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CAPInv. 171: hoi mystai

I. LOCATION

i. Geographical area	Aegean Islands
ii. Region	Melos
iii. Site	Melos (ancient city)

II. NAME

i. Full name (original language)	οἱ μύσται (IG XII.3 1125, l. 5 + IG XII.3 Suppl. p. 335)
ii. Full name (transliterated)	<i>hoi mystai</i>

III. DATE

i. Date(s)	160 - 190 AD
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IV. NAME AND TERMINOLOGY

ii. Name elements	Cultic:	<i>mystai</i>
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V. SOURCES

i. Source(s)	IG XII.3 1125 + IG XII.3 Suppl. p. 335 (160-190 AD)
Note	See also: Jaccottet 2003: no. 164. Mendonì & Zoumbaki 2008: 153 no. 38.
Online Resources	IG XII.3 1125
i.a. Source type(s)	Epigraphic source(s)
i.b. Document(s) typology & language/script	Honorary inscription in Greek. The <i>mystai</i> set up the portrait (in the form of a herm) of Marcus Marius Trophimus.

i.c. Physical format(s)	<p>Herm bearing the portrait of M. Marius Trophimus and fit into a rectangular base. H. 180 x W. 28 cm.</p> <p>M. Marius Trophimus bears a short beard and wears a wreath of ivy and flowers around his head. He is dressed in a himation and a chiton, and a nebris skin (attire of Dionysos) falls over his left shoulder and fastens below his chest with a broad belt. Left arm (broken above the elbow) missing. Bosanquet suggests that the honorand would hold a kantharos or a phiale in his right hand, and a thyrsos in his left hand. The lower part of the shaft consists of three acanthus leaves. The inscription is carved in the blank part of the shaft above the acanthus leaves.</p> <p>Wrede dates the herm portrait in 160-190 AD in light of the coiffure (Wrede 1981: no. 173). See also Schäfer 2002: no. D1.</p>
ii. Source(s) provenance	<p>The head of the herm was found during illicit activities and was sold to the Archaeological Society of Athens in 1884. In 1896 after demolishing the <i>traphos</i>, the British excavations unearthed the shaft of the herm fallen down on the mosaic floor in the NE part of the Hall of the Mystai (Bosanquet 1898: 63).</p>

VI. BUILT AND VISUAL SPACE

i. Archaeological remains	<p>The herm may have stood in niche C in the north wall of the Hall of the Mystai on Melos, not far away from where it was found (Bosanquet 1898: 65, 76). The back and sides of the base of the herm are roughly worked out and this probably indicates that the herm was meant to be seen only from the front and not from the sides and back.</p> <p>The herm was found in the 'Hall of the Mystai' in Traminthia on Melos.</p> <p>Part of the building came to light in 1861 in the course of private excavations that revealed architectural remains and some sculptures, incl. the bust of Aurelia Euprosia (CAP Inv. 172), a bust of a young man and another column bearing a relief of Athena (IG XII.3 1081) (Koumanoudes 1862: 274-5). Excavations in the building were resumed in 1896 by the British School of Athens (Bosanquet 1898). The building is partly revealed. It consists of an elongated hall with an E-W orientation. It measures 8.32 m wide and at least 23 m long (the exact length of the building cannot be determined as its west end is completely destroyed, though according to the restored plan it would not have exceeded much further to the west). A podium (1.50 m wide x 27 m high) runs along the long sides, whereas seven columns stood between the podium and the wall (7 columns on each long side). An opening on the east side is to be interpreted as a niche or as a door giving access to a side room. The hall was decorated with a mosaic floor, consisting of five panels depicting vine leaves, birds, a deer, a fisherman in a sea full of fish with the inscription <i>μόνον μὴ ὕδωρ</i>, <i>monon me hydor</i> (IG XII.3 1244), geometric and floral patterns. The identification of the building with a hall of mystai, i.e. initiates in Dionysiac cult, was made on the basis of the finds coming from the area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a herm of the hierophantes M. Marius Trophimos depicted with Dionysiac attributes (IG XII.3 1125) - a marble base carrying a dedication to Dionysos Trieterikos (IG XII.3 1089) - a column with relief sculpture and an inscription referring to <i>heieroi mystai</i> (IG XII.3 1098) <p>On the basis of the finds it seems that the building was used from the mid second century to the early fourth century AD (see Schäfer 2002: 182).</p> <p>For the Hall of the Mystai see Bosanquet 1898; Jaccottet 2003, vol. I: 175-82. For a summary of the archaeological finds see Galli 2014: 448-52; Nielsen 2014: 116-7.</p>
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VII. ORGANIZATION

iii. Members	μόσται, <i>mystai</i> (l. 5)
iv. Officials	<p>ἱεροφάντης, <i>hierophantes</i> (ll. 3-4)</p> <p>For the position of hierophantes in the hierarchy of associations centered around mystic cults see Poland 1909: 395-6.</p>

XII. NOTES

i. Comments	<p>The building ('Hall of Mystai') was most likely connected to cult of Dionysos as demonstrated by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - round base dedicated to Dionysos Trieterikos - iconographic attributes of M. Marius Trophimus attire (ivy leaf, nebris' skin) - Dionysiac features in the mosaic floor <p>The <i>mystai</i> of the inscription might be identified with the <i>heieroi mystai</i> in CAP Inv. 165. The possibility, however, that we are dealing with two groups among Dionysiac initiates should not be ruled out for the following reasons: In CAP Inv. 165 the <i>mystai</i> are designated as <i>heieroi</i>; this might be a conscious strategy to differentiate themselves from other <i>mystai</i>.</p>
ii. Poland concordance	Poland B 219a.
iii. Bibliography	<p>Bosanquet, R.C. (1898), 'Excavations of the British School at Melos. The Hall of the Mystae', <i>BSA</i> 18: 60-80.</p> <p>Galli, M. (2014), 'Les réalités associatives dans les Cyclades à l'époque impériale. Le bâtiment à l'intérieur de l'Agora des Déliens et le "Portique des Mystae" de Mélos', <i>Topoi</i> 19.1: 435-55.</p> <p>Jaccottet, A.-F. (2003), <i>Choisir Dionysos: les associations dionysiaques, ou, La face cachée du dionysisme</i>. Kilchberg.</p> <p>Koumanoudes, S.A. (1862), 'Ἀρχαιολογικαὶ Εἰδήσεις', <i>Philistor</i> 2: 272-6.</p> <p>Mendon, L.G. and Zoumbaki, S.B. (2008), <i>Roman Names in the Cyclades. Part I</i>. (Meletemata 56). Athens.</p> <p>Nielsen, I. (2014), <i>Housing the Chosen. The Architectural Context of Mystery Groups and Religious Associations in the Ancient World</i>. Brepols.</p> <p>Schäfer, A. (2002), 'Raumnutzung und Raumwahrnehmung im Vereinslokal der Iobakchen von Athen', in U. Egelhaaf-Gaiser & A. Schäfer (eds.), <i>Religiöse Vereine in der römischen Antike. Untersuchungen zu Organisation, Ritual und Raumordnung</i>. Tübingen: 173-209.</p> <p>Wrede, H. (1981), <i>Consecratio in formam deorum: vergöttlichte Privatpersonen in der römischen Kaiserzeit</i>. Mainz am Rhein.</p>

XIII. EVALUATION

i. Private association	Probable
Note	<p>The term <i>mystai</i> is not necessarily indicative of a private association, as it can also refer to initiates. However, taking into account the existence of an <i>hierophantes</i> along with the context of the inscription (building with material that pertains to Dionysiac clubs) it seems likely that the <i>mystai</i> under question had a form of organization with internal structure.</p>