

CAPInv. 1055: hai Pythastrides

I. LOCATION

i. Geographical area	Western Asia Minor
ii. Region	Mysia
iii. Site	Hamamlı village (in the area of ancient Kyzikos)

II. NAME

i. Full name (original language)	αἱ Πυθαῖστρίδες (SEG 28:953 ll. 60, 62)
ii. Full name (transliterated)	<i>hai Pythastrides</i>

III. DATE

i. Date(s)	e. i - m. i AD
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IV. NAME AND TERMINOLOGY

ii. Name elements	Cultic:	<p><i>Pythastrides</i>: cult epithet of Artemis Pythia, whose cult is well attested in Miletos, the mother-city of Kyzikos (Schwertheim 1978; Sève 1979). The name <i>Pythastrides</i> is otherwise unattested and it could be compared, on morphological grounds, to <i>Pythastai</i>: (1) members of the sacred mission from Athens to Delphi; (2) members of a cult association in Telos (see CAPInv....).</p>
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V. SOURCES

i. Source(s)	SEG 28.953 (2nd quarter of 1st c. AD)
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Note	Sève (1979: 334-5) narrowed down the date of the inscription in the second quarter of the 1st c. AD. Ed.pr.: Schwertheim 1978 Sève 1979: 327-59. Horsley 1987: no. 2 AGRW II, 108
Online Resources	IMT Kyz Kapu Dağ 1435 AGRW ID 290
i.a. Source type(s)	Epigraphic source(s)
i.b. Document(s) typology & language/script	Posthumous inscription for Apollonis. The text contains two documents in Greek: - the honorary inscription for Apollonis (lines 1-6) - the decree passed by the demos and the Roman negotiatores in honour of Apollonis (ll. 7-88). The text of the inscription is arranged in three columns. The first six lines (praescript) are incised in bigger letters than the remainder of the text.
i.c. Physical format(s)	Block of marble stone, broken on the left and right. Max. H. 68 x W. 142 x Th. 25 cm.
ii. Source(s) provenance	Found near the school in the village of Hamamlı, allegedly coming from a field within the ancient city of Kyzikos (Schwertheim 1978: 213).

VII. ORGANIZATION

iii. Members	αἱ Πυθαῖστρίδες, <i>hai Pythaistridai</i> (ll. 60, 62)
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IX. MEMBERSHIP

ii. Gender	Women
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X. ACTIVITIES

iii. Worship	τὴν ἱερωσύνην εἶχεν τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος τῶν Πυθαῖστρίδων: Apollonis held the priesthood of Artemis among the <i>Pythaistrides</i> (ll. 59-60) (note that Apollonis was the priestess of Artemis and not the priestess of the association). Since the priestess of Artemis was one of the Pythaistrides, the Pythaistrides would have centered around the cult of Artemis, also venerated as Artemis Pythia as the name of the Pythaistrides indicates.
Deities worshipped	Artemis
iv. Honours/Other activities	On the 7th of the month Artemision the priestesses, the <i>Pythaistrides</i> and the (female) hieropoioi would gather in the Charitesion to crown the agalma of Apollonis.

XI. INTERACTION

i. Local interaction

It can be noted that different religious groups interacted with each other in common events.

The Pythaistrides gathered annually in the Charitesion on the 7th day of the month Artemeision together with the priestesses and (women) hieropoioi. During this annual gathering they ought to crown Apollonis' statue set up in the Charitesion. It is unknown whether the priestesses refer to the priestesses of all cults in Kyzikos or to the priestesses of Artemis.

However, a parallel can be drawn with the decrees in honour of Kleidike in the 1st c. BC. There we also encounter three women-exclusive groups (IMT Kyz Kapu Dağ 1432 ll. 9-11):

(1) αἱ συντελοῦσαι τοὺς κόσμους παρὰ τῆ Μητρὶ τῆ Πλακκιανῆ

(2) καὶ ἱεροποιοὶ αἱ προσαγορευόμεναι θαλάσσια

(3) καὶ συνοῦσαι μετ' αὐτῶν ἱέρεια

They made a request to the assembly and asking permission to erect a bronze statue of Kleidike next to the statue of her brother on the monument of her ancestors 'in the men's agora' (IMT Kyz Kapu Dağ 1432). These groups were also gathered together in a *synodos* on the 5th day of Taureon.

XII. NOTES

i. Comments

Both Schwertheim and Sève see in the *Pythaistrides* a group of religious officials, exclusively consisting of women (weibliches Kollegium [Schwertheim 1978: 223]; 'mais les Pythaistrides, plus qu'une association, semblent être une sorte de collège de desservantes d'Artémis Pythie' [Sève 1979: 359]).

Sève (1979) gave some thought about the private or public nature of the *Pythaistrides*. He defies their private nature on account of the assembly's stipulations which prescribed to the priestesses, the Pythaistrides and the (women) hieropoioi (αἱ τε ἱέρηαι καὶ αἱ Πυθαΐστρίδες καὶ αἱ ἱεροποιοί) to crown Apollonis' statue when they all gathered on the 7th of Artemeision (ll. 61-2). However, the assembly clearly prescribes which groups were allowed to gather in the Charitesion and prescribes what ought to be done in a public shrine (i.e. Charitesion). In light of this, the private character of the *Pythaistrides* cannot be excluded, though it cannot be proven with certainty.

The *Pythaistrides* were a religious group centered around the cult of Artemis Pythia. The cult was probably public. To hold the priesthood of Artemis seems to have been of a public concern since the assembly granted Apollonis a statue, which was to be set up in the Charitesion as evidence for her *eusebeia peri ta hiera*, her priesthood of Artemis being a clear attestation to her piety. The public cult of Artemis, however, does not need exclude the existence of a closed group centered around her cult (i.e. *Pythaistrides*).

iii. Bibliography

Horsley, G.H. 1987. *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri published in 1979*. Vol. 4. Macquarie University.

Schwertheim, E. 1978. 'Ein postumer Ehrenbeschluss für Apollonis in Kyzikos'. *ZPE* 29: 213-28.

Sève, M. 1979. 'Un décret de consolation à Cyzique'. *BCH* 103: 327-59.

XIII. EVALUATION

i. Private association

Possible

Note

Although the collective name points to a closed group, perhaps loosely formed and centered around the cult of a deity, the private nature of the *Pythaistrides* should remain open to question (see also XII.i).