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CAPInv. 15: hoi basilistai

I. LOCATION

i. Geographical area	Aegean Islands
ii. Region	Thera
iii. Site	Ancient Thera

II. NAME

i. Full name (original language)	οἱ βασιλισταί (IG XII.3 443, l. 1)
ii. Full name (transliterated)	<i>hoi basilistai</i>

III. DATE

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

ii. Name elements	Cultic:	<i>basilistai</i> : In Ptolemaic Egypt <i>basilistai</i> were usually affiliated to the army and performed sacrifices to the royal house (Fischer-Bovet 2014: 287-89)
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V. SOURCES

i. Source(s)	IG XII.3 443 (iii BC)
Note	Other editions: <i>RICIS</i> no. 202/1202 <i>SGDI</i> no. 4768 <i>SIRIS</i> no. 137
Online Resources	IG XII.3 443
i.a. Source type(s)	Epigraphic source(s)

i.b. Document(s) typology & language/script	Dedication in Greek by Diokles and the <i>basilistai</i> to Sarapis, Isis and Anubis.
i.c. Physical format(s)	<i>thesauros</i> (deposit-box). The treasury consists of two parts. The upper part is inscribed with the dedicatory inscription (see <i>Thera</i> I: 260-261; <i>Thera</i> III: 86).
ii. Source(s) provenance	Found in situ in the sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods.

VI. BUILT AND VISUAL SPACE

i. Archaeological remains	The sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods is an open air sanctuary, cut into the rock, located in the SW part of the ancient city (<i>Thera</i> I: 258; <i>Thera</i> III: 85-8).
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VII. ORGANIZATION

ii. Leadership	Diokles might have been the leader of the <i>basilistai</i> as the dedication is made jointly by him and the <i>basilistai</i> . This suggestion can now be further corroborated by the recently published inscription from Limyra in Lycia (see CAPInv. 1657).
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IX. MEMBERSHIP

ii. Gender	Men
iv. Status	By analogy to associations of <i>basilistai</i> in Egypt and in Limyra in Lycia (CAPInv. 1657) where members had an affiliation to the army (Wörrle 2015), it can be inferred that in Thera the association was likewise composed of members of the garrison stationed there (Hiller von Gaertringen 1903: 97; Launey 1987: 1023-1031; Bagnall 1976: 129).

X. ACTIVITIES

iii. Worship	Diokles and the <i>basilistai</i> dedicated the <i>thesauros</i> to Sarapis, Isis and Anubis.
Deities worshipped	Sarapis, Isis, Anubis

XII. NOTES

i. Comments	<p>Hiller (Thera III: 85) proposed a date for the sanctuary of the Egyptian gods either to the reign of Ptolemy I or Ptolemy II.</p> <p>A date to the reign of Ptolemy I should, however, be ruled out for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ptolemaic control of the Aegean dates to the reign of Ptolemy II. - it was during the reign of Ptolemy II that the ruler cult was introduced. <p>On grounds of the letterforms the inscription dates to the 3rd c. BC. The earliest inscription that attests to the Ptolemaic garrison dates to 265 BC and this could constitute a <i>terminus post quem</i> for the presence of the <i>basilistai</i> in Thera.</p> <p>A date to the second half of the 3rd c. BC on the basis of the letterforms and in light of the newly discovered inscription from Limyra (CAPInv. 1657) seems more likely.</p> <p>The <i>basilistai</i>, as their name indicates, performed cultic activities for the Ptolemies in the sanctuary of the Egyptian gods. In this way, the sanctuary of the Egyptian gods emerges as a focal point of cultic activity, while the <i>basilistai</i> were the agents in fostering the ruler cult and cults strongly connected to the Ptolemaic kingdom. (see also Bommas 2005: 44; Pfeiffer 2008: 401-2)</p> <p>The name Diokles, the leader of the group, is also attested twice in the stele containing the letter of Philometor to Apollonios, the commander of Thera: IG XII.3 327 ll. 114, 160, but this inscription dates to the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometor and it is probably an homonym, rather than the same individual.</p>
ii. Poland concordance	Poland B 224.
iii. Bibliography	<p>Bagnall, R. (1976), <i>The administration of the Ptolemaic possessions outside Egypt</i>. Leiden.</p> <p>Bricault, J. (2005), <i>Recueil des inscriptions concernant les cultes isiaques</i>, vol. 1. Paris: no. 202/1202.</p> <p>Bommas, M. (2005), <i>Heligtum und Mysterium. Griechenland und seine ägyptischen Gottheiten</i>. Mainz a.R.</p> <p>Fischer-Bover, C. (2014), <i>Army and Society in Ptolemaic Egypt</i>. Cambridge.</p> <p>Fraser, P. (1960), 'Two studies on the cult of Sarapis in the Hellenistic World', <i>OpAth</i> 3: 1-54.</p> <p>Hiller von Gaertringen, F. (1903), 'Der Verein der Bakchisten und die Ptolemäerherrschaft in Thera', in <i>Festschrift zu Otto Hirschfelds Sechzigstem Geburtstage</i>. Berlin: 87-99.</p> <p>Launey, M. (1987), <i>Recherches sur les armées hellénistiques</i>. 2 v. Paris.</p> <p>Pfeiffer, S. (2008), 'The God Serapis, his Cult and the Beginnings of the Ruler Cult in Ptolemaic Egypt', in P. McKechnie and Ph. Guillame (eds.), <i>Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his World</i>. (Mnemosyne Suppl. 300). Leiden-Boston: 387-408.</p> <p><i>Thera I</i>: Hiller von Gaertringen, Fr. (1899), <i>Thera: Die Insel Thera im Alterthum und Gegenwart mit Ausschluss der Nekropolen. Volume I</i>: 260-1.</p> <p><i>Thera III</i>: Hiller von Gaertringen, Fr. (1904), <i>Thera: Stadtgeschichte von Thera. Volume III</i>. Berlin.</p>

XIII. EVALUATION

i. Private association	Probable
Note	<p>The group had a collective identity, as indicated by its name (<i>basilistai</i>). The name conveyed the group's loyalty to the Ptolemaic royal house. Groups of <i>basilistai</i> are attested in Ptolemaic Egypt and in territories under Ptolemaic influence/ control. In light of this it is reasonable to suggest that the group in Thera was comprised of members of the Ptolemaic garrison that formed an association devoted to the cult of the sovereigns. The internal structure and durability of this group remains, however, unclear.</p>