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CAPInv. 161: to koinon ton propoleon ?

I. LOCATION

i. Geographical area	Aegean Islands
ii. Region	Melos
iii. Site	Melos

II. NAME

i. Full name (original language)	τὸ κοινὸν τῶν προπόλεων ? (IG XII.3 Suppl. 1669, l. 2)
ii. Full name (transliterated)	<i>to koinon ton propoleon ?</i>

III. DATE

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

ii. Name elements	Cultic: προπολεύς: if this is indeed the correct reading, the term may be equated with πρόπολος (<i>LSJ^{s.v.}</i>) which is to be understood as 'servant of a god or a temple or as the one who interprets a god's will to men' (Mendonì and Zoumbaki 2008: 127). If so, then the association's name denotes cultic officials. Topographical: προπόλεος: the plural genitive προπόλεων (if this is indeed the correct reading) may derive from the word <i>propoleos</i> which is to be understood as 'lying before a city' (<i>LSJ^{s.v.}</i>) (Mendonì and Zoumbaki 2008: 127). The phrase <i>pro poleos</i> is often attested in conjunction with Dionysos. The way in which <i>pro poleos</i> is interpreted by scholars varies; it might stand for a topographical feature, i.e. the sanctuary of the worshipped deity was located in the outskirts of the city or it might bear cultic connotations, i.e. the role of the deity as the protector god of the city.
iii. Descriptive terms	κοινόν, <i>koinon</i>

V. SOURCES

i. Source(s) Note	IG XII.3 1669 (after 212 AD?) See also XII.i Two problematic letters, E and M, follow the name of the association in line 2 of the text. Since the inscribed stone cannot be examined for its present whereabouts are unknown, various readings of the problematic letters have been put forward: - Contoléon (1904: 3) reads τὸ κοινὸν τῶν προπόλεω[v?] ἐ[ν] M[ήλωι], <i>to koinon ton propoleo[n] e[n] M[eloi]</i>. This reading is also followed by Poland (1909: 166-7). - The editor of IG XII.3 1669 reads with some reservation τὸ κοινὸν τῶν προπόλεων ἐ[τί]μ[ησεν], <i>to koinon ton propoleon e[ti]m[esen]</i>. - Radin (letter to the editor of IG XII Suppl. p. 93) reads τὸ κοινὸν τῶν προσπόλων εἰερῶν μυστῶν, <i>to koinon ton prospolon e(ieron) m(yston)</i>. A similar reading of the problematic letters E and M is also suggested by Jaccottet (2003: no. 168) who reads τὸ κοινὸν τῶν προπόλεων εἰερῶν μυστῶν, <i>to koinon ton propoleon e(ieron) m(yston)</i>. - The editor of IG XII Suppl. p. 93 (no. 1669) reads τὸ κοινὸν τῶν πρὸ πόλεω[ς] Ἑ[ρ]μαῖστων, <i>to koinon ton pro poleo[s] He[r]m[ai]stōn</i>. - Mendonì & Zoumbaki (2008: 127) provide a different solution to the problematic reading of the two letters, particularly with regard to the second letter 'M' which could stand as the abbreviation of the praenomen M(arcus) preceding the Roman name that follows in line 3. Online Resources IG XII.3 1669
i.a. Source type(s)	Epigraphic source(s)
i.b. Document(s) typology & language/script	Honorary inscription in Greek for Aurelius Homer set up by <i>to koinon ton propoleon</i> . Invocation to Agathe Tyche in the beginning of the inscription (l. 1).
i.c. Physical format(s)	Stele. The present whereabouts of the stele are unknown. This impedes any new reading of the text.
ii. Source(s) provenance	In a private field, among the ruins of a public building decorated with a mosaic.

X. ACTIVITIES

iv. Honours/Other activities	Honorary inscription for Aurelius Homer.
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XII. NOTES

i. Comments	The letters E M in line 2 are tentatively interpreted by Hiller von Gaertringen (IG) as ἐ[τί]μ[ησεν]. Contoléon (1904: 3) reads ἐ[v] M[ήλω], followed by Poland (1909: 166-7, 562 B *219A). Radin (see IG XII Suppl. p. 93) understands the letters as an abbreviation of ε(ἱερῶν) μ(υστῶν), followed by Jaccottet (2003: no. 168). According to Mendoni and Zoumbaki (2008: 127) the letter M may perhaps stand for the abbreviation of the praenomen M(arcus), as this letter is followed by the personal name Aurelius Homer. As the present whereabouts of the inscriptions are unknown, it is not clear how many letters are missing between E and M and whether the N in the word <i>propoleon</i> should be considered a restored letter (Contoleon 1904: 3) or a fully legible letter (IG XII.3 Suppl. 1669). REG (Contoleon) and IG XII.3 Suppl. were both published in 1904. Although Contoleon does not quote the source for the inscription, he may have had direct access to the newspaper Skrip where the inscription was published. The inscription came to Hiller's von Gaertringen attention through H. Schrader who seems to have taken notice of the report in the newspaper. The term <i>propoleon</i> (genitive plural) is otherwise unattested (to my knowledge).
ii. Poland concordance	Poland B *219 A
iii. Bibliography	Contoléon, A.-E. (1904), 'Inscriptions grecques d'Europe', <i>REG</i> 17: 3-4. Jaccottet, A.-F. (2003), <i>Choisir Dionysos: les associations dionysiaques, ou, La face cachée du dionysisme</i>. Kilchberg. Mendon, L.G. and Zoumbaki, S.B. (2008), <i>Roman Names in the Cyclades. Part I</i>. (Meletemata 56). Athens.

XIII. EVALUATION

i. Private association	Certain
Note	The word <i>koinon</i> followed by what seems to be a cultic element is indicative of a private association. However due to the nature of evidence, we know almost next to nothing about its organization and durability.