MUSEUM HELVETICUM

Vol. 50 1993 Fasc. 4

The Theban Amphiaraion and Pindar's Vision on the Road to Delphi

By Thomas K. Hubbard, University of Texas, Austin

τοιαῦτα μέν
ἐφὐέγξατ' Ἀμφιάρηος. χαίρων δὲ καὶ αὐτός
Ἀλκμᾶνα στεφάνοισι βάλλω, ῥαίνω δὲ καὶ ὕμνῳ,
γείτων ὅτι μοι καὶ κτεάνων φύλαξ ἐμῶν
ὑπάντασεν ἰόντι γᾶς ὀμφαλὸν παρ' ἀοίδιμον,
μαντευμάτων τ' ἐφάψατο συγγόνοισι τέχναις.
(*P.* 8. 55–60)

In the myth of Pindar's *Eighth Pythian* (*P.* 8. 39–55), the hero Amphiaraus is portrayed delivering a prophecy concerning the successful expedition of the Epigoni, led by his son Alcmeon. In lines 56–60, closing the myth, the poet declares that he will throw crowns at Alcmeon and celebrate him in song, "because a neighbor and guardian of my possessions encountered me going to the songful navel of the earth, and grasped hold of prophecies with his inborn arts"[1]. Modern commentators and translators have universally taken the "neighbor and guardian" to be Alcmeon[2]. Some, troubled by the improbability of a Theban cult of Alcmeon and by considerations of relevance, have complicated the matter further by construing the first person here as either choral or

1 M. R. Lefkowitz, *The Influential Fictions in the Scholia to Pindar's* Pythian *8*, CP 70 (1975) 179–180, 183, translates v. 60 as "touched me with his inherited skills of prophecies", thus understanding μοι from v. 58 as a dative object of the verb and taking the genitive μαντευμάτων as dependent on τέχναις. There are simply no parallels for the verb ἐφάπτομαι taking such a double dative construction or meaning "touch someone with something"; indeed, there are no parallels for its having a personal dative object at all. While some commentators take the dative τέχναις as the object of the verb (cf. *O.* 1. 86) and others, like me, prefer the genitive μαντευμάτων as object (cf. *O.* 9. 12), Lefkowitz' unparalleled construction must be rejected out of hand. I favor the genitive object construction, since συγγόνοισι τέχναις are by definition already within a person and thus not something one would "take hold of". See L. R. Farnell, *The Works of Pindar* (London 1930) II, 196.

2 This assumption is found in every commentary on the Pythians at least since the time of F. Gedike, *Pindars Pythische Siegshymnen* (Berlin 1779) 208 n. 11. It is also expressed in every English translation of Pindar I have consulted, including those of Sandys, Bowra, Lattimore, Conway, Swanson, Ruck and Matheson, and Nisetich.

spoken in the persona of the Aeginetan athlete Aristomenes, thus postulating an Aeginetan cult of Alcmeon[3]. For this there is no more evidence than for a Theban cult. Critics cannot agree whether the encounter with the hero on the road to Delphi was a vision in a dream, an actual epiphany, a matter of passing his shrine, or even seeing his statue at Delphi itself[4]. There are problems with all these views. Indeed, Wilamowitz has gone so far as to despair: "So wird diese Stelle wohl immer unverstanden bleiben."[5]

I am more optimistic about finding a credible solution to the passage's many difficulties, if we discard assumptions about the "neighbor and guardian" being Alcmeon. We would do better to follow Σ*P.* 8. 78b in construing the first person as the poet (as always in Pindar's epinicia) and the "neighbor and guardian" as Amphiaraus, who had a well-attested oracle near Thebes and whose mantic powers have just been demonstrated at length in the preceding myth. The allusion is significant, and our understanding of the entire ode's literary and political meaning is seriously affected by knowledge of this oracle's position in Greece at the time of *P.* 8, generally dated to 446 BC[6].

3 In this interpretation, they follow Σ*P.* 8. 78a, 82, 83a (Drachmann). See F. Dornseiff, *Pindars Stil* (Berlin 1921) 84; E. Thummer, *Die Religiosität Pindars* (Innsbruck 1957) 32; E. L. Bundy, *Studia Pindarica* (Berkeley 1962) II, 69–70; E. D. Floyd, *The Performance of Pindar*, Pythian *8. 55–70*, GRBS 6 (1965) 187–200; W. J. Slater, *Pindar's House*, GRBS 12 (1971) 141, and *Pindar's Myths: Two pragmatic explanations*, in: G. W. Bowersock et al. (eds.), Arktouros: Hellenic Studies Presented to Bernard M. W. Knox (Berlin 1979) 68–70. There are in my opinion no convincing parallels either for a choral first-person or first-person utterances in the persona of the victor; the latter especially results in intolerable obscurity. For the altogether different phenomenon of the "first-person indefinite", which applies only to generic or gnomic statements, see D. C. Young, *Three Odes of Pindar* (Leiden 1968) 58–59, and the bibliography which he cites.

4 For a dream vision, see L. Dissen, *Pindari Carmina quae supersunt* (Gotha 1830) II, 291; F. Mezger, *Pindars Siegeslieder* (Leipzig 1880) 405; A. B. Drachmann, *De duobus Pindari locis*, Nordisk Tidsskrift for Filologi ser. 3, 1 (1892/93) 162; O. Schroeder, *Pindars Pythien* (Leipzig 1922) 72; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Pindaros* (Berlin 1922) 441; E. Rohde, *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Ancient Greeks*, tr. W. B. Hillis (London 1925) 152–153 n. 105; A. Puech, *Pindare* (Paris [6]1966) II, 122 n. 4; Slater (above, n. 3) 69. For a waking epiphany, see G. Norwood, *Pindar* (Berkeley 1945) 4; R. W. B. Burton, *Pindar's Pythian Odes* (Oxford 1962) 182–183; C. M. Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford 1964) 52; C. A. P. Ruck/W. H. Matheson (trs.), *Pindar: Selected Odes* (Ann Arbor 1968) 101. For the shrine of Alcmeon itself being what appears, see C. A. M. Fennell, *Pindar: The Olympian and Pythian Odes* (Cambridge 1893) 242; A. Boeckh, *Pindari Opera quae supersunt* (Leipzig 1821) II:2, 315, thinks it was either the shrine or a statue.

5 Wilamowitz (above, n. 4) 441. His doubts about the probability of an Alcmeon shrine at Thebes were so great as to cause him to speculate about Pindar possibly residing in Argos at the time this ode was written.

6 This is the date of Σ*P.* 8. Inscr., at least under the traditional reckoning of Pythiads (defended most recently by A. A. Mosshammer, *The Date of the First Pythiad – Again*, GRBS 23 [1982] 15–30). Some early Pindaric scholars (e.g. K. O. Müller, *Aegineticorum liber* [Berlin 1817] 177; Boeckh [above, n. 4] II:2, 308–309; Dissen [above, n. 4] II, 279–280; G. Hermann, *Opuscula* [Leipzig 1839] VII, 155–158) rejected the scholiastic evidence in favor of a much earlier date,

In contrast to the abundant documentation concerning Amphiaraus' oracle near Thebes, there is not one shred of evidence for a shrine of Alcmeon either in Thebes or Aegina. The sole evidence for a shrine of Alcmeon anywhere in Greece is Pausanias' testimony (8. 24. 7) to seeing his grave and sacred grove in Psophis. Greek hero cults are almost always connected with claims to being the site of a hero's death and burial[7]; as an enemy of Thebes who never returned to the city after destroying it, Alcmeon seems most unlikely to have been honored with a *hērōon* there. He is even less likely to have had such a shrine on Aegina, an island with which his family has no association and on which he never set foot so far as we can infer from extant mythological tradition. Aegina had a bountiful line of local heroes in the Aeacidae and hardly had need of an Alcmeon cult.

Moreover, there is no evidence that Alcmeon ever had an oracle anywhere in Greece or even that he had oracular powers. Greek tradition is univocal in representing Alcmeon's brother Amphilochus as the one who inherits Amphiaraus' prophetic powers[8]. Indeed, the many myths surrounding Alcmeon all make it quite clear that he did not possess the ability to foresee the future. The entire story of the matricide and endless wandering in search of purification is incompatible with prophetic ability. Rather, we are told that Alcmeon throughout his career sought advice from the oracle at Delphi concerning his next step: he consulted Delphi before the expedition of the Epigoni and before his matricide[9], and took refuge there after being pursued by the Furies. Some sources say that Delphi instructed him to dedicate the necklace and robe of Harmonia there, others that Delphi instructed him to seek purification in the region of the river Achelous[10]. In Corinth, Alcmeon buys his own daughter as a

but this opinion is based almost entirely on a misconstruction of the final prayer in vv. 98–100 as a reflection that Aegina is currently free of domination rather than a wish that it should become free. For detailed defense of the scholiastic date and the ode's political implications in light of it, see Mezger (above, n. 4) 399–401; C. Gaspar, *Essai de chronologie pindarique* (Brussels 1900) 165–168; and most recently, T. J. Figueira, *Athens and Aigina in the Age of Imperial Colonization* (Baltimore 1991) 90–91.

7 See Rohde (above, n. 4) 121–124, 134, who notes that this is especially true of oracular heroes, and that a hero's apparitions will regularly occur in the vicinity of his grave.

8 Amphilochus was a seer closely associated with Calchas and Mopsus in the *Nostoi*-tradition: see Herodotus 7. 91; Theopompus, FGrH 115F351; Lycophron 439–446; Strabo 14. 1. 27, 14. 5. 16; Quintus Smyrn. 14. 360–369. He had an important oracle at Mallos in Cilicia, the site of his death: see Pausanias 1. 34. 3; Plutarch, *De def. or.* 434d; Lucian, *Alexandr.* 29, *Deorum concil.* 12. One is also attested in Aetolia (Aristides 7. 45. 17–18 [Dindorf]). Part of the altar at Amphiaraus' oracle in Oropus was dedicated to Amphilochus (see Paus. 1. 34. 3 and IG VII, 421), whereas Alcmeon has no association with this cult. Finally, Amphiaraus' wisdom instruction is always directed to Amphilochus, not Alcmeon: see Pindar, fr. 43 S.–M., and Athenaeus 7. 317a (quoting Clearchus = fr. 75 Wehrli).

9 Diodorus Siculus 4. 66. 2–3, Apollodorus 3. 7. 5.

10 For the former, see Ephorus, FGrH 70F96. For the latter, see Thucydides 2. 102, Apollodorus 3. 7. 5, and Paus. 8. 24. 8–9.

slave without knowing it[11]. He ends his life at Psophis, in Arcadia, ambushed by the sons of Phegeus[12]. Neither the repeated consultations of Delphi nor Alcmeon's other experiences are consistent with having mantic powers of his own. Although Alcmeon's life was fertile subject matter for fifth- and fourth-century tragedy, as Aristotle tells us[13], the basic outlines of his story were already present in epic tradition, as represented by the *Thebaid*, *Melampodeia*, *Alcmeonis*, or Stesichorus' *Eriphyle*. In the context of this mythological background, it is inconceivable either that Pindar would allude in passing to Alcmeon's "inborn arts of prophecy" or that Pindar's audience could be expected to understand such an allusion.

On the other hand, Amphiaraus did have a well-known oracle in Thebes, located at the site of his descent into the earth (Strabo 9. 1. 22) on the road from Thebes to Potniae (Pausanias 9. 8. 3)[14]. This would indeed be the route a traveller from Thebes to Delphi might take[15]. The oracle of Amphiaraus was famous enough to be consulted by both Croesus and the Persians under Mardonius (Herodotus 1. 46, 1. 49, 1. 52, 8. 134. 1); indeed, it was one of only six Greek oracles that Croesus consulted prior to attacking the Persians, and Herodotus so took for granted its familiarity to his audience that he did not even need to identify its location at Thebes in his first allusion to it[16].

11 This was part of the plot of Euripides' *Alcmeon in Corinth*, on which see Apollodorus 3. 7. 7.

12 Apollodorus 3. 7. 5, Paus. 8. 24. 10.

13 Aristotle, *Poet.* 13, 1453a18–22. In addition to two plays each of Sophocles and Euripides, Alcmeon was the theme of tragedies by Agathon (*Alcmeon*), Achaeus (*Alphesiboea*), Astydamas (*Alcmeon*), Euaretus (*Alcmeon*), Nicomachus (*Alcmeon*, *Eriphyle*), Theodectes (*Alcmeon*) and Chaeremon (*Alphesiboea*).

14 For archeological attempts to locate the spot, see A. D. Keramopoullos, *Θηβαϊκά*, Arch. Delt. 3 (1917) 266, and S. Symeonoglou, *The Topography of Thebes from the Bronze Age to Modern Times* (Princeton 1985) 177–178.

15 Potniae is generally identified with the modern village of Tachy, immediately to the Southwest of Thebes. This was likely to be the most direct route from Thebes to Thespiae and thus on to Delphi. See Symeonoglou (above, n. 14) 12. Pindar's attention to topographical detail in describing cultic monuments is exacting: compare his description of Heracles' shrine embracing Thearion's house in Aegina (*N.* 7. 93–94) or of Battus' tomb and those of the Battidae in Cyrene (*P.* 5. 89–98).

16 Herodotus 1. 46, 1. 49, 1. 92. However, Hdt. 1. 52 makes it clear that this must have been the oracle at Thebes, since he refers to Croesus' dedication as now being kept at the temple of Apollo Ismenius in Thebes. Some scholars have denied that there ever was an oracle of Amphiaraus at Thebes and that Herodotus was in fact referring to Oropus: see U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Oropos und die Graer*, Hermes 21 (1886) 104–105; F. Dürrbach, *De Oropo et Amphiarai Sacro* (Paris 1890) 95–99; A. Schachter, *Cults of Boiotia*: 1. *Acheloos to Hera*, BICS Suppl. 38. 1 (London 1981) 22–23. This not only requires us to reject the evidence of Strabo and Pausanias, but also necessitates a radical contortion of the syntax in Hdt. 8. 134. 1, which really cannot be interpreted to mean that the oracle was anywhere but at Thebes: καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐς Θήβας πρῶτα ὡς ἀπίκετο is followed by a μέν-clause, in which Mys consults Ismenian Apollo, and a δέ-clause, in which he has a non-Theban perform the ἐγκοίμησις-ritual and consult Amphiaraus. The μέν- and δέ-clauses are clearly subordinate to the words announcing his arrival in Thebes and thus can only refer to actions which take place in

We need not press the term "neighbor" (γείτων) so literally as to assume that this shrine must have actually been in the vicinity of Pindar's house, any more than was Poseidon of Onchestus, who is identified as a "neighbor" (γείτον') of the Thebans in *I.* 1. 53[17]. Spatial expressions in Pindar are always metaphorical and relative[18]. By identifying the "neighbor and guardian" as the Amphiaraion in the vicinity of Thebes, located along the road to Delphi, we can unite the two elements that are awkwardly separate in the traditional interpretation of this passage – the neighboring shrine and the vision on the road to Delphi.

We can also unite this passage more effectively with the myth that has just preceded it in vv. 39–56, which records not an oracle of Alcmeon, but an oracle of Amphiaraus about Alcmeon. The manner in which Amphiaraus' words are introduced in vv. 39–42 and particularly in v. 43 ("thus did he speak as they fought" – ὣδ' εἶπε μαρναμένων) makes it clear that his prophecy concerning the fate of the Epigoni is not delivered during his own lifetime, but as an oracle at the time of the Epigoni themselves, as they attack Thebes[19]. The myth itself thus constitutes an allusion to the oracle of Amphiaraus functioning upon Theban soil; indeed, the myth shows it delivering what is probably its first prophecy. Given this focus on the well-known shrine of the Amphiaraion and its mythological history for the last seventeen verses, it is difficult to see why anyone in the original Greek audience would think that the *hērōon* alluded to in vv. 58–60 was anything other than the one just exhibited in the myth.

Thebes, as contrasted with Lebadeia and Abae, mentioned earlier in the sentence. Plutarch, *De def. or.* 411f–412b makes it even clearer that the oracle of Amphiaraus which Mys consulted was in Boeotia and defunct sometime after the Persian War (and certainly by Plutarch's own time); Oropus could not fit either detail. That Plutarch had sources other than Herodotus for what he relates about Mys is indicated by the non-Herodotean details concerning the content of the oracles both here and in *Aristides* 19. 1–2; see R. Flacelière, *Plutarque et les oracles béotiens*, BCH 70 (1946) 203–207.

17 For the conventional nature of such prayers or references to neighboring cults, see Bundy (above, n. 3) II, 70, and J. S. Rusten, *Γείτων Ἥρως: Pindar's Prayer to Heracles (N. 7. 86–101) and Greek Popular Religion*, HSCP 87 (1983) 289–297. For a comparable reference to a neighboring Theban cult in a non-Theban ode, consider Pindar's allusion to the shrine of the Mother in *P.* 3. 77–79; on which, see A. Henrichs, *Despoina Kybele: Ein Beitrag zur religiösen Namenkunde*, HSCP 80 (1976) 256–257.

18 On the motif of the "near" and the "far" in Pindar, see C. Ramnoux, *L'amour du lointain*, Revue de la Méditerranée 18 (1960) 439–459; Young (above, n. 3) 116–120; T. K. Hubbard, *The Pindaric Mind* (Leiden 1985) 11–27.

19 The ὁπότε-clause in v. 41 must express the time of the main verb αἰνίξατο in v. 40, not of the participle ἰδών in v. 39. The genitive absolute μαρναμένων in v. 43 must have the Epigoni as subject (mentioned as the last word of the sentence ending in v. 42), not the Seven Against Thebes (who are never mentioned and who would not really work in a genitive absolute, since Amphiaraus is one of them). For the correct interpretation of this prophecy as an oracle, see Mezger (above, n. 4) 404; Farnell (above, n. 1) II, 195; R. Führer, *Formproblem-Untersuchungen zu den Reden in der frühgriechischen Lyrik* (Munich 1967) 30–31; P. Friedländer, *Studien zur antiken Literatur und Kunst* (Berlin 1969) 47; R. Stoneman, *Pindar and the Mythological Tradition*, Philologus 125 (1981) 54–55.

The encomiastic relevance of the myth is only obscured by positing the hero shrine and prophecy of vv. 58–60 as Alcmeon's. Some critics have gone so far as to believe that Pindar actually experienced an apparition of Alcmeon on the road to Delphi and conceived the myth around it[20]. Even if we grant that Pindar was capable of hallucination, we would expect a myth concerning Alcmeon's supposed prophetic powers, something otherwise unfamiliar to the audience. Far likelier the whole epiphany story was a contrivance applying to the present day the mythological framework which Pindar first conceived: the Epigoni (represented by Alcmeon) viewed from the perspective of the defeated Seven (represented by Amphiaraus) constitute a powerful symbol for defeated Aegina's hopes in a similar reversal of fortune by the younger generation, including the victor Aristomenes[21].

The parallelism between the victorious Alcmeon and the victorious Aristomenes is clear: Pindar throws crowns at Alcmeon (v. 57 στεφάνοισι βάλλω) even as Aristomenes has just been crowned at Delphi (vv. 19–20 ἑστεφανωμένον ... ποίᾳ Παρνασσίδι), and Alcmeon is the subject of celebratory song (v. 57 ῥαίνω δὲ καὶ ὕμνῳ) even as Aristomenes now is (v. 20 ... Δωριεῖ τε κώμῳ). Pindar's celebratory role is just as clearly parallel to the prophetic role of Amphiaraus: after the closing formula of vv. 55–56 (τοιαῦτα μέν/ἐφὐέγξατ' Ἀμφιάρηος), capping Amphiaraus' praise of Alcmeon, Pindar describes his own celebration of Alcmeon with a corresponding δέ and emphatic καὶ αὐτός in vv. 56–57 (χαίρων δὲ καὶ αὐτός/Ἀλκμᾶνα στεφάνοισι βάλλω ...). The common poet-prophet metaphor solidifies the identification between the two domains of visionary verbal activity[22]. Indeed, the scholia may be right in assuming that the prophecy which was delivered in vv. 58–60, as Pindar set out for Delphi, was a prediction of Aristomenes' victory in the Pythian games[23]. We thus see the two *laudatores*, Pindar and Amphiaraus, clearly aligned, both

20 See Ruck/Matheson (above, n. 4) 101: "we must admit the possibility of waking miracles in ancient Greece ... Dream or not, for Pindar the encounter was real ..." Compare Burton (above, n. 4) 184: "There can be little doubt that the personal adventure here recorded suggested to the poet the myth and the form it should take." Or Farnell (above, n. 1) I, 131: "Pindar is haunted by the remembrance of the vision that he recently had of Alkmaion when he was journeying from Delphi, and therefore he cannot refrain from telling his story, attaching it to the context as well as he can."

21 Vv. 76–100 are pervaded by imagery and aphorisms of changing fortune. Note particularly vv. 98–100 at the very end of the poem, which Pindar concludes with a prayer to the nymph Aegina to convey the city ἐλευθέρῳ στόλῳ.

22 For the parallel of poet and prophet, see *Paean* 6. 6, *Parth.* 1. 5–6, fr. 75. 13, fr. 150 S.–M., and J. Duchemin, *Pindare poète et prophète* (Paris 1955) 32–33, 80–81. On the concept in archaic Greek poetics generally, see G. Nagy, *Ancient Greek Poetry, Prophecy, and Concepts of Theory*, in: J. L. Kugel (ed.), Poetry and Prophecy: The Beginnings of a Literary Tradition (Ithaca 1990) 56–64.

23 See Σ*P.* 8. 78a (Drachmann); Dissen (above, n. 4) II, 291–292; B. L. Gildersleeve, *Pindar: The Olympian and Pythian Odes* (New York 1885) 331; Farnell (above, n. 1) II, 196; Duchemin (above, n. 22) 90 n. 2; Bowra (above, n. 4) 52; G. Kirkwood, *Selections from Pindar* (Chico 1982) 211. As we have observed, Aristomenes' victory is implicitly connected with hopes for a

praising each of the two *laudandi*, Aristomenes and Alcmeon, who are just as clearly aligned. The correctness of Amphiaraus' prophecy concerning Alcmeon in the myth stands as a warrant of his authority in prophesying Aristomenes' victory (and possibly Aegina's as well). Pindar adds his praise to Alcmeon as a mythological paradigm of his own hopes for Aristomenes and Aegina. This neat symmetry and structure of parallels between the mythological *laudator* and *laudandus* and the epinician *laudator* and *laudandus* is shattered if we make Alcmeon the one prophesying to Pindar about Aristomenes: Alcmeon would cease to be the *laudandus*, as he is in the myth and in vv. 56–57, and would instead become another *laudator*.

The sole rationale for construing Alcmeon as the subject of vv. 58–60 is the perception that this is grammatically necessary after his naming in v. 57. Most commentators do not even acknowledge another construction to be conceivable. The alternative of supposing Amphiaraus to be the γείτων and φύλαξ is explicitly rejected by one modern authority on Pindar in the following words: "This reading [sc. of Σ*P.* 8. 78b] can be discarded after reference to Pindar's text: a sudden switch of subject from Alcmeon to Amphiaraus, without an intervening particle or demonstrative pronoun, would have been incomprehensible."[24] But if Σ*P.* 8. 78b could construe Amphiaraus as the γείτων and φύλαξ, this construction must have been comprehensible to at least one well-informed native speaker of the language. The scholia are not always right in such matters; indeed, if Σ*P.* 8. 78b was correct, Σ*P.* 8. 82 must have been wrong. However, it is of some weight that the one scholium with no other exegetical motive takes the sentence this way, particularly since the scholiast did not know what we know (and what a fifth-century audience knew) about the cult of Amphiaraus at Thebes[25].

The "sudden switch of subject" which Lefkowitz finds so "incomprehensible" is well attested in dozens of Pindaric passages: no principle of Greek grammar dictates that the subject of a subordinate clause must be a person named in the main clause of the sentence. We find a close syntactical analogue for the present crux in *P.* 3. 31–34:

> καὶ τότε γνοὺς Ἴσχυος Εἰλατίδα
> ξεινίαν κοίταν ἄϋεμίν τε δόλον, πέμψεν κασιγνήταν μένει
> ὐιοισαν ἀμαιμακέτῳ
> ἐς Λακέρειαν, ἐπεὶ παρὰ Βοιβιάδος κρημνοῖσιν ᾤκει παρθένος.

future victory of Aegina against Athenian domination; this may also be part of what is prophesied here.

24 Lefkowitz (above, n. 1) 180. See n. 1 for difficulties with Lefkowitz' own translation of the Greek.

25 For other cases where an isolated scholium was correct and most modern commentators wrong in the construction of a line, see T. K. Hubbard, *Pindar and the Aeginetan Chorus: Nemean 3. 9–13*, Phoenix 41 (1987) 4–5, on Σ*N.* 3. 18a, b, c (Drachmann), and *Hieron and the Ape in Pindar, Pythian 2. 72–73*, TAPA 120 (1990) 74 n. 2, on Σ*P.* 2. 132a (Drachmann).

Here again we have a main clause, with Apollo as the subject and his sister Artemis as the direct object (κασιγνήταν), but no mention of the girl Coronis (who last appeared in *P.* 3. 24–27). This is followed by a causal subordinate clause (ἐπεὶ ...) with παρθένος as subject. According to the principle of syntax which many have tacitly assumed in *P.* 8. 56–60, the παρθένος would have to be Artemis, who is the only maiden mentioned in the main clause of the sentence. Nevertheless, the following lines as well as literary tradition[26] make it certain that the παρθένος is Coronis, last mentioned seven lines earlier; no commentator on *P.* 3. 34 has presumed to take the reference otherwise. This situation is exactly parallel to *P.* 8. 56–60, where the main clause features Pindar as subject, Alcmeon as direct object, with a causal subordinate clause (... ὅτι ...) featuring γείτων and φύλαξ as subject. Must the γείτων and φύλαξ be Alcmeon? No more so than the παρθένος of *P.* 3. 34 need be Artemis. The sole difference between *P.* 3. 31–34 and *P.* 8. 56–60 is that Amphiaraus is even more readily at hand in the latter passage than Coronis was in the former: whereas we had to go back seven lines to infer Coronis as the παρθένος of *P.* 3. 34, Amphiaraus is the subject of the sentence immediately before this one, is named at the very end of that sentence (*P.* 8. 56 ... ἐφθέγξατ' Ἀμφιάρηος), and delivers the oracle described for the last seventeen lines. There are many Pindaric examples of shifts in third-person reference far more striking than this one[27]. To a fifth-century audience conversant with the famous oracle of Amphiaraus at Thebes (whose familiarity to his audience Herodotus took for granted), it would never occur that there was even any ambiguity about the identity of the γείτων and φύλαξ to whom Pindar makes reference.

Having argued that *P.* 8. 58–60 refers to the Theban Amphiaraion, as does the preceding myth, we should now consider the possible purpose and significance of the allusion, particularly inasmuch as it comes within an Aeginetan ode, where one would not normally expect Theban myth to be so central[28]. It should be noted that Pindar also alludes to Amphiaraus in three other epi-

26 See Hesiod, fr. 59 M.-W., from the *Ehoeae*, identifying Coronis as the maiden who dwells on Lake Boebias.

27 For another example of a subordinate clause shifting its implied subject, even with no nominative expressed, see *P.* 2. 11, where the implied subject of καταζευγνύῃ must be Hieron (supplied from the previous sentence in *P.* 2. 5–9), not Hermes or Artemis (the personages of the present sentence's main clause). Similarly, in *O.* 13. 80 the implied subject of κελήσατο must be Polyidus (mentioned in the dative case in *O.* 13. 75), not Athena (the subject of *O.* 13. 76–78). Perhaps the most arresting third-person shift in Pindar comes in *I.* 2. 44, where the unexpressed subject of the imperative σιγάτω must be understood as Thrasybulus, addressed with a vocative in the first line of the poem but not mentioned since that point; the ode is otherwise concerned with his father Xenocrates.

28 *P.* 8 is distinctive as Pindar's only Aeginetan ode in which the principal mythological focus is not on the Aeacidae. Indeed, the "famous virtues of the Aeacidae" are alluded to in vv. 22–23, but pointedly dropped as a theme here by the elaborate break-off formula of vv. 28–34. They are brought back into the picture only at the end of the ode (vv. 99–100) in Pindar's prayer for Aegina's freedom.

nician contexts, all non-Theban odes, but each time emphasizing his identification with Theban soil: *N.* 9. 22–27 describes Zeus opening up the Earth with his lightening-bolt to swallow Amphiaraus Ἰσμηνοῦ δ' ἐπ' ὄχυθαισι, as does *N.* 10. 8–9 (γαῖα δ' ἐν Θήβαις ὑπέδεκτο ...), and *O.* 6. 15–17 quotes Adrastus' lament for Amphiaraus' loss at Thebes (εἶπεν ἐν Θήβαισι ...). This insistence on pinning down the locale of Amphiaraus' death to Thebes is fully consistent with an interest in defending the claims of his Theban oracle; Strabo 9. 1. 22 tells us that the oracle claimed to be located on the very spot where Amphiaraus' chariot disappeared into the earth, as appropriate for a chthonian cult.

Thebes' claims to being the site of Amphiaraus' demise were not unique, however. The distinction was also claimed by Harma ("Chariot"), a village about 100 stades northwest of Thebes[29], Cleonae (closer to Argos)[30], and most importantly by Oropus, a town on the border between Boeotia and Attica, but under Attic control during most of the fifth-century[31]. Indeed, Herodotus suggests that the Theban oracle of Amphiaraus was in decline by the time of his travels in the mid-fifth century, although active at least until 480[32]. I have argued elsewhere that the Theban Amphiaraion may have experienced a sharp decline in business after Thebes' disgrace at Plataea in 479, due to the oracle's complete dependence on foreign customers[33], who might have become re-

29 See Pausanias 1. 34. 2, 9. 19. 4. In the latter passage, Pausanias tells us that Harma's claims were supported by nearby Tanagra. Tanagra was a rival of Thebes for leadership of the Boeotian League, especially during the period after Plataea. See B. V. Head, *On the Chronological Sequence of the Coins of Boeotia*, Numismatic Chronicle ser. 3, 1 (1881) 196–197; B. H. Fowler, *Thucydides 1. 107–108 and the Tanagran Federal Issues*, Phoenix 11 (1957) 164–170; M. Amit, *The Boeotian Confederation*, Rivista Storica dell'Antichità 1 (1971) 60–62; R. J. Buck, *A History of Boeotia* (Edmonton 1979) 141–142; N. H. Demand, *Thebes in the Fifth Century* (London 1982) 32–33. One might therefore regard the cult rivalry as a reflection of political challenges to Thebes during this period.

30 See Σ*O.* 6. 21d (Drachmann).

31 See Σ*O.* 6. 18c, 21b, d, 23a, e (Drachmann), and Philostratus, *Imag.* 1. 27. 1. Oropus' claims may have derived from the location of the cult site deep within a ravine, resembling the underground cleft through which Amphiaraus disappeared.

32 Hdt. 1. 52 relates that the golden shield and spear which Croesus dedicated were no longer on display at the Amphiaraion when he visited it, but were located at the oracle of Ismenian Apollo inside the city of Thebes. See B. C. Petrakos, *Ὁ Ὠρωπὸς καὶ τὸ Ἱερὸν τοῦ Ἀμφιαράου* (Athens 1968) 67. If indeed the Amphiaraion did cease to be attended full-time and some valuables had to be transferred to Thebes, there may be a particular point to Pindar's phrasing his defense of the oracle's present vitality by declaring it to be the "guardian of my possessions" (v. 58). However, one could also see this phrase as a metaphorical reference to Amphiaraus' function as a σύμμαχος of the city (see Hdt. 8. 134. 2 and n. 33 below) and in this sense a "guardian" of every citizen's possessions.

33 Hdt. 8. 134. 2 relates the story that the Thebans were given a choice between having Amphiaraus either as a μάντις or as a σύμμαχος, and the Thebans of course chose the latter. Hence, only non-Thebans were allowed to perform the ἐγκοίμησις-ritual and consult the hero as an oracle. Pindar's vision here should therefore not be conceived as a consultation of the oracle (which as a Theban he could not make), but as a spontaneous epiphany of the hero to the poet

luctant to patronize the Medizing oracle of a Medizing city; I have also argued that this may be the period to which we should date the development of the rival oracle and cult of Amphiaraus at Oropus[34].

What is the point of Pindar's defending the Theban Amphiaraion here? Is it merely another opportunity to advertise his native Thebes and its cults?[35] Perhaps the recent vicissitudes in the fortunes of Amphiaraus' Theban oracle parallel the vicissitudes in his career as a hero, even as the whole city of Thebes has suffered reversals of fortune both in mythological times and in the fifth century. Changing fortune is certainly the major focus of both the myth and the last quarter of the ode. Pindar's decision to use the Theban myth as a paradigm in this Aeginetan ode surely reflects a desire to parallel the political experiences of the two states: Aegina was now under Athenian domination, even as Thebes had been a decade earlier after the Battle of Oenophyta. In this context, allusion to an emblematic Theban cult is not inappropriate. Amphiaraus' fate as a onetime Theban enemy turned into a local Theban hero illustrates another relevant lesson, which is that former enemies may become future friends, even as Thebes and Aegina are now, despite their enmity at Plataea. This ode is not the first in which Pindar has brought the two cities together: *I.* 8. 15–21, written in the immediate aftermath of Plataea, appeals to Aegina for reconciliation based on the sisterhood of the two cities as the eldest daughters of Asopus[36].

Even if the myth's reference to Amphiaraus as an oracle at Thebes is nothing more than Theban propaganda, it is still difficult to see why he would deflect attention away from the Amphiaraion at the end by alluding to an otherwise obscure shrine of Alcmeon. It seems far likelier that Pindar would show the contemporary relevance of the myth's Amphiaraus oracle by declaring that Amphiaraus is still a divine presence in the vicinity of Thebes, actively making prophecies to people, foreign attempts to appropriate him notwithstanding. The correctness of Amphiaraus' prophecy about Alcmeon certifies the correctness of his present prophecy, made to Pindar in an imagined epiphany near his shrine on the road to Delphi, the greatest of all oracular

as he passed the shrine on his journey to Delphi. As such, Amphiaraus' appearance is even more extraordinary and miraculous: in this case, the gravity of the situation is so great that the hero of his own will makes an exception to his rule of not prophesying to Thebans.

34 *Remaking Myth and Rewriting History: Cult-Tradition in Pindar's Ninth Nemean*, HSCP 94 (1992) 103–107.

35 In addition to the Theban shrine of the Mother in *P.* 3. 77–79 (see n. 17 above), compare Pindar's allusion to the Seven Pyres in *O.* 6. 12–17 and *N.* 9. 21–27 (and my remarks [above, n. 34] 92–100) and the long digression on the Iolaea in *P.* 9. 79–96. On this latter passage and Pindar's advertisement of Theban institutions in non-Theban odes generally, see my *Theban Nationalism and Poetic Apology in Pindar, Pythian 9. 76–96*, RhM 134 (1991) 22–38.

36 Hdt. 5. 79–89 describes the Delphic oracle about the sisterhood of Thebe and Aegina within the context of the two cities' alliance and mutual hostility to Athens in the late sixth century. On the political implications of the myth in *I.* 8, see T. K. Hubbard, *Two Notes on the Myth of Aeacus in Pindar*, GRBS 28 (1987) 14–16.

shrines. Pindar never tells us the precise content of the prophecy supposedly revealed to him: it may have related to Aristomenes' upcoming Pythian victory, but by not specifying Pindar leaves it open to his Aeginetan audience to believe that it may have foretold a general reversal in Aegina's political fortunes.

To sum up, proponents of the traditional view that *P.* 8. 58–60 refers to a shrine and oracular appearance of Alcmeon must contend with a series of weighty objections: (1) the lack of attestation or motive for an Alcmeon cult either in Thebes or Aegina, (2) the uniform mythological tradition dissociating Alcmeon from any capacity for prophetic foresight, a tradition in no way contradicted by anything Pindar tells us in this myth, (3) the confusion involved in positing two separate hypotheticals – the shrine supposedly within Thebes and the apparition on the road to Delphi, (4) the clear parallelism between Pindar and Amphiaraus as visionary *laudatores* and between Aristomenes and Alcmeon as victorious youthful *laudandi*, which would only be confused and obscured by positing Alcmeon as a prophet praising Aristomenes, (5) the prominence and contemporary political significance of the Amphiaraion at Thebes, which has been the focal point of the preceding myth and which would therefore be foremost in the audience's mind when Pindar alludes to an oracular shrine in vv. 58–60. All of these difficulties are removed if we instead see *P.* 8. 58–60 as a proper closure of the myth, parallelling Amphiaraus' inaugural oracle on behalf of his son and the Argives with his present prophecy on behalf of Aristomenes and the Aeginetans. Commentators' lack of familiarity with the cultic background and with the significance of cultic allusion in Pindar generally has led them into a serious misconstruction of this passage.