

Hieromastor – an inquisitor or adviser?

The office of *hieromastor* is attested only in three Bosphoran inscriptions: CIRB 988 (Phanagoria, 4th century AD); 1016 (Phanagoria, 3rd century AD ?); 1054 (Hermonassa, 123/124 – 132/133 AD).

The magistrates listed in these inscriptions are (in order of appearance) as follows:

CIRB 988: *hiereus, hieromastor, thiasitai*

CIRB 1016: *hiereus, hieromastor, philagathos,*

CIRB 1054: *nakoros (neokoros), hiereus, hieromastor, grammateus, philagathos, thiasitai*

All “*hieromastor*” collegia Ustinova (1999) presumes to worship Aphrodite and *hieromastor* appears only in texts connected with this deity. Other offices are generally universal and appear in many different associations.

The hierarchy of officials in synods was complex and mostly hard to define although we know sometimes their *cursus honorum*. One question however is sure – we have no evidence for high rank officials being later called simple *thiasotes* (cf. Knipovich (1949), 104; Ustinova (1999), 189). Therefore we may presume that order of appearance reflects hierarchy of magistrates.

This hierarchy of Bosphoran associations’ magistrates and their known range of duties can be reconstructed on the ground of epigraphic material. Ustinova (1999) did it shortly and all information in list below is a short summary of her work.

Hieros is mentioned almost always as first and he conduct sacrifices. It is almost sure that it was one (if not the one) of highest posts.

Philagathos and *paraphilagathos* offices are subject of controversy. Pomyalovskii (1888, 27) thought that they were responsible for common meals, Novosadskiy (1928, 65) that they supervised morals of *thiasotes* and controlled admission of new members, Knipovich (1949, 112) and Gaydukevich (1949, 435) emphasized importance of the office because of existence *philagathos*’ assistant office. Salach (1955, 218) proposed very interesting interpretation of this office comparing them with Jewish officials called עֲרִיקָה נְבִיאַ. עֲרִיקָה means justice and charity dues and these dues could be collected only by both officials together. Ferguson (1944, 139) means it was charity supervisor and Barton and Horsley (1981, 19-21) added also moral supervision in private cult associations.

Nakoros (Doric form of *neokoros*) was probably originally temple servant, cleaner (Eurip., Ion 82) or official (Xen. Anab. 5.3.6-7) but later, in Roman period it was one of most prominent titles (even city is called *neokoros*; cf. CIRB 59 with essential commentary) connected with Emperor Cult, at least in Asia Minor where from comes major part of comparative material. In Panamara (Caria), for example, it was usually ex-priest, who took care over archives and finances of the sanctuary (Laumonier 1958, 231). In Ustinova’s (1999, 130) opinion, who generally repeats arguments after CIRB 59 commentary, we may not mechanically transfer this range of duty to Bospor. Therefore its functions in Bospor remain unclear. Because of first place in the association list it should be, in my opinion, very important office.

Grammateus appears several times (CIRB 1263, 1264 ?, 1268) and was supervisor of official records of synod.

CIRB editors citing Latyshev commentary (after IOSPE and archive) are going to describe *hieromastor* office as taking care over preparing of festivals and offerings and compare it with *hieropoios*. This conclusion is consequence of *master, mastros, masteuo* analyse and interpretation of the title as “seeker, searcher of holly activities”. But in further text CIRB commentators agreed that this hypothesis is questionable and say that *hieromastor* range of duty is unclear. Tolstoi (in CIRB) defines this office as sacral-inquiring, because of *μαστεύω* meaning as “conduct investigation” and gives as comparative offices of *μαστροί* with Minns, Novosadskii and Gaidukevich for further reading about *hieromastroi*.

Other comments to this office are rather accidentally and secondary. Minns mentions *hieromastor* accidentally (SaG, p. 624) and accepts Latyshev point of view adding only in footnote 15 Ziebarth (p. 151) and Poland (p. 390) as bibliography. Gaidukevich (Bosporanische Reich, p. 454) also follows Latyshev in interpretation of *hieromastor* duties calling him “Gehilfe des Priesters, der die heiligen Handlungen vorzubereiten hatte” with giving in footnote 250 two testimonies in IOSPE 4, 421 and Latyshev IIAK 14 (1915) publication.

Ustinowa analyzing inscription CIRB 1054 (p. 130-131) starts citing Latyshev’ commentary in IOSPE but she quickly adds: “However, the exact responsibilities of the *hieromastor* remain obscure (CIRB 1054, Minns 1913, 624; Gaidukevich 1949, 435 [and 1971, 454])”. Further she suggests, analyzing other officials mentioned in the inscriptions in comparison to CIRB 1005, that “CIRB 1054 might be related to her [Aphrodite Ourania] cult, although this cannot be definitely determined” and in footnote 4 gives CIRB 988 and 1016 as testimonies for the office.

Therefore we have two positions: Latyshev defines *hieromastor* as minor helper in conducting *hiera* and Tolstoi as a king of inquisitor of holy things. Most scientist have accepted Latyshev point of view and Tolstoi remains rather solitary with his doubts.

Etymological the *ιερομάστωρ* is constructed from *ιερο-* (or rather *ιερου-*) and *-μαστωρ*. First part is connected with “sacred” or “priests” or even “temple” and *μαστωρ*. If we accept Latyshev proposal and agree that the second element is connected with *μαστεύω* we would have etymologically construction „seeker, searcher” of *hieros*. In that case more natural would *ιερομάστηρ* or *ιερομαστρος*.

In the *master/mastros* case we have huge comparative material with offices all-around Greek civilisation. Well known are *mastroi* at Rhodos as highest magistrates (e.g. IG 12 (1), 677, 35, 3rd century BC; cf. V. Gabrielsen, The synoikized polis of Rhodos in: Polis & politics: studies in ancient Greek history, (2000), p. 185). Other places of interest may be Delphi (Sylloge (3) 672=Sokolowski (1969), no 80 (in part), 2nd century BC, cf. Hansen, The Attalides of Pergamon, 2nd edition (1971), p. 292-295, 395, 459 f), Pellene (Aristotle, Fr. 567). *Mastroi* in Pellene are, after Aristotle, equivalent of Athenian *ζητηταί*, who were commissioners to inquire into extraordinary offences or to recover moneys owing to the State (cf. Lidell-Scott with further literary sources), similar in Delphi. Anyway *mastros* seems to be officer for investigation and control, which etymological I would connect not only with *μαστεύω* but also with *μαίωμαι*. To the above mentioned magistrates I would add *hypomastroi* from Andania inscription (l. 51), who have to help *tamias* control financial operations of mysteries. Deshours (Andania (2006), p. 96), mentioning that it is very interesting term, cites Wilhelm, who compared it with Hesychios notice about *mastreiai* (*αὐτῶν ἀρχόντων εὐθυναί*) and Froehlich (1999, p. 239) doubts about existence of *hypomastroi* as magistrates specializing in controlling other magistrates naming *mastroi*, because these activities in Messene did *synedroi*. Anyway in most cases *mastroi* were officers

aimed on search and seek corruption. The problem are *mastroi* at Rhodos, who were supreme council of synoikized Rhodians. It is not place to analyze these body competences, but the name was given to distinguish them from *bouleitai* of single *poleis*.

From that point of view *hieromastor* should be etymologically magistrate, who inquires for or controls finances of mysteries, which is similar to Tolstoi hypothesis. But the problem is that this kind of office would be not list as second, after *hieros*, before *grammateus*. Anyway *mastroi* are not listed on high place in inscriptions and are (with Lindos exception) secondary rank control-body.

Alternative is put $\mu\acute{\alpha}\sigma\tau\omega\rho$ in association with $\mu\acute{\eta}\sigma\tau\omega\rho$ (adviser, counsellor). The problem with vowels exchange is relatively easy to solve, although there is no testimonies for $\mu\acute{\alpha}\sigma\tau\omega\rho$ for $\mu\acute{\eta}\sigma\tau\omega\rho$. Dovatur in his “Kratkii ocherk” (CIRB pp. 798-799) gives many examples of Doricism in Bospor. Even in CIRB 1054 we have example of Doricism (*nakoros*) although this version of magistrate is well attested (mainly in Delphi and Rhodus but cf. also IEpH 1271) but only once in Bospor (more popular was $\nu\epsilon\omega\kappa\acute{o}\rho\omicron\varsigma$).

This interpretation makes *hieromastor* a *hieros*-adviser or someone, who is experienced with holy things. Latyshev compares it with *hieropoios* which is known in two main meanings: as overseer of temple (or temples) or the person who offers sacrifice and seems not to be a rank from highest shelf but rather doing their job in exchange for salary, as professional. In our inscriptions *hieromastor* is named always after *hieros*, which, in my opinion, nominates him to vice-*hieros*, who is placed higher than *hieropoios* in association hierarchy. This interpretation is approach to Latyshev opinion with this distinction, that *hieromastor* was high-rank magistrate.

The problem with this point of view is that it would be linguistically sophisticated. Known constructions with $-\mu\eta\sigma\tau\omega\rho$:

$\epsilon\nu\tau\epsilon\omicron\mu\acute{\eta}\sigma\tau\omega\rho$ (or $\epsilon\nu\tau\epsilon\sigma\iota\mu\acute{\eta}\sigma\tau\omega\rho$): $\delta\pi\lambda\omega\nu$ $\xi\mu\pi\epsilon\iota\rho\varsigma$ (experienced with arms)

$\pi\alpha\mu\mu\acute{\eta}\sigma\tau\omicron\rho\alpha$: $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omega\nu$ $\tau\epsilon\chi\nu\acute{\iota}\tau\eta\nu$ (all-inventive)

$\chi\alpha\lambda\kappa\epsilon\omicron\mu\acute{\eta}\sigma\tau\omicron\rho\varsigma$: $\iota\sigma\chi\upsilon\rho\acute{o}\phi\rho\nu\omicron\varsigma$ (Hesychios, strong-minded neologism, after Euripides, Troiades, 272)

$\theta\epsilon\omicron\mu\acute{\eta}\sigma\tau\omega\rho$ – like the god in counseils even proper name in Herodot (e.g. 8, 85)

are rather rare and of more rafined language, if not neologisms and existence of well attested and popular family of *mastroi* magistrates across the Greece is strong argument for first interpretation.

However I personally would prefer second one.

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