

CAPInv. 87: to koinon ton melanephoron kai hypostolon

I. LOCATION	
i. Geographical area	Aegean Islands
ii. Region	Euboea
iii. Site	Eretria

II. NAME	
i. Full name (original language)	τὸ κοινὸν τῶν μελανηφόρων καὶ ὑποστόλων (IG XII Suppl. 571, ll. 1-3)
ii. Full name (transliterated)	to koinon ton melanephoron kai hypostolon

III. DATE	
i. Date(s)	iii / ii BC

IV. NAME AND TERMINOLOGY		
ii. Name elements	Cultic:	<i>melanephoroi</i>: this word relates to officials in the cult of the Isis, the bearer of black garments, who may have been involved in a mourning song for the death of Osiris (Bricault 2013: 291). The word is also attested in the textual evidence as an epithet of Isis, called Isis Melanephoros (<i>Orphica</i> 42.9). <i>hypostoloi</i>: officials of the cult of the Egyptian Gods (it is only epigraphically attested. In the textual evidence we hear of <i>hierostoloi</i> [Plut., <i>De Iside et Osiride</i>, 352B] and <i>stolistai</i> [Plut., <i>De Iside et Osiride</i>, 366F). Malaise (2007) presented the various interpretations that have been put forward, arguing that the <i>hypostoloi</i> were in all likelihood cult personnel/ officials dressed in white.
iii. Descriptive terms	κοινὸν, <i>koinon</i>	

V. SOURCES

i. Source(s)	IG XII Suppl. 571 (l. iii / e. ii BC)
Note	Edd. pr. Papadakis 1915: 148-50. Other editions: <i>RICIS</i> no. 104/0103 (Bricault 2013: no. 92c). <i>SIRIS</i> no. 75.
Online Resources	IG XII Suppl. 571
i.a. Source type(s)	Epigraphic source(s)
i.b. Document(s) typology & language/script	Honorific inscription in Greek by the koinon for Phantias, son of Iason, who took over the priesthood by birth according to the oracle of the god (ll. 5-8 τὸν ἱερετεύσαντα ἐγ γένους κατὰ τὴν μαντείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, <i>ton hiereteusanta eg genous kata ten manteian tou theou</i>). The letterforms in line 9 are smaller than the remainder of the text.
i.c. Physical format(s)	Marble stele with <i>epikranon</i> (architectural moulding) on top (H. 53 x W. 36 x Th. 5 cm) and a tenon below (for the insertion of the stele into a base). A wreath is incised above the inscription on the upper part of the stele.
ii. Source(s) provenance	Found in the Isieion (sanctuary of Isis and Egyptian deities) in Eretria.

VI. BUILT AND VISUAL SPACE

i. Archaeological remains	The sanctuary of Isis lies north of the Baths. It was founded in the late 4th c. BC. A temple with two columns in antis is located in the centre of a court flanked on the south by a series of auxiliary spaces.
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VII. ORGANIZATION

iv. Officials	Phantias, son of Iason, was priest by birth according to the oracle of the god (ll. 5-8 τὸν ἱερετεύσαντα ἐγ γένους κατὰ τὴν μαντείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, <i>ton hiereteusanta eg genous kata ten manteian tou theou</i>).
v. Other staff	Isidoros was ζῶκορος (l. 9 <i>zakoros</i> , cult attendant). Isidoros may have proposed to the <i>koinon</i> to honour Phantias (Bricault 2005: 47).

X. ACTIVITIES

iii. Worship	The name of the association indicates that the gods worshipped were the Egyptian deities, i.e. Isis and Sarapis. This is also confirmed by the findspot of the stele, i.e. in the Isieion in Eretria. The term <i>tou theou</i> in l. 8 should refer to Sarapis rather than Osiris (Bricault 2005: 47).
iv. Honours/Other activities	The <i>koinon</i> crowned Phantias.

XII. NOTES

i. Comments

Bricault (2005, 47) considers that the *melanephoroï* and the *hypostoloi* constituted two different associations, following Papadakis (1915: 148-50) and Baslez (1976: 192 n. 3). He notes that the absence of the definitive article before *hypostolon* does not necessarily imply that we are dealing with one and the same association. However, it is often the case that an association bears a compound name and thus it should be not ruled out that we are dealing in fact with one and the same association.

Phanias, the priest by birth, is probably the same individual whose name is incised in the interior of a small cup found in the sacntuary (Papadakis 1915: 140).

Isidoros, the *zakoros*, may be identified with Isidoros son of Herakleon, who put up two thank-offerings to Sarapis, Isis and Anubis ([IG XII Suppl. 567](#); [568](#)).

iii. Bibliography

Bruneau, Ph. (1975), *Le sanctuaire et le culte des divinités égyptiennes à Érétrie*, (EPRO 45), Leiden: 73-5 no. 3, 112-4.

Malaise, M. (2007), 'Les hypostoles. Une titre isiaque, sa signification et sa traduction iconographique', *CE* 82: 302-22.

Papadakis, N. (1915), 'Ανασκαφή Ισείου εν Ερέτρια', *ADelt* I: 115-90.

XIII. EVALUATION

i. Private association

Certain

Note

The name of the group points to a private association centred around the cult of the Egyptian deities. The presence of cult officials attests to the internal organization of the group.