



**THE ATHENS GREEK RELIGION SEMINAR, Tuesday, November 18, 2025**

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***The Cult of Apollo Zoster at Halai Aixonides in the 5th and 4th Centuries BC***

**ABSTRACT**

This lecture explores the cult of Apollo *Zoster* worshipped in the sanctuary located within the territory of the Attic deme of Halai Aixonides, at Vouliagmeni. The *epiclesis* of the god is due to the mythological episode in which Leto, on her way to Delos to give birth, loosened her belt at this cape (hence the name *Zoster*), establishing a strong symbolic connection with Delos from the very beginning. Although some evidence suggests a pre-Cleisthenic phase of worship, the sanctuary underwent its first monumentalization around the turn of the 6th and 5th centuries BC, coinciding with Cleisthenes' political reorganization of Attica and the emergence of new deme identities. Within this historical framework, from the early decades of the 5th century BC, the sanctuary stands out not only as a local religious center, but also, as the epigraphical evidence suggests, as a crucial site for the construction and expression of collective identity among the Halaieis. In the 4th century BC, the sanctuary continued to hold particular significance for the local community, also serving as a place for the display of deme decrees, and its relevance was not limited to the local level: in the same period, Hyperides referred to the episode of Leto at Cape Zoster to support Athens' claims over Delos, reaffirming the connection between Attica and the sacred island. From this narrative and historical premise, the presentation proceeds to examine the ritual practices and the sanctuary's administrative *status* in relation to the *polis*, drawing on literary and epigraphic sources that shed light on its organization and role within the wider religious landscape of Attica.

**The seminar takes place Tuesday, November 18, 2025, 17.00 (Athens) in a hybrid format with live presence at the Swedish Institute at Athens and online via Zoom.**

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