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CAPInv. 716: U-MAC-005

I. LOCATION

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

II. NAME

i. Association with unknown name	U-MAC-005
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III. DATE

i. Date(s)	i - s. ii AD
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V. SOURCES

i. Source(s)	SEG 30: 622 (i AD) IG X.2.1 244 (s. ii AD)
Note	See also: SEG 30: 622: Jaccottet II no. 19; GRA I 76; RICIS 113/0537 IG X.2.1 244: RICIS 113/0561
Online Resources	SEG 30: 622 (IG X.2.1 259 as corrected by Daux 1973) and AGRW ID 2388 IG X.2.1 244 and AGRW ID 15536
i.a. Source type(s)	Epigraphic source(s)
i.b. Document(s) typology & language/script	SEG 30: 622 is a dedication and IG X.2.1 244 a later catalogue of members. Both texts are in Greek.
i.c. Physical format(s)	Stele (SEG 30: 622) and plaque (IG X.2.1 244).
ii. Source(s) provenance	Both inscribed monuments were found at the Serapeum of Thessalonike.

VII. ORGANIZATION

i. Founder(s)	The clause specifying that the triannual banquets for the ancestors should be held “according to tradition” (SEG 30: 622, l. 9: κατὰ τὸ παραδεδομένον, <i>kata to paradedomenon</i>) means that the association existed before the foundation of the endowment, and therefore Ioulios Besartes was not the founder of the association itself.
ii. Leadership	The association is presumably led by its priest (SEG 30: 622, col. I ll. 21-22). For the priest mentioned in SEG 30: 622, ll. 32-33, see VII.iv.
iii. Members	The members of the association are repeatedly termed μύσται, <i>mystai</i> , “initiates” (SEG 30: 622, ll. 5, 12, 15, 18).
iv. Officials	A ἱερεὺς, <i>hiereus</i> , ‘priest’ (SEG 30: 622, col. I ll. 21-22) is the only official named in the earlier catalogue of members; <i>pace</i> Daux 1973: 480, the priest mentioned in SEG 30: 622, ll. 31-32 was not a priest of the association, but a priest of the sanctuary where the stele set up, whose authorisation was necessary for the erection of the dedication and whose name is recorded here for dating purposes.
v. Other staff	In IG X.2.1 244, l. 16, one of the members is called βησάρτης, <i>besartes</i>, which most probably means “he who carries Bes” (Daux 1973: 487 n. 1), Bes being one of the deities forming the hybrid god worshiped by the association. In the same catalogue, two other liturgical terms are attested: a βωοφόρος, <i>boophoros</i> (l. 4), and an ἀρχινάκορος, <i>archinakoros</i> (l. 7), who may, however, be the superintendent of the entire sanctuary and not necessarily of the sacred precinct of Zeus Dionysos Gongylos.
viii. Obligations	One of the terms of the endowment set out in SEG 30: 622 (see below, under VIII.ii-iv: Realty, Income and Endowments) is that that present and future members have to swear to uphold all traditional ceremonial aspects of the cult (ll. 11-14).

VIII. PROPERTY AND POSSESSIONS

ii. Realty	An estate of five <i>plethra</i> near the village of Perdylia in the chora of Thessalonike (Daux 1980: 555-6) was apparently bought by Ioulios Besartes (who offered a third of the sum needed) and the other undersigned initiates (who collectively offered two thirds of the sum needed) and then dedicated to the god. The annual revenue from the estate was used for the cult’s various ceremonies, especially the triannual “bread banquets” in honour of the ancestors. See Daux 1973: 482-3. The ownership of the estate apparently remained in the hands of the association.
iii. Income	The revenue of the land in Perdylia dedicated by Ioulios Besartes and the other members (SEG 30: 622, ll. 5-7 and 18-19 respectively) was a steady source of income for the association. Daux 1973: 483 is puzzled by the fact that, contrary to the dedication by Ioulios Besartes, the second part of the dedication (SEG 30: 622, ll. 14-20) does not specify to what end the revenue of the two thirds of the estate will be used. Given, however, that a separate oath to uphold the traditional rituals is also mentioned in that part of the text (ll. 19-20), we may safely assume that this part of the revenue would also be used for the needs of the rituals.
iv. Endowments	On the endowment of Ioulios Besartes and the other initiates, see above, VII.viii: Obligations, VIII.ii-iii: Realty and Income.

IX. MEMBERSHIP

i. Number	The earlier catalogue (SEG 30: 622) records the names of 18 members, including the primary dedicant, Ioulios Besartes, but excluding the priest (on whom see VII.iv: Officials, above). The later catalogue (IG X.2.1 244) records the names of more than 35 members.
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ii. Gender	Men Women
Note	All 18 members recorded in the earlier member list (SEG 30: 622) are men. In the later catalogue (IG X.2.1 244) the vast majority of the more than 35 members are again men, but two women (bearing different <i>nomina</i> but the same <i>cognomen</i>) are also recorded.
iv. Status	Thirteen out of the eighteen members of the earlier catalogue (SEG 30: 622) bear Roman names, but the presence of <i>cognomina</i> commonly associated with slaves (e.g. Felix, Eros) should not necessarily lead us to suppose a relatively high social status. The fact that even in the late-second-century catalogue (IG X.2.1 244) at least 4 members do not carry Roman names also points to a not particularly elevated social standing. The fact that the dates of at least two of the three triannual banquets in honour of the members' dead ancestors (SEG 30: 622, ll. 10-11) coincide with well-known Roman festivals in honour of the dead (see Nigdelis 2010: 30-3) seems to suggest that, at least at some initial point, the members of the association had a connection with the Italian community of Thessalonike. Kubínska 2001 identifies Klaudios Lykos of IG X.2.1 244, col. I, l. 11 with Tiberios Klaudios Lykos, known from several other inscriptions from Thessaloniki as a councillor and the owner of a funerary enclosure (IG X.2.1 461; 484; 608-609) and develops various rather hypothetical theories on the association of Zeus Dionysos Gongylos (see SEG 51: 885 and EBGR 2001: no. 104). Not even the identification on which these theories are founded is entirely secure: Claudius is a common imperial <i>nomen</i> and Lykos hardly a rare name, in Thessalonike or elsewhere (another member of the association of Zeus Dionysos Gongylos, IG X.2.1 244, col. II, l. 6, is also named Lykos).

X. ACTIVITIES

iii. Worship	Three bread banquets (ἄρτου ἐστίασις, <i>artou estiasis</i>) in honour of the θρέψαντες, <i>threpsantes</i>, i.e. the dead ancestors, were held annually (SEG 30: 622, ll. 7-10). Moreover, the members benefiting from the endowment, swear to uphold ritual traditions by the god, the mysteries (ll. 12: ὄργια, <i>orgia</i>), and the "midnight bread ceremony" (ll. 13: τὸ μεσανύκτιον ἄρτου, <i>to mesanyktion artou</i>).
Deities worshipped	Zeus Dionysos Gongylos, most probably a hybrid of Serapis and Bes (see Nigdelis 2010: 15-6 with earlier literature).

XII. NOTES

i. Comments	The attribution of the catalogue IG X.2.1 244 to the association of Zeus Dionysos Gongylos is assured by the word βησάρτης, <i>besartes</i> , in l. 16, a religious office here, but used as a personal name (the dedicant's <i>cognomen</i>) in SEG 30: 622.
iii. Bibliography	Daux, G. (1972), 'Trois inscriptions de la Grèce du Nord', <i>CRAI</i> 1972: 478-93, esp. 478-87. Daux, G. (1980), 'Notes de lecture', <i>BCH</i> 104: 551-64, esp. 555-6. Jaccottet, A.-F. (2003), <i>Choisir Dionysos. Les associations dionysiaques ou la face cachée du dionysisme</i>, Zürich: II no 19. Kubínska, J. (2001), 'Tiberius Claudius Lycus de Thessalonique et son thiase', <i>ZPE</i> 137: 153-60. Nigdelis, P.M. (2010), 'Voluntary Associations in Roman Thessalonike: in Search of Identity and Support in a Cosmopolitan Society', in L. Nasrallah, Ch. Bakirtzis and S. Friesen (eds.), <i>From Roman to Early Christian Thessalonike: Studies in Religion and Archaeology</i>, Cambridge Mass., London: 13-47, esp. 15-6 and 30-3.

XIII. EVALUATION

i. Private association	Certain
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Note

The association of Zeus Dionysos Gongylos is one of the earliest associations of Thessalonike, exemplifying the complex relationship between the 'core' cult of the Egyptian Gods and the related associative cults under the auspices of the sanctuary.