

CAPInv. 1476: **ha** (l. **he**) **synodos ton geronton**

I. LOCATION

i. Geographical area	Peloponnese with Adjacent Islands
ii. Region	Arkadia
iii. Site	Tegea

II. NAME

i. Full name (original language)	ἁ (l. ἡ) σύνοδος τῶν γερόντων (IG V.2 22, l. 6)
ii. Full name (transliterated)	<i>ha</i> (l. <i>he</i>) <i>synodos ton geronton</i>

III. DATE

i. Date(s)	ii - i BC
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IV. NAME AND TERMINOLOGY

ii. Name elements	Other: <i>gerontes</i> (elders): age class
iii. Descriptive terms	σύνοδος, <i>synodos</i>
Note	<i>synodos</i> : IG V.2 22, ll. 4, 6, 9

V. SOURCES

i. Source(s)	IG V.2 22 (ii - i BC)
Online Resources	IG V.2 22
i.a. Source type(s)	Epigraphic source(s)
i.b. Document(s) typology & language/script	Fragmentary honorary decree in Greek of the <i>synodos</i> of the elders for Aisagenes, son of Bathykles (ll. 7, 10).

ii. Source(s) provenanceTegea, IG: "olim in vico Βερζοβᾶ δήμου Κορυθίου" (*Berzoba demou Korythiou*).**IX. MEMBERSHIP****ii. Gender**

Men

Note

If we are to infer anything from the name of the group, its members were male.

iii. Age

Elders

Note

If we are to infer anything from the name of the group, its members were elders.

X. ACTIVITIES**ii. Meetings and events**The announcement of the honours voted by the *synodos* for Aisagenes, son of Bathykles, is planned to take place at the contest of Aleaia.**iv. Honours/Other activities**

As the honorary decree in question shows, the *synodos* used to honour its benefactors, ὅπως οὖν φανερά ηἱ ἡ σύνοδος ἀμῶν [τιμῶσ]α τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας ὡς πρέπον, *hopos syn phanera ei ha synodos hamon [timos]a tous agathous andras hos prepon* (ll. 4-5). Eisigenes is honoured with a golden crown and a bronze statue.

XI. INTERACTION**i. Local interaction**The fact that the announcement of the honours voted by the *synodos* for its benefactor, takes place at the festival of Aleaia, shows its impact on local society.**XII. NOTES**

i. Comments

There are more groups attested as *gerontes* or *gerousiai* in several inscriptions from the Peloponnese, Argos, Messenia, whilst an inscription of uncertain origin published under Lakonian inscriptions perhaps also comes from Messenia. All these texts are dated to the Roman period. The groups from Messene, Korone and that in the inscription of uncertain origin, are defined by the adjective “sacred”, *ἱερὰ γερονσία*, *hiera gerousia*, or *ἱεροὶ γέροντες*, *hieroi gerontes*.

The attestations in question are the following:

MESSENEIA

I. Korone

The inscription from Korone (modern Petalidi) refers to ἡ *ἱερὰ γερονσία*, *he hiera gerousia* (Makres 2011: 70-8).

II. Messene

In Messenian inscriptions a group of sacred *gerontes* appears in several versions of the full title which is οἱ τῶν Οὐπηςίας ἱεροὶ γέροντες οἱ ἀπὸ Κρεσφόντα, *hoi as Oupesias hieroi gerontes hoi apo Kresphonta*:

1) Orlandos 1965: 116-20 (SEG 23: 208), revisited by Deshours 2004: 119-21 who regards the *gerontes* as a “Kultverein civique” (SEG 54: 466; SEG 55: 510) (AD 42): οἱ τῶν Οὐπηςίας, *hoi as Oupesias*.

2) SEG 23: 215; SEG 55: 517 (2nd/3rd c. AD): οἱ τῶν Οὐπηςίας ἱεροὶ γέροντες οἱ ἀπὸ Κρεσφόντα, *hoi tas Oupesias hieroi gerontes hoi apo Kresphonta*.

3) SEG 23: 216; SEG 55: 518 (2nd/3rd c. AD): [οἱ τῶν] Οὐπηςίας ἱεροὶ γέροντες, [*hoi tas*] *Oupesias hieroi gerontes*.

4) SEG 23: 217 (2nd/3rd c. AD): [οἱ ἱεροὶ] γέροντες οἱ ἀπὸ Κρεσφόντα, [*hoi hieroi*] *gerontes* *hoi apo Kresphonta*.

5) Themelis 1994: 95-6, no. 3 (SEG 45: 296) (2nd/3rd c. AD): [τῶν] Οὐπηςίας, [*tas Oupesias*], further the members of the group are called σύνεδροι, *synedroi*.

III. Stenylkaros

An honorific inscription found in Stenylkaros, a town at the north of Messene (between the modern towns of Meligala and Diavolitsi), near the Karneasion, refers to the honorand as τὸν ἀστέρα τῆς ἱερᾶς βουλῆς, *ton astera tes hieras boules*: Valmin 1928-1929: 108-55 (SEG 11: 982) (1st/2nd c. AD). Deshours 2004: 119 (SEG 54: 468) suggests that the *hiera boule* is to be identified with the *gerousia* of the Oupesia of Messene.

IV. The inscription published under the Lakonian texts (IG V.1 1346) is dated to AD 163 and refers to ἡ *ἱερὰ <γερον>σία*, *he hiera <gerou>sia*, which is corrected by J. et L. Robert, *BE* 1966: no. 202 (p. 379) to “Ἱέρια Οὐπῆσια”, namely in accordance to the evidence from Messene.

Oupesia is an epithet of Artemis used in Messene together with the evocations Ortheia and Phosphoros, cf. *Etymologicum Magnum*, s.v. Οὐπς: ...παρὰ τὸ ὀπίσθαι τὰς τικτούσας, *para to opizesthai tas tiktousas*... For this cult see Themelis 1994: 101-122; Piolot 2005: 113-140.

Little is known about the internal organization of the *gerontes* of Oupesia in Messene. The honorific decree of the year AD 42 for Mnasistratos, son Philoxenidas (see II. Messene. 1 above), shows that 75 or 76 (according to G. Daux’s emendation (1967: 477-478) members of the *collegium* voted univocally for the honours, whilst two of its members are called ἐπιμεληταὶ τῶν Οὐπηςίας, *epimeletai tas Oupesias*. The first editor, Orlandos (1965), identifies the *epimeletai* with the whole group of the *gerontes* of Oupesia. In a similar sense, the l. 3 of the fragmentary decree (δόγμα, *dogma*), see II. Messene. 5 above and SEG 45: 296) is according to P. Themelis to be restored as ἐλδόντων ἐπὶ τὸν [γραμματεῖα τὸν ἐπιμελητὴν τῶν Οὐπηςίας, *elthontan epi ton [grammatea ton epimeletan tas Oupesias*. The word σύνεδροι, *synedroi*, of the latter decree (l. 7 and 9) refers perhaps to the members of the group of *gerontes* of Oupesia. This body is usually identified with *hoi synedroi tes Oupesias* attested in an inscription from Thuria (SEG 11: 972; Makres 2011) dates it to the Roman Imperial period rejecting Valmin’s dating to the 2nd c. BC): ll. 8-9: τοὺς συνέδρους πάντας πλὴν τὸν τῆς Οὐπηςίας, *tous synedrous pantas plan ton tes Oupisias*.

The inscription from Korone (see above) mentions a πρέσβιστος, *presbistos* (perhaps also to be recognized in IG V.1 1398, l. 15: αἰωνίου πρεσβίστου, *aioniou presbistou*), a term which, according to A. Makres, is to be understood as a synonym of *gerousiastes*, *presbyteros* etc. *Gerontes* attested in a fragmentary decree from Kalamae (IG V.1 1370) are perhaps also to be identified as members of a sacred *gerousia*.

ARGOS

The *gerousia* in Roman Argos does not bear the title “hiera” but claims a respectable origin, ἡ ἀπὸ Δαναοῦ καὶ Ὑπερμήστρας καὶ Λυγκέος, *he apo Danaou kai Hypermestras kai Lygkeos*:

1) IG IV 579: ἱέροντες οἱ ἀπὸ Δαναοῦ, *gerontes hoi apo Danaou*.

2) Charneux 1956: 612: γερονσία ἡ ἀπὸ Δαναοῦ καὶ Ὑπερμήστρας καὶ Λυγκέος, *gerousia he apo Danaou kai Hypermestras kai Lygkeos*.

3) SEG 16: 259; Oliver 1958: 481 no. 3: Ἀργείων γέρονσι τοῖς ἀπὸ Δαναοῦ καὶ Ὑπερμήστρας, *Argeion gerousi tois apo Danaou kai Hypermestras*.

The *gerousia* in Argos is not connected with a certain cult. In the letter addressed by Agrippa to the body (the aforementioned no. 3) it is called Ἀργείων γέροντες, *Argeion gerontes* (Ἀργείων γέρονσι τοῖς ἀπὸ Δαναοῦ καὶ Ὑπερμήστρας, *Argeion gerousi tois apo Danaou kai Hypermestras*). Further it is called σύστημα, *systema*, whilst the reference to their παλαιὸν ἀξίωμα, *palaion axioma*, shows that the group was not a new formation.

Some of the Peloponnesian *gerousiai* are thus defined by the ethnic name of their polis (e.g. Ἀργείων γέρονσι, *Argeion gerousi*) and others are defined by the epithet “sacred” or by its connection with a certain cult. Their old history is advertised by the fact that they claim an origin from legendary ancestors. It is, however, unknown, when these bodies were founded and it is not always clear, whether the Peloponnesian *gerousiai* had a pre-Roman origin. Cf. Spawforth 2012: 176: “As for the origins of the Messenian body, since the little Messenian city of Thuria had its own corps ‘of Upesia’ in the second century bc, we can be sure that the equivalent body in the Messenian ‘capital’ already existed then”. However, as aforementioned, it is disputed, whether the inscription from Thuria is to be dated to the 2nd c. BC.

The institution of *gerousia* in the Roman period has been studied by Van Rossum 1988; Giannakopoulos 2008; Bauer 2012. Roman *gerousiai* do not seem to have a clear political role despite the fact that they often appear side by side with political institutions or they often seem to have an influence on political life.

The type of sacred *gerousia* has been studied by Oliver 1941, who suggested that these bodies were involved in certain aspects – especially the financial support – of traditional cults and the imperial cult. This view remained rather isolated, as the majority of scholars incline to recognize a social character of *gerousiae* centered on the gymnasium, which developed according to Giannakopoulos 2008: 569 “a particular identity and organization which resulted in the creation of a distinctive institutional body”. However, none of the aforementioned important studies has dealt in depth with the *gerousiai* of the Peloponnese. The inscriptions from Messenia, which mention a sacred *gerousia*, have been revisited by Makres 2011: 70-8, who discerns these bodies from political *gerousiai* and stresses their connection to a concrete cult.

Spawforth 2012: 174 sees a Roman, more concretely Augustan, influence in the diffusion of *gerousiai*, irrespectively of their functions in each case: “It seems as if the Augustan regime brought a positive evaluation of the political role of old men, based on ingrained Roman attitudes, to the task of identifying its most natural supporters in the Greek city and for this reason singled out, not so much the age-class of the old men tout court, but the elite groups within them constituted as *gerousiai*, making use of bodies of elders already in existence, as at Ephesus, and, where they did not exist already or, as at Argos, had in some way lapsed, encouraged their formation or their resurgence”.

Every single case needs a thorough analysis in order to draw conclusions about its nature, functions and origins. In any case, the close connection of the Peloponnesian *gerousiai* of the Roman period to political institutions, their unclear origin and the fact that they seem to play a public role and even to have an impact on the political sphere, prevent us from classifying them as “private” associations. At least the *gerontes* of the Oupesia are classified as a body of a civic public nature by scholars who have studied it. Themelis 1994: 115 defines οἱ τῶν Οὐπηςίας ἱεροὶ γέροντες οἱ ἀπὸ Κρεσφόντα, *hoi tas Oupesias hieroi gerontes hoi apo Kresphonta*, as “state officials”. Deshours 2004 also regards the *gerontes* *tes Oupesias* as a “Kultverein civique”.

ii. Poland concordance	Poland Γ *2
iii. Bibliography	<p>Bauer, E. (2012), <i>Gerusien in den Poleis Kleinasiens in hellenistischer Zeit und der römischen Kaiserzeit. Die Beispiele Ephesos, Pamphylien und Pisidien, Aphrodisias und Iasos</i>. München.</p> <p>Charneux, P. (1956), 'Inscriptions d'Argos', <i>BCH</i> 80: 598-618 esp. 612.</p> <p>Daux, G. (1967), 'Notes de lecture', <i>BCH</i> 91.2: 469-82.</p> <p>Deshours, N. (2004), 'Cultes de Déméter, d' Artémis Ortheia et culte impérial à Messène (Ier s. av. notre ère-Ier s. de notre ère)', <i>ZPE</i> 146: 115-27 esp. 119-21.</p> <p>Giannakopoulos, N. (2008), <i>Ο Θεσμός της Γερουσίας των ελληνικών πόλεων κατά τους Ρωμαϊκούς Χρόνους, Οργάνωση και Λειτουργίες</i>. Thessaloniki.</p> <p>Makres, A. (2011), 'The sacred gerousia in the Peloponnese: a new epigraphical document from ancient Korone', in Palagia O and Goette H.R. (eds), <i>Sailing to Classical Greece, Papers on Greek art, archaeology and epigraphy presented to Petros Themelis</i>. Oxford: 70-8.</p> <p>Oliver, J.H. (1941), 'The sacred gerusia', <i>Hesperia</i> Suppl. 6. Baltimore.</p> <p>Oliver, J.H. (1956), 'Gerusiae and Augustales', <i>Historia</i> 7: 472-96.</p> <p>Oriandos, A.K. (1965), 'Ἄνo επιγραφὰ ἐκ Μεσσήνης', <i>AEph</i>: 110-21, esp. 116-20.</p> <p>Piolot, L. (2005), 'Nom d' une Artémis! A propos de l' Artémis Phosphoros de Messene (Pausanias, IV, 31, 10)', <i>Kernos</i> 18: 113-40.</p> <p>Spawforth, A.J.S. (2012), <i>Greece and the Augustan cultural revolution. Greek culture in the Roman world</i>. Cambridge, New York: 174.</p> <p>Themelis, P. (1994), 'Artemis Ortheia at Messene. The epigraphical and archaeological evidence', in R. Hägg (ed.), <i>Ancient Greek cult practice from the epigraphical evidence, Proceedings of the second international seminar on ancient Greek cult organized by the Swedish Institute at Athens, 22-24 November 1991</i>. Stockholm: 101-22.</p> <p>Valmin, N. (1928-1929), 'Inscriptions de la Messénie', <i>Bull. Soc. des Lettres de Lund</i>: 108-55.</p> <p>Van Rossum, J. (1988), <i>De Gerousia in de Griekse Steden van het Romeinse Rijk</i>. Leiden.</p>

XIII. EVALUATION

i. Private association	Possible
Note	<p>It is not clear, whether we have to do with a private association or with a body of a public nature, such as the political <i>gerousiai</i> of certain Greek poleis, or with a group connected with a certain cult, but with an impact on political sphere, as other Peloponnesian cases presented in XII.i above. Their planning to announce the honours to their benefactor publicly at Aleaia, a prominent festival of the polis, shows -if not their public nature- their collaboration with authorities of the town. However, the fragmentary text does not allow us to exclude the possibility that they formed a private association.</p>