' place tablets with their name and the candidate's name in the temple; for at least 30 days, anyone can remove a candidate's tablet; after this, up to 300 of the leading candidates' tablets are displayed; then,

¹² Why 37? This number has puzzled commentators. It is a noteworthy number because, unlike the vast majority of the other offices, it is not a clean subdivision of 5040. 37 is a prime, but so are 31 and 43; 37 is the twelfth prime however, which may be significant (thanks to Youngbin Yoon for pointing this out to me). One explanation is that 37 is $12 \times 3 + 1$, so 3 Guardians from each tribe, and then one more to avoid high-level voting ties. The problem with this explanation is that the election of the Guardians has nothing to do with tribal affiliation. Another speculation given that Magnesia is likely circular is that 37 is roughly 12π (≈ 37.699 ...). While Plato did not have the value of π exactly, his contemporaries were likely using $3 \frac{1}{7}$ as an approximation (see Heron of Alexandria, *Metrika*, Book 1, XXXI and the notes *ad loc.* by Fabio Acerbi & Bernard Vitrac). This would get us $12 \times 3 \frac{1}{7} = 37.714$...; close, but perhaps not close enough to justify the Athenian's decision.

anybody can nominate a candidate from this group; the 100 leading candidates from this process are then displayed; the final 37 is elected from this group (753b4-d6).

Age Restriction: Must be at least 50, but must give up the office at 70 (755a5-b2)

Length of Term: No more than 20 years (755a4-5).

Specific Responsibilities: The Guardians of the Law are said to have duties that will be specified as the laws are developed (755b3-6). Their listed responsibilities are, first, that of guarding the laws generally; then that of ensuring the laws regarding property and wealth are followed, including assessing the written returns detailing how much property each person owns and hearing charges of illegal financial gain (754d6-e8, 850a1-5); nominating candidates for the offices of general, infantry colonels, cavalry commanders, and temple treasurers (755c4-6, 755e3, 756a4-b6, 760a2-4); hearing cases of those who prosecute high court judges (767e3-9); filling out gaps in the lawcode and amending laws, particularly during the 10-year trial period (772a4-c6, 779c7-d2);¹³ handling divorce arrangements (784b6-c2); with the Officer of Education and officers of artistic competitions, they are tasked with approving music and poetry for public performance (801c8-d6), deciding when to have the competitions (834e2-835b4), and determining details for the festivals (828b3-5). The 12 most senior Guardians of the Law – after the 5 most senior (i.e. #6-17) – inspect and regulate foreign imports and exports (847c5-e1). The Guardians are also given the following responsibilities: determining fines (855b2-5), imprisoning exiles who committed a crime in madness but return before their exile is over (864e4-9) and examining people who were exiled for committing homicide in unpremeditated anger, both during their exile and once the allotted period has come to an end, to see if they are fit to return (867d7-868a3); determining purification and sacrifice procedures (with the interpreters and seers) for those whose crimes involve impiety (871c3-d2); consulting on cases (with the

13 It is controversial whether the Guardians of the Law are given the authority to *change* the law once it has been established, or simply *fill in the gaps* of the lawcode given ('amend' is appropriately ambiguous between both of these meanings). Though a minority view, I believe that the text suggests that they cannot change the law after the 10 year trial period – and certainly cannot do so unilaterally (see especially 772c4-d4) – but it is clear that their legislative role in expanding the law is ongoing. For further discussion, see J. Reid, 'Changing the Laws of the *Laws*'.

priests) where a nomination of an heir is required (877c8-878b3); determining the assessment of damages in controversial cases of wounding (878e2-4); prescribing food for those people imprisoned for holding atheistic beliefs and having a vicious character, and then casting them out of Magnesia when they die (909c2-4); hearing cases of people keeping private shrines in their homes or setting up unauthorized shrines in public (910b8-d4); judging cases where the question is whether a buyer knowingly bought a slave who had killed someone (this is decided by the five youngest Guardians of the Law, 916c3-d1); determining (with the market wardens) what counts as adulterated goods and commercial malpractice, and what levels of profit are acceptable for retailers (917e2-918a1, 920b3-c6); assigning guardians to orphans (924b7-8); providing guardianship to orphans in general (the fifteen oldest Guardians of the Law divide themselves into five groups of three on the basis of age, and then rotate responsibility for this on a yearly basis (924b8-c4) – a responsibility that includes raising any people who become orphans during their rotation (926e5-9)); settling controversial cases about inheritance (926b7-c7); the oldest Guardian of the Laws advises on cases regarding whether a son should bring a case against his father for ruining the household through dementia, and acts as a joint plaintiff if they agree the father should be prosecuted (929d3-e8); 10 middle-aged male guardians (along with the 10 female marriage overseers) supervise turbulent marriages, and arrange new marriages in unfixable cases (929e9-930a5); the three oldest guardians of the law (along with three of the women responsible for marriages) punish or imprison people who fail to care adequately for their parents (932a7-c2); the Guardians of the Law are part of the court (along with the other auditors and high court) who hear cases against one of the auditors (948a1-4); deciding who is fit to go abroad as an ambassador (951d1-2); the 10 oldest Guardians of the Law meet with ambassadors who have traveled abroad (951d3-952b5, see the description of the ambassadors for a fuller account); hearing cases of obstruction of justice (958c2-6); overseeing funeral arrangements to make sure they are appropriate (959e1-5).

Title and number of officers	Method of appointment	Age restriction and length of term ^a	Specific responsibilities
Generals (<i>stratēgoi</i> , 755c4) 3 (755d4)	The Guardians of the Law nominate citizen candidates; from this, selection is made by those who have performed or are eligible to perform military service; anyone can challenge a nomination and propose an alternative candidate, then the candidacy between the two is decided by show of hands; from this final group, the final three candidates with the most votes are appointed (755c4-6). ^b		Responsibility for military affairs (755d5-6); inspecting and regulating the import of military goods (847d1-e1); hearing minor assault cases (880b1-d7); hearing cases involving breaches of military conduct of hoplites, including draft-dodging (943a1-b7); hosting official foreign embassies (953b5-2).
Infantry Colonels (<i>taxiarchoi</i> , 755d6-7) 12 (one per tribe, 755e1)	The generals nominate candidates, but anybody can propose a replacement – then the winner is determined by voting (755d6-e4). Only those who bear a shield (i.e. hoplites) may vote (755e9-756a1).		Hearing minor assault cases (880b1-d7); close supervision of soldiers, giving commands regarding marching, exercising, washing, preparing meals, rotation of night watches, taking messages (942b1-c4), ^c hearing cases involving breaches of military conduct of hoplites, including draft-dodging (943a1-b7); hosting official foreign embassies (953b5-2).

a An empty entry indicates that the specifications are not mentioned.

b 755e8-9 read alone suggests that everyone can vote for generals and cavalry commanders, but the earlier passage clearly limits the voting to those who are involved in military service, and the direct context of *pantes* suggests that all those in the gathered assembly, which includes only those involved in military service. It's not clear how much hangs on the distinction between those who serve in the military and citizens, as military service is compulsory, hence Morrow writes that 'the assembly of the armed forces is indistinguishable from the assembly of the people' (*Plato's Cretan City*, p. 157). A distinction could be drawn if *active* service is important, which would perhaps exclude child-bearing women, men over 60, and women over 50, all who are exempted from military service (758b5-9).

c This description is not specifically related to the colonels (as opposed to the commanders), but just refers to the way in which soldiers should respond to their leaders (*pros ton archonta*, 942b2). It applies equally for any military hierarchy, but is nonetheless helpful in understanding what the rather under-described colonels do.

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Title and number of officers	Method of appointment	Age restriction and length of term	Specific responsibilities
Cavalry Colonels (<i>phularchoi</i> , 756a1) Not specified, though presumably 12	All serving in the cavalry choose for themselves (756a1-2).		Hearing minor assault cases (880b1-d7); close supervision of soldiers, giving commands regarding marching, exercising, washing, preparing meals, rotation of night watches, taking messages (942b1-c4), hearing cases involving breaches of military conduct of cavalry, including draft-dodging (943a1-b7).
Cavalry Commanders (<i>hipparchoi</i> , 755e9) 2 (756b2)	The same process as the election of generals, but only those in the cavalry participate in the final vote, in full view of the infantry. The final vote may be challenged twice; on a third challenge, those responsible for counting the votes ^d decide by their own vote (756a4-b6).		Inspecting and regulating the import of military goods (847d1-e1); hearing minor assault cases (880b1-d7); hearing cases involving breaches of military conduct of cavalry, including draft-dodging (943a1-b7); hosting official foreign embassies (953b5-2).
Councilors (<i>bouleutai</i> , 756c2); 360, divided into four groups of 90, one group from each property class (756b7-c2)	Over four days, councilors are nominated from each of the four property classes; on the first two days, everybody must vote on penalty of fine; on the third day, the lowest class is not subject to fine if they don't vote; on the fourth day, the third and fourth classes are not subject to fine if they don't vote, but those from the second class receive three times the fine	One year (756e7)	Most of the councilors are occupied with their own affairs for most of the time (758b3-6), serving for only one month of the year in rotation (i.e. in prytanies, 755e5); they must make themselves available to meet with foreigners (758b6-c5); councilors also stop various innovations

d It is unclear whom Plato has in mind here. The Guardians of the Law nominate the initial candidates for the position (by parity with the process for electing generals) and convene the assembly of soldiers, but they are not mentioned elsewhere in the process. One could understand *diapsêphizesthai* as those who 'put to the vote' (see LSJ *diapsêphizô* A.1) the candidates, which could refer to those who initiated the voting process and convened the voters, i.e. the Guardians of the Law. The indefinite generalizing *hoisper* suggests a more random assortment though.

(cont.)

Title and number of officers	Method of appointment	Age restriction and length of term	Specific responsibilities
	and those from the first class receive four times the fine if they don't vote; on the fifth day, the names of the nominees are published and the top 180 candidates from each class are selected, then, of these 720, half are selected by lottery to be councilors (756c3-e8)		(Griffith: 'subversive developments', <i>neôterismôn heneka pantodapôn</i> , 758c5-6); the council has the power to convene and disassemble assemblies (including in emergencies), and in general watches over the affairs of the city (758d2-9). The Council and Assembly judge petitions of foreigners who wish to stay in Magnesia longer than the 20-year allowance (850b6-c3).
Priest (<i>hierous</i> , 759b8)	Any hereditary priesthoods are left as such (though there are likely to be few given that the city is new); priests are appointed by lottery, assuming they pass a background check regarding religious disqualifiers (759b7-c6)	Must be at least 60 (759d2) One year (759d1-2)	Determining details for the festivals (828b3-5), consult on cases (with the Guardians of the Law) where a nomination of an heir is required (877c8-878b3); looking after foreign visitors who come to observe Magnesia, and hearing minor cases if those visitors are harmed or harm someone else (953a3-b4).
Interpreters of religious law, 'Exegetes' (<i>exêgêtai</i> , 759c7) 3 (759d7-8)	Schofield: 'Each of the three clusters of four of the twelve tribes votes three times on three separate occasions on lists of four candidates. The three top candidates each time are vetted, and if they survive that scrutiny they are then referred as a group to Delphi, which selects just one of them on each of the three occasions (therefore considering nine in all). The total number of interpreters so selected is accordingly three.' (p. 210n26). When one of the interpreters dies, the group of four tribes chooses his replacement. (759d5-e3)	Must be at least 60 (759e1) For life (759e1-2)	Determining details for the festivals (828b3-5); determining laws for the purification of spoiled water (845e5-9); determining purification and sacrifice procedures (with the Guardians of the Law) for those whose crimes involve impiety (871c3-d2); determining the purification and burial rites for cases of suicide (873d1-4); determining appropriate funeral rites (958d3-6).

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Title and number of officers	Method of appointment	Age restriction and length of term	Specific responsibilities
Temple treasurers (<i>tamiai tôn hierôn chrématôn</i> , 759e3-4) ^e	Candidates are chosen from the highest property class (760a1); the election process is the same as for the generals (760a2-4) ^g		Responsible for the temple's money, land, produce, and rents (759e3-5).
3 for each large temple, 2 for smaller temples, and 1 for the smallest (760a1-2) ^f			
Country wardens/garrison commanders; (<i>agronomous te kai phourarchous</i> , 760b6; also called <i>kruptoi</i> , 763b67) ^h 60 (=5×12) (760b6, 761d6, 763c5)	Initially, for each of the 12 sections of the city, a tribe, chosen by lottery, provides five people (760b3-6); after this initial selection, the next officers are chosen by the previous officers at the end of their term (760e2-3).	Two years ⁱ (760c5, 760d3, 762e8)	To ensure that the wardens and their assistants get to know the whole country in all seasons, they rotate every month around the areas, clockwise in their first year and counter-clockwise in their second (760c6-e2); duties include: protecting the land against enemies, digging ditches and trenches, making

e It is unclear whether the temple treasurers are the same people as the temple wardens described at 759a1. Given that these treasurers were not introduced at the start of the discussion of religious offices and the temple wardens are not described either, it is likely they are the same officers.

f How many total, then? We are not given an exact number, but Magnesia has a lot of temples (see 778c4-6).

g The implication is that voting is only done by those in the military for this office, but why would this restriction would be relevant here? Plato may be saving time and assuming that we can adjust the details accordingly, so that the voting mechanism is the same as the election of the generals but the voting would be done by all the citizens, but the text does not explicitly say as much.

h The Athenian doesn't actually give this office a title (see 763b7), but presumably it is similar to roles with which his audience would have been familiar.

i There is some controversy over the length of this office. Schofield takes 760b5 to mean that the officers serve for a year, whereas later it is clear that the office lasts two years (p. 211n28). The *kat'eni auton* in the earlier passage, however, could be read to mean 'over the course of the year' (LSJ 'kata', B.I.2), as opposed to a part of a year (like the councilors). Given that it is clear that there is a second year of office (760c5,

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Title and number of officers	Method of appointment	Age restriction and length of term	Specific responsibilities
			<p>fortifications (though note that Magnesia doesn't have city walls, 778d3-6), supervising servants helping with this work, taking care of the roads, making sure the rainwater goes to beneficial places by means of canals, reservoirs and irrigation channels; making gardens, gymnasia, and baths; collecting wood; overseeing minor lawsuits where people in their area have claimed to have been injured (760e3-761e4, 843d2-6); rural commissioners live and eat in a communal barracks for the duration of their office, and suffer harsh penalties (except in very rare circumstances) for leaving this post (762b6-e1); country wardens also approve re-allocations of water supplies (844b6-c1), divide up the skilled workers between the city and the villages to be most beneficial for the farmers (848e7-10), judge cases where an animal kills somebody (873e1-6), punish slaves who do not step-in if somebody assaults their parent in the country (881c2-7), punish people who assault their parent but do not remain in exile (881d3-7).</p>

760d3, 762e8), we should probably forgive Plato's admittedly confusing grammatical ambiguity in his initial statement.

(cont.)

Title and number of officers	Method of appointment	Age restriction and length of term	Specific responsibilities
Assistants to the country wardens ^j 144 (=12×12) (760b7-c1) ^k	Selected by the acting country wardens (760b6-c2).	Must be between 25-30 (760c1-2) Two years (760c5, 760d3, 762e8)	Assisting the Country Wardens.
City wardens (<i>astunomoi</i> , 763c4) 3 (763c5), each is responsible for four city areas (763c5-6)	Anybody can nominate somebody from the highest property class; six finalists are chosen by vote, and the final three are selected by lottery (763d4-e3).		Responsible for the streets within the city, for the highways into the city, for the water supply within the city, making sure the fountains have plenty of clean water (763c6-d4), and for ensuring buildings comply with regulations, cleaning the city as a whole, ensuring private houses don't encroach on public land, controlling the flow of rainwater, and miscellaneous duties in their purview (779c1-7); judge cases where people have spoiled, diverted, or stolen water (845e2-5); judge cases where transporting the harvests from the farm cause damage to somebody else's property

j Technically this is not an office, as the age limit on holding office for males is 30 and 40 for females (785b5-6). Thus, we should think of these people as like interns to the office-holders.

k There is also debate over the number of assistant officers. Schofield: '[I]nitially it seems as though each tribe will have a garrison of sixty-five (760c: 5 + (5 × 12)), it is subsequently made clear that only seventeen are envisaged (760e, 761e: 5 + 12)' (p. 211n28). Once again, the later passage makes explicit an ambiguous earlier passage. The problem is that the *hekastô* ('by each') in 760b7 makes it sound like *each of the five* officers selects 12 assistants (=60 assistants). Saunders thus suggests 60 in his main text, but also provides an alternative translation to get the total to 17. My preferred reading understands the *hekastô* to refer to each *group* of country wardens, i.e. 12 tribes, selected by lottery, each provide five officers, and *each of these groups of five* selects twelve men from their own tribe.

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Title and number of officers	Method of appointment	Age restriction and length of term	Specific responsibilities
Market wardens (<i>agoranomoi</i> , 763e4) 5 (763e5)	Anybody can nominate somebody from the top two property classes; ten finalists are chosen by vote, and the final five are selected by lottery; voting for this office is compulsory on pain of fine (763e4-764a2).		(845e10-846a7); ¹ ensuring that everybody sticks to the principle of one person, one skill/job (846e2-847b2); settling minor cases where workers have not been paid or treated unfairly (847b2-6); deciding the best arrangement of skilled workers for the city (849a1-2); judging cases of assault where a foreigner strikes a citizen (879d5-e6); punishing slaves who do not step-in if somebody assaults their parent in the city (881c2-7) Responsible for ensuring market regulations are upheld, especially watching against unfair dealings, taking care of the marketplace temples, and judging cases and punishing those who violate the market laws (764b1-c4, 849a3-850a1); punishing slaves who do not step-in if somebody assaults their parent in the marketplace (881c2-7), determining, along with the Guardians of the Law, what counts as adulterated goods and commercial malpractice, and what levels of profit are acceptable for retailers (917e2-918a1, 920b3-c6); hearing serious cases of foreign visitors who are harmed or harm someone else (953b4-5).

¹ This duty is not explicitly given to the City Wardens, and I suspect it is more within the purview of the Country Wardens. The problem is that the text says only that 'the officials' are to act as inspectors, and the last office mentioned was the City Wardens. So grammatical context suggests the Country Wardens do this, but geographical division of labor suggests the Country Wardens do.

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Title and number of officers	Method of appointment	Age restriction and length of term	Specific responsibilities
Assembly members (those in the <i>ekklēsia</i> and <i>koinos sullogos</i> , 764a3) ^m Open to all citizens (764a3)	Attendance is compulsory for all in the first two property classes (on penalty of fine), but optional for the lower two property classes – except in declared emergencies (764a3-b1).		The Assembly meets at the prompting of the Council, presumably to determine general issues of governance in the city and hold elections, as was standard for Greek assemblies (758d2-9). Exactly how much the Council handles by itself and how much it works with the assembly is not stated. The Council and Assembly are also specifically tasked with judging petitions of foreigners who wish to stay in Magnesia longer than the 20-year allowance (850b6-c3).
Officers of artistic competitions (<i>archontes mousikēs ... agōnistikēs heneka</i> , 764c5-7) 2, 1 for choruses and 1 for solo-voice performances (765b3-c1)	Artistic devotees must attend the assembly (on penalty of fine), who then nominate people on the basis of their experience; 10 finalists are voted on, and one is chosen by lot from the finalists (765a5-c1). The process is repeated for the solo-voice performance judge.	For choruses, the official must be at least 40; for solo-voice performances, they must be at least 30 (765a1-2) One year (765b4-5)	Running the competition events (764d3-4); introducing and judging the contests (765a2-5); approving music and poetry for public performance (801c8-d6, 802b1-c4), ⁿ and deciding when to have the competitions (834e2-835b4).

m Given that the Assembly is open to all citizens, it is unclear whether it should be considered an office in the strict sense – for example, when the Athenian says that the existing office holders should gather to nominate high court judges, being a part of the assembly probably does not qualify someone to participate in this election. At any rate, the role of the general assembly is very under-described. See Morrow, *Plato's Cretan City*, pp. 157-177, and Pierart, *Platon et la cité grecque*, pp. 89-121.

n It is not clear whether the Athenian is here referring to a new office for overseeing music at 802b1-c4, or to the group of office-holders just mentioned at 801c8-d6 (the Officer of Education, Guardians of the Law, and musical competition judges). It may be a new office, given that the age restriction for this office is 50, whereas the age restriction for the office of musical competition judge is lower (the Officer of Education and Guardians have to be 50, but the musical judges can be as young as 30). On the other hand, there is no selection procedure mentioned if this is a new office, which

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Title and number of officers	Method of appointment	Age restriction and length of term	Specific responsibilities
Officers of athletic competitions (<i>archontes gymnastikês ... agônistikês heneka</i> , 764c5-7) 3 (765c5)	Attendance for the selection is compulsory for the first three property classes on penalty of fine, but not for the fourth. From among the second and third property classes, twenty finalists are voted for, then three are selected by lottery from the finalists (765c1-d3).		Running the competition events (764d3-4); there are the same judges for athletics and horse racing (764d5-6).
Officer of Education (<i>archon tês paideias</i> , 765d4-5) 1 (765d5)	The candidate must be a father of legitimate children, preferably of both sons and daughters (765d4-8). The candidate must also be one of the Guardians of the Law. All officials – other than those on the council – cast their votes by secret ballot in the Temple of Apollo. The Guardians of the Law are exempted from participating in vetting the candidate, but all others are who participated in the vote are to vet the candidate (766b1-c1).	Must be at least 50 (765d7) 5 years (766b7)	The Athenian calls this office ‘the very greatest (<i>polu megistên</i>) of the highest offices in the city’ (765e2). The officer is responsible for discipline and teaching in gymnasia and schools, and for ensuring attendance of young people (764c7-d3), for approving music and poetry for public performance (801c8-d6, 802b1-c4), and for deciding when to have the competitions (834e2-835b4). The details of what forms of music, dance, and poetry the Officer of Education will enforce are explained from 809b5-813a3, for athletics from 813b10 and in the first part of Book 8 (828a1-834d8), and for mathematics from 817e5-822d1. The Officer of Education also

may suggest that it is office-holders already established, and when the Athenian later talks about the selection of works, he mentions only the Officer of Education and Guardians of the Law (again emphasizing that they must be at least 50, 829c7). One solution may be that, in general, artistic works are to be approved by the Officer of Education and the Guardians of the Law, but that for pieces to be performed in the musical competitions, they must *also* be approved by the competition judges – not all performances are competition pieces. Alternatively, it may be that only the competition judges who are above 50 participate in the process (as 835a2-b4 strongly suggests that the judges are involved). At any rate, music is highly regulated in Magnesia and on any interpretation, senior office-holders will be involved in ensuring that music, poetry, and dance are consistent with the established laws.

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Title and number of officers	Method of appointment	Age restriction and length of term	Specific responsibilities
High court judge (767d6-8) One from every group of officials (767d2-4) ^o	In the month before the new year, all office-holders are to meet in a temple and nominate one person from their particular office to act as judge for the next year. A replacement is provided if the candidate does not pass their scrutiny (767c2-d8). Everybody who participated in the election of these judges must attend all of the trials over which they preside (767d8-e3).	One year (767d3-4)	decides whether some comedic play shows a playful spirit (and is thus acceptable) or whether it shows anger (and is thus unacceptable)(816d5-e10, 936a2-b2). The acting Officer of Education, along with retired holders of this office, meet with ambassadors who have traveled abroad (951d3-952b5; see the description of the Ambassadors for a fuller account). Judging cases that have been appealed in lower courts, giving their votes openly (767d6-8); judging serious cases, including those involving homicide (855c6-856a8); settling cases about inheritance and marriage where the Guardians of the Law are thought to have too much authority by the parties (926d2-d7); judging cases where somebody is accused of practicing rhetoric, swaying jurors, and bringing inappropriate cases to court (938a7-c5); part of the court (along with the other auditors and the Guardians of the Law) who hear cases against one of the auditors (948a1-4).

^o The exact number will depend, then, on how one decides what counts as a group of office-holders.

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Title and number of officers	Method of appointment	Age restriction and length of term	Specific responsibilities
Judge-investigator (768a5-7) ^p 3 (768a6)	The prosecutor and defendant agree on three high-ranking officers to handle the questioning in the case; if they cannot agree, the council decides between those nominated (768a5-b1).	The duration of the case	Questioning the parties in the case.
Jurors (<i>dikastai</i> , 768b5)	On-the-spot lottery (768b5)	The duration of the case	Opening and closing the proceedings (768a4-5); deciding the verdict of the case.
Neighborhood arbitrators (766e3-767a2)	Decided on by the parties (766e3-767a2); in controversies over the health a slave, a panel of (probably three) doctors must be chosen (916b5-6). ^q	The duration of the case	Deciding the verdict of the case.

p Plato's description of the court system is difficult. There are at least three civic courts: neighborhood, tribal, and a high court. There also seem to be independent military courts (943a1-b7, though they do hear some civil cases: 880b1-d7); moreover, some scholars have claimed that there is also a separate court for capital cases (see 778d1-3) – though, perhaps more plausibly, it may just be that there are special court *locations* where one of the aforementioned courts hear homicide cases, as the description for the composition of judges for this court is described in a back-reference and is simply that of the high court (855c6-d1). In addition, the Athenian distinguishes between courts for private cases and courts for public cases. The text is problematic in that it is unclear whether there is a procedural difference between the courts for private cases and public cases (757e9-768c2). I believe the justice system in Magnesia generally works as follows: in the first instance, the prosecutor and defendant are to decide upon some number of people known to both of them to adjudicate their case (the neighborhood court); if one of the parties finds the decision unsatisfactory, they appeal the decision; the appeal is heard in the tribal court, which is one of the general courts of Magnesia, made up from members of all of the tribes; this court is composed of a large number of people selected by lottery (it may be fair to assume that they were roughly the same size as Athenian courts, given that Plato does not comment one way or the other on the number of jurors), and three high-ranking officials who handle the questioning of the parties, decided upon by the parties (or the council if they cannot agree); thus, the public decides these tribal court cases, ensuring that they are not excluded from the judicial process, but the public does not get to ask questions of the parties; if the decision is appealed, the parties go to the high court, from which the general public is excluded from voting and the case is decided by the elected office-holders mentioned.

q “Three” is an emendation, but a plausible one.

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Title and number of officers	Method of appointment	Age restriction and length of term	Specific responsibilities
Marriage overseer (<i>episkopoi</i> , 784a1-3; <i>kuriarai tôn gamôn</i> , 794b3) 12 (794a8-b1) ^r	Said to be a women (784a1-3)	10 years (784b1-2)	Go to the temple of Eileithuia for up to a third of the day to report anybody of child-producing age who is doing anything other than what the laws and customs prescribe (784a3-b1); allowed to enter young people's houses to check up on them (784c2-3); selecting nurses (794b3-4); 10 middle-aged male Guardians of the Law along with the 10 female marriage overseers supervise turbulent marriages, and arrange new marriages in unfixable cases (929e9-930a5); three of the oldest Guardians of the Law along with three of the women responsible for marriages punish or imprison people who fail to care adequately for their parents (932a7-c2).
Nurses (<i>trophoi</i> , 794a4-c3) 12 (794b4)	Said to be women; selected by the marriage overseers (794b3-4).	The same age as the marriage overseer (794b4, no age is given for the marriage overseers) 1 year (794b1-2)	Supervising children (ages 3-6) playing in public gatherings, maintaining discipline, and punishing wrongdoers (794a4-c3).

^r Schofield (p. 240n95) thinks that the number is 10, citing 930a; but this passage says 10 *of* the women appointed to this post, which suggests that this number is a subset (cf. 932b4-5: 'three of the women responsible for marriages'). At any rate, 794a8-b1 makes clear that there is one woman appointed for every tribe, so there must be 12 women total.

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Title and number of officers	Method of appointment	Age restriction and length of term	Specific responsibilities
Mess-hall supervisors (806e2-807a3)			Dismissing the communal meals, supervising eating and drinking habits, pouring a libation to the god for whom the day is sacred (806e2-807a3).
Auditors (<i>euthunoi</i> , 945b3) In the first year, 12 auditors are selected, and then every year after that three new auditors are added (946c2-5); thus the total number of auditors depends on how many die or retire.	All need to have 'the most amazingly complete virtue' (945e2-3); every year after the summer solstice, the whole city meets on the sacred ground of Helios and Apollo; everybody presents three men (<i>andras ... treis</i> , 946a1); everybody then votes on these candidates, and half are eliminated (if the number is an odd number, the one with the least number of votes is removed; if it's a tie, the younger of the candidates is removed); three candidates are then selected by another round of voting, and the candidates are ranked (if there is a tie, the ranking is determined by lottery). ^s	Must be between 50 and 75 (946a2, 946c4) Serves until the auditor turns 75 (946c4)	Auditors divide all the public offices into twelve and investigate them, sometimes working alone and sometimes working together; they live on the grounds of Apollo and Helios, acting as priests; after their investigation has taken place, they put in writing in the marketplace what should happen to the person audited or what fine they should pay (946c5-e4). The auditors are also audited themselves. If they pass their audit, they receive further privileges. These auditors are permitted to travel abroad for Panhellenic festivals, and to festivals with other states; they act as leaders when there are embassies that need to be sent elsewhere (947a1-4). They also receive special honors upon their death, including (relatively) lavish funerals and yearly games

s Though all three people elected will hold office as an auditor, the auditors receive prizes, so presumably the final ranking determines the degrees of honor and what prizes the auditors receive (946b2-5). The person who is awarded first place for that year also acts as the chief priest to Apollo and Helios, and the calendar year is named after him (947a5-b3). The office of the chief *archon* in Athens lasted for a year and we have surviving lists of the *archontes*, so Plato follows Athenian practice here, though it is significant that it is an auditor who receives the honor in Magnesia.

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Title and number of officers	Method of appointment	Age restriction and length of term	Specific responsibilities
Ambassador, 'observer' (<i>theôros</i> , 951c6)	Must be somebody with a good reputation, especially in war, who has been approved by the Guardians of the Law (951c6-d2).	Between 50 and 60 (951c7, 951d2) Ambassadors may be overseas as long as they want, within the specified age range (951d3-4).	in their honor (947b3-e5). If an auditor is prosecuted, the court consists of the Guardians of the Law, the other auditors, and the high court (948a1-4). The auditors who received prizes for excellence meet with Ambassadors who have traveled abroad (951d3-952b5; see the description of the Ambassadors for a fuller account). Ambassadors go abroad to seek out good people and good laws in order to secure Magnesia's laws or find anything that may have been missed (951c1-3). ^t Upon their return, the ambassadors meet all day with the auditors/priests who received prizes for excellence, the 10 oldest Guardians of the Law, the current Officer of Education and any previous Officers of Education (each of whom will bring with him a man between the ages of 30 and 40), i.e. the Nocturnal Council (951d3-952b5).

^t The second part of this disjunct is difficult to translate in a neutral way: the Athenian's point could be that the goal is to fix parts of the law that may be defective (as Griffith takes it), or that it is to correct for anything that may have been missed by the original lawgivers (my preferred reading). On the first reading, part of the ambassador's task is to find *improvements* to existing legislation; on the second reading, it is to *complete* and *fill out* the legal framework with effective laws implemented elsewhere.

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Title and number of officers	Method of appointment	Age restriction and length of term	Specific responsibilities
The Nocturnal Council (referenced at 818a1-4; mentioned by name first at 908a3-4, <i>nuktôr sullegomenos</i> , 961a1 ff.)	Said to be a 'small minority' of the population (818a1-4); comprised of (a) the 10 oldest Guardians of the Law, (b) all citizens who have won awards for excellence (as, e.g., some auditors receive), (c) those who have been ambassadors to learn about other political systems, (d) the current Officer of Education and all previous Officers of Education, ^u and (e) one person aged 30-40, selected by each of the people in (a)-(d) and approved by all of them (951d6-e5; 961a2-b8).		Engage in detailed study of arithmetic, measurement, and astronomy (818a1-4); the members of the Nocturnal Council talk with people who are ignorant but do not have bad characters (and thus hold atheistic beliefs on the basis of rational errors) and are isolated in the <i>sôphronistêrion</i> for at least 5 years (908e5-909a5); said to know the target of statesmen and how to hit it, and to know which laws and people counsel well or badly (962b6-9); they have a sufficient knowledge of virtue (964c7), can view the many and the one, and order things towards that end, looking towards one the single form (<i>pros mian idean</i> , 965b7-c3); have real knowledge of the truth about the fine and the good, and the gods (966a5-d3); know about the primacy of soul, its immortality, the role of intelligence (<i>nous</i>) in astronomy, the connection between music (art) and ethical habits and laws, and how to provide a rational explanation (967d4-968a)

^u The Officers of Education are included at 951d6-e5 but not at 961a2-b8; the latter passage also does not specify the upper age limit (40) for the younger members chosen by the senior officer-holders that the earlier passage does.