

CAPInv. 128: **hoi en Therai machimoi**

I. LOCATION

i. Geographical area	Egypt
ii. Nome	Thebes with Peri Thebas (U04b)
iii. Site	Thebes

II. NAME

i. Full name (original language)	[οἱ ἐν] <Θ>ή<ρ>αι μάχιμοι (SEG 8: 714, l. 5)
ii. Full name (transliterated)	<i>hoi en Therai machimoi</i>

III. DATE

i. Date(s)	ii BC
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IV. NAME AND TERMINOLOGY

ii. Name elements	Geographical:	<i>en Thera</i> : Thera was the seat of the Ptolemaic navy in the third and second century BC (until the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometor)
	Professional:	<i>machimoi</i> : soldiers of the Ptolemaic army (usually of Egyptian origin). Fischer-Bovet (2014) has demonstrated that by the second and first centuries BC the ethnic connotations of the word <i>machimos</i> started fading away as a number of soldiers was of mixed or non-Egyptian origin; the word came to designate soldiers of the lower strata of the army that possessed a specific type of land and equipment.

V. SOURCES

i. Source(s)	SEG 8: 714 (ii BC)
Note	Other editions: SB V 8209
Online Resources	SEG 8: 714 TM 6309
i.a. Source type(s)	Epigraphic source(s)
i.b. Document(s) typology & language/script	Greek dedicatory inscription: dedication of an altar to Dionysos Thrax by two religious officials of the <i>machimoi en Thera</i> .
ii. Source(s) provenance	Thebes

VI. BUILT AND VISUAL SPACE

ii. References to buildings/objects	[βω]μός, <i>[bo]mos</i> (l. 6; altar)
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VII. ORGANIZATION

iv. Officials	λειτορέύσας, <i>leitoreusas</i> (l. 2, religious office, see Bagnall 1976: 129) Attalos son of Charmokles held this office twice. ἀρχεύσας, <i>archeusas</i> (l. 4, for the religious overtones of this, see Bagnall 1976: 129 n. 50)
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IX. MEMBERSHIP

ii. Gender	Men
Note	On the basis of the military context of the inscription, the members were men.
iii. Age	Adults
Note	In the light of the military context of the inscription, we can deduce that the <i>machimoi</i> were all adults.
iv. Status	Onesimos son of Aristion was probably from Cyprus (Bagnall 1976: 129). Launey (1987 ² : 957-8) thinks that the <i>machimoi</i> in Thera were Egyptians (1976: 130). However, Egyptian names are not attested for the soldiers stationed in Thera. The Ptolemaic garrison stationed in Thera in the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometor was of mixed origin in the light of the onomastics (IG XII.3 327) and as Robert (1963: 398-411) showed there was a Pamphilian contingent among the soldiers. Names nonetheless can occasionally be deceitful; Egyptians joining the army tended to choose Greek names (Fischer-Bovet 2014, ch. 7). Soldiers, bearing Egyptian names, were sent to Gortyn in Crete (ICret IV 195) in the reign of Ptolemy VI. For Fischer-Bovet (2014: 165) 'the question of the ethnicity of <i>machimoi</i> stationed in the Mediterranean in the second century BC remains open', but 'it is likely that at least some <i>machimoi</i> were Egyptian'.
v. Relations	The name of Attalos Cha() is also attested in the list of soldiers' names inscribed under the letter of Ptolemy VI Philometor (IG XII.3, 327 l. 130). Given that both inscriptions (IG XII.3 327 and SEG 8: 714) refer to soldiers of the Ptolemaic garrison stationed in Thera, Attalos of the list (IG XII.3 327) can be identical with Attalos of the dedicatory inscription (SEG 8: 714).

X. ACTIVITIES

iii. Worship

Altar dedicated to Dionysos Thrax by Attalos son of Charmokles and Onesimos son of Aristion, both religious officials, at their own expense.

The promotion of the cult of Dionysos already by the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator could justify the worship of Dionysos by members of the Ptolemaic garrison outside Egypt. For the interest in the cult of Dionysos by other associations in Thera see [CAPInv. 16](#). See also [IG XII.3 468](#) for a dedication by the *demoi* of the Theraens on behalf of Ptolemy VI Philometor and Kleopatra to Dionysos.

Deities worshipped

Dionysos Thrax

XII. NOTES

i. Comments

The *machimoi* were active in Thera in light of their name. However, on the basis of the provenance of the inscription it seems that some members of the Ptolemaic garrison stationed in Thera returned to Egypt and upon their return (or some years after their return) they commemorated past activities (notice that all participles are in the past tense) by erecting an altar in their 'homeland' (and not in Thera).

The presence of two religious officials suggests that the *machimoi* stationed in Thera valued greatly the performance of and participation in religious activities; it also reveals a formal aspect of the religious life of the *machimoi*. In the light of the religious officials, Bagnall suggested that the *machimoi* in SB V 8209 constitute a religious unit (Bagnall 1976: 130), a view also taken up by Chaniotis 2002: 109 who considered the *machimoi en Thera* a religious association. I would be more skeptical as to whether the *machimoi* in SB V 8209 should be considered a private association centred around the cult of Dionysos Thrax, and thus fulfilling a distinct function from the military unit of *machimoi* stationed in Thera, as attested in [IG XII.3 466/1390](#), the latter a dedication of the *grammateus* of the *machimoi* and *stratiotai* stationed in Crete, Thera and Arsinoe in the Peloponnese and *oikonomos ton auton topon*.

The presence of officials assuming administrative (*grammateus*), financial (*oikonomos ton auton topon*) and religious duties (*archesuas*, *leitoreusas*) demonstrates a fully-fledged military life.

iii. Bibliography

Bagnall, R. (1976), *The administration of the Ptolemaic possessions outside Egypt*. Leiden.

Chaniotis, A. (2002) 'Foreign soldiers - Native girls? Constructing and crossing boundaries in Hellenistic cities with foreign garrisons', in P. Ducrey & A. Chaniotis (eds.), *Army and Power in the Ancient World*. Stuttgart: 99-113.

Fischer-Bovet, C. (2014), *Army and Society in Ptolemaic Egypt. Armies of the Ancient World*. Cambridge.

Launey, M. (1987), *Recherches sur les armées hellénistiques*. 2nd ed. (BEFAR 160). Paris.

Robert, L. (1963), *Noms indigènes dans l'Asie-Mineure gréco-romaine*. Paris.

XIII. EVALUATION

i. Private association

Possible

Note

The presence of religious officials suggests a formal organization of military religious life. It should remain open to question to what extent a military unit, the *machimoi*, formed a private association bearing the same name, as modern scholars tend to think (see XII.i).