

CAPInv. 515: asianon thiasos

I. LOCATION

i. Geographical area	Macedonia
ii. Region	Mygdonia
iii. Site	Lete

II. NAME

i. Full name (original language)	Ἀσιανῶν θίασος (SEG 35: 751, l. 5)
ii. Full name (transliterated)	<i>asianon thiasos</i>

III. DATE

i. Date(s)	187 / 188 (?) AD
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IV. NAME AND TERMINOLOGY

ii. Name elements	Ethnic:	<i>asianoi</i> : There are two possible interpretations of the term Asianoi, attested in various Dionysiac <i>thiasoi</i> in the Northern Balkans and the Propontis. According to Nigdelis 2006: 138 no. 116 (with earlier literature), the <i>Asianoi</i> were initiates of Dionysos at least initially originating from Asia Minor. According to Jaccottet 2003: II 108-9 this Asian origin may have been fictitious and with religious connotations, a means to distinguish these groups of initiates from other <i>thiasoi</i> of the god.
iii. Descriptive terms	θίασος, <i>thiasos</i>	
Note	<i>thiasos</i> : SEG 35: 751, l. 5.	

V. SOURCES

i. Source(s)	SEG 35: 751 (AD 187/8)
Note	See also: Jaccottet II 23
Online Resources	SEG 35: 751
i.a. Source type(s)	Epigraphic source(s)
i.b. Document(s) typology & language/script	Funerary epigram in Greek for Fabis.
i.c. Physical format(s)	Early Hellenistic grave stele, reused for a funerary epigram in the second century AD.
ii. Source(s) provenance	Found at the village of Lagina, very close to ancient Lete. Nigdelis 2006: 139-40 points out that we cannot exclude the possibility that the stele was transferred to Lagina by nearby Thessaloniki, where the other two inscriptions testifying to <i>thiasoi</i> of Asianoi were found.

VII. ORGANIZATION

iii. Members	The initiates of the <i>thiasos</i> are called μύσται, <i>mystai</i> (σεμνοτάτων μυστῶν, <i>semnotaton myston</i> , l. 2)
iv. Officials	According to one of the many interpretations of the epigram (M. B. Hatzopoulos in <i>BE</i> 1987: no. 684; for other interpretations see XII.i: Comments, below), the ἱεραὶ εὐιάδες, <i>hierai euiades</i> (l. 4) were priestesses of Bakchos.

XI. INTERACTION

ii. Interaction abroad	<i>Thiasoi</i> of Asianoi are attested throughout the Northern Balkans and at Perinthos (see Jaccottet 2003: II 108-9), and twice more in Macedonia (both at Thessalonike: CAPInv. 722 and CAPInv. 723). There is no reason to assume, however, that there was contact between these groups.
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XII. NOTES

i. Comments	Jaccottet II 23 wonders if the term <i>thiasos</i> is not used here poetically, in lieu of another term, such as <i>bakcheion</i>, but the close parallel in prose from Thessalonike (CAPInv. 722: Ἀσιανῶν ὁ θῆσος, <i>Asianon ho thiasos</i>) makes clear that this was the actual descriptive term for this association. The date was originally engraved as θτ' (Actian era, AD 287/8) and then corrected to θισ' (AD 187/8); see <i>BE</i> 1987: no. 684. Jaccottet II 23 maintains the reading and interpretation of the first editor (Rhomiopoulou 1981: 301-2 no. 6): θτ', i.e. 319 according to the provincial (and not the Actian) era, i.e. AD 171/2. Finally, Nigdelis 2006: 140 no. 120 claims that the date should be read as θπσ', i.e. AD 289/2, that the era is the provincial one, and that the inscription should thus be dated to AD 141/2. There are several different interpretations of this epigram depending on the interpretation of προφυγών, <i>prophygon</i> and ἱεραὶ εὐιάδες, <i>hierai euiades</i> (l. 4): a) Fabis left the holy rituals of the venerable initiates and went to Hades (rightly rejected by Voutiras 1984: 47). b) Fabis, one of the venerable initiates, left the holy vines of Dionysos for the Netherworld (Sijpesteijn 1983). c) Fabis, one of the venerable initiates, escaped the demonic Maenads and took refuge in Hades (Voutiras 1984: 48-50). d) Fabis, one of the venerable initiates, took refuge among the holy vines of Hades (Jaccottet II 23). e) Fabis, one of the venerable initiates, left the company of the holy priestesses of Bacchus and went to Hades (M. B. Hatzopoulos, <i>BE</i> 1987: no. 684).
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iii. Bibliography

- Jaccottet, A.F. (2003), *Choisir Dionysos. Les associations dionysiaques ou la face cachée du dionysisme*, Zürich.
- Nigdelis, P.M. (2006), *Επιγραφικά Θεσσαλονίκεια. Συμβολή στην πολιτική και κοινωνική ιστορία της αρχαίας Θεσσαλονίκης*, Thessaloniki: 138-42.
- Rhomiopoulou, K. (1981), 'New Inscriptions in the Archaeological Museum, Thessaloniki' in H.J. Dell (ed.), *Ancient Macedonian Studies in Honor of Charles F. Edson*, Thessaloniki: 299-305, esp. 301-2 no. 6.
- Sijpesteijn, P.J. (1983), 'Remarks on Some Recently Published Inscriptions', *ZPE* 52: 288.
- Voutiras, E. (1984), 'Παρατηρήσεις σε τρία επιγράμματα', *Ἑλληνικά* 35: 38-50, esp. 45-50.

XIII. EVALUATION

i. Private association

Certain

Note

In the context of Dionysiac cults distinguishing between *thiasos* denoting the sum total of the god's devotees in a particular city and *thiasos* as a private cultic association is often strenuous. In this case, however, the fact that the group's name has a further mark of distinction (*thiasos* of the *Asianoï*) ensures that we are dealing with the latter case.