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CAPInv. 751: U-MAC-007

I. LOCATION

i. Geographical area	Macedonia
ii. Region	Mygdonia
iii. Site	Thessalonike

II. NAME

i. Association with unknown name	U-MAC-007
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III. DATE

i. Date(s)	iii AD
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V. SOURCES

i. Source(s)	IG X.2.1 65 (iii AD)
Online Resources	IG X.2.1 65
i.a. Source type(s)	Epigraphic source(s)
i.b. Document(s) typology & language/script	A Greek funerary inscription
i.c. Physical format(s)	Funerary altar, with reliefs of a crook on the left side and a caduceus on the right.

VI. BUILT AND VISUAL SPACE

ii. References to buildings/objects	<i>Pace</i> Robert 1934: 812, the terms <i>magaron</i> , <i>neos</i> and <i>spelaion</i> implied by the titles of the association's leader (see VII.ii, below) need not refer to three different sacred places (a crypt, a temple and a cave), but most probably to a single, at least partly underground (as the terms <i>magaron</i> and <i>spelaion</i> imply), location, where the sacrifices were performed.
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VII. ORGANIZATION

ii. Leadership	One of the two dedicants who paid for this funerary altar is ὁ ἀρχιμαγαρεὺς καὶ ἀρχινεωκόρος καὶ πατὴρ σπηλλέου, <i>ho archimagareus kai archineokoros kai pater spelaïou</i> (ll. 3-6), undoubtedly the association's leader. His titles are all related to superintendence of the holy precinct of the god.
iv. Officials	The second dedicant, and apparently the second in command in the association, is its γαλακτηφόρος, <i>galaktephoros</i> (ll. 7-8), and κισταφόρος, <i>kistaphoros</i> (ll. 8-9), who held her second office for 30 years. The fact that the <i>kistaphoros</i> of the association held her office for 30 years means that at least some of the offices were held without fixed terms, for life.

IX. MEMBERSHIP

ii. Gender	Men Women
Note	The two officials, who are also the only members that we know of, were a man and a woman. The presence of a woman among the officials of the association is a strong argument against the interpretation of the association as a cult association of Mithras (see X.iii, below).

X. ACTIVITIES

iii. Worship	The title of the association's leader implies sacrifices performed at some underground location (not necessarily an actual natural cave). The title of the <i>galaktephoros</i> , a <i>hapax legomenon</i> , probably refers to a ceremony where new initiates drank milk (Robert 1974: 804). There is considerable literature on the possible deity worshiped by this association. Robert 1974: 199-205 (with all earlier literature) summarizes and criticizes earlier views that the god was Dionysos or Mithras, and forcefully insists on his convincing earlier view (Robert 1934) that the association worshiped Kybele, Attis and Hermes. Marki 1987: 491 and Pachis 1994: 237 tentatively return to the Mithraic interpretation.
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XII. NOTES

i. Comments	The term σπήλλεον (l. σπήλαιον), <i>spelleon</i> (l. <i>spelaion</i>), "cave", may have been part of the association's name, if one judges by the title πατὴρ σπηλλέου, <i>pater spelleou</i> (ll. 5-6), but this is not certain. The five titles that the two officials bear, along with the fact that, contrary to normal custom, it is not the association that pays for the funerary monument but the officials themselves in a private capacity, seem to point to a very small association with limited resources.
iii. Bibliography	Marki, E. (1987), 'Δύο μισραϊκά ευρήματα από τη Θεσσαλονίκη', in <i>Αμνηστός. Τιμητικός τόμος για τον καθηγητή Μανώλη Ανδρόνικο</i> . Thessaloniki: 1487-93, esp. 491. Pachis, P. (1994), 'The Cult of Mithras in Thessalonica' in I.R. Hinnels (ed.), <i>Studies in Mithraism. Papers Associated with the Mithraic Panel Organised on the Occasion of the XVIth Congress of the International Association for the History of Religion, Rome 1990</i> . Rome: 229-55, esp. 237. Robert, L. (1934), 'Inscription de Thessalonique', in <i>Mélanges Bidez, Annuaire de l'institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales</i> II: 793-812 [OMS II 990-1007]. Robert, L. (1974), 'Les inscriptions de Thessalonique', <i>RPh</i> 48: 180-246 [OMS V 267-333], esp. 199-205.

XIII. EVALUATION

i. Private association

Certain

Note

Judging from the impression of a small number of members and limited resources , and from the fact that the attested officials held office for a number of years this was most probably a small private cultic association.