

Author: SOPHIA ZOUMBAKI

CAPInv. 1485: sympas xystos

I. LOCATION

i. Geographical area	Peloponnese with Adjacent Islands
ii. Region	1. Eleia 2. Lakonia
iii. Site	1. Olympia 2. Sparta

II. NAME

i. Full name (original language)	σύμπας ξυστός (IvO 436, l. 2; IG V.1 669, l. 7)
ii. Full name (transliterated)	<i>sympas xystos</i>

III. DATE

i. Date(s)	85 - iii AD
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IV. NAME AND TERMINOLOGY

ii. Name elements	Topographical:	<i>xystos</i> is the practice track for the athletes. <i>Ho sympas xystos</i> , in the sense of the entire group of athletes, is often translated as "the entire portico".
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V. SOURCES

i. Source(s)	1. IvO 436 (AD 85) 2. IG V.1 669 (Roman)
Online Resources	IvO 436 IG V.1 669
i.a. Source type(s)	Epigraphic source(s)

i.b. Document(s) typology & language/script	1. Inscription in Greek on an honorific monument erected by <i>hoi apo tes oikoumenes athletai</i>, the <i>sympas xystos</i>, the <i>hiera xystike synodos</i> for the Elean agoranomos and archiereus L. Vettulenus Laetus. 2. Inscription in Greek summarizing M. Ulpius Domesticus's athletic achievements, honorific distinctions and offices: citizen of Ephesos, Antinoopolis and Athens, pankratiast, <i>paradoxos periodonikes</i>, lifelong <i>xystarches</i> and <i>archiereus tou sympantos xystou kai epi balaneion Sebastou</i>.
i.c. Physical format(s)	1. A statue base of gray marble, whose left part is missing. 2. Stele
ii. Source(s) provenance	1. Olympia, in front of the eastern side of the temple of Zeus. 2. Sparta, near the church of Hagios Nikolaos.

VII. ORGANIZATION

iv. Officials	In the inscription from Sparta (IG V.1 669), M. Ulpius Domesticus appears as πανκρατιαστής, παράδοχος περιδονεΐκης, ξυστάρχης διὰ βίου καὶ ἀρχιερεὺς τοῦ σύνπαντος ξυστοῦ καὶ ἐπὶ βαλανείων Σεβαστοῦ, <i>pankratiastes, paradoxos periodoneikes, xystarches dia biou kai archiereus toi sympantos xystou kai epi balaneion Sebastou</i>. The international xystic association (<i>sympas xystos</i>) was headed by imperial appointees who generally served for life, high priest, <i>xystarches</i>, superintendent of the imperial baths, offices which could be undertaken by one and only functionary, as in the case of M. Ulpius Domesticus. Pellet 1973: 216 n. 64: "The sympas xystos had a three-man directorate (all three were high-priests, and directors of the Imperial Baths and lifelong xystarchs) and a archigrammateus".
Known practice of appointment	It seems that the officials were nominated directly by the emperor, see Caldelli 1992: 79. Even the <i>xystarchai</i> of the local <i>xystoi</i> were often appointed directly by the emperor, as several inscriptions show, e.g. I.Magnesia 220, ll. 16-21 (...τειμηθεΐς τε ἐπὶ τούτοις ὑπὸ θεοῦ Ἀδριανοῦ Ῥωμαίων πολειτείαις εἰς τε τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ τὴν Κυζικηνῶν ξυσταρχίαν,... <i>...teimetheis te epi toutois hypo theou Hadrianou Rhomaion poleiteiais ais te ton patera kai ten metera kai tous adelphous kai ten Kyzikenon xystarchia</i>,...), cf. Golden 2004: 73, s.v. Guild: "the sacred xystic international association of those connected to Heracles... The federation was headed by imperial appointees, who generally served for life ...: a high priest, a xystarches, a superintendent of the imperial baths"; 178, s.v. Xystarches: "leader of the xystos, the president of a Greek athletes' guild. Roman emperors often named distinguished athletes (usually pancratiasts) xystarches for life, and made them responsible (at least in theory) for the management of festivals or all the festivals in a city or region. Xystarchai, decked out with a wreath and a purple robe, played the role of the agonothetai in many new festivals and (like them) often supplemented their funds".

IX. MEMBERSHIP

ii. Gender	Men
Note	It is likely that the members were men.

X. ACTIVITIES

iv. Honours/Other activities	In the inscription from Olympia (IvO 436) the <i>sympas xystos</i> together with <i>hoi apo tes oikoumenes athletai</i> (CAPInv. 1477) and the <i>hiera xystike synodos</i> (CAPInv. 1486) for the Elean agoranomos and archiereus L. Vettulenus Laetus.
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XI. INTERACTION

i. Local interaction	The fact that <i>xympas xystos</i> honours a prominent Elean shows its impact on a local level.
ii. Interaction abroad	<i>Xympas xystos</i> , sometimes together with <i>hoi apo tes oikoumenes athletai</i> and the <i>hiera xystike synodos</i> , is attested in inscriptions set up in Olympia, Sparta and other places of the Roman Empire. The involvement of the emperor shows further its international impact.

XII. NOTES

i. Comments	Our knowledge on the <i>sympas xystos</i> and the <i>hiera xystike synodos</i> as well as on the relationship and differences between them is not comprehensive. For the difference between <i>hiera xystike synodos</i> and the <i>sympas xystos</i> see Pleket 1973: 216 n. 64. Cf. also CAPIInv. 1486. Pleket, cites Forbes 1955: 243 and 246/7 observations concerning the double meaning of "xystos", which is according to him (a) "temporary guild of the athletes who happened to come together as participants in a given festival"; (b) "The active right arm of the sacred Athletic Guild"; Pleket adds: "Forbes' 'active right arm of the synodos' sounds attractive but does not satisfy me, because the synodos itself per definitionem was the synodos of active athletes, well to be distinguished from that of the retired colleagues". Pleket's own suggestion seems to be made in n. 64: "Another possibility perhaps is that the Entire Xystos was established after and as a result of a merger of the two guilds of athletes and sacred victors, as a kind of super-board of the combined σύννοδος of ἀθληταί and ἱερωνίκα στεφανίται". It is in any case important that the inscription from Olympia is one of the earliest attestations –if not the earliest– of <i>sympas xystos</i> and this makes it unclear, whether we are already dealing with a world-wide organization, since it is generally believed, that this took place under Antonines. Harris 1964: 45 states that the athletes in the early stages organized themselves in local groups, but Roman emperors suspected such groups as possible outbreaks of unrest, thus "For this reason the separate xysti were dissolved at some time in the first century and reconstituted as a single organization under the emperor. The officers of the branches, the xystarchs, thus became nominees of the emperor, and the imperial authorities retained full control over the proceedings of the synod". In any case, the branch of Rome of the <i>hiera xystike synodos</i>, known as <i>Curia athletarum</i>, is attested from AD 46 onwards, but acquired a permanent headquarters only under Antoninus mainly thanks to the efforts of M. Ulpius Domesticus (see Sinn 1998: 129-135; Caldelli 1992: 75-87). Volpe 2007: 427-437 presents evidence based on excavations of the south-western section of the Baths of Trajan in Rome and reconstructs the complex as a combination of Roman baths with a Greek-style gymnasium consisted of a large open space surrounded by colonnades. Volpe interprets the complex as the <i>xystos</i> and <i>balaneia</i> attested in inscriptions, such as ἀρχιερεὺς τοῦ σύμπαντος ξυστοῦ καὶ ἐπὶ βαλανείων Σεβαστῶν, <i>archiereus tou sympantos xystou kai epi balaneion Sebaston</i>. This architectural complex included the headquarters of the <i>hiera xystike synodos</i>.
ii. Poland concordance	Poland H 12
iii. Bibliography	Caldelli, M.L. (1992), 'Curia athletarum, iera xystike synodos e organizzazione delle terme a Roma', <i>ZPE</i> 93: 75-87. Forbes, C.A. (1955), 'Ancient Athletic Guilds', <i>CPh</i> 50: 238-52. Golden, M. (2004), <i>Sport in the ancient world from A to Z</i>. London, New York. Lehner, M. (2004), <i>Die Agonistik in Ephesos der römischen Kaiserzeit</i>. Dissertation, München. Pleket, H.W. (1973), 'Some aspects of the history of the ancient athletic guilds', <i>ZPE</i> 10: 197-27. West, W.C. (1990), 'M. Oulpius Domestikos and the Athletic Synod at Ephesus', <i>AHB</i> 4.4: 84-9.

XIII. EVALUATION

i. Private association	Possible
Note	The intervention of the emperor and the important public role of <i>sympas xystos</i> prevent us from regarding it with certainty as a private association.