

CAPInv. 140: hoi tou presbyterou Ophelionos hetairoi kai synetheis philoi

I. LOCATION	
i. Geographical area	Western Asia Minor
ii. Region	Bithynia
iii. Site	Prusa ad Olympum

II. NAME	
i. Full name (original language)	Οἱ τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου Ὀφελίωνος ἑταῖροι καὶ συνήθεις φίλοι (I.Prusa 24, ll. 1-3)
ii. Full name (transliterated)	hoi tou presbyterou Ophelionos hetairoi kai synetheis philoi

III. DATE	
i. Date(s)	i AD

IV. NAME AND TERMINOLOGY	

ii. Name elements	Personal:	<i>Ophelionos hetairoi kai synetheis philoi</i> (ll. 1-3). Despite the bipartite structure of the name of the honouring body, the absence of the definite article before συνήθεις φίλοι (<i>synetheis philoi</i>) and the use of the term κοινόν (<i>koinon</i>, l. 8) to describe the group on behalf of which Themistokles son of Lysikles promised to erect the stele indicate that the honours were not awarded by two associations in collaboration but by a single one, consisting of Ophelion's companions and friends (see also below under field IX.iv: Status). While the use of the term <i>synetheis</i> or the equivalent <i>synetheia</i> is quite frequent in associations formed around an individual (see for example IG X.2.1 219, 679, 933 and Nigdelis 2006: 147-151 no. 4, 178-193 no. 9, 191-196 no. 12, 206-211 no. 15 (Thessaloniki); EKM I 371 (Beroia)), the combined use of the terms <i>synetheis philoi</i> is significantly more rare, but attested in an inscription from Ankyra Sidera in Mysia (MAMA X 458, dated to 57/58 AD).
iii. Descriptive terms	κοινόν, <i>koinon</i>	
Note	<i>koinon</i> : I.Prusa 24, l. 8	

V. SOURCES

i. Source(s)	I.Prusa 24 (i AD?)
Note	See also: AGRW 99
Online Resources	I.Prusa 24 AGRW ID# 67
i.a. Source type(s)	Epigraphic source(s)
i.b. Document(s) typology & language/script	Honorific inscription in Greek erected by the association.
i.c. Physical format(s)	Stele with a relief depicting a priest offering sacrifice.
ii. Source(s) provenance	The inscription was found in Bursa.

VII. ORGANIZATION

i. Founder(s)	The name of the association indicates that Ophelion himself may have been the founder (οἱ τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου Ὠφελίωνος, <i>hoi tou presbyterou Ophelionos</i> , ll. 1-2).
ii. Leadership	The name of the association suggests that Ophelion was its leader (οἱ τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου Ὠφελίωνος, <i>hoi tou presbyterou Ophelionos</i> , ll. 1-2).

IX. MEMBERSHIP

ii. Gender	Men
Note	The only known member (Themistokles son of Lysikles) was a man.

X. ACTIVITIES

iv. Honours/Other activities	The association erected a stele in honour of the high-priest and <i>gymnasiarchos</i> Sakerdos son of Menandros, described as benefactor of the association for life (διὰ βίου εὐεργέτης, <i>dia biou euergetes</i> , I.Prusa 24, ll. 5-6). On the honorand, cf. Fernoux 2004: 320-321, 340 and 355-356, who thinks that the title <i>archiereus</i> refers to a Bithynian and not a local priesthood of the imperial cult.
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XI. INTERACTION

i. Local interaction	The honours awarded to the high-priest and <i>gymnasiarchos</i> Sakerdos son of Menandros and especially the fact that he was considered as a benefactor of the association for life indicate ongoing contacts and solid bonds between the two parties. The exact context of the benefactions offered to the association is not known. The members of the association may have been invited to sacrifices, meals and/or distributions performed by Sakerdos as part of his official duties as high-priest and <i>gymnasiarchos</i> (cf. the iconography of the stele). On the other hand, Sakerdos may have offered similar benefactions exclusively to the association in a purely private context. In any case, Sakerdos was undoubtedly an important local figure, although he was not a Roman citizen (see Fernoux 2004: 320 and Bekker-Nielsen 2008: 104). Moreover, as the title <i>dia biou euergetes</i> suggests, he may have functioned as a sort of patron for the association. The institution of the gymnasium, in which both Sakerdos and Ophelion as a <i>presbyteros</i> were involved (see above under IX.iv: Status) perhaps provided the background for creating, encouraging and consolidating the contacts and the relations established between the honouring association, its leading figure (Ophelion) and the honorand.
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XII. NOTES

i. Comments

Associations formed around and/or named after a single individual (usually identified either as οἱ περὶ or οἱ σὺν + personal name or with an epithet deriving from a personal name + the suffix *-eios*) have generally been seen as reflecting and reinforcing that specific individual's influence (see Gabrielsen 2001: 168-70 and Maillot 2013: 204-7 with further bibliography). Ophelion was undoubtedly the central figure in our association. However, it is worth pointing out that the title εὐεργέτης διὰ βίου (*euergetes dia biou*) attributed to Sakerdos indicates that the latter also enjoyed great prestige and influence among the members of the association and, being an active local statesman, this could contribute to the enhancement of his social and political capital in Prusa ad Olympum.

Unfortunately, the exact nature of the relationship between Ophelion and Sakerdos cannot be deduced from the inscription in the latter's honour (but see above under field XI.i: Local Interaction).

The stele in honour of Sakerdos was paid by Themistokles son of Lysikles, after a promise that he had made. Themistokles seems to have been a member of the association with an interest in honouring Sakerdos, thus a person close to the honoured *gymnasiarchos* and high-priest.

The members of the association are defined according to their relation to the *presbyteros*, Ophelion, as the latter's *hetairoi* and *syntheis philoi*. Ophelion's *hetairoi* may have been also members of the *presbyteroi* in Prusa ad Olympum, an association which in all probability has to be identified with the *gerousia*, attested in at least two other inscriptions of Prusa ad Olympum (I.Prousa 20 and 229; cf. the remarks of Th. Corsten in I.Prousa 24, p. 46). The term *presbyteroi* is frequently used as a synonym for the *gerousia* in Asia Minor but it has been argued that in some cities the *gerousia* was a more restricted group that evolved from the *presbyteroi*. In any case, both the *presbyteroi* and the *gerousia* were age-groups based on the gymnasium (on this topic see now Zimmermann 2007, Giannakopoulos 2008: 13-27 and Fröhlich 2013 with further bibliography) and it is to this context that Ophelion's *hetairoi* – or at least some of them – presumably belonged. The persons described as *syntheis philoi* may have been Ophelion's friends outside the circle of the gymnasium. A funerary inscription from Amaseia recording separately the deceased's *ἑταῖροι* (*hetairoi*) and φίλοι (*philo*) inside crowns (Marek 1985: 140-141 no. 21; cf. Marek 1993: 172-173 no. 57) supports the hypothesis that in our case too these two terms were describing two different groups of people belonging to the same association.

On the other hand, it is possible that the terms *hetairoi* and *syntheis philoi* did not correspond to a clear-cut technical division as the one suggested above, but were loosely used as synonyms to describe the group of people organised in an association around (and by) Ophelion. But even if that was the case, it is highly probable that at least some of the members also shared with Ophelion participation to the local *presbyteroi*.

iii. Bibliography

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XIII. EVALUATION

i. Private association

Certain

Note

Both the personal character of the association's name and the use of the term κοινόν (*koinon*) indicate that it was a private association.