

PROSOPOGRAPHICA PINDARICA

The Eighth Olympian

Pindar's Eighth Olympian celebrates the victory of Alkimedon of Aigina in the boys' wrestling at Olympia in 460. This victory was the sixth won by a member of this family (line 76). The absence of detail about most of these victories suggests that the family had had little success in the great Panhellenic competitions and that the majority were won at minor festivals. However, one of the remaining five victories was certainly won in one of the four festivals which made up the *periodos*. In lines 15-18, after preparatory generalizations about the diversity of paths to achievement, all with divine aid, Pindar describes the path of achievement, and the source of divine aid, which features in the victor's family:

Τιμόσθενες, ὅμμε δ' ἐκλάρωσεν πότμος
Ζηνὶ γενέθλιωι· ὃς σὲ μὲν Νεμέαι πρόφατον,¹
Ἀλκιμέδοντα δὲ παρ Κρόνου λόφωι
θῆκεν Ὀλυμπιονίκαν.

Timosthenes, in your case fate allotted you to Zeus as your family god, who made you pre-eminent at Nemea and Alkimedon Olympic victor by the Hill of Kronos.

Pindar speaks at *O.* 13.105 of a δαίμων γενέθλιος (cf. *I.* 1.39f. πότμος συγγενῆς). Alkimedon's family has the highest δαίμων γενέθλιος, Zeus γενέθλιος himself. With the god who presides over two of the four great Panhellenic festivals as its patron, it is no surprise that the family has achieved victories at those festivals. Pindar's statement is clearly an assumption based on the family victories in games held in honour of Zeus.²

The Timosthenes addressed here is clearly a close relative of Alkimedon. From the fact that his victory preceded that of Alkimedon, one would naturally suppose that he is an older relative. He is not however the victor's father. This is strongly suggested by the emphasis on the grandfather (rather than the father) in lines 70-3 as the person chiefly delighted by the victory, and also by the similarity of 77ff. (where two dead members of the family are to hear in Hades of the victory) to *O.* 14.20ff. (where Echo is to announce the victory to the victor's dead father in Hades). *O.* 8.77ff. seems to be intended, like *O.* 14.20ff., to console the victor on the early loss of his father by suggesting that the father, though dead, can still feel pride and pleasure at his son's achievement.³ Who then is Timosthenes? The scholiasts tell us that he was Alkimedon's brother,⁴ and this view has never, to my knowledge, been called into question. Indeed, the scholiasts' statement has been used as a basis for biographical conjecture. It has been suggested that the trainer Melesias who is praised at length later in the ode (lines 54-66) had trained not only Alkimedon but also Timosthenes;

¹ For the text in line 16 see P. von der Mühll, *MH* 11 (1954), 53f.

² U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Pindaros* (Berlin, 1922), 403 suggests that Pindar refers to a cult of Zeus in the victor's family. But ἐκλάρωσεν πότμος in 15 suggests a relationship imposed by destiny rather than one created and maintained by the family. That the relationship is a deduction of Pindar's based on the family's success in games in honour of Zeus does not of course diminish the seriousness of the point, either for Pindar or for his audience; cf. *N.* 10.29-36.

³ For the element of consolation cf. C. Segal, *AJP* 106 (1985), 211f., also A. Miller, *TAPA* 107 (1977), 233-4 (on *O.* 14.20ff.).

⁴ Schol. 16, 19b in A. B. Drachmann, *Scholia vetera in Pindari carmina* i (Leipzig, 1903), p. 241.

it has also been suggested that Timosthenes, with only a Nemean victory to his credit, was jealous of his younger brother's success at Olympia.⁵ However, the identification advanced by the scholiasts is unlikely to be more than a reasoned conjecture. We can in fact be fairly sure that ancient scholarship had no independent source of information about Alkimedon's family. This is indicated by the uncertainty in the scholia about the precise relationship of the individuals named in lines 81–2 to Alkimedon. Iphion is described as 'ancestor', 'father', or 'merely a relative', Kallimachos as 'relative' or 'uncle'.⁶ If ancient scholars had to resort to conjecture in order to identify the victor's father, it is on the whole unlikely that they had any authority for their identification of the victor's brother.

We might of course suppose that the confident statement in the scholiasts is based on the *date* of Timosthenes' Nemean victory. This however is unlikely to be the case. Alexandrian scholars had little information concerning victors at Nemea and the Isthmus, as the general absence of dates from the scholia on these books indicates, in contrast to the scholia on Pindar's Olympian and Pythian odes. Such information as they do offer is unreliable. The scholiasts tell us that neither the victor praised in *N.* 8 nor his father was included in the Nemean victory lists;⁷ yet Pindar tells us clearly (*N.* 8.16) that both had won at Nemea. They give us an impossible date for *N.* 7, though admittedly that may be the result of textual corruption.⁸ They tell us, on the authority of Asklepiades,⁹ that Alkimidas of Aigina, who belonged by birth to the Aiginetan family of the Bassidai (*N.* 6.15ff., 31ff.), appeared in the victor lists as Ἀλκιμίδας Θέωνος Κρής. Modern scholars, impressed by the authority of Asklepiades, have explained this entry by suggesting that Alkimidas was given in adoption to a Cretan living on Aigina as a metic,¹⁰ or alternatively that he belonged to the Aiginetan colony at Kydonia in Crete.¹¹ Against the first conjecture we may urge the inherent improbability that any Greek would give a son in adoption to a metic, in view of the severe political and social limitations which would result for the child. Against both we may urge the improbability that Pindar would pass over in silence a Cretan connection which was apparently of sufficient importance to the athlete to justify its public proclamation on the occasion of the victory; elsewhere Pindar readily stresses dual origin or dual nationality on the part of his patrons (*O.* 6, *O.* 12, *N.* 2). It is more likely that Asklepiades' statement is an error based on poor lists. We may conclude from the paucity, and the poor quality, of the information supplied in the scholia to the Nemean and Isthmian odes that ancient critics were in no better position than moderns to date Timosthenes' victory.

Although the identification of Timosthenes offered by the scholia is likely to be conjecture, it is at least a reasonable conjecture. It is however unlikely to be correct, for it raises a problem which has hitherto gone unobserved. If Timosthenes is

⁵ For Melesias as Timosthenes' trainer see B. L. Gildersleeve, *Pindar: the Olympian and Pythian Odes*² (New York, 1890), p. 193, C. E. Whitmore, *Studies in Philology* 15 (1918), 346. For Timosthenes as jealous of Alkimedon see Whitmore l.c., following Paton in *CR* 4 (1890), 318. This view is disposed of by Gildersleeve in *AJP* 40 (1919), 105.

⁶ Schol. 106a, d, f, h, k, Drachmann 262–3. Cf. W. S. Barrett in *Dionysiaca* (Cambridge, 1978), p. 4.

⁷ Schol. *N.* 8. inscr. in A. B. Drachmann, *Scholia vetera* iii (Leipzig, 1927), p. 140.

⁸ Schol. *N.* 7. inscr., Drachmann iii.116. For a discussion of the problem see C. Carey, *A Commentary on Five Odes of Pindar* (New York, 1981), p. 133.

⁹ *N.* 6. inscr., Drachmann iii.101. H. Mähler, *Hermes* 113 (1985), 401 is skeptical.

¹⁰ T. Bergk, *Poetae lyriici Graeci* (Leipzig, 1878), i.280, Wilamowitz 399, L. R. Farnell, *The Works of Pindar* (London, 1930), ii.283.

¹¹ L. Dissen in his commentary *ap.* A. Boeckh, *Pindari opera* 2.ii (Leipzig, 1821), 403. For the colony at Kydonia see Hdt. 3.59, Strabo 376.

Alkimedon's brother, Pindar refers to two living relatives of the victor in this ode, his brother and his grandfather (71–3). The grandfather is then not named; he cannot be one of the men named in 81–2, for he is alive while they are dead. However, it is Pindar's practice, when dealing with individual relatives of his patrons, to designate the individuals concerned by name alone, or by name and relationship, rather than simply to give the relationship alone. Of 37 cases in the odes and fragments where Pindar defines an individual in terms of family relationship, he gives both name and relationship in 26;¹² relationship alone (without name) is given in only 8 cases,¹³ with 3 passages in which the name is possibly or probably, but not certainly, supplied, including *O.* 8.70–3.¹⁴ This is hardly surprising. The epinician poet offers the victor and the other objects of praise immortality in song (e.g. *O.* 10.86–96, *N.* 7.11–16, *Bakch.* 3.90ff.). For immortality the naming is essential. To be preserved in song as an anonymous father, uncle or grandfather is not to be preserved at all. In contrast, to be named in song without having one's precise relationship to the patron defined is still to be preserved, as *O.* 6.88, *O.* 8.81–2, *O.* 9.84, *N.* 5.50, *I.* 2.47, *I.* 6.65. It is the naming which immortalizes. Of the certain exceptions to Pindar's general practice, one (*P.* 5.114) concerns a woman and may not be significant. It may have been felt that a woman should not be named in the masculine context of a victory-ode, in contrast to the feminine context of a maiden-song (fr. 94b.66, 71).¹⁵ Of the exceptions involving males, it is striking that no less than five (*O.* 2.49, *P.* 1.79, *P.* 6.46, *P.* 10.69, *I.* 2.28f.) concern members of ruling families, whose fame had other means of preservation; indeed, in the cases of *O.* 2, *P.* 6, and *I.* 2 we are dealing with individuals who had other victory odes addressed to them. We may suggest therefore that to omit the name in these cases is significantly different from the omission of the name of a private citizen from an otherwise unknown family. Of the two remaining exceptions, *N.* 6.22 concerns people of whom Pindar has only athletic obscurity to report; silence in this case may be dictated by tact (*I.* 1.63 *πολλάκι καὶ τὸ σεσωπαμένον εὐθυμίαν μείζω φέρει*). *O.* 5.23 however cannot be explained away so easily, unless (which I am reluctant to assume) *υἱῶν... παρισταμένων* is a prayer for the birth of sons rather than for the health of existing sons.

Clearly the existence of exceptions, and of at least one exception which cannot be rationalized, forbids dogmatism. Nonetheless, we have clear evidence of a consistent tendency of Pindar's, particularly where his patron is a private citizen, to name individual relatives rather than to refer to them merely in terms of relationship. Moreover, we have seen that this practice arises naturally, almost inevitably, from the poet's aims as a panegyrist. The latter point is particularly important in view of the

¹² Father: *O.* 5.8, *O.* 7.17, *O.* 13.35, 41, *O.* 14.21, *P.* 6.15 (with 6), *P.* 10.12 (with 16), *P.* 11.43, *N.* 4.14, *N.* 7.91 (with 7), *N.* 8.16, *N.* 11.11, *I.* 1.34, *I.* 2.44 (with 14), *I.* 8.2; grandfather: *N.* 4.89, *N.* 6.16; paternal uncle: *I.* 8.66; maternal uncle: *P.* 8.35, *N.* 4.80, *N.* 5.43, *N.* 10.37, *I.* 6.62, *I.* 7.24; son: *P.* 1.70 (with 58), fr. 94b.10. Total 26. I have ignored cases in which the victor or a relative or associate is called 'son of X' since in such cases it is impossible to avoid naming the parent. I append a list of such cases: *O.* 3.9, *O.* 6.8, 80, *O.* 10.2, 99, *O.* 11.12, *O.* 12.13, *P.* 1.79, *P.* 2.17, *P.* 4.59, *P.* 8.19f., *P.* 9.71, *P.* 10.5, *N.* 1.29, *N.* 2.10, *N.* 3.20, *N.* 5.4, *N.* 7.7, *N.* 9.42, *N.* 10.24, *I.* 2.29, *I.* 4.45, *I.* 5.20, *I.* 6.3, 16, *I.* 7.31, fr. 120, 123.15, 333a.6. Total 29. Cumulative total 55.

¹³ Relationship only: *O.* 5.23 (sons), *O.* 2.49 (brother), *P.* 1.79 (sons), *P.* 5.114 (mother), *P.* 6.46 (paternal uncle), *P.* 10.69 (brothers), *N.* 6.22 (sons), *I.* 2.28f. (sons).

¹⁴ Uncertain: *O.* 8.70f. (grandfather), *N.* 6.23f. (sons), fr. 94b.69. *O.* 8.70f. and *N.* 6.23f. are dealt with in this paper. In fr. 94b it is likely that the name as well as the relationship is supplied in the text; see L. Lehnus, *BICS* 31 (1984), 84f.

¹⁵ We may tentatively compare the general reluctance of speakers addressing Athenian juries to name female relatives or women of good repute; see D. Schaps, *CQ* 27 (1977), 323–30.

context in which Pindar refers to the grandfather. For he pointedly refers to the proximity of death in lines 73–4. It would be surprising in this context if he also left the old man nameless, thus depriving him of remembrance in song, especially since he proceeds in 81–2 to name two dead relatives. Thus we would expect the grandfather to be named. And the ode in fact offers a name, Timosthenes. We have no reason to suppose that this refers to a separate individual beyond a statement in the scholia which we have seen to be without foundation. Modern scholars would probably have had little difficulty in recognizing Timosthenes as the grandfather, despite the interval between the naming and the definition of relationship, but for the confidence with which the scholiasts present unfounded conjecture as incontrovertible fact.

The proposed identification gives added point to Pindar's description in 70–1 of the effect on the grandfather of Alkimedon's victory:

πατρὶ δὲ πατρός ἐνέπνευσεν μένος
γήραος ἀντίπαλον.

ἀντίπαλον is a term taken from wrestling, and it is used here to provide a complimentary reference to the victor's own discipline, by a procedure common in Pindar; *δυσπαλές* in 25 is another example. However, the choice of adjective is also highly appropriate to the grandfather, for we can be reasonably sure, in view of 74–5, which point to a tradition of participation in wrestling by the Blepsiadai, that Timosthenes too had won as a wrestler. Pride and joy in his grandson's achievement rekindle in the old man the fighting spirit (μένος) which made him a successful wrestler in his youth and enable him to shrug off the weakness of old age and forget the proximity of death.

More important, the identification is a significant aid to a proper understanding of the myth. In 31–52 Pindar tells how Apollo and Poseidon took Aiakos with them when they went to build the walls of Troy. When the task was completed, three serpents tried to leap on the wall; two of them fell and died, while the third succeeded.¹⁶ This portent is interpreted by Apollo as follows (42–6):¹⁷

Πέργαμος ἀμφὶ τεαῖς, ἥρωις, χερὸς ἐργασίαις ἀλίσκεται·
ὥς ἐμοὶ φάσμα λέγει Κρονίδα

¹⁶ For a survey of views on the precise significance of the portent see E. Robbins, *CQ* 36 (1986), 317f.

¹⁷ I have retained the MSS readings in 45–6. If ἄρξεται is correct in 45 the sentence must mean 'will begin with the first and (end) with the fourth' (certainly 'will be ruled' is impossible; 'parebit', offered by L. Dissen, *Pindari carmina*, rev. F. G. Schneidewin (Gotha, 1843), p. 113. 'shall be subdued' offered by C. A. M. Fennell, *Pindar: the Olympian and Pythian Odes*² (Cambridge, 1893), p. 89, and Gildersleeve's 'will be swayed', p. 197, merely evade the problem). This is awkward, and evidently unparalleled, but surely not impossible. Of modern conjectures, ῥάσσεται from ῥάσσω (Gildersleeve/Wilamowitz) and ῥήσεται (Bergk) from ῥήγνυμι have found favour; but both seem melodramatic after the factual ἀλίσκεται in 42. Of proposed changes the most plausible is Jurenka's ἔρξεται, 'will be achieved'. This may seem pallid compared with the alternatives, but in fact ἔρδω/ῥέζω are reserved in Pindar for significant action, usually physical achievement. For ἔρδω/ῥέζω resuming a more precise verb cf. *O.* 9.92–4. MSS τετράτοις may be retained if we accept, with A. J. Beattie, *CR* 5 (1955), 2, E. K. Borthwick, *CQ* 26 (1976), 203 n. 29, Robbins 319 that Pindar reckons inclusively; πρώτοις then refers to Aiakos himself, the first generation of the family, and τετράτοις to Neoptolemos, the fourth generation (Robbins 318 n. 6 gives good reason to doubt the common assumption that Pindar also has in mind Epeios, builder of the wooden horse). πρώτοις is commonly referred to the successful expedition of Herakles against Troy, in which Aiakos' sons Telamon (*N.* 3.37, *N.* 4.25ff., *I.* 6.27ff.) and (at least according to fr. 172 and Eur. *Andr.* 796ff.) Peleus participated; so most recently T. K. Hubbard, *GRBS* 28 (1987), 18 n. 35. Hence the popularity of Ahrens' conjecture τετράτοις, which introduces an otherwise unattested form.

πεμφθὲν βαρυγδούπου Διός·
οὐκ ἄτερ παίδων σέθεν, ἀλλ' ἅμα πρώτοις ἄρξεται
καὶ τετράτοις.

The scholiasts cite Didymos to the effect that no earlier source than Pindar includes Aiakos in the building of the Trojan walls.¹⁸ It is therefore reasonable to assume that the myth told in *O.* 8 is Pindar's invention.¹⁹ It appears to have its origin in *I.* 6.433f., where reference is made to a weak point in the Trojan wall, and the *Little Iliad*, where the Trojans demolish a section of the wall to let in the wooden horse.²⁰ By tradition the walls of Troy were built by Poseidon and Apollo (*Il.* 7.451ff., 21.441ff.). One would expect a wall built by gods to be impregnable, and on this assumption Pindar bases his introduction of Aiakos to provide the necessary element of vulnerability. Méautis,²¹ citing *O.* 1.52 and *O.* 9.35ff. (cf. *O.* 1.35), where Pindar rejects myths about the gods as incredible or unsuitable for poetry on ethical-religious grounds, suggests that Pindar's reshaping of the myth in *O.* 8 was motivated by considerations of piety: 'Il estimait que la tradition qu'il trouvait dans l'*Illiade* était véritablement indigne de la majesté divine'. Certainly the myth as told by Pindar is based on fundamental Greek beliefs about the immense gulf which separates man from the gods. Pindar is quite explicit that this was the reason for the gods' inclusion of Aiakos in their task (33ff.).²² But if the myth is read in the context of the ode we can see that Pindar's purpose in altering the myth was not to offer an implicit criticism of the epic tradition but to create a parallel for the victor and his family. As well as picking up (through the remarkable divine favour enjoyed by Aiakos) the theme of divine favour stressed in the praise of both the victor (lines 8, 14, 15ff.) and his city (25ff.),²³ the myth also reflects two specific features of the victor's situation. One of these is the element of prophecy. The first seven verses of the ode deal with the oracle of Zeus at Olympia, specifically its consultation by athletes eager to obtain information about their immediate future from the god of the games in which they are about to compete. It has often been suggested that Alkimedon or his family had consulted the oracle of Zeus and had received a favourable response.²⁴ It is in fact exceedingly unlikely that Pindar would have given so much space and prominence to the oracle and its consultation by athletes if this had no bearing on Alkimedon, that is, if he had not consulted the oracle or if the response had been unfavourable; his practice elsewhere suggests that the opening of the ode is used to establish general principles which have particular relevance to the victor.²⁵ The idea of prediction re-emerges in the praise of

¹⁸ Schol. *O.* 8.41a, Drachmann i.247.

¹⁹ It is often supposed that Pindar derived his myth from a non-literary (Aiginetan) source; see Boeckh 181, Dissen 112, Wilamowitz 405, M. Van der Kolf, *Quomodo Pindarus fabulas tractaverit* (Rotterdam, 1923), p. 31, Farnell i.45. No argument is offered for this belief, which appears to rest on a disinclination to credit Pindar with invention on this scale. However, Pindar like other Greek poets freely alters and invents when narrating myths. His silence about this crucial role for Aiakos elsewhere in the odes, and presumably (given the silence of the scholia) elsewhere in the corpus, despite frequent mention of Aiakos and specific praise at *N.* 8.7ff., *I.* 8.21ff., suggests that the myth was invented for *O.* 8. Hubbard 20f. argues for Pindaric invention.

²⁰ Proklos *Chrest.* in T. W. Allen, *Homeri opera* v (Oxford, 1946), 107.

²¹ G. Méautis, *Pindare le dorien* (Neuchâtel, 1962), 349.

²² Robbins 320 is therefore wrong to speak of 'a humanized Apollo' in *O.* 8.

²³ For Pindar's tendency to trace parallels between the victor and his city cf. *Eranos* 78 (1980), 162 with n. 74.

²⁴ See Boeckh 179f., Dissen 108, Fennell 83, Gildersleeve 192, Farnell ii.60, Méautis 345, J. Pörtulas, *Lectura de Pindaro* (Barcelona, 1977), p. 37; this view is reported without comment by L. Lehnus, *Pindaro: le Olimpiche* (Milan, 1981), p. 136.

²⁵ Cf. Carey 137, following E. Thummer, *Pindar: die isthmischen Gedichte* (Heidelberg, 1968-9), i.108.

Melesias in 62–4, where ‘prophecy’ assumes a secular form; as the oracle of Zeus can tell who will win in the games, Melesias with his unsurpassed experience can tell the athlete how he will win. Pindar provides a parallel for both the divine and the human prediction in the role of Apollo in the myth. The second parallel concerns Timosthenes as well as Alkimedon. In the victor’s family Pindar sees a fateful connection (πότμος 15) with Zeus. The connection is begun by the grandfather’s victory at Nemea, but it is only completed (and perceived) when his grandson wins at Olympia. Thus we have a destiny which takes generations to come to fulfilment. The myth too tells of a fated sequence of events (πεπρωμένον 33). The destiny of Troy is begun by Aiakos, but for its completion it must wait for Aiakos’ descendant Neoptolemos, who will take the city. This parallel is, we may reasonably suppose, Pindar’s real reason for introducing Aiakos into the tale of the building of the Trojan walls.²⁶ In the victor’s family he sees the slow and obscure working of an unswerving destiny, and he seeks to reflect this in the myth. The two parallels discussed above are of course closely related, for the prophecy received by Alkimedon at Olympia and the portent sent by Zeus and interpreted by Apollo themselves testify to a future which is foreordained, though beyond the perception of mortal man.

As was noted above, the scholiasts were ignorant of the identity of the other members of the victor’s family named in the ode. They do however record a view that Iphion was the victor’s father, and modern scholars have again followed them, with varying degrees of confidence.²⁷ They may of course be correct. However, it is surprising that the father should be treated as an intermediary in this way rather than, as at the close of *O.* 14, as the recipient of the news of the son’s victory. I therefore think it more likely that Kallimachos, whose name appears in the second, climactic, position in 81–2, was the victor’s father and Iphion another kinsman who had died more recently.

The Sixth Nemean

Pindar’s Sixth Nemean opens with a pronouncement on man’s simultaneous kinship with and distance from the gods, expressed in a sequence of contrasting statements of a sort familiar in Pindar when he wishes to express a tension between mutually opposed tendencies.²⁸ Man resembles the gods in his capacity for greatness, physical or mental (4–5). But human life is insecure and unpredictable (6–7), in contrast to the security of the gods (expressed through the image of the bronze heaven, 3).

²⁶ It seems at first surprising that Pindar should introduce Aiakos instead of exploiting the existing legends of the first (under Herakles) and second (under Agamemnon) Trojan expeditions of the Aiakidai in order to mirror the athletic achievements of grandfather and grandson. However, by introducing Aiakos into the tale of the building of the wall Pindar creates a causally related sequence of events (Aiakos’ participation creates a weakness in the wall which later enables his great-grandson to capture Troy) and thereby presents the fulfilment of a meaningful destiny. Nonetheless the complete silence of Apollo about the first Aiakid assault on Troy (according to the interpretation adopted in n. 17 above) requires explanation, for this expedition was successful. Probably the reason is twofold: (i) Troy was defeated but not destroyed by the expedition of Herakles, while the expedition under Agamemnon destroyed it completely; (ii) Pindar is more interested in emphasizing the interval of generations between the beginning of the destined fall of Troy by Aiakos and the completion of the task by Neoptolemos than in presenting a complete chronicle of Aiakid contact with Troy. The inclusion of Telamon would merely clutter and confuse the myth.

²⁷ Cf. Boeckh 186, Disson 119, Gildersleeve 192, Fennell 92, F. Nisetich, *Pindar’s Victory Songs* (Baltimore, 1980), p. 118, Lehnus 141. Hubbard 21 n. 44 inclines to Beattie’s view that Kallimachos is Alkimedon’s great-grandfather; this is mere speculation.

²⁸ Cf. *P.* 8.88–97, *P.* 10.17–30.

This pronouncement is then exemplified (καί νυν 8) in the victor's family, in which athletic achievement shows a striking tendency to appear in alternate generations. Alkimidas has won at Nemea, but his father evidently has no athletic success to his credit. However, Alkimidas' grandfather, Praxidamas, had a very distinguished athletic career, itemized in 17–20. Praxidamas' father, Sokleidas, in turn had no athletic success (20). Of this Sokleidas Pindar says (21–4):

ὃς ὑπέρτατος
'Αγησιμάχοι' ὑέων γένετο,
ἐπεὶ οἱ τρεῖς ἀεθλοφόροι πρὸς ἄκρον ἀρετᾶς
ἦλθον, οἳ τε πόνων ἐγεύσαντο.

...who became the greatest of the sons of Hagesimachos, when/since his three prizewinners reached the peak of achievement, who tasted labours.

This passage has frequently been misunderstood. The scholiasts, followed by some moderns, take ὑπέρτατος in 21 as 'eldest'.²⁹ However, as Bury rightly notes,³⁰ for the proposed meaning an additional word such as γενεάι is required, and the ἐπεὶ clause which follows makes no sense unless ὑπέρτατος means 'greatest'. In 23 οἱ is sometimes referred to Sokleidas' father, Hagesimachos.³¹ Sokleidas is then one of four sons of Hagesimachos; he is the only non-achiever of the siblings, the others being successful athletes. This is unlikely in context. The ἐπεὶ clause in 23 should explain what precedes. This it can only do if οἱ refers to Sokleidas (though not a successful athlete himself he achieved vicarious eminence in the family through the successes of his sons). If οἱ refers to Hagesimachos, we should expect an adversative rather than a causal or temporal connection in 23 ('Sokleidas became the greatest of Hagesimachos' sons; and yet Hagesimachos' three other sons were victorious athletes').

We have then three sons of Sokleidas in 23f. Of these three sons, Praxidamas is praised at length in 15–20. The other two however are not named in 23f. Later in the ode (34–44), Pindar praises two successful athletes in the family, Kallias and Kreontidas. Modern scholars have in general been satisfied to identify these simply as members of the victor's family or clan.³² However, Wilamowitz suggested tentatively that Kallias and Kreontidas were the other two sons of Sokleidas.³³ His suggestion, largely ignored by subsequent writers, is recommended both by chronological considerations and by Pindar's deployment of proper names when dealing with relatives of the victor, in and out of *N.* 6.

The identification is certainly plausible on chronological grounds. The praise of Kallias and Kreontidas is preceded by a generalized praise of the family, in which Pindar describes the Bassidai as 'famed of old' (παλαίφατος γενεά 31). His description of the family is explicitly illustrated (καί γάρ 34) in the account of the

²⁹ Schol. *N.* 6.30, Drachmann iii.105; so also Dissen *ap.* Boeckh 410, J. E. Sandys, *Pindar* (London, 1919), p. 371, LSJ s.v. II.

³⁰ J. B. Bury, *The Nemean Odes of Pindar* (London, 1890), p. 107.

³¹ So G. Fraccaroli, *Le odi di Pindaro* (Milan, 1914), ii.259, Sandys 366, A. Puech, *Pindare* iii (Paris, 1923), 74.

³² Cf. e.g. Bury 100 ('Bassids, though probably not very nearly related to Alkimidas'), Farnell ii.284 ('We know nothing of Hagesimachos or his other sons, nor the names of the others sons of Sokleidas'), R. Lattimore, *The Odes of Pindar*² (Chicago, 1946), pp. 172–3 (Kallias and Kreontidas are each described as: 'An ancestor or relative of Alkimidas'), Nisetich 255 ('fellow clansmen').

³³ Wilamowitz 399; he is followed only by P. Waring, *A Textual and Linguistic Commentary on Five Nemean Odes of Pindar* (diss. Cambridge, 1984), p. 174. The identification was first considered but rejected by Boeckh, quoted by Dissen *ap.* Boeckh 410.

careers of the two athletes. The implication of this connection of thought that Kallias and Kreontidas belong to an earlier generation is reinforced by the use of *ποτε* in the praise of both (36, 42). It may be, as has been suggested, that *ποτε* in Pindar's victory accounts reflects the viewpoint of later audiences on the event in question rather than indicating distance in time from the poet's point of view at the time of writing.³⁴ However, repeated *ποτε* cannot be explained in this way. It gives an added vagueness to the chronology which suggests a significant remove in time. In this context the generalization in 29f. (*παροιχομένων γὰρ ἀνέρων, αἰοδαὶ καὶ λόγοι τὰ καλὰ σφιν ἔργ' ἐκόμισαν*), in itself an epinician commonplace, may have an individual as well as a general point: Kreontidas and Kallias may be dead. However that may be, there is certainly reason to believe that the two athletes belong to an earlier generation of the family. This is unlikely to be that of Alkimidas' father, since it is then difficult to understand why Pindar insists that athletic achievement comes with alternate generations (8–11). So they must belong to the grandfather's generation at the latest.

The suggestion of Wilamowitz is also recommended by Pindar's general practice with reference to relatives of the victor. As was noted above, Pindar does not as a rule designate an individual merely in terms of relationship; he will usually give either relationship and name or name alone. We would therefore expect the other sons of Sokleidas to be named. We could of course suggest that their victories were all won in local competitions (certainly some of the twenty-five victories mentioned in line 58 must have been in minor festivals); but this was a reason to ignore Praxidamas' brothers rather than a reason to leave them anonymous. We could perhaps suggest that Praxidamas alone is named because Pindar is interested solely in the direct line of descent to the victor. But 24–34 suggest that Pindar is interested in the whole family in the broadest sense; moreover, it is not his practice to distinguish neatly between direct descent and collaterals.³⁵ Thus the apparent failure to name Praxidamas' brothers has no obvious logical explanation.

It would also be odd in the context of the ode for Pindar to leave Praxidamas' brothers anonymous. Others left unnamed in the ode are individuals who have no athletic success to their credit, the victor's father, who surprisingly is not mentioned at all,³⁶ and the brothers of Sokleidas (21f.). It would be strange for Pindar to reduce two successful athletes to the same position, particularly when he names Polytimidas (62), who apparently has only a near-miss to his credit.

Thus we have two successful athletes belonging to an earlier generation (23f.), who would normally be named. We also have two successful athletes belonging to an earlier generation named in the ode (34–44). Wilamowitz' suggestion, which would reduce these two pairs of successful athletes to a single pair, is recommended by its economy. We may then reconstruct the victor's family tree as shown in Figure 1.

This conclusion is more than a contribution to Pindaric prosopography. It has important consequences for a reading of the ode. Lines 17–44 become a single victory

³⁴ See D. C. Young, *HSCP* 87 (1983), 35–42.

³⁵ Hence his readiness to detect in the victor hereditary virtues shared with both paternal and maternal uncles (as *P.* 6.46, *P.* 8.35, *N.* 5.43, *N.* 10.37ff., *I.* 8.65a–66).

³⁶ Pindar sometimes fails to mention the father in odes to adult victors, as *O.* 1, *O.* 4, *O.* 9, *P.* 3, *P.* 7, *P.* 12, *I.* 7. However, in other odes certainly or possibly written for victors in the boys' or youths' categories Pindar always mentions and names the father, living or dead; cf. *O.* 8.82, *O.* 10.2, *O.* 11.11, *P.* 8.19, *P.* 10.16, *P.* 11.43, *N.* 5.4, *N.* 7.7, *N.* 8.16, *I.* 5.21, *I.* 6.3, *I.* 8.2. His complete silence about Alkimidas' father is presumably motivated by his choice of the theme of alternation, which compels him either to pass over the father in silence or by mentioning him to draw attention explicitly to his failure.

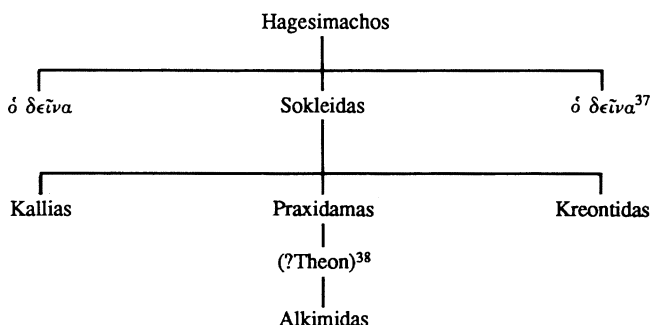


Figure 1. The family tree of Alkimidas.

list detailing the achievements of the grandfather's generation, and 11–44 together illustrate the principle of alternation announced in 8–11 and ultimately the theme of the opening stanza, man's similarity and dissimilarity to the gods. The ode thus gains in coherence. The reason for the general failure of modern scholars to recognize Kallias and Kreontidas as the remaining sons of Sokleidas is the long interval between the enumeration of the sons in 23f. and the naming and praise of the remaining two in 34ff. This however is very typical of Pindar. The reflections in 24ff. are so positioned as to break up the victory list and so avoid monotony; this is normal for Pindar where a substantial number of victories must be enumerated, as can be seen from the comparable interruptions at *O.* 13.101ff., *P.* 8.67ff., *P.* 9.80ff., *N.* 10.29ff.³⁹

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³⁷ The superlative *ὑπέρτατος* at *N.* 6.21 indicates that Hagesimachos had at least three sons.

³⁸ Since the scholia mistake the nationality of Alkimidas' father, we cannot be confident that they give his name correctly.

³⁹ Parts of this article were delivered as papers at meetings of the Classics Research Seminars in St Andrews in January 1987 and the Classical Association of the Midwest and South in New Orleans in April 1988.