

Author: STELLA SKAL TSA

CAPInv. 165: **heieroi mystai**

I. LOCATION

| | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| i. Geographical area | Aegean Islands |
| ii. Region | Melos |
| iii. Site | Ancient Melos |

II. NAME

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| i. Full name (original language) | εἰεροὶ μύσται (IG XII.3 1098, l.4 + IG XII Suppl. p. 335) |
| ii. Full name (transliterated) | <i>heieroi mystai</i> |

III. DATE

| | |
|------------|-----------|
| i. Date(s) | e. iii AD |
|------------|-----------|

IV. NAME AND TERMINOLOGY

| | | |
|-------------------|---------|---|
| ii. Name elements | Cultic: | <i>heieroi mystai</i> - <i>mystai</i> : the term normally designates initiates of a mystery cult, in this case of Dionysos. |
|-------------------|---------|---|

V. SOURCES

| | |
|---|--|
| i. Source(s) | IG XII.3 1098 + IG XII Suppl. p. 335 (e. iii AD) |
| Note | See also Jaccottet 2003: no. 166. |
| Online Resources | IG XII.3 1098 |
| i.a. Source type(s) | Epigraphic source(s) |
| i.b. Document(s) typology & language/script | Dedicatory inscription Invocation to the Good Fortune of Melos (ll. 1-2) to protect Alexandros, <i>ktistes</i> of the <i>heieroi mystai</i> . In Greek |

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| i.c. Physical format(s) | Relief carved in a column drum. H. 83 x Diam. 140-146 cm. The relief depicts the Tyche of Melos, holding baby Pluto on her left arm and standing beneath an arch (for the relief see Wolters 1890; Schäfer 2002: 204 D 4). The inscription is carved under the arch, above the statue of Tyche. |
| ii. Source(s) provenance | Found in Traminthia, in the 'Hall of the Mystai'. The editor of IG XII.3 notes that the column drum was found not far away from the ancient theatre. As Bosanquet explains, the site lies ten minutes walk away from the theatre (1898: 61). Koumanoudes reported in 1862 (p. 274) that the column was found in Traminthia. |

VI. BUILT AND VISUAL SPACE

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| i. Archaeological remains | <p>The column was found in the 'Hall of the Mystai' in Traminthia on Melos. 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.</p> <p>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> |
|---------------------------|---|

VII. ORGANIZATION

| | |
|---------------|---|
| i. Founder(s) | κτίστης, <i>ktistes</i> (l. 4) |
| Gender | Male |
| iii. Members | εἰεροὶ μύσται, <i>heieroi mystai</i> (l. 4) |

IX. MEMBERSHIP

| | |
|--------------|--|
| ii. Gender | Men |
| Note | The <i>ktistes</i> is a man. |
| v. Relations | The name of Alexandros is attested in another relief, depicting Athena and carved on a column, found also in the Hall of the Mystai (IG XII.3 1081 ; see also Wolters 1890). Instead of an homonym, Alexandros should be one and the same individual. |

X. ACTIVITIES

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| iii. Worship | Dedication to <i>Agathe Tyche Melou</i> . The personification of Melos is depicted in the relief beneath the inscription. |
| Deities worshipped | <i>Agathe Tyche Melou</i> (Good Fortune of Melos) |

XII. NOTES

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| i. Comments | <p>The <i>heieroi mystai</i> of the inscription might be identified with the <i>mystai</i> in CAP Inv. 171; there they are called <i>mystai</i> and honour the <i>hierophantes</i>, M. Marius Trophimus.</p> <p>The possibility, however, that we are dealing with two groups among Dionysian initiates should not be ruled out for the following reasons:</p> <p>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>. They honour their <i>ktistes</i>, an indication that the group was founded by Alexandros himself. If so, then this groups was formed or reformed after CAP Inv. 171, which dates a few decades earlier and honours its <i>hierophantes</i>.</p> |
| ii. Poland concordance | Poland B *216. |
| 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>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>Wolters, P. (1890), 'Melische Kultstatuen', <i>MDAI(A)</i> 15: 246-61.</p> |

XIII. EVALUATION

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| i. Private association | Certain |
| Note | Although the term <i>mystai</i> is not necessarily indicative of a private association, as it can refer to initiates, the existence of a <i>ktistes</i> along with the context of the inscription (building with material that pertains to Dionysiac clubs) suggests that the group under question was a formally organised group. |