

CAPInv. 771: **toi Aiiatai**

I. LOCATION	
i. Geographical area	Peloponnese with Adjacent Islands
ii. Region	Laconia
iii. Site	Sparta

II. NAME	
i. Full name (original language)	τοὶ Αἰιάται (Kourinou 2000: 224-7, pl. 51)
ii. Full name (transliterated)	<i>toi Aiiatai</i>

III. DATE	
i. Date(s)	iii BC

IV. NAME AND TERMINOLOGY	

ii. Name elements	Cultic: Del Barrio Vega 2002: 134-6, regards τοὶ Αἰῖται, <i>toi Aiiatai</i> as a variant of Αἰσιῖται, <i>Aisiatai</i> which displays "l' affaiblissement et la perte de la sifflante intervocalique", a phaenomenon which is to be observed in several Laconian inscriptions of the same period. Moreno Conde 2008: 37, n. 131, follows Del Barrio Vega's suggestion that the name of the group can be connected with Poseidon <i>Aisios</i>: "Ces Aiiatai ou Aisiatai -autrement inconnus- ont été également interprétés comme une sorte de confrérie religieuse à mettre en rapport cette fois-ci avec le culte de Poséidon Aisios à Délos (Cf. I.Délos 1581, 1902, datant de 102-101 av. J.-C.). Nous aurions quelque chose de semblable encore dans ces Tainarioi consacrés au culte de Poséidon Ténarien (Cf. IG V.1 210-212, datée du Ier s. av. J.-C.)." Topographical: <i>Aiitai</i> may refer to a topographical or civic subdivision of Sparta, perhaps a neighborhood, as two further inscriptions of similar content, refer to Kynosoureis, one of the <i>obai</i> (subdivisions of the tribes), and to <i>koinon ton hypochetion</i>, see respectively Peek 1974: 295-302 and Le Roy 1974: 219-38 (cf. <i>BE</i> 1976: nos. 266 and 267). Other: We also have to take into account that αἶτας, <i>aitas</i> (from αἶω, <i>aio</i>) is a doric word meaning "a beloved youth" (LSJ, s.v.). The possibility that their name derives from αἶτας, <i>aitas</i> should be examined in parallel with Jeffery's reading of an inscription on a bronze bowl from Aigiai as ἡακίνθοιοι ἀνέθεν Ἀῖται ἀπ' ῥοίκω, <i>hyakinthioi anethen Aitai ap' woiko</i> (cf. <i>Hyakinthioi</i>, CAPInv. 1488).
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V. SOURCES	
i. Source(s)	Kourinou 2000: 224-7, pl. 51. (iii BC)
i.a. Source type(s)	Epigraphic source(s)
i.b. Document(s) typology & language/script	A Greek honorary dedication in Laconian dialect erected by the <i>Aiiatai</i> for the <i>hydragos</i> Timon (ll. 2-3) and the <i>hyphydragoi</i> Androsthene and Kallikrates (ll. 3-4).
i.c. Physical format(s)	A fragment of a stele bearing two reliefs and between them a band where the inscription is almost totally preserved. On the upper relief two legs walking to the left are depicted whilst the lower relief depicts two heads facing to the left.
ii. Source(s) provenance	Found in 1980 at the excavation in a private property at the Western part of modern Sparta, in the area of ancient Pitane.

X. ACTIVITIES

iii. Worship	The stele is dedicated to Tyndarids, another name for the Dioscuri.
Deities worshipped	Dioscuri

XI. INTERACTION

i. Local interaction	There is no indication that the <i>hydragos</i> and the <i>hyphydragoi</i> (ll. 2-4) were members of the <i>Aiiatai</i> . This shows that there was an interaction of the group on a local level.
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XII. NOTES

i. Comments	Kourinou 2000: 226, connects the inscription which mentions the <i>Aiiatai</i> as well as the inscriptions in Peek 1974: 295-302 and Le Roy 1974: 219-38 (cf. <i>BE</i> 1976: nos. 266 and 267) with canalization works in Sparta in the second half of the 3rd c. BC simultaneously with the fortification of the <i>polis</i> by Kleomenes III. Since Peek 1974: 295-302 and Le Roy 1974: 219-38 are dedications to the same functionaries by Kynosoureis, one of the <i>obai</i> (subdivisions of the tribes), and <i>to koinon ton hypochetion</i> (see CAPInv. 772), namely in both cases parts of the population of the town, we can assume that <i>Aiiatai</i> could also be regarded as a topographical definition or a definition of a part of the inhabitants. Cf. CAPInv. 1488 (for the mention of <i>Aitai</i> in an inscription from Aigiai). The attestation of the inhabitants of a part of a town as a group is a frequent phenomenon, especially in Asia Minor. Van Nijf 1997: 181-3, refers to the common identity that was developed by traders or artisans working at the same place, so that they often operated as a "neighbourhood association". The attestations of groups of neighbourhoods, which act as a collectivity, either organized as associations or not, are gathered and commented by Pont 2013: 129-56.
iii. Bibliography	del Barrio Vega, M. (2002), 'Remarques sur une inscription de Sparte (ΜΣ 6747)', <i>ZPE</i> 141: 134-6. Kourinou, E. (2000), <i>Σπάρτη. Συμβολή στη μνημειακή τοπογραφία της</i>. Athens: 224-7. Moreno Conde, M. (2008), <i>Regards sur la religion laconienne : les Hyacinthia à la lumière des textes et de l'archéologie</i>. Madrid: 37, n. 131. van Nijf, O. (1997), <i>The civic world of professional associations in the Roman East</i>. Amsterdam: esp. 181-3. Peek, W. (1974), 'Artemis Eulakia', in <i>Mélanges Hélieniques offerts à Georges Daux</i>, Paris: 295-302. Pont, A.-V. (2013), 'Les groupes de voisinage dans les villes d'Asie Mineure occidentale à l'époque impériale', in P. Fröhlich and P. Hamon (eds.), <i>Groupes et associations dans les cités grecques (IIIe siècle av. J.-C. – IIe siècle apr. J.-C.)</i>, Genève: 129-56. le Roy, Chr. (1974), 'Inscriptions de Laconie inédits ou revues', in <i>Mélanges Hélieniques offerts à Georges Daux</i>, Paris: 219-38.

XIII. EVALUATION

i. Private association	Possible
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Note

The definition of the *Aiitai* as an association depends on the interpretation of their name. If they are to be understood as a group of inhabitants of Sparta, they can be perhaps interpreted as an official civic or topographical subdivision of the population; in this sense it is rather to be regarded as a collectivity which acted *ad hoc* for the honour of the *hydragos* and the two *hyphydragoi*.

If their name derives from an epithet of Poseidon, they could be regarded as a cultic group. The possibility that their name derives from αἶτας, *aitas* (a beloved youth) should be examined in parallel with Jeffery's reading of an inscription on a bronze bowl from Aigiai as ὑακίνθιοι ἀνέθεν Αἶται ἀπ' ᾠκό, *huakinthioi anethen Aitai ap' woiko* (cf. Hyakinthioi, [CAPInv. 1488](#)).