

Author: ALEXANDRU AVRAM

CAPInv. 1218: [he] speira Dionysiaston presbyteron

I. LOCATION

i. Geographical area	Thrace
ii. Region	Euxine Coast
iii. Site	Istros

II. NAME

i. Full name (original language)	[ή] σπεῖρα Διονυσιαστῶν πρεσβυτέρων (I.Histriae 99, ll. 8-9; 199, ll. 5-6, restored).
ii. Full name (transliterated)	[he] speira Dionysiaston presbyteron

III. DATE

i. Date(s)	m. ii - e. iii AD
------------	-------------------

IV. NAME AND TERMINOLOGY

i. Name in other forms	ὕμνοδοί, <i>hymnodoi</i> (I.Histriae 57, l. 31, and Suceveanu 2007: 149 no. 6.) ὕμνοδοι πρεσβύτε[ροι οἱ πε]ρὶ τὸν μέγαν θεὸν Διόνυσον, <i>hymnodoi presbyte[roi hoi pe]ri ton megan theon Dionyson</i> (I.Histriae 100, ll. 3-4.) ὕμνοδοι πρεσβύτεροι περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον, <i>hymnodoi presbyteroi peri ton Dionyson</i> (I.Histriae 167, ll. 6-8, and, through restoration, I.Histriae 208 + 221, two fragments which might join)
ii. Name elements	Theophoric: Dionysos (god) Other: <i>presbyteroi, hymnodoi</i>

V. SOURCES

<p>i. Source(s)</p> <p>Online Resources</p>	<p>I.Histriae 57, l. 31 (s. ii AD). I.Histriae 98 (l. ii - e. iii AD). I.Histriae 99 (AD 218/9). I.Histriae 100 (AD 222-224). I.Histriae 167 (AD 161-169). I.Histriae 196 (m. ii AD). I.Histriae 199 (l. ii - e. iii AD). I.Histriae 207 (m. ii AD). I.Histriae 208 (m. ii AD). I.Histriae 221 (m. ii AD). I.Histriae 412 (s. ii - e. iii AD). Suceveanu 2007: 149 no. 6 (l. ii - e. iii AD).</p> <p>I.Histriae 57 and AGRW ID 16139 I.Histriae 98 I.Histriae 99 and AGRW ID 14391 I.Histriae 100 and AGRW ID 14393 I.Histriae 167 and AGRW ID 3240 I.Histriae 196 I.Histriae 199 and AGRW ID 14400 I.Histriae 207 I.Histriae 208 I.Histriae 221 I.Histriae 412</p>
<p>i.a. Source type(s)</p>	<p>Epigraphic source(s)</p>
<p>i.b. Document(s) typology & language/script</p>	<p>All the documents are in Greek. I.Histriae 57: honorary decree for Aba Hekataiou, a benefactress of citizens and of several associations. I.Histriae 98: fragment of a vessel offered as prize to the <i>ιερονεϊκαι</i>, <i>hieroneikai</i>. I.Histriae 99: dedication of the <i>σπειρα Διονυσιαστῶν πρεσβυτέρων</i>, <i>speira Dionysiastōn presbyterōn</i> on behalf of emperor Elagabalus, Iulia Maesa, two <i>praefecti praetorio</i>, the Senate, the imperial armies, the governor of Lower Moesia and the <i>βο[υλη] καὶ δῆμος</i>, <i>bo[ule] kai demos</i>, of Istros. I.Histriae 100: agonistic inscription with list of victors in sacred contests (dance and chorus). I.Histriae 167: dedication of a <i>στίβας</i>, <i>stibas</i> (see VI.ii), to the <i>ὑμνοδοὶ πρεσβύτεροι</i>, <i>hymnodoi presbyteroi</i>, who won a sacred contest. I.Histriae 196: agonistic inscription with list of victors in a sacred contest. I.Histriae 199: very fragmentary inscription of unknown nature. I.Histriae 207: agonistic inscription with list of victors in the <i>ἱε[ρὸς] ἀγών</i>, <i>hie[ros] agon</i>. I.Histriae 208 + 221 (might join, Avram): <i>clipeus</i> with inscription which allows the restoration <i>[ὑμνοδοὶ πρεσβύτεροι] περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον</i>, <i>[hymnodoi presbyteroi] peri ton Dio[n]yson</i>. I.Histriae 412: small fragment of an inscription of uncertain nature. Suceveanu 2007, 149 no. 6: very fragmentary agonistic inscription with broken names.</p>
<p>i.c. Physical format(s)</p>	<p>I.Histriae 57: nine joining fragments of a marble stele. I.Histriae 98: fragment of a big clay vessel with Dionysiac ornaments (tendrils), very probably offered as prize in a sacred competition. I.Histriae 99: two not joining fragments of a marble stele with the inscription carved in a <i>tabula ansata</i>. I.Histriae 100: two joining fragments belonging to a marble stele. I.Histriae 167: pedimental marble stele with relief depicting an acanthus leaf. I.Histriae 196: fragmentary marble stele (the upper part is lacking). I.Histriae 199: lower right corner of a marble stele. I.Histriae 207: fragmentary marble stele. I.Histriae 208 + 221: two fragments of the upper part of a <i>clipeus</i>. I.Histriae 412: small fragment of a limestone stele. Suceveanu 2007, 149 no. 6: very fragmentary marble stele.</p>
<p>ii. Source(s) provenance</p>	<p>All the inscriptions have been found through archaeological excavations in several areas of the ancient city of Istros. They are now in the local museum.</p>

VI. BUILT AND VISUAL SPACE

<p>i. Archaeological remains</p>	<p>I.Histriae 98 (see V.i.c).</p>
<p>ii. References to buildings/objects</p>	<p>Στιβάς, <i>stibas</i>, dedicated to the <i>ὑμνοδοὶ πρεσβύτεροι ἱερονεϊκαι οἱ περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον</i>, <i>hymnodoi presbyteroi hieroneikai hoi peri ton Dionyson</i> (I.Histriae I 167, ll. 8-9). This <i>stibas</i> might have been a building for meetings (or sacred banquets) rather than the feast itself (D.M. Pippidi, see bibliography).</p>

VII. ORGANIZATION

ii. Leadership	One πατήρ, <i>pater</i> (same person, Achilles Achilla, mentioned under emperor Elegabalus in I.Histriae 99, l. 9, and 100, ll. 10-11).
iii. Members	45 ἱερονεῖκαι, <i>hieroneikai</i> in I.Histriae 196. Unknown number of ἱερονεῖκαι, <i>hieroneikai</i> in I.Histriae 98. Some broken names of members in Suceveanu 2007, 149 no. 6. At least 14 members in I.Histriae 100: participants in a sacred contest (besides the two ἱερεῖς, <i>hiereis</i> ; see VII.iv).
iv. Officials	19 persons are called προστάται, <i>prostatai</i> in I.Histriae 207, ll. 3-14, among them a πρῶτος ποντάρχης, <i>protos pontarches</i> , (of the West Pontic community) and υἰὸς τῆς πύλεως, <i>hyio[s tes p]oleos</i> (ll. 3-5), also known from several other documents, and a ποντάρχης, <i>pontarches</i> (l. 7). Four further προστάται, <i>prostatai</i> , are mentioned some decades later in I.Histriae 100, ll. 5-8. One of them, Phl. Ioukoundos (l. 5) is the same as the [προστά]της, <i>[prostata]tes</i> (rest. Jaccottet 2003; [ἱεροφάν]της, <i>[hierophan]tes</i> , I. Histriae), mentioned in I.Histriae 99, ll. 10-11. A supposed [πρ]οστά[της], <i>[pr]osta[tes]</i> , could be found in I.Histriae I 412 (SEG 57: 649, under no. 412). I.Histriae 99 mentions as officials (cf. l. 9: <i>hoi peri</i>), besides the leader (πατήρ, <i>pater</i> ; see VII.ii), one ἱερεύς, <i>hiereus</i> (l. 10; see below), the above mentioned [προστά]της, <i>[prostata]tes</i> (rather than [ἱεροφάν]της, <i>[hierophan]tes</i>), and two other officials not accompanied by titles. Several ἱερεῖς, <i>hiereis</i> , are mentioned. The first ones are, in chronological order, the seven 'former priests, participants in the contest and honorary members' (I.Histriae 207, ll. 16-21: ἱερησάμενοι [καὶ] συ<ν>αγωνισάμενοι καὶ [φι]λοτειμισάμε[νο]ι, <i>hieresameno[i] [ka]i sy<n>agonisameno[i] kai [phi]loteimisame[no]i</i>), from which we can infer that all the former ἱερεῖς, <i>hiereis</i> , became φιλότιμοι, <i>philotimo[i]</i> , (here doubtless 'honorary members') after leaving the office. I.Histriae 199 reveals the <i>hoi peri hiera</i> formula (l. 6). Other ἱερεῖς, <i>hiereis</i> are mentioned in I.Histriae 167, l. 10 (the author of the dedication), I.Histriae 99, l. 10 (see above), and I.Histriae 100, col. B, ll. 16-19 (two persons). We also know an ἀρχιερεύς, <i>archiereus</i> (I.Histriae 207, l. 14), and an ἀρχιέρεια, <i>archiereia</i> (Suceveanu 2007: 149 no. 6), the only woman occurring in this association. The relation between the ἀρχιερεύς, <i>archiereus</i> (or ἀρχιέρεια, <i>archiereia</i>) and the ἱερεῖς, <i>hiereis</i> , (there are at least two acting in the same time: see I.Histriae 100, col. B, ll. 16-19) is not clear. I.Histriae 167 adds a γραμματεὺς διὰ βίου, <i>grammateus dia biou</i> (ll. 14-16), and two 'censors' (cf. ll. 17-18: εὐθυνοῦντων, <i>euthynounton</i>). An ἀρχιμ(ύστης) <i>archim(ystes)</i> , is mentioned in I.Histriae 199, l. 8, perhaps another one in I.Histriae 412: [ἀρχιμ]ύστης, <i>[archim]ystes</i> or just [μ]ύστης, <i>[m]ystes</i> .
v. Other staff	One μεσοχόρος, <i>mesochoros</i> in I.Histriae 207, ll. 14-15. One μεσοχόρος, <i>mesochoros</i> (ll. 10-12), and one μούσαρχος <i>mousarchos</i> (ll. 12-13) in I.Histriae 167. One μεσοχόρος καὶ [χο]ροστάτης, <i>mesochoros kai [cho]rostates</i> (ll. 11-12), and one μούσαρχος, <i>mousarchos</i> (ll. 12-14) in I.Histriae 100. The μεσοχόρος καὶ [χο]ροστάτης, <i>mesochoros kai [cho]rostates</i> (Aur. Helei tou Helei), might have been a descendent of the μούσαρχος, <i>mousarchos</i> , Ailianos Heli mentioned in I.Histriae 167 (see above). The separate mention of μεσοχόροι, <i>mesochoroi</i> , μούσαρχοι, <i>mousarchoi</i> , and χοροστάται, <i>chorostatai</i> , in the catalogues seems to distinguish them from ordinary members, therefore, they can be taken as a kind of 'technical' staff.

IX. MEMBERSHIP

i. Number	More than 45 (see the ἱερονεῖκαι, <i>hieroneikai</i> of c. 150 AD; cf. VII.iii).
ii. Gender	Men Women
Note	Just one woman is attested, an ἀρχιέρεια, <i>archiereia</i> (Suceveanu 2007: 149 no. 6).
iii. Age	Adults Elders
Note	πρεσβύτεροι, <i>presbyteroi</i> , as opposed to νεώτεροι, <i>neoteroi</i> (see CAPInv. 1994).

X. ACTIVITIES

ii. Meetings and events	See VI.ii about the interpretation of the στῖβας, <i>stibas</i> , as building for meetings and feasts of the σπεῖρα, <i>speira</i> . Annual (?) sacred contests (called one time explicitly ἱερ[ὸς] ἀγών, <i>hier[os] agon</i> (I.Histriae 207, ll. 15-16), for dance, chorus (see especially [ἀ]γῶνα χορῶ[v], [<i>a]gona chor[on]</i>), Suceveanu 2007: 149 no. 6, rest. Avram 2015: 129–35 no. 5), declamation (see ὑμνοδοί, <i>hymnodoi</i> , and the staff mentioned above, VII.v).
iv. Honours/Other activities	Agonistic inscriptions for the ἱερονεῖκαι, <i>hieroneikai</i> (<i>passim</i>).

XI. INTERACTION

i. Local interaction	Several members of the σπεῖρα, <i>speira</i> , are also attested as members of the local γερουσία, <i>gerousia</i> . We also note the membership of pontarchs.
----------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

XII. NOTES

i. Comments	Several more or less fragmentary <i>alba</i> are known in Istros in the period c. 140-230 AD. Some of them might refer to the same association but there is no concrete indication for such an assumption. There was in Istros in the Roman period an official cult of Dionysos Καρποφόρος, <i>Karpophoros</i> , managed by a college of four priests (see recently Panait Bîrzescu 2010-11). The Dionysos worshipped through our σπεῖρα, <i>speira</i> , might have been Βάκχειος, <i>Bakcheios</i> , or Βακχεύς, <i>Bakcheus</i> (as in Callatis): see especially the name of the association (σπεῖρα, <i>speira</i>) and the one or two ἀρχιμύσται, <i>archimystai</i> (cf. VII.iv). Nevertheless, the question remains: 'les hymnodes sont-ils un département spécial de la <i>speira</i> des Dionysiastes ou sont-ils une association à part entière qui, au vu des intérêts communs des deux groupes, s'est liée avec les Dionysiastes?' (Jaccottet 2003: 135, referring to Pippidi 1962: 186). In our opinion there are good reasons for assuming that the <i>hymnodoi</i> were either synonymous with the <i>speira</i> or a 'section' of it. Ata, who is mentioned as benefactress of the group in I.Histriae 57, was also a benefactress of the <i>tektones</i> (CAPInv. 1208), the <i>Herakleistai</i> (CAPInv. 1209), and the <i>Taureastai</i> (CAPInv. 1210).
iii. Bibliography	Avram, A. (2015), 'Newly Published Documents Concerning Cult Associations in the Black Sea: Some Remarks', in V. Gabrielsen & C.A. Thomsen (ed.), <i>Private Associations and the Public Sphere</i> . Copenhagen: 122-35. Dana, M. (2011), <i>Culture et mobilité dans le Pont-Euxin. Approche régionale de la vie culturelle des cités grecques</i> . Paris, Bordeaux: 80-3. Jaccottet, A.-F. (2003), <i>Choisir Dionysos. Les associations dionysiaques ou la face cachée du dionysisme, vol II. Les documents</i> . Zürich: commentaries under nos. 63 (= I.Histriae 167), 64 (= I.Histriae 99), 65 (= I.Histriae 100), 66 (= I.Histriae 199), 130-7. Panait Bîrzescu, F. (2010-11), 'A New List of Priests of Dionysos Karpophoros from Histria', <i>II Mar Nero</i> 8: 103-112 Pippidi, D.M. (1959), 'Dionysische Inschriften aus Histria aus dem 2.-3. Jh. u. Z.', <i>Dacia N.S</i> 3: 391-413. Pippidi, D.M. (1962), <i>Epigraphische Beiträge zur Geschichte Histrias in hellenistischer und römischer Zeit</i> . Berlin: 154-91. Suceveanu, A. (2007), 'Inscriptions', in A. Suceveanu et al. (eds.), <i>Histria XIII. La basilique épiscopale</i> . Bucharest: 145-53.

XIII. EVALUATION

i. Private association	Certain
Note	The context suggests a private association.