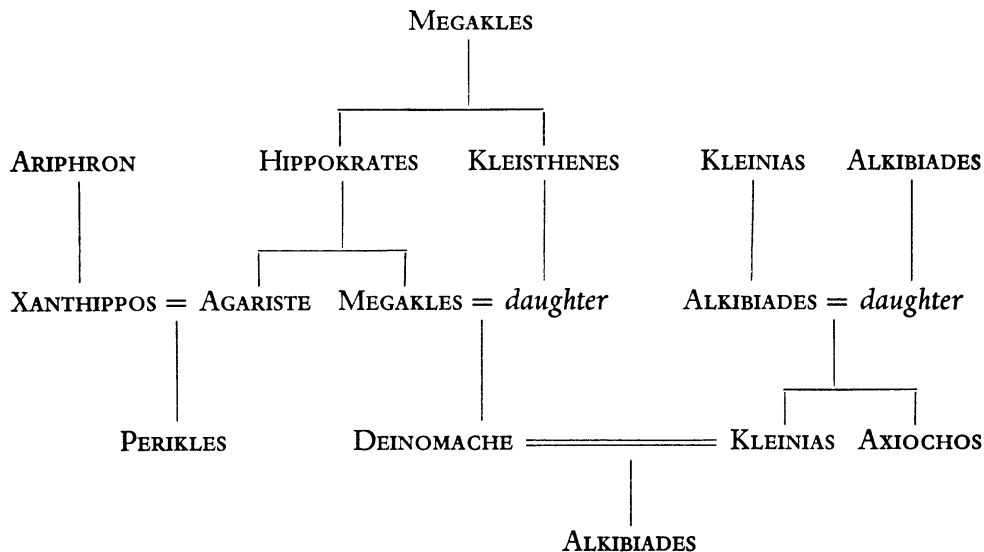


The Kinship of Perikles and Alkibiades

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NEPOS SAYS that Alkibiades was Perikles' stepson (*privignus*), but according to Diodoros they were uncle (*θεῖος*) and nephew (*ἀδελφιδούς*).¹ Since our other evidence seems to indicate that neither statement is correct, these testimonia are generally simply ignored. The purpose of this paper is to establish that Diodoros and Nepos are actually wrong and to seek the origin of their errors in a misunderstanding of an uncommon Greek kinship term.

To refute Diodoros it will be convenient to set forth the family tree of Alkibiades, from which it will be seen that Perikles could not be the brother of his father, Kleinias, or of his mother, Deinomache.



This stemma depends largely upon three basic testimonia. Herodotus (6.131) mentions some of the descendants of Megakles and

¹ Nep. Alc. 2: *educatus est in domo Pericli (privignus enim eius fuisse dicitur)*; Diod. 12.38.3.

Agariste, the daughter of Kleisthenes of Sikyon: οὗτος (sc. Kleisthenes of Athens) τε δὴ γίνεται Μεγακλείῃ καὶ Ἰπποκράτης, ἐκ δὲ Ἰπποκράτους Μεγακλέης τε ἄλλος καὶ Ἀγαρίστη ἄλλη, ἀπὸ τῆς Κλεισθέneos Ἀγαρίστης ἔχουσα τὸ οὖνομα, ἢ συνοικήσασά τε Ξανθίππῳ τῷ Ἀρίφρονος καὶ ἔγκυος εἴδουσα εἶδε ὄψιν ἐν τῷ ὕπνῳ, ἐδόκεε δὲ λέοντα τεκεῖν. καὶ μετ' ὀλίγας ἡμέρας τίκτει Περικλέα Ξανθίππῳ. This gives us Perikles' ancestry.

To reconstruct Alkibiades' lineage we rely on speeches from cases concerning his son. In a speech prepared by Isokrates (16.26–7) the son says, Ἀλκιβιάδης καὶ Κλεισθένης, ὁ μὲν πρὸς πατρός, ὁ δὲ πρὸς μητρός ὦν πρόπαππος τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦμοῦ, στρατηγήσαντες τῆς φυγῆς κατήγαγον τὸν δῆμον καὶ τοὺς τυράννους ἐξέβαλον, καὶ κατέστησαν ἐκείνην τὴν δημοκρατίαν. This gives us the names of two of Alkibiades' great-grandfathers; we get evidence for the names of the other two from a speech written by Lysias (14.39) against his son: Ἀλκιβιάδην μὲν τὸν πρόπαππον αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν πρὸς μητρός Μεγακλέα οἱ ὑμέτεροι πρόγονοι δις ἀμφοτέρους ἐξωστράκισαν, τοῦ δὲ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ὑμῶν θάνατον κατέγνωσαν. Although this passage is usually considered corrupt, there is nothing wrong with it if αὐτοῦ refers to the same person, the son of Alkibiades, in both instances. When we compare it with what the writer of [Andokides] 4.34 says about Alkibiades' ancestors, ὁ τῆς μητρός πατήρ Μεγακλῆς καὶ ὁ πάππος Ἀλκιβιάδης ἐξωστράκισθησαν ἀμφοτέροι, we see that Megakles and Alkibiades are the grandfathers of the famous Alkibiades and great-grandfathers of his son.² Of course, if πρὸς μητρός in Lysias refers to the son's mother, something is amiss. Thus I suggest that here the phrase is simply equivalent to πρὸς γυναικῶν. In Athenian law Alkibiades' son was related to Megakles πρὸς γυναικῶν, not πρὸς ἀνδρῶν.³ The evidence of Lysias and [Andokides], taken together, shows that Alkibiades' grandfathers were named Megakles and Alkibiades.

Plutarch provides confirmation of this conclusion, for he names Megakles as the father of the statesman's mother, Deinomache, and says that Alkibiades' father, Kleinias, excelled at the battle of Artemision (*Alk.* 1). According to Herodotus (8.17) the hero of Artemision

² Up to this point I have followed the interpretation of A. E. Raubitschek, *TAPA* 79 (1948) 203–04.

³ Under the inheritance law the descendants of any sons of Megakles would take preference, as ἐξ ἀρρένων, over the descendants of any daughters, such as Alkibiades and his son. For an analogous situation cf. Dem. 44.13 and 19, where the contrast is between the descendants of the deceased's brother (πρὸς ἀνδρῶν) and those of the deceased's sister (πρὸς γυναικῶν).

was Kleinias, the son of Alkibiades. Even if one rejects Plutarch's identification of the hero of the battle with the father of Alkibiades, we have yet another way of establishing the name of his second grandfather: Alkibiades' uncle, according to Plato (*Euthyd.* 275A) was Axiochos, the son of Alkibiades.⁴

Now that we have established the names of Alkibiades' grandfathers, who were ostracized, we can determine those of his other great-grandfathers from ostraca which name Megakles, the son of Hippokrates, and Alkibiades, the son of Kleinias.⁵ Aristotle (*Ath. Pol.* 22.5) confirms the fact that Megakles, the son of Hippokrates, actually was ostracized.

Perikles' parents, then, were Xanthippos and Agariste, Deinomache's were Megakles and a daughter of Kleisthenes,⁶ and those of Kleinias were the Alkibiades who was ostracized and a daughter of the Alkibiades who helped to overthrow the tyrants and establish the democracy. This, at any rate, is what the evidence from the fifth and fourth centuries implies. To this reconstruction, which is essentially the one proposed by Raubitschek,⁷ Vanderpool raises the objection that "it makes the rather rare name Alcibiades occur not only in the family of the elder Alcibiades but also in the family of the woman he married, a strange coincidence unless perhaps the woman he married was a cousin."⁸ Since, however, the marriage of close relatives was a common occurrence in the Athenian aristocracy,⁹ we should not hesitate to follow the evidence of the orators.

As far as consanguineal relationship is concerned, therefore, our stemma shows that Perikles and Deinomache were first cousins. In Attic kinship terminology Perikles was Alkibiades' ἀνεψιός, while

⁴ An Axiochos, son of Alkibiades, appears among those condemned in connection with the sacrileges of 415; cf. IG I² 328.

⁵ For the latest list of known ostraca cf. Russell Meiggs and David Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions* (Oxford 1969) 45–47.

⁶ For the daughters of Kleisthenes cf. Cic. *Leg.* 2.41: *et Atheniensis Clisthenes Iunoni Samiae civis egregius, quom rebus timeret suis, filiarum dotis credidit.*

⁷ TAPA 79 (1948) 203–04; RhM 98 (1955) 260 n.4; cf. also T. Leslie Shear Jr, *Phoenix* 17 (1963) 99–112. The usual reconstruction makes the Megakles who was ostracized the son of Kleisthenes instead of the son of Hippokrates; cf. Wilhelm Petersen, *Quaestiones de historia gentium Atticarum* (Kiel 1880) 90–91; Johannes Toepffer, *RE* 1.2 (1894) 1557–58; Johannes Kirchner, *Prosopographia Attica* II (Berlin 1903) no. 9688.

⁸ *Hesperia* 37 (1968) 398.

⁹ *Phoenix* 21 (1967) 273–82. To the instances of marriage between first cousins collected there, add the marriage of Themistokles' daughter to her first cousin (Plut. *Them.* 32) and that of the Platonic Phaidros to his first cousin (Lys. 19.15).

Alkibiades was an ἀνεψιαδοῦς to Perikles. To call them θεῖος and ἀδελφιδοῦς is incorrect.¹⁰

If Perikles was not Alkibiades' uncle by blood, perhaps Diodoros meant to indicate that he married an aunt of Alkibiades. We know from Plutarch (*Per.* 24) that Perikles married a kinswoman. Some German scholars in the nineteenth century thought that she might be Deinomache's sister.¹¹ Whatever the truth of that suggestion, Diodoros cannot be used as evidence for such a relationship. Whenever the context makes the relationship clear, θεῖος in Attic prose always indicates an uncle by blood, not by marriage, and likewise ἀδελφιδοῦς always indicates a blood relationship. This is, of course, not proof that the words cannot indicate a marriage tie, for the bulk of the instances come from oratory and in particular from inheritance cases, in which affinal relatives play little or no part. Much more significant is the usage of Polybius and Plutarch. In about twenty instances where the context or historical situation determines the meaning of θεῖος and ἀδελφιδοῦς these words always indicate a blood relationship.¹² In addition to this negative evidence we have three instances which indicate quite clearly that neither author would use ἀδελφιδοῦς to mean nephew by marriage. In Plutarch (*Mar.* 6) Marius marries Julia, ἥς ἦν ἀδελφιδοῦς Καίσαρ.¹³ He also calls Apollokrates the nephew of Dion's wife, not of Dion himself: ἀδελφιδοῦν μὲν ὄντα τῆς ἑαυτοῦ γυναικός (*Dion* 56), and Polybius describes the relationship of Flamininus to a certain Quintus Fabius, ὃς ἦν αὐτῷ τῆς γυναικὸς ἀδελφιδοῦς (18.10.8). Likewise, if Perikles married Deinomache's sister, Diodoros should call Alkibiades the nephew of Perikles' wife.

As for Nepos, we can rule out the possibility that Perikles actually married Alkibiades' mother. According to Plutarch, Perikles' "wife was near of kin to him and had been wedded first to Hipponicus, to whom she bore Callias, surnamed the Rich; she bore also, as the wife of Pericles, Xanthippus and Paralus. Afterwards, since their married

¹⁰ It is true that we have only one reference to a parent's first cousin ([Dem.] 43.41 and 49, where ἀνεψιός is used), but ἀνεψιαδοῦς occurs frequently enough to show that it is the proper term for the son of one's first cousin; cf. *Isaios* 9.2; *Dem.* 44.26, 57.67 and 57.68 (a sure emendation based on 57.38).

¹¹ Cf. Wilhelm Vischer, *Kleine Schriften* I (Leipzig 1877) 98 n.1.

¹² Polyb. 10.7.7 and 12.13.4; *Plut. Ant.* 19, *Brut.* 2 and 22, *Caes.* 62, *Cat. Min.* 1, 2, 3, and 36, *Cic.* 46, *Demetr. and Ant.* 5, *Dion* 6, 7, and 14, *Luc.* 1, *Marc.* 30, *Otho* 16, *Pel.* 29, *Popl.* 3 and 4, *Mor.* 492c.

¹³ Cf. also *Plut. Caes.* 5.

life was not agreeable, he legally bestowed her upon another man, with her own consent, and himself took Aspasia, and loved her exceedingly.”¹⁴ Had this woman also been the mother of Alkibiades, Plutarch must have known and must have said so.¹⁵

Given, then, that both Diodoros and Nepos are wrong in their statements about the kinship of Perikles and Alkibiades, how can we account for their errors? It is clear that in one of his sources Diodoros found a reference to the relationship of the two men. The question is, whether he misinterpreted what he found or whether his source was inaccurate in the first place. Although we cannot be certain, I would discount the second possibility in view of the fact that as late as Plutarch’s time there was abundant material on the family of Perikles available to an historian engaged in independent research. On the other hand, a compiler like Diodoros, finding an ambiguous kinship term in his source, might easily misunderstand it. For instance, the word *κηδεστής*, which can mean father-in-law, son-in-law, or brother-in-law, is frequently mistranslated in various volumes of the Loeb Library, when the translator is lax in investigating the historical context of the passage.¹⁶ In modern Greek *θεῖος* can mean not only uncle but also one’s parent’s first cousin¹⁷ and thus can describe the relationship of Perikles to Alkibiades. If Diodoros’ source used *θεῖος* in this sense, it would be an easy error for him to interpret the word as uncle and assume that Alkibiades was Perikles’ nephew. Unfortunately, I have been unable to find any instance in classical Greek where *θεῖος* does have this meaning. In the only place in Attic literature where a parent’s first cousin is mentioned ([Demosthenes] 43.41 and 49) the term *ἀνεψιός* is used.¹⁸

¹⁴ *Per.* 24, translated by Perrin (*LCL*).

¹⁵ *Isok.* (16.28) and Plato (*Alk.* 104B; *Prot.* 320A) certainly do not suggest that Perikles married Alkibiades’ mother.

¹⁶ Some examples are *Aischin.* 1.115, *Dem.* 45.8, *Isai.* 2.29, *Isok.* 18.52, and *Lys.* 13.1. In each instance the translator renders *κηδεστής* as brother-in-law, but there is no evidence to show what the actual relationship is. To take an example from an ancient historian, *Livy* (37.45.5 and 37.55.3) expands Polybius’ term *ἀδελφιδούς* (21.16.4) to *fratris filius*.

¹⁷ John Andromedas, *American Anthropologist* 59 (1957) 1087; J. K. Campbell, *Honour, Family, and Patronage* (Oxford 1964) 42 n.6.

¹⁸ *Aristophanes of Byzantium* (fr.9 Nauck) and *Pollux* (3.22) give only ‘uncle’ as the meaning of *θεῖος*. *Kritias* was a first cousin of Plato’s mother (cf. Hans Raeder, *Hermes* 72 [1937] 404–10), and Aristotle was a first cousin of Kallisthenes’ mother (*Plut. Alex.* 55; *Suidas*, s.v. *Καλλισθένης*), but no ancient source applies a kinship term to *Kritias* or Aristotle in this connection.

The very fact that such a remote relationship is so seldom mentioned suggests that the sources simply described Perikles as a relative of Alkibiades and did not specify the degree, just as Plutarch (*Alk.* 1) calls Perikles and his brother, Ariphron, *προσήκοντες κατὰ γένος* of Alkibiades. It would be especially appropriate in this case to add the fact that Perikles was a *maternal* relative, since the connection was through the family of the Alkmeonidai. Of course, no one could reasonably extract the meaning 'uncle' from such a phrase as *προσήκων πρὸς μητρός*, but there is a term outside the Attic dialect which could easily lead to such a mistake. According to the scholia Pindar uses the word *μάτρως* to mean ἢ ὁ τῆς μητρὸς ἀδελφὸς ἢ ὁ κατὰ μητέρα συγγενής,¹⁹ and the Gortynian Code uses it in this wider sense.²⁰ The range of meaning of the Ionic *μήτρως* cannot be determined for lack of evidence,²¹ but it was probably the same. Consequently, if Diodoros found Perikles described as a maternal relative (*μήτρως*), he would naturally assume that the word meant 'uncle' and that Alkibiades was his nephew. Of course, proof is out of the question, but this does seem to me the most likely way to explain Diodoros' error.²²

With Nepos the problem is trying to reconstruct the Greek which he is translating or paraphrasing (at *Alc.* 2) with the words *educatus est in domo Pericli* (*privignus enim eius fuisse dicitur*). Isokrates, for instance, says (16.28) that Alkibiades *ἐπετροπεύθη δ' ὑπὸ Περικλέους*. If Nepos found a similar statement in his source, he might simply have confused the guardian/ward relationship with that of a stepfather and his stepson. On the other hand, his own method of expression is more in the manner of Diodoros (12.38.3), *Ἀλκιβιάδης ὁ ἀδελφιδούς, ὀρφανὸς ὢν, τρεφόμενος παρ' αὐτῷ* (*sc. Περικλεῖ*) and Plutarch (*Alk.* 1), *τοῦ δ'*

¹⁹ Scholium to *Nem.* 5.43 (78a Drachmann). The actual usage is maternal uncle at *Nem.* 4.80 and 5.43 and *Isthm.* 6.62, maternal grandfather at *Ol.* 9.63, and maternal ancestor or relative in general at *Ol.* 6.77 and *Nem.* 10.37 and 11.37. At *Isthm.* 7.24 the meaning is unclear.

²⁰ Col. 9, line 4 and col. 12, lines 13–14 Willetts.

²¹ Herodotus (4.80.4) uses it to mean maternal uncle and *πάτρως* (2.133.2, 4.76.6, 6.103.4, 7.10.α.1, 7.46.1, and 9.78.3) to mean paternal uncle.

²² For a similar mistake cf. HSA *Alex.Sev.* 49.5. Although Alexander and Elagabalus were cousins (Dio 78.30), the Greek historian Dexippos *dicit patrum fuisse Antoninum Helio-gabalum Alexandri*. The apparent explanation here is that Dexippos correctly described Alexander as an *ἀνεψιός* ('cousin') of Elagabalus, but the Latin writer took the word in its later sense of 'nephew' and concluded that Dexippos considered Elagabalus the uncle of Alexander; cf. A. Jardé, *Etudes critiques sur la vie et le règne de Sévère Alexandre* (Paris 1925) 5.

Ἄλκιβιάδου Περικλῆς καὶ Ἀρίφρων οἱ Ξανθίππου, προσήκοντες κατὰ γένος, ἐπετρόπευον. This indicates to me that Nepos' Greek original employed some form of the verb ἐπιτροπεύειν plus a separate kinship term, such as 'cousin', 'nephew', or simply 'relative'. Nepos uses *educatus est* to translate the verb, but what word underlies *privignus*? Its Greek equivalent is πρόγονος, but it is hard to see how Alkibiades could be called the πρόγονος of Perikles or anything similar. On the other hand, the reciprocal of this term is μητρικός, 'stepfather'. As we have argued, since Perikles was in fact a maternal relative of Alkibiades, it would be natural to describe him as a μήτρως. I suggest, therefore, that the errors of Nepos and Diodoros may have a common source, a statement that Perikles, a maternal relative (μήτρως), acted as guardian to Alkibiades. Diodoros took the word to mean 'uncle', Nepos confused it with μητρικός, 'stepfather'.

To summarize, Perikles was by blood a first cousin of Alkibiades' mother, not his uncle, as Diodoros says. Perikles married a woman closely related to him; although we do not know her identity, she was not Alkibiades' mother, as Nepos implies. The origin of these errors by the universal historian and the biographer cannot be determined with certainty, but my suggestion is that both authors were misled by finding Perikles described as a μήτρως (here = 'maternal relative') of Alkibiades.

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