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CAPInv. 1148: he synodos ton myston tes megales theas pro poleos thesmophorou Demetros

I. LOCATION

i. Geographical area	Western Asia Minor
ii. Region	Ionia
iii. Site	Smyrna

II. NAME

i. Full name (original language)	ἡ σύνοδος τῶν μυστῶν τῆς μεγάλης θεᾶς πρὸ πόλεως θεσμοφόρου Δήμητρος (I.Smyrna 655, ll. 1-2)
ii. Full name (transliterated)	<i>he synodos ton myston tes megales theas pro poleos thesmophorou Demetros</i>

III. DATE

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

i. Name in other forms	ἡ σύνοδος τῶν τῆς θεοῦ μυστῶν (I.Smyrna 653, l. 1)
ii. Name elements	Cultic: <i>mystai</i> Theophoric: <i>Demeter Thesmophoros pro poleos</i>
iii. Descriptive terms	σύνοδος, <i>synodos</i>
Note	<i>synodos</i> : I.Smyrna 653, l. 1; I.Smyrna 655, l. 1

V. SOURCES

i. Source(s)	I.Smyrna 653 (i - iii AD) I.Smyrna 654 (i - iii AD) I.Smyrna 655 (i - iii AD)
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Note	See also: GRA II 138
Online Resources	The attribution of all three inscriptions to the same association is debated, see below. I.Smyrna 653 I.Smyrna 654 I.Smyrna 655
i.a. Source type(s)	Epigraphic source(s)
i.b. Document(s) typology & language/script	Honorific decrees, greek
i.c. Physical format(s)	I.Smyrna 653 and I.Smyrna 654 were bases of white marble, one of which is lost; I.Smyrna 655 has only survived in a 19th century drawing.
ii. Source(s) provenance	Smyrna

VI. BUILT AND VISUAL SPACE

ii. References to buildings/objects	Statues of the honored persons
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VII. ORGANIZATION

iv. Officials	The <i>stephanephoros</i> honored by the association in I.Smyrna 655 is the civic magistrate. Two <i>tamiai</i> are mentioned in the dating formula of I.Smyrna 653, l. 6; both belonged to the city, as this is a civic decree. Less certain is the case of the female <i>theologoi</i> honoured in I.Smyrna 653 and I.Smyrna 654. In both cases, the statues are erected by the parents (the father in the first case, the mother in the second), but at least in I.Smyrna 653, and maybe also in the less well-preserved I.Smyrna 654, the decision was made by the council, the people, and the <i>synodos</i> of the <i>mystai</i>. The <i>theologoi</i> are praised for having provided everything pertaining to a) general piety towards the goddess and b) the festival of the <i>mystai</i>. What exactly this means must remain insecure. Schipporeit 2013: 441-2 thinks that "in Sitzungen der smyrnäischen Synodos referierten 'Theologen' rituelle Texte und Mitglieder führten rituelle Tänze auf". This would mean to take the <i>theologia</i> as an internal institution, but then why would <i>boule</i> and <i>demos</i> be involved in the honors? The solution may lie in the relationship of this association towards the city; see below.
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X. ACTIVITIES

ii. Meetings and events	A festival of the initiates (ἐορτή τῶν μυστῶν, <i>heorte ton myston</i>) is mentioned in I.Smyrna 653 and I.Smyrna 654.
Deities worshipped	Demeter <i>Thesmophoros</i>

XI. INTERACTION

i. Local interaction	Ties to the city were very strong; see below.
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XII. NOTES

i. Comments	The cult of Demeter <i>Thesmophoros</i> was important in Smyrna at least since the Hellenistic period (Schippareit 2013: 193-8). Her sanctuary "before the city" (if <i>pro poleos</i> really has this sense here) has not yet been found, so the involvement of the <i>synodos</i> of initiates in the civic cult is difficult to grasp. But it is clear from the joint decision taken by the council, the people, and the <i>synodos</i>, that the <i>mystai</i> were not just a private association below the city's radar. It is in fact rather probable that the <i>theologoi</i> were honored as civic magistrates (for parallels from Ephesos, see Harland 2014: 310). The <i>synodos</i> and its festival seem to have been a part of the civic organization of the cult. This argument, however, presupposes that the "<i>synodos</i> of the <i>mystai</i> of the great goddess Demeter <i>Thesmophoros</i> before the city" (the one we see honoring the civic <i>stephanephoros</i>) is in fact identical to the "<i>synodos</i> of the <i>mystai</i> of the goddess" in the <i>theologoi</i>-inscriptions. This is not certain, as there was at least one other <i>synodos</i> of <i>mystai</i> focused on a female goddess, namely Kore (I.Smyrna 726). Ziebarth 1900: 511 and Keil 1908: 553-4, n. 3 opt (without any reason) for connecting the <i>theologoi</i>-inscriptions with the <i>synodos</i> for Kore; Poland 1909: 38 is ready to reject both identifications; Schippareit 2013: 198-9 seems to tend towards the connection with Demeter. The name of the Kore group was "<i>synodos</i> of the <i>mystai kai enbatai</i> in Smyrna". If the <i>theologoi</i>-inscriptions were connected with this group, we would have to assume that important elements that defined the association's structure had been left out. If we connect them with the Demeter group, all we have to assume is that the name of the goddess was shortened - due to spatial reasons, of course, but also because it was clear to any reader that "the goddess" was Demeter <i>Thesmophoros</i> before the city. In addition, we do not hear of any official connections of the Kore group, while the Demeter group honored a <i>stephanephoros</i>. These arguments cannot lead to a definite decision, but make the identification assumed here the most likely.
ii. Poland concordance	Poland B 353 (I.Smyrna 655) Poland B 354a (I.Smyrna 653) Poland B 354*b (I.Smyrna 654)
iii. Bibliography	Harland, P.A. (2014), <i>Greco-Roman Associations: Texts, Translations, and Commentaries. II. North Coast of the Black Sea, Asia Minor</i>. Berlin, Boston. 308-11. Keil, J. (1908), 'Über kleinasiatische Grabinschriften', <i>Hermes</i> 43: 522-77. Poland, F. (1909), <i>Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens</i>. Leipzig. Schippareit, S.T. (2013), <i>Kulte und Heiligtümer der Demeter und Kore in Ionien</i>. Istanbul. Ziebarth, E. (1900), 'Zu den griechischen Vereinsinschriften', <i>RhM</i> 55: 501-19.

XIII. EVALUATION

i. Private association Note	Possible The private character of this association may be doubted; see above.
ii. Historical authenticity	Certain