Pythios and Python: The Spread of a Cult Title
J.K. Davies

The epithet Pythios/Python, unequivocally denoting the cult of Apollo of Delphi, came to have a very widespread distribution throughout the Greek world, comparable only to that of Zeus Olympios. Pre-Hellenistic attestations are summarily reported, showing concentrations (e.g., Attika, Argolis, Thessaly, Aegean islands, Krete), significant vacua (e.g., Boiotia, north-western Greece), and overlaps with the epithets Delphinios and Pythaieus. Likely periods and mechanisms of its spread are sketched, as are possible explanations (colonization, oracles, purification), though without overt preference for any one model of network-formation.

Keywords: Apollo; Cult; Oracle; Purification; Distribution

It is a cliché of scholarship that the terms Pythios and Python derive from Pytho, the earliest attested name for the cultic area later known as Delphi,1 and that they came to refer unequivocally to Apollo as the principal god of the upper sanctuary there. They therefore belong among the ‘locational’ epithets of the god, parallel to Klarios or Didymeus, not among those derived from function or from association or identification with animals.2 As such, they pose a problem, for it was unusual for locational epithets to spread far beyond their primary sanctuary, still less to show such widespread attestation throughout much of the Greek-speaking world: Zeus Olympios provides perhaps the only true comparison, with even Eleusinian Demeter well behind. Their distribution therefore needs an explanation, and one which is couched not just in terms of geography or of the ‘profile’ of the god but also, and primarily, in terms of human needs and of the ways in which a specific cult could be transferred, or replicated/cloned, elsewhere. What follows here began as an attempt to provide such
an explanation, though the reader will find that it does little more than canvass possibilities. Equally, I leave open the question of whether the attested distribution amounts to a ‘network’, in terms of the examples and theoretical models which were offered at the Rethymno colloquium, for even at a wholly pragmatic level three models need to be distinguished. The first, discussed in more detail below, is that of the formal establishment in territory B of a cult which has its primary location in territory A, itself a model which may or may not include periodic ceremonial theorai from B to A. The second, attested only for the major agonistic festival sanctuaries, is the complement of the first, comprising the periodic circuits of Greek states undertaken by theoroi as envoys of such sanctuaries in order to announce the date of a forthcoming festival, to invite competitors to present themselves, and to proclaim a sacred truce. A third model, Procrustean in form and varying continually in space and in intensity, consists of the community of all participants in this or that cultic activity carried out at a particular sanctuary, whether as dedicants or as competitors, or as suppliants, or as enquirers of an oracle, or as manumitters of slaves, or as participants in feasts. Since my own study of the third model is still very much work in progress, while the second model has recently been excellently mapped (if only for Peloponnese) by Paula Perlman’s City and Sanctuary, what follows here will focus on the first model, in the hope that some preliminary progress can be made.

One must start with the data. That is easier said than done, for the only systematic assemblages of all the evidence for all the epithets of Apollo and his sanctuaries, including Pythios and Python, remain those of Wernicke and Farnell, now over a century old. As might be expected, their lists cannot be used in their raw state in the search for attestations of Apollo Pythios (A.P.), for they now need both expansion and pruning. The latter is needed because there had clearly been a temptation to draw the net too widely and to create an over-synchronic picture, which is the very opposite of what is needed for present purposes. For example, attestations of the epithet in the areas of the post-Alexander diaspora, e.g., in Egypt or the cities of Syria, must stem from a period of secondary or tertiary diffusion, tell us little about the processes that generated earlier stages, and went on for centuries: the Pythian festival that came to be celebrated in Thessalonike was (remarkably) a creation of the 240s CE. Again, perhaps paradoxically, it may be wise to leave out of the account the cities that are known from literary evidence (mostly Pausanias) to have erected treasuries at Delphi. Wernicke included them all, but even apart from the well-known difficulties of attribution, the hidden assumption—namely, that all such cities must already have imported and given civic space to the cult of A.P.—does not necessarily hold without other evidence. The same is true for those cities that Plutarch and Strabo name as having made ‘golden summer’ offerings to Delphi, for, accepting the normal interpretation of such gifts as one-off thank-offerings, all that need be postulated is a community’s desire to advertise its good fortune by clothing it in suitable garb of piety. Caution requires instead that only the direct attestation—preferably datable, and preferably in epigraphic or reliable antiquarian form—of an altar, sacrifice, sanctuary, or temple explicitly devoted to Apollo Pythios can reliably be used as evidence.
On the other hand, new evidence, largely epigraphic and archaeological, has so much increased the amount of robust relevant data that, for reasons of space, it has proved impossible to retain them within the framework of the present paper. The only expedient available was to consign the detailed assemblage of data to a separate paper, which will be published elsewhere, and to present here a simple, largely un-annotated working summary that omits the dubious categories instanced above, and allows the argument to go forward. The expedient is less than satisfactory, not least because this present paper has had, *hysteron proteron*, to take precedence in reaching editors’ desks; I can only beg for the reader’s understanding. For convenience, the following summary follows the geographical order of *IG* I–XIV (non-existent volumes being flagged [thus]), thence (though it scarcely applies) the order used by *SEG*.

Athens and Attika (*IG* I–III) offer a very substantial harvest of evidence. Not only did the city itself show two shrines, the temple of A(pollo) P(ythios) on the Ilissos attributed to the Peisistratids by Thucydides (2.15.3) and that of A. Hyperakraios/Pythios on the north slope of the Akropolis, but shrines or altars (for present purposes the distinction is unimportant) of A.P. are known at Daphne, Eleusis, Ikarion, Marathon, Oinoe, Thorikos, and in the Kephisos valley. To them one must add both the curious set of cultic consultants called the *exegetai pythochrestoi* and the evidence of a pilgrimage called the *Pythais*, which came to have great symbolic importance after 146. Evidence from the Korfinthia (IV), in contrast, is very slim indeed, unless one is prepared either to take the Treasuries of Korinth and Sikyon at Delphi into account, or to short-circuit the endless debate about the deity housed so monumentally on Temple Hill at Korinth. The Argolid (IV) offers far more evidence, with attestations of various kinds from Aigina, Argos, Asine, Epidaurus, Hermione, Kynouria, Mykenai, and Troizen, but also with evidence for the parallel cult of Pythaieus, which is discussed below. Lakonia and Messenia (V,1), on the other hand, offer very little apart from a dedication to A. Pythaieus at Prasiai, a fifth-century verse dedication to A.P. in the sanctuary of Athene Chalkioikos, an image of A.P. at Sellasia, and the Kings’ sacred remembrancers called the *Pythioi* (Hdt. 6.57.2 and 57.4). Arkadia (V,2) offers evidence only at Mt Lykaions, Pheneos, and Tegea, if numismatic evidence of the Severan period from Kaphyai and Orchomenos is to be discounted; while Olympia and Elis ([VI]) offer nothing except an altar of Apollo Pythios before the *proedria* at Olympia (Paus. 5.15.4). Boiotia and the Megarid (VII) offer problematic evidence at Megara (for Pythaieus, as well as for Pythios) and Thebes, and explicit evidence at Tripodiskos, which is discussed in more detail below. Delphi itself ([VIII]), of course, is full of the epithet, while in north-western Greece ([IX], 1), sites in Aitolia, Akarnania, and western Lokris offer virtually nothing except at mid-fifth-century Naupaktos, and in the post-279 decrees for the Soteria, Kerkyra alone preserving a fifth-century *o rwoas Puthaios* (*IG* IX 2 1,863). Thessaly (IX, 2), in contrast, shows a remarkably rich haul, with explicit attestations in Argissa, Atrax, Azoros, Gonnoi, Halos, Larisa, Melitaia, Pythion itself (hardly surprisingly), and Tempe. Further north, however, Makedonia and the Black Sea yield virtually nothing until late in the Hellenistic period, unless the third-century dedications made at Delphi by the
Paionian royal family can be taken to reflect a daughter cult of A.P. established in Bylazora and not (as is rather more likely) an anti-Makedonian statement of independence and Greekness pinned onto the national notice-board.12

If we return to the Aegean, the picture changes dramatically, with evidence for altars, sanctuaries, and temples of A.P. widespread throughout the region: Delos, of course (XI), Rhodes with its oscillation between Pythios and Pythaieus (XII,1), Syme, Anaphe, and Thera (XII, 3), Halasarna (XII, 4), Andros, Ios, Keos, Paros, Sikinos, and perhaps Tenos (XII, 5), Samos (XII, 6), Amorgos (XII, 7), Thasos (XII, 8), and Chalkis on Euboia (XII, 9). Even that list, with its interesting absences noted below, pales besides Krete ([XIII]), where the cult is attested at Allaria, Dreros, Eleutherna, Gortyn, Hierapytina, Itanos, Lato, Lyttos, Malla, Phaistos, Praisos, and Tylisos, with perhaps Aptera, Axos, Chersonesos, Kydonia, Lappa, Rhithymna, and Sybrita on the more fragile basis of numismatic evidence. In contrast, apart from the Treasuries, western Greece offers thin pickings, with firm early evidence for an installed cult only being available for Kroton and (remarkably) Rome. Lastly, Asia Minor and the eastern Mediterranean, where the only installations of the cult which may pre-date the post-Alexander expansion seem to be those of Mylasa, Ephesos, Erythrai, and Klaros.

For fairly obvious reasons these data must be used with great caution. Areas with a pronounced epigraphic habit, **imprimis** Athens–Attika, show a very rich picture, while Magna Graecia is correspondingly under-represented, as also are areas which fell outside the purview of Pausanias. More radically, cult titles are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In this regard Travlos13 cited the statement of Demosthenes (18.141) that Apollo Pythios was honoured in Athens as Patroios and that on the evidence of Euripides, *Ion* 283–85, the Apollo who was worshipped as Hypoakraios (‘Below the crags’) on the North Slope of the Akropolis was also the Pythios whose shrine figures in the Panathenaic procession.14 Likewise there can be little doubt that the Apollo Archegetes whose altar on the shore of Sicilian Naxos is reported by Thucydides (6.3.1) was the Apollo of Delphi in his capacity as mythic leader of the colony—though that does not allow us to list it as a cult of A.P. However, on other occasions aspects of a god are explicitly differentiated. For example, Philochoros reports (*FGrH* 328 F 75) that in the temple of Apollo Delios at Marathon it was the altar of A.P., not by implication the main altar, which was used for sacrifices when the Pythais was being sent to Delphi. So, too, oaths to be sworn by the citizens of Cretan communities distinguish, for example, Apollo Delphinius and Apollo Pythios at Dreros, or even more elaborately at Eleutherna give equal and separate billing to A. Lykeios, A. Delphinius, A. Pythios, A. Karneios, A. Bilkonios, A. Styraiktas, and A. Siastraioi.15 That will especially have been the case when, as at these two Cretan towns, a community has inserted into its cultic idiosystem two or more aspects of the god. As usual, this is clearest at Athens, where besides A. Pythios/Patroios there was also A. Delphinius, whose profile, especially in Krete, closely parallels that of Apollo Pythios, not least in the use of their sanctuaries as public archives. In his exemplary paper of 1979 Fritz Graf argued that Apollo Delphinius is not a god of the seaways, as the (itself very dubious) etymological association with dolphins might suggest, for
in contrast to Poseidon by no means all his sanctuaries are on the coast. Nor, a few brief allusions in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo notwithstanding (400; 493–96), has he, or his epithet, any discernible link with Delphi, where (a) A. Delphinios is not attested, and (b) the form of the epithet should be Delphaios, not Delphinios. Instead, Graf argued, Apollo Delphinios had specific roles in the public life of the community, not least in respect of male bonding groups and the protection of ephebes—this latter aspect explaining, via the myth of the return of Theseus from Krete, the existence and role of the Delphinion law-court in Athens.

If one overlap between Pythios and another epithet of Apollo can be mapped thus, there remains another overlap, that with Apollo Pythaieus. Here too the essentials of this aspect of Apollo have been clarified, this time by Marcel Piéart. He has shown that it is attested above all in the Argive Kulturgebiet, had an oracle at Argos as its central component, and came to be seen as an offshoot of the Delphian shrine. However, and notwithstanding the oscillation between the forms ‘Pythios’ and ‘Pythaieus’ which the Rhodian texts show, there is a clear tendency in the texts to use the word ‘Pythaieus’ on its own, as if it were not so much an epithet as a self-standing proper name. Though not conclusive in itself, that hint gains substance further when Pausanias (2.35.2) quotes Telesilla for the statement that Pythaieus was the son of Apollo. That suggests strongly that the overlap between ‘Pythaieus’ and ‘Pythios’ reflects a different pattern, namely that whereby it becomes convenient to merge with Apollo an originally distinct divine entity. There is a precisely parallel oscillation in northern Boiotia, where the hero Ptoios merged with Apollo but could also rate as his son, and another in eastern Argolid, where the hero Maleas eventually merged with Apollo and/or with Asklepios, not to mention the even more complex processes which approximated Diktynna-Britomartis, Aphaia, Artemis, and Saronia to each other. In this way, though it is not the primary focus of this paper, one can see how an adventitious similarity of name (Pythios/Pythaieus), and the social need for a particular function—here, oracular—to be naturalized in a community’s territory, combined to generate an untidy convergence and to give a god a more complex and a more widespread profile. Whether this amounts to a ‘network’ is in part a matter of terminology, but in part also a function of the degree to which such rapprochements came to be used as the basis of institutionalized practices such as theoriae.

After these preliminaries, the argument can now at last address the principal question: can we account for the distribution of the cult epithet ‘Pythios’, and what connotations, or reflections of function, did it carry? There are two main ways of approaching the question: procedurally, by considering likely mechanisms of transfer or colonization, or psychologically, by reviewing likely motives on the part of communities. If I first consider ‘mechanisms’ of transfer, that word is not meant to imply that the diffusion of this, as of any, cult was a mechanistic process. Since there is a whole spectrum of them, helpfully illustrated for Athens by Garland and Parker and in more general terms by Burkert, it will be useful, with no pretence of completeness or originality, to set them out summarily.
(1) At one extreme stands the systematic, ‘top-down’ promulgation of a cult on the part of a powerful state outside its own boundaries for political purposes, as has been claimed for the third-century plantation of the cult of Serapis and Isis in the Aegean by the Ptolemaic regime of Egypt.24 (2) Closely allied thereto is the process of building up local deities or heroes as symbols of national identity, in a way well illustrated by the magnification of Theseus before and after the Graeco-Persian Wars or by that of Athene herself within Athens and Attika.25 (3) Also closely allied is the picture—drawn above all by Defradas in 1954 for Delphi itself, but applicable in principle to other sanctuaries—of a cult centre actively promulgating itself and its deity. If the list now moves from visibly human action to initiatives which are deemed to be due to the deities themselves, (4) a straightforward version is that of a divine command, enunciated by an oracle to a community, to establish a specific cult, two examples among many being the injunction in the Great Rhetra to establish cults of Zeus and Athene at Sparta and the coded instruction to the Athenians in 480 to incorporate a cult of Boreas.26 (5) A variant of (4) comprises those establishments of cult where an individual is reported to have witnessed an epiphany or received an instruction but where the community, then or later, gives the cult formal recognition and space. Well-known examples include the creation of the public cult of Pan after the epiphany reported by Pheidippides, or the reception of Asklepios in Athens, with Telemachos of Acharnai as the driving force.27 (6) More informal again are establishments of cult by an enthusiast, prophet, or guru, where the individual takes the initiative but the cult remains ‘private’ in the sense of not being taken into the formal cultic calendar of the community (whether city, canton, tribe, or deme), the classic example being the cult of the Nymphs in the Vari cave set up by the nympholeptos Archedemos.28 (7) A variant of (6) comprises those cults of their homeland deities which are set up abroad by displaced persons such as slaves, freedmen, metics, or mercenaries.29 (8) Lastly, though perhaps to be left out of account as unlikely to be applicable to the present problem, are those cultic practices which are reported to have been a response to an untoward or unexpected natural or human event treated as an omen oblativum: examples are a lightning strike, a plague, a sudden violent nervous breakdown with tragic consequences, or an unexpected success or salvation.30

Such mechanisms of diffusion plainly reflect a community’s need to harness or avert the power of a particular deity. In the case of A.P., the question therefore becomes that of asking which aspect of his ascribed powers (obvious possibilities are oracular, purificatory, and legislative) formed the main attraction. Fortunately, whatever the preferred answer, one can use a fairly clear chronological horizon for its initial diffusion, for although recent reassessment of the archaeological evidence has sharply reduced the length of the period in the tenth century BCE, when Delphi may have been a ghost town, or nearly so, and has instead given it a status in the ninth and eighth centuries BCE as already a significant settlement, nevertheless there is absolutely no reliable evidence to suggest that it was a cult centre of any consequence until the dedications begin in the late ninth or early eighth century BCE.31 We must therefore be dealing with a process which does not begin to unfold until the Late Geometric period,
perhaps even towards the end of it. Indeed one might cautiously go further, for the Kretan evidence in particular, recently and most helpfully assembled and reviewed,\textsuperscript{32} shows that sanctuaries which at least were later called ‘Pythion’ were in place in Gortyn and elsewhere by the late seventh century. In consequence, the process of diffusion must have been in motion well before then.\textsuperscript{33}

That being so, various possible explanations of the process need to be canvassed, though the reader should be warned that the quest leads rather to \textit{aporia} than to tidy answers. The simplest hypothesis is institutional, namely that the diffusion reflects the crystallization of the Pylian Amphiktyony and its re-orientation towards Delphi at the expense of Anthela.\textsuperscript{34} However, although the strong showing of A.P. in Thessaly supports that hypothesis, his equally strong profile in Crete and the Aegean is intractable counter-evidence, for participation in the ‘Ionian’ ethnos-constituency never extended further east than Euboia, while participation in the ‘Dorian’ constituency came eventually to include Sparta and the Dorian states of north-eastern Peloponnese, but never embraced Crete. In any case, while a close relationship between Crete and Delphi can indeed be documented for the seventh century BCE, alike via the Kretan artefacts found at Delphi\textsuperscript{35} and via the ‘Pythian’ sanctuaries detectable on the island, Guarducci’s case that the relationship weakened from the late seventh century onwards, for whatever reason, still holds good,\textsuperscript{36} and carries with it the awkward consequence that the Kretan ‘presence’ at Delphi tailed off before the period when, on conventional understandings of the ‘Sacred War’, Amphiktyonic influence began to make itself felt there. While therefore it would be foolish to deny that the crystallization of the Amphiktyony around the Apollo sanctuary assisted the spread of the cult, that cannot be the whole story.

Nor can the known distribution of the cult be explained in purely geographical terms, for closely adjacent and easily accessible regions such as Achaia, Aitolia, Akarnania, Elis, and even Boiotia and the Korinthiadi show little trace of it. The hypothesis that the cult did not take root where there were strong local oracles would explain its absence from Boiotia or from north-western Greece, and perhaps also from Euboia if the ‘most reliable’ oracle of Selinountian Apollo at Histiaia (Strabo 10.1.3, 445C) offered an effective alternative. However, that explanation falters for the Aegean, for whose communities the oracles of Apollo at Klaros and Didyma were far more accessible. Nor, thirdly, can the diffusion of the cult of A.P. be seen as that of Apollo as patron saint of colonial foundations, tempting though the \textit{termini ante} and \textit{post quem non} render it. That conclusion is firm, not so much because he would then be \textit{Archegetes}, as on the seashore of Sicilian Naxos, or because the recent ‘colonization debate’ has argued for seeing most such claims of divine patronage as \textit{ex post facto} rationalizations,\textsuperscript{37} as because the cult is widespread in regions which had little or nothing to do with colonization (Crete itself in particular) but is absent or near-absent in communities such as Megara and above all Korinth, which tradition regarded as being among the most active colonizers. Nor, fourthly, at least in respect of the Archaic and Classical periods, should we see the cult as a reflection of Apollo as the patron saint of musical or athletic contexts. Again, the argument rests partly on the existence
of another, more appropriate epithet, Nomios, but mainly on the fact that on the conventional chronology of the Pythian Games, that aspect of Apollo does not gather force until well after the earliest Pythian sanctuaries had been established, again especially in Crete.

Even so, certain other possibilities remain open. If one thinks of the two main roles which are chartered for Apollo in the sixth-century hymns of Alkaios and ‘Homer’, that is, to speak the will of Zeus and to utter themistes, there is a plausible case for both: for him as the utterer of themistes such as the Great Rhetra because of the role as repositories of public documentation which Pythian sanctuaries came to play, and for him as oracular mouthpiece, both because that is what we should expect in any case, and particularly because, as noted above, A.P. is noticeably sparse or absent in areas such as Boiotia or north-west Greece, which had active oracles of their own. However, again there are difficulties. To invoke his oracular function in general, whether for private or public guidance, fails to explain why it should be the ‘Pythian’ oracle of Apollo at Delphi which was being favoured, rather than one of his other oracles in (say) Boiotia or Asia Minor: we need to be looking for some specialized but nonetheless widely needed sub-set of oracular pronouncements, wherein Delphi was deemed to have special authority.

One remaining possibility is therefore the need for purification, for that is a perpetually recurring theme in the oracles attributed to Pythian Apollo, and its prevalence has to be taken seriously even if every single example is marked down, by Fontenrose’s or other criteria, as a falsum. In this context the ritual purifications which are widely attested in leges sacrae for pollution incurred by birth or death matter less than homicide, the pollution which it engenders, and the purifications which are deemed to neutralize such pollution. Over twenty years ago Robert Parker made a very plausible case (a) for seeing the package of ideas and phobias comprised in the concept of pollution as ‘a kind of shadowy spiritual Doppelgänger of the law’, and (b) for linking them with the versions of homicide law which crystallized in the seventh century BCE, such laws being part of the growth in a community’s need and capacity not so much to control this basic breakdown in proper human behaviour, as to manage its consequences.38

The trouble is that though in principle Parker’s analysis offers an attractive explanation for why the cult of A.P. came to be invoked and to take root outside Delphi, the supporting evidence is frail. Two texts do indeed illustrate a direct link, but both are taken from Pausanias, with all the dangerous baggage of antiquarian elaboration through the centuries which such paternity implies (though also with the high marks for reporter’s accuracy which recent work has awarded him). The first concerns the crime of Krotopous39 in killing Poiné, whom Apollo had sent to punish the Argives because the sheepdogs of Krotopous had killed the child which Apollo himself had fathered on Krotopous’s daughter Psamathe. Krotopous himself sorts out the ensuing inversion of moral order (plague) by submitting himself to Delphi, where he was forbidden to return to Argos and ordered instead to take a tripod away and to live, and to build a temple, at the place where it eventually slipped out of his hands—
which was Tripodiskoi in western Megarid. Now of course this is ‘pure’ aetiological myth to account for the place-name Tripodiskos—of course it is Apollo taking vengeance for the death of his child, but it is also an explanation of why there was a temple of Apollo at that spot, and more importantly still an example of how to redeem a murderer by chartering a legitimate residence for him in exile. The second text, the foundation myth of the Athenian cultic lineage of the Kephalidai, contains closely similar structural motifs. Again a murder, this time of his wife Prokris by Kephalos; again an exile, to Thebes before leaving to found Kephallenia; again a desire to return, this time on the part of two descendants of his; again a consultation of Delphi; again an injunction to do so but to found a temple at a place where certain conditions would be fulfilled, in this instance the Apollo sanctuary which Travlos locates underneath the eleventh-century monastery church at Dafni.

The trouble is that even if such myths could be reliably deemed to have crystallized in the Archaic period, and to reflect community preoccupations of that epoch accurately, they scarcely begin to match the widespread distribution of the cult of A.P. In theory, indeed, it is easy to accept that its diffusion could reflect a specific aspect of the role of oracular Apollo, namely that of offering practical ways in which homicide could be negotiated, and its destructive effects mitigated, in the interests alike of the community, of the murderer himself, or his relatives, and of the relatives of his victim. Such a pattern of diffusion would suit the horizon of the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, when population increase—surely real, whatever we make of the quantitative arguments—will have fuelled tensions over land and inheritance, and will have generated a need for clear rules about homicide. It could therefore have made the oracular shrine which showed an interest in such matters into a source of authority and legitimation, both of one-off solutions for each individual murderer, and of codified general solutions for those polities which experienced significant disruption. That much said, the case is fragile, for only a clear correlation between regions that adopted the cult of A.P., and regions that were particularly troubled by the need to negotiate homicide, would provide proof. That will scarcely be forthcoming, for though one may take comfort from the fact that Athens–Attika—plainly very active in adopting the cult—was one community for which a preoccupation with homicide can be firmly documented for the seventh century BCE, while somewhat later Gortyn on Crete was another, neither they nor such few other early homicide laws as are reported or attested show themselves much preoccupied with purification: only in the case of Kleonai is the link explicit.

The argument therefore ends, disconcertingly and disappointingly, in bafflement. On the one hand we have a ‘network’ of attestations of the cult of Apollo Pythios, widely though not uniformly spread throughout the pre-Alexander Greek world, and plainly in some sense reflecting the importance of the Apolline sanctuary of Delphi. On the other hand no single explanation goes very far to explain its general diffusion, still less its specific distribution pattern; while to invoke all suggested explanations in combination is a sad abdication of investigative scholarship. One might, with strictly guarded optimism, hope that the discovery and excavation of further sanctuaries...
identifiable as Pythia would increase the number of regional *termini post quos non*, and perhaps allow different explanations to have predominated at different epochs. Until then, however, all I can do is to pose the problem and to leave it open to others.

**Acknowledgements**

My warmest thanks for their assistance go to Dr Mili (n. 11 above), and to Professor Robert Parker, whose speed, kindness, precision and general helpfulness in reading a draft of this paper were palmary. She and he bear no responsibility for any remaining *bétes*. My thanks also to the editors, and to the suggestions made by two anonymous referees, which I have gratefully incorporated.

**Notes**

[5] Myrina on Lesbos, and Apollonia (but which Apollonia is not clear) (Plut. *De Pyth. Or.* 16 = *Mor.* 402A); Metapontion (Strabo 6.1.15, 264C). The human *ver sacrum* dedications made by Eretrians and Magnesians and cited by Plutarch (ibid.), even if historical, should likewise be left on one side.
[7] Davies, 'Attestations of the Cult of Apollo Pythios'.
[10] Jost, *Sanctuaires et cultes*, 490–91, reads Paus. 2.7.7–9 as implying a temple of A.P. in the *agora* of Sikyon, but the myth linking the historical temple of Peitho with the need for Artemis and Apollo to be purified after killing Python does not justify the inference.
[11] I am exceptionally grateful to Dr Maria Mili, who has allowed me to use the evidence she has collected, for Apollo Pythios as for other cults of Apollo, in her ‘Studies in Thessalian Religion’.
[17] Ibid., 324 n. 30.
[22] References in *Neue Pauly*, and more fully in *Kleine Pauly*, s.v. *Diktyyna*. 

Thus Roesch, ‘Les cultes égyptiens’; Fraser, ‘Two Studies’, was more cautious.


See Burkert, ‘Greek Temple-Builders’, 27.

See the cults attested in the silver-mining region round Laureion (Lauffer, *Bergwerkssklaven*, 277–85, or the examples cited by Chaniotis, *War in the Hellenistic World*, 149–54).


It is tempting to use the extreme rarity of the month-name Pythoios (attested only at Halos and Meliteia in Thessaly: Samuel, *Greek and Roman Chronology*, 81) as an index of late diffusion, but given the evidence in Linear B of month-names of recognizable later form (Ventris and Chadwick, *Documents*, 304–5) and the accompanying likelihood that calendars had crystallized long before the late seventh century, month-names unfortunately tell us little. Likewise, the known distribution of names in *Pnpt*—emerges too late, and is subject to too many contributory factors, to be a useful indicator. My thanks, nonetheless, to the referee who raised these points.


See the papers in Hurst and Owen, *Ancient Colonizations*.

Parker, *Miasma*, 104–43.

Paus. 1.43.7–8. Structuralists will enjoy the *noms parlants*.

Boethius, *Die Pythais* 74–75, ingeniously combined Paus. 8.15.5 with Plut. *De sero numinis vindicto* 16 (Mor. 557C) to yield a third case, but cf. Jost, *Sanctuaires et cultes*, 489–91, for a wholly different analysis.

Paus. 1.37.6–7, with Parker, *Athenian Religion*, 300. For much further detail on Kephalos, see Kearns, *Heroes of Attica*, 70 and 177.

Travlos, *Bildlexikon*, 177.

*IG* I 104 = *ML* 86 = *Nomima* I, 02.

*IC* IV 8 and 9 ( = *Nomima* II, 78).

*Nomima* I, 01 = *SEG* XXXIX 13 = *IGT* 86*, of debated paternity from south-eastern Sicily, ?525–500; ML 20 = *Nomima* I, 43 (Naupaktos, mid-fifth-century BCE, an *andreonikos tethmos*). Ad hominem measures such as the curses of Teos (ML 30 = *Nomima* I, 104, c. 475), the judgement against sacrilegious persons at Mantinea (*IG* V 2, 262 = *IGT* 34 = *Nomima* II, 2), or the Alkmæonid curse (Thuc. 1.126–27) are a different matter.

*Nomima* II, 79 = *IGT* no. 32.
Abbreviations


IG Inscriptiones Graecae. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1873.


References


———. ’Attestations of the Cult of Apollo Pythios.’ Forthcoming.


Copyright of Mediterranean Historical Review is the property of Routledge and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.