

# Fathers *in absentia* in Pindar's Epinician Poetry

*Maria Pavlou*

FOR PINDAR'S CLIENTELE, noble birth constituted the cornerstone of their ideology and served as a mark of exclusivity, distinction, and superiority. It is not surprising, therefore, that inborn excellence (*phya*) and heredity are two of the main threads that permeate his epinician corpus.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the odes abound with terms which cover the broad semantic field of the notion of "family," such as *genos*, *genea*, *oikos*, and *domos*, while a great number of male—mostly victorious—kin (fathers, paternal and maternal grandfathers, uncles, brothers, cousins, and sons) parade proudly in almost every poem.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. *Ol.* 10.20, 13.13; *Pyth.* 5.17, 6.46, 10.12; *Nem.* 1.25, 2.16, 3.14, 6.8; *Isthm.* 8.63. According to Pindar, virtue and inner qualities can be inherited from either the father or the mother; e.g. *Nem.* 5.43; 10.37–54; *Pyth.* 6.44–46; *Nem.* 2.6–10; *Ol.* 6.71–76; *Pyth.* 8.35–37. For the notion of *phya* in Pindar see P. Rose, "The Myth of Pindar's First *Nemean*: Sportsmen, Poetry, and *Paideia*," *HSCP* 78 (1974) 145–175, at 152–153; L. Kurke, *Traffic in Praise* (Ithaca/London 1991); S. B. Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece* (Oxford 1997) 85–95. Cf. J. Bremmer, "The Importance of the Maternal Uncle and Grandfather in Archaic and Classical Greece and Early Byzantium," *ZPE* 50 (1983) 173–186.

<sup>2</sup> See Kurke, *Traffic* 20 n.14, who provides a list of all victory-catalogues in Pindar. On kinship terminology in Pindar see O. Longo, "Su alcuni termini di parentela in Pindaro: classificatorio e descrittivo," in *Lirica greca da Archiloco a Elitis. Studi in honore di Filippo Maria Pontani* (Padua 1984) 155–174. Interestingly, in Bacchylides the theme of kinship is weaker. As a rule, the Cean encomiast pays far less attention to relatives and does not provide family lists. Exceptional from this respect is *Ep.* 2.9–10, where he specifies the number of crowns (70) won by the whole island of Ceos in the Isthmian

Even though the ‘omnipresence’ of family in Pindar has always been recognised, its exact role or function has been the subject of controversy. For one party of scholars, family is merely conducive to the *encomium* of the *laudandus* and only a subcategory of victory praise; therefore its significance is never prominent but remains secondary.<sup>3</sup> In her wide-ranging book on Pindar’s sociological poetics, Leslie Kurke challenged this view and argued instead for the primacy of the household in Pindar by considering both the external evidence (actual references to a victor’s household) and the way in which this motif plays out in the poems’ diction and imagery.<sup>4</sup> According to her, in the epinicians the individual victory is always placed within the broader spectrum of family and is subsumed as family victory. In other words, the victory is seen as promoting the prestige and reputation not only of the individual victor, but also of his extended family, thus accruing and augmenting its “symbolic capital” (36). As she put it, “Pindar’s conception of *kleos* is not personal: it is inextricably bound to the *oikos* as a social entity and as the space that defines that entity” (82).

Undoubtedly Kurke’s contribution regarding the role of family in Pindar has been immense. Yet, as it stands, her thesis begs the question: Does the principle of the ‘prevailing family’ underpin all the odes? Can one discern any exceptions to, or even nuances of, the rule? In her discussion about the victor’s reintegration into his aristocratic group and his civic community, Kurke points out that Pindar uses various strategies and adopts differing stances in his praise of aristocrats and tyrants. No such variations are identified, however, *vis-à-vis* the victor’s reintegration into his *oikos* in particular and the configuration of family praise in general. Whereas in the opening

---

games; see C. Carey, “Pindar and the Victory Ode,” in L. Ayres (ed.), *The Passionate Intellect: Essays on the Transformation of Classical Tradition presented to Professor I. G. Kidd* (Brunswick/London 1995) 85–103, at 93.

<sup>3</sup> E. L. Bundy, *Studia Pindarica* I–II (Berkeley 1962); Rose, *HSCP* 78 (1974) 152.

<sup>4</sup> Kurke, *Traffic* 19, 22–82.

chapter she does acknowledge that certain poems do not include family victory catalogues or appeals to other victorious kin, and that the commissioning of epinicians could vary (boy athletes, for instance, could not enter into contracts),<sup>5</sup> she does not pursue these and similar issues. For instance, the question of whether or not family praise is configured differently in odes for boys, adults, and powerful individuals and tyrants is not addressed. One wonders, does it matter who commissioned the epinicians, whether the athlete himself, his father, his clan, or a “third” party outside his family?

This study of the odes will reveal that the position held by the victor’s family in each individual poem (or in sub-groups of poems) can differ greatly in terms of length and breadth. Indeed, sometimes the recent victory is clearly and ostentatiously subsumed as a victory of the household and/or clan and is put on par with other familial athletic achievements. In fact, on some occasions the reference to these distinctions is quite elaborate, and Pindar may provide information regarding the place of the contest and the sport in which the victorious kin had excelled.<sup>6</sup> At other times the family of the *laudandus* plays a secondary role and praise of other victorious kin is implicit or cursory; in these cases it is the recent victor who clearly commands the limelight.<sup>7</sup> Finally, a few poems are almost silent concerning the victor’s family. In such instances the eulogy is confined to a simple reference to the victor’s father and/or grandfather (either by name or in the form of a patronymic),<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Kurke, *Traffic* 19–21.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. *Ol.* 6, 7, 8, 13; *Pyth.* 9; *Nem.* 4.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. *Pyth.* 1; *Ol.* 2.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. *Ol.* 10, 12. R. Hamilton, *Epinikion. General Form in the Odes of Pindar* (The Hague 1974) 22 n.17, contends that there is no praise attached in patronymics and that “the name of the father seems to be a periphrasis for the name of the victor.” Although I agree that the praise of the father is greater when he is explicitly addressed or invoked, some sort of praise is attached to patronymics as well. Perhaps for us the name of the father does not indicate much; for the first audience, however, sheer mention of it could

and in a couple of cases the victor is addressed without his patronymic, and his household is totally and utterly absent.<sup>9</sup>

In two recent articles Monessa Cummins has provided a fine study of the subtle and intricate ways in which Pindar eulogizes other fraternal athletic achievements in epinicians for the members of the Sicilian ruling families.<sup>10</sup> As she points out, in this group of poems Pindar skillfully eschews explicit mention of fraternal victories and prefers either to be implicit or to suppress them altogether. Accordingly, even though past family victories are alluded to, the victor is never lost from sight and his victory is never entirely subsumed as “family victory.”<sup>11</sup> Specific strategies seem to be employed also in the eleven Aeginetan odes, which can be separated off as a group. With one exception,<sup>12</sup> in this cluster of poems the recent victory is always treated as a collective one, and Pindar is here, more than anywhere else, particularly keen on cataloguing familial athletic distinctions and totals. Moreover, in eight of the eleven Aeginetan odes he insists on specifying the *patra*<sup>13</sup> to which his *laudandus* is ascribed.<sup>14</sup> As Morgan succinctly puts it, “the

---

have evoked a number of connotations. Besides, we should not forget that in antiquity address by patronymic was much less common than first-name address (see E. Dickey, *Greek Forms of Address: From Herodotus to Lucian* [Oxford 1996] 52); accordingly, the use of patronymics in Pindar should be taken as functional. Cf. Plato *Lys.* 204E, who leaves it to be inferred that boys with famous fathers were referred to by patronymics more often than boys whose fathers were less known.

<sup>9</sup> E.g. *Ol.* 9; *Pyth.* 12.

<sup>10</sup> F. M. Cummins, “Sicilian Tyrants and their Victorious Brothers I: The Emmenids,” *CJ* 105 (2010) 321–339, and “II: The Deinomenids,” 106 (2010) 1–20.

<sup>11</sup> *Pyth.* 6, however, does not seem to fit entirely Cummins’ formulation; see 75 ff. below.

<sup>12</sup> See the discussion of *Nem.* 3 below.

<sup>13</sup> On the Aeginetan *patrae* see T. J. Figueira, *Aegina: Society and Politics* (Salem 1981); D. Roussel, *Tribu et Cité* (Paris 1976) 52–53; R. Parker, *Athenian Religion* (Oxford 1996) 63 n.26.

<sup>14</sup> The *patra* is not specified in *Nem.* 3, *Isthm.* 8, and fragmentary *Isthm.* 9.

Aeginetan odes show an especially intense focus on kinship networks, training, and family heritage.”<sup>15</sup> All this conjures up a host of intriguing questions: How can the unmistakable preponderance of Aeginetan victorious kin be explained? What purposes do the victory catalogues, the totals, and the naming of the *patrae* serve? What is it that makes Aegina so unusual?<sup>16</sup>

In this paper I examine the ways in which Pindar handles and negotiates the relationship between an individual victor and his family in four odes: *Nem.* 6, *Nem.* 3, *Ol.* 9, and *Pyth.* 12. I have selected these odes because they diverge from the norm and are unique in their treatment of the notion of family. On the one hand, *Pyth.* 12 and *Ol.* 9 constitute the only two poems where the victors are introduced without a patronymic and we are kept in the dark about their family. *Nem.* 6 and *Nem.* 3, on the other hand, are exceptional in regard to the sub-group of Aeginetan odes to which they belong; the first names six of the victor’s relatives but fails to acknowledge his father, while *Nem.* 3 constitutes the only ‘family-less’ ode of the group.<sup>17</sup> My intention is to consider the possible reasons that may account for the exceptional treatment of family in these poems. Regrettably, lack of external evidence regarding the victors’ whereabouts and their exact relationship to other individuals mentioned in the epinicians prevent us from drawing absolute conclusions. Accordingly, with information gleaned from the

<sup>15</sup> C. Morgan, “Debating Patronage: The Cases of Argos and Corinth,” in S. Hornblower and C. Morgan (eds.), *Pindar’s Poetry, Patrons, and Festivals: From Archaic Greece to the Roman Empire* (Oxford 2007) 213–263, at 227. See also J. Fenno, “Setting Aright the House of Themistius in Pindar’s *Nemean* 5 and *Isthmian* 6,” *Hermes* 133 (2005) 294–311, at 294 nn.1–2, who gives some interesting statistics, and now the discussion by D. Fearn, “Aeginetan Epinician Culture: Naming, Ritual, and Politics,” in D. Fearn (ed.), *Aegina. Contexts for Choral Lyric Poetry* (Oxford 2011) 175–226, at 176–181.

<sup>16</sup> These issues are addressed in M. Pavlou, “Aegina’s Obsession with Epinician,” unpublished paper presented at the *Advanced Seminar in the Humanities* (Venice International University, September 2009).

<sup>17</sup> On the second see C. Carey, “Prosopographica Pindarica,” *CQ* 39 (1989) 1–9, at 3.

diction and imagery of the odes, and taking into account the pragmatics of their performance, I will attempt to provide plausible scenarios which could shed light upon, and help us to unlock, some of their most perplexing aspects. Attention will focus mainly on identifying the patron of each ode and examining the impact that this patron might have had on Pindar's shaping and structuring of family praise.

*Nemean 6*

*Nemean 6* celebrates Alcimidas of Aegina, a boy from the phratry of the Bassidae.<sup>18</sup> Two aspects of this ode are instantly arresting. First, we notice the great emphasis placed on the notion of heredity.<sup>19</sup> Second and equally significant is the prominence ascribed to Alcimidas' family, which even led Norwood to declare that in composing *Nem. 6* Pindar was "hampered by instructions to use a family chronicle composed by some relative or relatives of the victor."<sup>20</sup> Pindar mentions Hagesimachus (22), the boy's great-great-grandfather,<sup>21</sup> Praxidamas (15), his grandfather and the first Aeginetan who had a statue erected at Olympia,<sup>22</sup> Callias (36) and Creontidas (40), most likely brothers of Praxidamas,<sup>23</sup> while at the end of the poem there is also reference to a certain Polytimidas (62), who

<sup>18</sup> D. Gerber, "Pindar, *Nemean Six*: A Commentary," *HSPC* 99 (1999) 33–91; B. W. Henry, *Pindar's Nemeans: A Selection* (Munich 2005) 49–68.

<sup>19</sup> γένος (1); τὸ συγγενές (8); πατροπάτορος ὀμαιμίου (16); ὑέων (22); οἰκόν (25); παλαίφατος γενεά (31); αἶμα πάτρας (35b); κλειτᾶ γενεᾶ (61).

<sup>20</sup> G. Norwood, *Pindar* (Berkeley 1945) 261 n.44. Of course a chronicle would not be necessary for the retrieval of such information, given that past familial athletic victories would have been particularly cherished and well known among the members of aristocratic families.

<sup>21</sup> Contrast Longo, in *Lirica greca* 165, who argues that Hagesimachus was the uncle of Alcimidas.

<sup>22</sup> According to Paus. 6.18.7, Praxidamas of Aegina and Rhexibius of Opus, victorious in 544 and 536 B.C. respectively, were the first to dedicate statues at Olympia.

<sup>23</sup> See Carey, *CQ* 39 (1989) 7–9.

came within a hairsbreadth of winning an Olympic victory.<sup>24</sup> Even though Pindar does not specify the relationship between Polytimidas and Alcimidas, it stands to reason that they should have been members of the same *patra*.<sup>25</sup> Finally, Pindar also names Socleidas (21), the father of Praxidamas, Callias, and Creontidas, who, although not a victorious athlete himself, became the “greatest” (ὑπέρτατος) of Hagesimachus’ offspring because of his three victorious sons.

But whereas six members of the Bassidae are explicitly named in the ode, the victor’s sire receives no mention at all.<sup>26</sup> Pindar’s reticence concerning the father, let alone in an epinician celebrating a boy victor,<sup>27</sup> has baffled scholars and evoked much speculation. The scholia, citing Asclepiades as their source, inform us that on the Nemean victory list Alcimidas appeared as Ἀλκιμίδας Θέωνος Κρήης, which indicates a Cretan connection.<sup>28</sup> On the basis of this, some have argued that Alcimidas had probably been adopted by a Cretan metic living on Aegina.<sup>29</sup> This suggestion has been rejected outright

<sup>24</sup> *Nem.* 6.61–64: “although a random lot robbed you, my boy, and Polytimidas of two wreaths from the Olympic festival by the precinct of Kronos’ son.”

<sup>25</sup> Schol. 104a identifies Polytimidas merely as an οἰκεῖλος. J. Bury, *The Nemean Odes of Pindar* (London 1890) 101, thinks that he may have been Alcimidas’ brother.

<sup>26</sup> Pindar usually identifies fathers explicitly. The father is omitted in odes for tyrants and very powerful individuals where more emphasis is laid upon their *genos* (e.g. *Ol.* 1, *Pyth.* 3, 4, 7), in the short odes which were probably sung at the place of the victory and were then followed by more elaborate poems (e.g. *Ol.* 4, *Isthm.* 3), and in *Nem.* 6, *Ol.* 9, and *Pyth.* 12.

<sup>27</sup> The presence of the father is more prominent in odes for boy victors (e.g. *Ol.* 8, *Pyth.* 8, *Nem.* 7, *Isthm.* 8) probably because in those cases the father was the one who commissioned the poems. That Alcimidas was a boy can be inferred from lines 13 and 62, where he is called a παῖς.

<sup>28</sup> Schol. *Nem.* 6 Inscr. (III 101 Dr.).

<sup>29</sup> E.g. Wilamowitz, *Pindaros* (Berlin 1922) 399; L. R. Farnell, *The Works of Pindar* II (London 1932) 283. See also A. Boeckh, *Πινδαρόρου τὰ σωζόμενα. Pindari Opera quae supersunt II: Interpretationem Latinam* (Leipzig 1819) 403:

by most scholars. As Maehler convincingly points out, the “adoption solution” would be inappropriate and unsatisfactory in a poem where the notion of heredity is so emphatically stressed.<sup>30</sup> Carey attempted to solve the problem by arguing that Alcimidas’ father is not mentioned probably because he had no athletic distinctions. Given that mention of him could have thrown his failure into relief, Pindar goes even four generations back in order to pay tribute to the victorious members of his *laudandus*’ family.<sup>31</sup> Although this is a more plausible interpretation, once again it is not entirely satisfactory, as evidently not all fathers mentioned in the epinicians had an athletic record.<sup>32</sup> The mention of the victory-less Socleidas in this particular ode provides a very good example, even though the *exemplum par excellence* is perhaps the Aeginetan Lampon.<sup>33</sup>

How can we, then, explain the missing father? First of all, it would be quite safe to assume that the ode was not commissioned by him, as in such a case his name would have been at least mentioned in the poem, whether he had been a victor himself or not. Alcimidas could not have entered into a con-

---

“videtur enim ille Alcimidas simul civis Cydoniates fuisse”; on the Aeginetan colony of Cydonia see Hdt. 3.44, 3.59.1–3; Strab. 8.6.16.

<sup>30</sup> H. Maehler, “Bemerkungen zu Pindar,” *Hermes* 113 (1985) 392–403, at 401. See also Bury, *Nemean Odes* 106; Carey, *CQ* 39 (1989) 2; Gerber, *HSPC* 99 (1999) 33–91; B. W. Henry, *Pindar’s Nemeans: A Selection* (Munich 2005) 50–51.

<sup>31</sup> Carey, *CQ* 39 (1989) 8 n.36; A. P. Burnett, *Pindar’s Songs for Young Athletes of Aigina* (Oxford 2005) 158. See also Henry, *Pindar’s Nemeans* 50–51, who suggests that Alcimidas’ father might have died before his birth, and that the boy could have been the ward of a number of relatives, perhaps even of Callias or Creontidas. I do not find this proposition convincing; there is nothing in the poem to support it, while we do encounter mention of dead fathers in *Ol.* 8 and *Nem.* 4.

<sup>32</sup> See for instance *Ol.* 5.8, 7.17, 14.21; *Nem.* 4.14, 8.16; *Isthm.* 8.2.

<sup>33</sup> As can be adduced from the three epinicians that Lampon commissioned for his victorious sons, neither he nor any other member of his family was athletically prominent. Nevertheless, he is highly praised in all three odes.



tract either, as he was still a boy. This leaves us with three possible options: that the ode was commissioned by (a) another member of Alcimidas' *oikos*, most likely his grandfather; (b) the *patra* of the Bassidae—in this case Alcimidas would have been celebrated primarily as a member of his *patra* and not of a particular *oikos*; (c) an 'external' patron, as is the case with *Pyth.* 10.<sup>34</sup>

The stress on heredity<sup>35</sup> and the absence of praise of an external patron exclude (c), while the great emphasis laid upon the *patra* of the Bassidae rather points to (b). In lines 25–26 we hear that the Bassidae have more crowns than any other house in Greece,<sup>36</sup> and later that Alcimidas' recent victory is their twenty-fifth Panhellenic victory (57–61).<sup>37</sup> Last but not least, in 31–34 the Bassidae are even praised for carrying “their own shipload of victory songs”:

Βασίδαισιν ἅ τ' οὐ σπανίζει παλαίφατος γενεά,  
ἴδια ναυστολέοντες ἐπι-  
κόμια, Περίδων ἀρόταις  
δυνατοὶ παρέχειν πολὺν ὕμνον ἀγερώχων ἐργμάτων  
ἔνεκεν.

Even though the Bassidae are not named as the contractors of song, this is implied by the wording of the passage. That the Aeginetan *patrae* could undertake to commission epinicians is more clearly stated in another Aeginetan ode, *Nem.* 4.78–79.

<sup>34</sup> *Pyth.* 10 was commissioned by Thorax, the leader of the Aleuadae of Larissa. It constitutes the only known case of an epinician ode commissioned by a patron outside the victor's family, as Thorax and his family are explicitly mentioned in the poem. On the ode see M. Stamatopoulou, “Thessalian Aristocracy and Society in the Age of Epinician,” in Hornblower and Morgan, *Pindar's Poetry* 309–341.

<sup>35</sup> See n.19 above.

<sup>36</sup> “By the god's grace the art of boxing has revealed no other house to be steward of more crowns in the heart of all Hellas.”

<sup>37</sup> Burnett, *Pindar's Songs* 157, is right when she notes that “the newly crowned lad, Alcimidas, shrinks to little more than a statistic when the singers proclaim the astounding total, *πέμπτον ἐπὶ εἴκοσι*.”

Here Pindar explicitly declares that he was contracted to come to Aegina by the Theandridae, a *patra* “devoted to victory songs” (73–79):<sup>38</sup>

Θεανδρίδαισι δ' ἀξιγυίων ἀέθλων  
 κάρυξ ἑτοῖμος ἔβαν  
 Οὐλυμπία τε καὶ Ἴσθμοῦ Νεμέα τε συνθέμενος,  
 ἔνθα πείραν ἔχοντες οἴκαδε κλυτοκάρπων  
 οὐ νέοντ' ἄνευ στεφάνων, πάτρην ἴν' ἀκούομεν,  
 Τιμάσαρχε, τεὰν ἐπινικίοισιν ἀοιδαῖς  
 πρόπολον ἔμμεναι.

Even if we accept that *Nem.* 6 was commissioned by Alcimidas' *patra*, the absence of his father still cannot be fully explained, especially if we consider that in *Nem.* 4 the victor's father is mentioned despite his lack of an athletic record.

Another hypothesis could be that Alcimidas' father was dead. Yet dead fathers do receive elaborate praise in other odes.<sup>39</sup> Could it be that the relationship between Alcimidas' father and his *patra* was tense and problematic? If that had been the case, the Bassidae would have hardly wanted him to be included in the encomium, and they would have asked Pindar to carefully and skillfully eschew mention of him.

What kind of tension this might have been, we cannot say with certainty, although the missing link could lie in the information provided by the scholia regarding Alcimidas' citizenship. One possibility could be that Alcimidas' father had moved to Crete (perhaps to the Aeginetan colony of Cydonia) sometime before Alcimidas' participation in the games, and that he had changed his Aeginetan citizenship for a Cretan one, much to his family's discontent.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> See Bury, *The Nemean Odes* 78; Parker, *Religion* 63 n. 26.

<sup>39</sup> See n.31 above.

<sup>40</sup> T. J. Figueira, *Excursions in Epichoric History: Aeginetan Essays* (Lanham 1993) 311–312 and n.52, proposes that Alcimidas could have emigrated to Cydonia after the fall of Aegina to Athens in 457/56, and that perhaps Asclepiades derived his information regarding his Cretan citizenship from a later victory of Alcimidas.

Another possibility can be suggested: the tension was sparked because his son Alcimidas entered the games as a Cretan rather than as an Aeginetan. Both scenarios help us to explicate not only Alcimidas' peculiar Cretan citizenship on the Nemean victory list (if we are to believe Asclepiades) and the absence of his father, but also the problematic adjective *ὄμαιμιος*, which the MSS. attribute to the grandfather (15–16):

*ἴχνεσιν ἐν Πραξιδάμαντος ἐὸν πόδα νέμων  
πατροπάτορος ὄμαιμίου.*

The adjective was considered superfluous and banal on the grounds that it would make no sense for Pindar to call Praxidamas a “related by blood” grandfather of Alcimidas. Accordingly, most scholars accept Schroeder’s emendation to the dative *ὄμαιμίους* to modify *ἴχνεσι* (“in the kindred steps of his grandfather”).<sup>41</sup> Yet, what these scholars seem to overlook is that a few lines further down Callias is also described as a “blood-relative” (*ἀπὸ ταύτας αἷμα πάτρας ... Καλλίας*, 35–36), which serves to validate the reading of the MSS. in 16. It is most significant that this is the only time throughout the epinicians that the bond between members of a family is indicated through specific reference to blood, and one should try to provide an explanation by looking at the broader picture before embarking upon *ad hoc* emendations.

If these conjectures regarding Alcimidas’ father are correct, this disputed adjective would make much more sense, for its purpose could be to emphasize the “blood-bond” between Alcimidas and Praxidamas, despite their different citizenship. Even of a Cretan citizenship, Alcimidas was still a legitimate member of the Bassidae because the same blood flowed in their veins; he was, by birth, automatically enlisted as a member of this *patra*. Accordingly, his athletic distinction could be sub-

<sup>41</sup> O. Schroeder, *Pindari carmina* (Leipzig 1900) p.195. See D. Gerber, *A Commentary on Pindar Olympian Nine* (Stuttgart 2002) 55. Wilamowitz, *Pindaros* 399, and Farnell, *The Works of Pindar* 283, accept it on the grounds that the adjective is used to distinguish Praxidamas, as the real grandfather by blood, from another grandfather by adoption.

sumed by the Bassidae as their own success. Though our evidence about the Aeginetan *patrae* is meager, one could speculate that it was through birth that membership in these social groups was ascribed.

To be sure, the hypotheses proposed here cannot be proved by hard evidence and remain necessarily speculative. Nevertheless, it would not be far-fetched to argue that the existence of a problematic and tense relationship between Alcimidas' father and his family, a tension which Pindar tries to mask and conceal by comparing the athletic distinctions of the Bassidae to the alternating produce of cropbearing fields (8–11), constitutes perhaps the most plausible solution of the ones suggested so far and is worthy of consideration.

### *Nemean 3*

*Nemean 3* was composed for Aristocleidas of Aegina. Whereas, as noted above, in the Aeginetan odes it is Pindar's practice to designate the victor's *patra* and make extensive reference to his broader family, in *Nem. 3* Aristocleidas' family is hardly present. With the exception of a passing mention of the name of the father, and this in the form of a patronymic,<sup>42</sup> there are no references to other kin relationships, agnatic or collateral, and, most importantly, Aristocleidas' *patra* is not specified. Additionally, contrary to other odes for Aeginetans, the diction indicating hereditary excellence and noble birth is also confined to a single gnome in line 40: *συγγενεῖ δέ τις εὐδοξία μέγα βρίθει*. The only thing with which Aristocleidas is explicitly associated in the ode is the "*Thearion* of the Pythian god," which his victory has linked to splendid ambitions and concerns (67–70):<sup>43</sup>

βοὰ δὲ νικαφόρῳ σὺν Ἀριστοκλείδῃ πρέπει,  
ὅς τάνδε νᾶσον εὐκλείῃ προσέθηκε λόγῳ

<sup>42</sup> *Nem. 3.20*: παῖς Ἀριστοφάνεος.

<sup>43</sup> I. L. Pfeijffer, *Three Aeginetan Odes of Pindar. A Commentary on Nemean V, Nemean III, and Pythian VIII* (Leiden 1999) 378, reads the passage quite differently; see the justified objection of Burnett, *Pindar's Songs* 142 n.7.

καὶ σεμνὸν ἀγλααῖσι μερίμναις  
 Πυθίου Θεάριον.

Our knowledge about this Aeginetan building is regrettably scant.<sup>44</sup> The scholia associate the *Thearion* with the institution of *theoria*, indicating that it was the venue of: (a) sacred officials (θεοφύλακες); (b) local magistrates (ἄρχοντες); (c) sacred delegates.<sup>45</sup> The divergences among these interpretations regarding the function of the *Thearion*, even though not great, imply that they are based on guesswork and not on hard evidence. In any case, most scholars seem to favour (a), a view also supported by the adjective σεμνόν (69) that Pindar ascribes to the *Thearion*.<sup>46</sup> In a recent paper Ian Rutherford, after carefully assessing the evidence from Aegina and other cities regarding *theoroi* and their duties, concludes that the Aeginetan *theoroi* were probably liaising with Delphi and other extraterritorial sanctuaries, and that they could also have held some political power derived from these activities,<sup>47</sup> a view which I find both possible and plausible.

Aristocleidas' exact relationship to the *Thearion* has also been the subject of much controversy. Those who believe that he was well advanced in age argue that he was a member of the *Thearion*,<sup>48</sup> or even that he was granted the privilege of a *theoros* because of his recent victory.<sup>49</sup> Those who consider him a boy,

<sup>44</sup> See Burnett, *Pindar's Songs* 143–144, and I. Rutherford, “The *Thearion* of the Pythian One: The Aeginetan *Thearoi* in Context,” in Fearn, *Aegina* 114–128, who cite relevant bibliography.

<sup>45</sup> Schol. *Nem.* 3.122a–b (III 59 Dr.). On the institution of *theoria* see J. Elsner and I. Rutherford, *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity* (Oxford 2005).

<sup>46</sup> Burnett, *Pindar's Songs* 15 and n.9; B. Currie, *Pindar and the Cult of Heroes* (Oxford 2005) 333 and bibliography. Contrast Figueira, *Aegina* 314–321, who argues for (b).

<sup>47</sup> Rutherford, in *Aegina* 114–128, esp. 125.

<sup>48</sup> E.g. C. A. M. Fennel, *Pindar: the Nemean and Isthmian Odes* (Cambridge 1899) 23.

<sup>49</sup> Pfeijffer, *Three Aeginetan Odes* 218, 227.

which is more likely, maintain that he was probably associated with the *Thearion* through a relative.<sup>50</sup> Whatever the case is, Aristocleidas certainly must have had a special relationship to the *Thearion*, as this building appears in no other Aeginetan ode. I wonder, however, how much emphasis one should place on this association. In her attempt to explain the omission of Aristocleidas' *patra* in *Nem.* 3, Burnett argues that Aristocleidas "alone among the Aeginetan victors has been left without tribal identification, apparently because the college that serves the shrine of Apollo Pythaeus is for him a yet more magnificent family, to whom his garlands and his glory are due."<sup>51</sup> Yet if the focal point of the poem were Aristocleidas as a *theoros*, it stands to reason that Pindar would have woven a much more elaborate and extended praise of the *Thearion*, as in that case the 'family' of the *theoroi* would have substituted for the victor's real family. Indeed, examined closely, the ode, despite the fleeting reference to the *Thearion* in 69, celebrates Aristocleidas first and above all as an Aeginetan and not as a *theoros*.

This, at least, can be inferred from the evidently prominent role that Aegina plays in the poem and the way in which the recent victory is emphatically 'appropriated' as victory of the whole island, not merely of the *theoroi* or Aristocleidas himself.<sup>52</sup> The victory is twice described as a source of joy for the whole city (*χώρας ἄγαλμα* 13, *ἐπιχώριον χάρμα* 66), and in 68–69 Pindar declares that Aristocleidas has linked the island to glorious praise (*βῶα δὲ νικαφόρῳ σὺν Ἀριστοκλείδα πρέπει, / ὅς τάνδε νᾶσον εὐκλέει προσέθηκε λόγῳ*). The 'public' orientation of the poem is evident from the very beginning. Here a chorus of

<sup>50</sup> Burnett, *Pindar's Songs* 144, thinks that he was the son or grandson of a *theoros*.

<sup>51</sup> Burnett, *Pindar's Songs* 144.

<sup>52</sup> A clarification is in order here: praise of the victor's city, as Kurke, *Traffic*, has shown, is an indispensable part of the epinician odes. However, while in all the Aeginetan odes this praise is shared between the victor's family and the *polis*, in *Nem.* 3 it is merely the *polis* that appropriates the glory; this is what renders this poem unique and exceptional.

Aeginetan youths, representative members of the Aeginetan community, are depicted waiting for the arrival of the poem, eager to sing of Aristocleidas,<sup>53</sup> while a few lines later Pindar expresses his intention to communicate the ode to the public (11–12):

ἔγὼ δὲ κείνων τέ νιν ὄairois  
λύρα τε κοινάσομαι.

Most scholars take *κοινάσομαι* to mean ‘impart’ and translate “I shall impart it [the hymn] to their voices and the lyre.”<sup>54</sup> Here I concur with Hubbard, who construes ὄairois and λύρα as instrumental datives and takes *κοινάσομαι* to mean ‘to publicise’.<sup>55</sup> As he convincingly points out, the verb denotes “a mode of public communication which broadens the interest of a topic into the arena of the *polis* and its concerns.”<sup>56</sup> This reading also finds support in the scholia,<sup>57</sup> while at the same time tying in perfectly well with the overall tenor of the poem.

The configuration of Aristocleidas’ victory as a civic one is also manifested by the way in which Pindar intermingles divergent traditions *vis-à-vis* Aeginetan origin. Apart from the Aeacidae, who are omnipresent and a stock-theme in the Aeginetan odes,<sup>58</sup> at the very opening of the poem Pindar points to the Dorian character of Aegina (*Δωρίδα νᾶσον*, 3),<sup>59</sup>

<sup>53</sup> T. Hubbard, “Two Notes on the Myth of Aeacus in Pindar,” *GRBS* 28 (1987) 5–22, at 7 and n.20.

<sup>54</sup> W. Race, *Pindar* II (Loeb 1997); see also E. Mandruzzato, *Pindaro. Tutte le opere* (Milan 2010) 389: “il canto schietto che comunicherò a quelle voci e alla lira”; Burnett, *Pindar’s Songs* 138: “while I set parts for these echoing voices, and for the lyre!” See Hubbard, *GRBS* 28 (1987) 1 n.1, for bibliography.

<sup>55</sup> Hubbard, *GRBS* 28 (1987) 1–2.

<sup>56</sup> Hubbard *GRBS* 28 (1987) 6–7.

<sup>57</sup> Schol. *Nem.* 3.18a (III 44 Dr.).

<sup>58</sup> *Pyth.* 8 provides an exception; here the poet refers fleetingly to the Aeacidae without going into details.

<sup>59</sup> For the Dorian link see also *Ol.* 8.30 and *Isthm.* 9.

while a few lines later he introduces rather boldly and ostentatiously the myth of the Myrmidons (12–16):<sup>60</sup>

χαρίεντα δ' ἔξει πόνον  
 χώρας ἄγαλμα, Μυρμιδόνες ἵνα πρότεροι  
 ᾤκησαν, ὧν παλαίφατον ἀγοράν  
 οὐκ ἐλεγχέεσσιν Ἀριστοκλείδας τεάν  
 ἐμίανε κατ' αἶσαν ἐν περισθενεῖ μαλαχθείς  
 παγκρατίου στόλω.

The scholia cite two versions of the myth, attested by Hesiod and the historian Theogenes.<sup>61</sup> According to Hesiod, Zeus transformed the ants (μύρμηκες) on Aegina into human beings so that his son Aeacus would not be alone; these first Aeginetans are also credited with the invention of sails: οἱ δ' ἦτοι πρῶτον ζευξάν νέας ἀμφιελίσσας.<sup>62</sup> Theogenes offers a different version; the human beings who inhabited Aegina initially lived in underground caves, like ants; Aeacus was the first who taught them to communicate through language and who established laws and a political order among them.<sup>63</sup> Even though Pindar does not touch upon the etymology of the name 'Myrmidons', his account seems to allude to both versions. On the one hand, the reference to the Myrmidons' παλαίφατον ἀγοράν (14) echoes, in my view, Theogenes and points implicitly to Aegina's civic and political traditions.<sup>64</sup> On the other

<sup>60</sup> On the myth of the Myrmidons and its relation to Aegina see S. J. Carnes, "The Aeginetan Genesis of the Myrmidons: A Note on *Nemean* 3.13–16," *CW* 84 (1990) 41–44; G. Nagy, "Asopos and his Multiple Daughters: Traces of Preclassical Epic in the Aeginetan Odes of Pindar," in Fearn, *Aegina* 55–57; Pfeijffer, *Three Aeginetan Odes* 26.

<sup>61</sup> Schol. *Nem.* 3.21 (III 45–46 Dr.).

<sup>62</sup> Hes. fr.205 M-W.

<sup>63</sup> *FGrHist* 300 F 1. For the affinity of the name 'Myrmidons' with warlike ants see M. Sears, "Warlike Ants: Elite Troops in the *Iliad*," *CW* 103 (2010) 139–154.

<sup>64</sup> Contrast C. Carey, "Three Myths in Pindar: *N.* 4, *O.* 9, *N.* 3," *Eranos* 78 (1980) 143–162, who remarks that it is not clear why Pindar singles out the *agora* of the Myrmidons (154).



hand, the myth of the travels of Heracles that follows, in conjunction with the extensive use of maritime vocabulary,<sup>65</sup> brings to mind the Hesiodic version and the Myrmidons as the first εὐρεταί of sails.

Although probably significant for insular Aeginetan identity, the myth of the Myrmidons appears in no other ode for a victor from Aegina.<sup>66</sup> Its occurrence here, therefore, is noticeable and most likely not coincidental. While the Aeginetans considered and proudly advertised Aeacus and his offspring as their ancestors, the great emphasis that the odes place upon the relationship between the Aeacidae and Pindar's patrons points to the conclusion that this Aeacid descent was quite elitist and was the exclusive legacy of the nobles and not of the entire population of Aegina. This must have constituted the major mark of distinction between the Aeginetan aristocracy and the rest; *they* were the direct descendants of Aeacus and his sons.<sup>67</sup> By contrast, the myth of the Myrmidons seems to have been more inclusive and egalitarian; it was a tradition that embraced the Aeginetan populace *in toto* and evoked the notion of *communitas* in a way that the myths of the Aeacidae most likely did not.

Now, how can we weave all the strands together? How should we construe Aegina's prevalence in *Nem.* 3? Why is Aristocleidas' victory counted as merely "Aeginetan"? How does the *Thearion* associate with this success and how are we to understand the "splendid concerns" that Aristocleidas' athletic

<sup>65</sup> See e.g. στόλαφ (17), ἀβάταν ἄλα (21), ναυτιλίας ἐσχάτας (22), ἐν πελάγει (23), πλόον (27). The account of Heracles' exploration of the western Mediterranean, even though it is designated as a digression by Pindar and has troubled scholars as to its relevance (see Carey, *Eranos* 78 [1980] 155), dovetails nicely with the myth of the Myrmidons, precisely because the Myrmidons were the first who used sails and gave, according to Hesiod, "wings" to ships.

<sup>66</sup> The myth is also mentioned at *Paeon* 6.106–108.

<sup>67</sup> Burnett, *Pindar's Songs* 25 and n.67. Contrast G. Nagy, *Pindar's Homer: The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* (Baltimore 1990) 178 n.136.

distinction imposed upon it? With regard to his relationship with the *Thearion*, Rutherford has “devised a hypothesis” which I find quite plausible, as it seems to respond well to all these questions. According to him, Aeginetan athletes who were not members of the aristocratic *patrae* could have entered the Panhellenic competitions financed by the state, as part of the official *theoria* to the festivals. In the fortunate case of a victory, the *Thearion* could have undertaken its celebration, something which might have happened with *Nem.* 3.<sup>68</sup>

Even though I tend to think that this practice did not involve only young athletes who did not belong to a *patra* but everyone who was attached, in one way or another, to the *Thearion*, Rutherford’s hypothesis neatly squares with the diction and imagery of *Nem.* 3. At the same time it enables us to explain not only the peculiar absence of Aristocleidas’ family from the poem, but also the configuration of the victory as exclusively Aeginetan. Aristocleidas was associated with the *Thearion*, and his participation in the Nemean games was financed by it on behalf of the city of Aegina. Because of this connection, the *Thearion* also undertook the celebration of his victory and probably contracted with Pindar. One could even take this line of thought a step further and argue that the public celebration of Aristocleidas’ Nemean distinction was of a broader scope and was intended primarily for external consumption. Foreigners, most likely *theoroi* from liaising cities and, of course, the Nemean *theoroi*, could have been invited to attend the performance and participate in the festivities. In such a case, the Aeginetan *theoroi* would have acted as their hosts (*theorodokoi*).<sup>69</sup> This is, perhaps, also implied by the reference to the “splendid concerns” that Aristocleidas’ victory had imposed upon the *Thearion*. Seen from this aspect, the ode’s emphasis upon Aeginetan origins and etiological myths, as well as the mythical *exempla* of the Aeacidae (32–64), which focus on their contri-

<sup>68</sup> Rutherford in Fearn, *Aegina* 127.

<sup>69</sup> See Rutherford in Fearn, *Aegina* 125 n.44. On the *theorodokoi* see P. Perlman, *City and Sanctuary in Ancient Greece* (Göttingen 2000).

bution to the first and second Greek expedition against Troy, gain in significance; they are advanced to a kind of manifesto of Aeginetan identity and postulate a pivotal role for Aegina in the Greek world, thus ingeniously enhancing and promoting what Kowalzig has aptly called Aegina's "ideology of connectivity."<sup>70</sup>

### *Olympian 9*

*Olympian 9* for Epharmostus of Opus, a small city in eastern Locris, constitutes an even more puzzling case.<sup>71</sup> In spite of its length, which extends to 113 lines, the poem is reticent about Epharmostus' family. It includes no references to victorious relatives and the honouree is referred to without a patronymic (4, 87). Miller sought to explain this omission by arguing that Epharmostus was not from "an athletically prominent or gifted family."<sup>72</sup> Though possible, we have seen that this conjecture is far from satisfactory, as Epharmostus' athletic victories could have been cited to impart *kleos* upon his allegedly inglorious father and household. In the light of *Nem.* 3, I propose that Epharmostus' family is absent from the poem because *Ol.* 9 was commissioned by a third party.

In order to support my argument, I focus attention on the enigmatic figure of Lampromachus (84), a man who, in the past, won an Isthmian victory on the same day as Epharmostus. The scholia attest that Lampromachus was a relative of Epharmostus.<sup>73</sup> Even though Pindar does not specify the re-

<sup>70</sup> B. Kowalzig, "Musical Merchandise 'on every vessel': Religion and Trade on Aegina," in Fearn, *Aegina* 129–171, at 145.

<sup>71</sup> On the poem in general see A. M. Miller, "Inventa Componere: Rhetorical Process and Poetic Composition in Pindar's Ninth Olympian Ode," *TAPA* 123 (1993) 109–147; Gerber, *A Commentary*; M. Pavlou, "Metapoetics, Poetic Tradition, and Praise in Pindar *Olympian 9*," *Mnemosyne* 61 (2008) 533–567.

<sup>72</sup> Miller, *TAPA* 123 (1993) 144. A rather strained view, that Lampromachus was first the *παιδικά* of Epharmostus and later his adoptive son, was proposed by J. A. Nairn, "On Pindar's *Olympian Odes*," *CR* 15 (1901) 10–15, at 14.

<sup>73</sup> Schol. *Ol.* 9.123a and 125c (I 296–297 Dr.); see also Miller, *TAPA* 123

relationship between the two men, this is certainly a possibility if we are to judge from victorious individuals mentioned in other odes. Miller, however, makes a valid and significant point when he argues that the concealment of the relationship between Epharmostus and Lampromachus indicates that Pindar did not “regard the connection as one that contributes materially to his encomiastic argument.”<sup>74</sup>

But if Lampromachus is not introduced as Epharmostus’ relative, then what is his role in the ode, and what does the text tell us about him? As Pindar declares in lines 83–85:

προξενία δ’ ἀρετῆ τ’ ἦλθον  
τιμᾶρος Ἰσθμίοισι Λαμπρομάχου  
μίτραϊς, ὅτ’ ἀμφοτέρωι κράτησαν  
μίαν ἔργον ἀν’ ἀμέραν.

Much dispute has arisen over the meaning of *proxenia* in this passage. Some scholars contend that the term means nothing more than “guest-friendship” or “hospitality.”<sup>75</sup> But most interpret it as the technical term for the political office of *proxenos*.<sup>76</sup> Even though *xenia* and *proxenia* shared many similarities, in reality they indicated two different institutions. On the one hand, *xenia* was a private institution, the friendship between individual aristocrats. *Proxenia*, on the other hand, was a public institution, “an agreement between a community of people personified as a single individual, and a ‘real’ individual outsider.”<sup>77</sup> The beginnings of *proxenia* are normally placed around

(1993) 117 n.23.

<sup>74</sup> Miller, *TAPA* 123 (1993) 144. Even though Pindar occasionally suppresses the victor’s exact relationship with individual relatives (see Carey, *CQ* 39 [1989] 3), in those cases the relationship can be deduced. *Ol.* 9 is different in this respect.

<sup>75</sup> G. Most, “Pindar, *Nemean* 7.64–67” *GRBS* 26 (1985) 324–325.

<sup>76</sup> E.g. Farnell, *Works of Pindar* 73; G. Méautis, *Pindare le dorien* (Neuchâtel 1962) 415; P. Bernardini, *Mito e attualità nelle odi di Pindaro: la Nemea 4, l’Olimpica 9, l’Olimpica 7* (Rome 1983) 122, 147 n.77; Carey in *The Passionate Intellect* 94 n.16. Gerber, *A Commentary* 57–58 also inclines to this view.

<sup>77</sup> G. Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City* (Cambridge 1987) 133.

the seventh century or slightly later, while the word *proxenos* appears in decrees dated to the sixth century.<sup>78</sup> The first literary instances occur in Pindar, Bacchylides, and Aeschylus.<sup>79</sup> In addition to *Ol.* 9, in Pindar *proxenia/proxenoí* occurs three more times: in *Nem.* 7.65, *Isthm.* 4.8, and fr.94b.41.

Most contends that in the poetry of the fifth century *proxenia* and *xenia* are used interchangeably to indicate “an act of hospitality or generally hospitable disposition,”<sup>80</sup> and this is how he interprets all the Pindaric instances of *proxenia*. But if we examine the contexts in which these two terms occur in Pindar,<sup>81</sup> we see that *proxenia* seems to hint at something more than mere guest-friendship or at a relationship that is in the framework of interstate politics.<sup>82</sup> Besides, given that the term was well-established by the sixth century, I am skeptical that Pindar would use it so loosely, especially when, on many occasions, he appears to employ words not previously utilized in order to achieve specificity and exactness.<sup>83</sup> That *proxenia* in *Ol.* 9 should

---

See also A. Gerolymatos, *Espionage and Treason* (Amsterdam 1986) 6–8; F. S. Russell, *Information Gathering in Classical Greece* (Ann Arbor 1999) 76–83. The term is defined by a scholion to Aeschin. 3.138: εἰσὶ δὲ πρόξενοι οἱ ἐν ταῖς ἑαυτῶν πατρίσιν ἄλλων προνοοῦντες πόλεων.

<sup>78</sup> M. B. Wallace, “Early Greek *Proxenoí*,” *Phoenix* 24 (1970) 189–208, at 190–193.

<sup>79</sup> Bacchyl. 9.76; Aesch. *Suppl.* 239, 419, 491, 919, 920.

<sup>80</sup> Most, *GRBS* 26 (1985) 324, who argues that the first evidence for the public institution is to be found in Hdt. 8.136.1 and 143.1.

<sup>81</sup> For *xenia* see e.g. *Ol.* 4.15, *Pyth.* 10.64, *Isthm.* 2.24, 39.

<sup>82</sup> *Proxenia* is associated with the word *amphiktion* in both *Isthm.* 4 and fr. 94b. Contrast G. A. Privitera, *Le Istmiche* (Milan 1982) 174, who contends that the terms *proxenoí* and *amphiktiones* in *Isthm.* 4 “hanno valore generico” and should not be understood as *termini tecnici*. Regarding *Nem.* 7 Currie, *Pindar* 297–340, esp. 331–340, argues that the “Achaean man” mentioned in the poem was probably a *proxenos* of the Molossians attending the performance of the ode on Aegina. Contrast Most, *GRBS* 26 (1985) 323 and n.31.

<sup>83</sup> For instance words indicating family relationships, such as *πατροπάτωρ* and *ματροπάτωρ*, first appear with Pindar; see Longo, in *Lirica greca* 155–174.

be understood as a technical term is also supported by the pragmatics of the ode. Perhaps it is not coincidental that two of the five extant archaic and early classical inscriptions referring to *proxenia* confer the title to Locrians, more specifically to an East and a West Locrian. In fact, the earliest recorded *proxenos* was Menecrates of Oeanthea in Ozolean Locris, who was appointed *proxenos* of the Corcyreans. From this evidence, Wallace proposed that the interstate institution of *proxenia* might have been developed by the Locrians.<sup>84</sup> Even though the origins of *proxenia* are difficult to trace with certainty, the evidence at hand indicates that this institution must have been in use relatively early in Locris. Bearing this in mind, I am reluctant to suppose that Pindar would have used a term which bore such a specific meaning for his Locrian audience in order to define a relationship merely of *xenia*.

Even if we accept that Lampromachus was indeed a *proxenos* of the Thebans in Opus, there is still a problem to be resolved. The way in which Pindar refers to Lampromachus implies that he was actively involved in Pindar's presence in Opus. Indeed, the main duty of a *proxenos* was to host the citizens of the city that allocated him the title. However, if we surmise that the poem was commissioned by Epharmostus himself, and if Pindar went to Opus as his encomiast and not merely as a Theban citizen, would not we expect that Epharmostus would have been Pindar's host? This difficulty fades if we suppose that the poem was not a commission of Epharmostus but rather of his city. In that case, Lampromachus, as *proxenos* of the Thebans, would have acted as Pindar's host, and one could even argue that he would have been the one who approached and contracted with Pindar as well.<sup>85</sup>

This interpretation accounts not only for Lampromachus'

<sup>84</sup> Meiggs/Lewis 4; Wallace, *Phoenix* 24 (1970) 191, 194.

<sup>85</sup> See also Méautis, *Pindare* 415: "On a conjecturé ... que c'est lui [Lampromachus] qui fit les démarches auprès de Pindare pour qu'il accepte de composer une ode en faveur d'un vainqueur originaire d'une ville et d'une des contrées les moins célèbres de la Grèce."

praise and the absence of Epharmostus' family from the poem, but also for the particular spin that the notion of family is given in lines 14 and 20, where the victor is emphatically presented as "the son of the city of Opus" and Opus, in turn, is configured as the "mother" of the Opuntians (12–20):

οὔτοι χαμαιπετέων λόγων ἐφάψαι,  
 ἀνδρὸς ἀμφὶ παλαίσμασιν φόρμιγγ' ἐλελίζων  
 κλεινᾶς ἐξ Ὀπόεντος· αἰνήσαις ἔ καὶ υἰόν,  
 ἂν Θέμις θυγάτηρ τέ οἱ σῶπειρα λέλογχεν  
 μεγαλόδοξος Εὐνομία. θάλλει δ' ἀρεταῖσιν  
 σὸν τε, Κασταλία, πάρα  
 Ἄλφεοῦ τε ῥέεθρον·  
 ὅθεν στεφάνων ἄωτοι κλυτὰν  
 Λοκρῶν ἐπαείροντι ματέρ' ἀγλαόδενδρον.

A few lines later Pindar also refers to the ancestors of the Opuntians (not of Epharmostus): κείνων δ' ἔσαν / χαλκᾶσπιδες ὑμέτεροι πρόγονοι / ἀρχᾶθεν, Ἰαπετιονίδος φύτλας / κοῦροι κορᾶν καὶ φερτάτων Κρονιδᾶν, / ἐγχώριοι βασιλῆες αἰεὶ (53–56).

Thus it becomes clear that Epharmostus' excellence is not credited to his family stock but rather to his Opuntian lineage. Epharmostus managed to build an admirable athletic record not because he was the offspring of a particular household or clan, but simply because he was an Opuntian. The portrait of his recent and earlier victories as primarily Opuntian is unmistakable and reinforces my suggestion that the epinician was most likely commissioned by Opus. The way in which Pindar rounds off the poem also conjures up similar connotations:<sup>86</sup> Epharmostus' dedication of his *kotinos* at the altar of the Locrian hero Ajax<sup>87</sup> is a symbolic act which serves to

<sup>86</sup> *Ol.* 9.112: "and at your feast, Aias, son of Iteus, the victor has placed a crown upon your altar."

<sup>87</sup> So Bernardini, *Mito e attualità* 152–153; schol. *Ol.* 9.166a–167 (I 306 Dr.) have it that the wreath that Epharmostus dedicates to Ajax is the one that he won at the Aiantea and not at Olympia.

inscribe the individual victory as a collective one and the victor as a benefactor, an *euergetes*, of his community.<sup>88</sup>

But why would Opus want to celebrate Epharmostus' distinction *δημοσίᾳ δαπάνῃ*? Why did his victory stand out? Epharmostus' recent distinction was a landmark in his career for two reasons: it was an Olympic victory, and with this he became a *periodonikes* (victor in all four crown games), an enviable title for himself but also a major honour for his otherwise insignificant hometown. To put it more succinctly, this was a prestigious victory that any city would be eager to publicly celebrate and promote by every possible means. In fact, I would argue that, like *Nem.* 3, *Ol.* 9 was not intended merely for local consumption but was targeting the foreigners who must have been invited to attend the celebration either as simple viewers or as the representatives of their communities.<sup>89</sup>

Opus was a smallish city. Victors of the calibre of Epharmostus were the only things it could capitalise upon in order to put itself on the map.<sup>90</sup> The way in which Pindar structures and tailors the myth of its foundation<sup>91</sup> not only puts it on the map, but 'centralizes' it by describing it as the maternal womb of the second generation of humans. Indeed, in the myth Opus is transformed into a centripetal power which, in addition to its (newly forged) kinship ties with Arcadia and Pisa,<sup>92</sup> is net-

<sup>88</sup> The theme of the victor's dedication of his victory crown is encountered in statuary as well; see E. Walter-Karydi, *How the Aiginetans Formed their Identity* (Athens 2006) 32–34 and figs. 16–19.

<sup>89</sup> Because of the reference to Ajax at the end of the poem, it was assumed that *Ol.* 9 had been most likely performed during the Aiantea festival.

<sup>90</sup> Indeed, the Locrians must have laid much emphasis upon athletics as one can infer from the legendary Euthymus of Locri, the first historical Greek to receive a cult in his lifetime, around the beginning of the fifth century; see B. Currie, "Euthymos of Locri: A Case Study in Heroization in the Classical Period," *JHS* 122 (2002) 24–44. A Locrian was also one of the two athletes who first dedicated statues at Olympia; see n.22 above.

<sup>91</sup> On the myth see Gerber, *A Commentary*.

<sup>92</sup> According to the traditional myth, Opus was the son of Protogeneia,



worked with a number of other Greek cities. King Opus' reception of his guests (*xenoi*) from all over Greece (Arcadia, Thebes, Thessaly, Argos) exemplifies this in the most eloquent way (67–70). In fact, it would not be far-fetched to suggest that the evidently extended enumeration of Epharmostus' victories both in the Panhellenic and non-Panhellenic games (Argos, Athens, Marathon, Arcadia, Pellana, Eleusis, Thebes)<sup>93</sup> served to enhance not only his glory, but also the honour of his hometown. Epharmostus' participation in all these local games implicitly hints at the current good interstate relationship between Opus and the host-cities, a rapport formed in the past as a simple guest-friendship (*xenia*) and developed in recent years into something more formal and solid (*proxenia*).<sup>94</sup>

Of particular interest is the link that Pindar forges between Opus and Thessaly through Menoetius, the father of Patroclus. According to Homer, Menoetius was the son of the Opuntian king Aktor but was forced to flee from Opus to Thessaly. As Patroclus explains (*Il.* 23.85), when he was young he accidentally killed one of his playfellows, and as a result he and his father had to abandon their homecity. Menoetius brought Patroclus to Peleus in Phthia, to grow up with Achilles, and Peleus kindly and generously gave them hospitality. It was from Phthia that Patroclus set off for Troy, together with Achilles (11.765). The story alluded to by Pindar in *Ol.* 9, however, is different. Surprisingly, Menoetius is not presented as Opuntian

---

daughter of Pyrrha and Deucalion. In the Pindaric version, Zeus carried off to the Maenalian glens the daughter of Opus of Elis and from their union was born Opus, whom Zeus took to the childless king Locrus. In altering the myth Pindar manages to associate the Opuntian royal line with Elis, as well as with Arcadia; see G. L. Huxley, *Pindar's Vision of the Past* (Belfast 1975) 31; Pavlou, *Mnemosyne* 61 (2008) 556 and 559.

<sup>93</sup> Note the similarities between these places and the citizenship of the *xenoi* who came to Opus in the past.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. the detail about the cheers and 'hurrahs' of the crowd at Epharmostus' victory at Marathon: διήρχετο κύκλου ὄσσα βοᾶ, ὠραῖος ἐὼν καὶ καλὸς κάλλιστά τε ῥέξαις, 93–94.

by birth but rather as one of the many immigrants (ἐποίκων, 69) who flocked to Opus. Even though Pindar does not specify Menoetius' city of origin, in many sources he is said to be of a Thessalian origin,<sup>95</sup> and the close friendship between his son and Achilles underlined at 106–119 further supports this. While at first sight Pindar's choice of story might appear odd (in presenting Menoetius and his renowned offspring as immigrants and not genuine Opuntians), it seems justified and entirely functional. First, it dovetails with the poem's overall aim, to depict Opus as a hospitable and cosmopolitan city with a centripetal force. It also manages to whitewash from Aktor's family history the embarrassing detail of Patroclus' killing of his playfellow and his consequent flight from Opus. In the version celebrated by Pindar, Aktor moves willingly to Opus, and when his son follows Achilles to the war, he departs as a citizen of Opus and not of Phthia. Last but not least, this alternate version of the story also serves to forge strong links between Opus and Thessaly. It is not an insignificant detail that Pindar puts into relief this relationship by stressing that Locrus honored Menoetius more than any other settler (υἷὸν δ' Ἄκτορος ἐξόχως τίμασεν ἐποίκων Αἰγίνας τε Μενότιον, 69–70). Shall we assume that among those attending the festival was also the Locrians' *proxenos* from Thessaly? Unfortunately, it is impossible to know. It seems, however, that the two cities must have had very good relationships during the archaic period if we are to believe the bronze proxeny decree dated to that time according to which Aristomachus of Opus was appointed *proxenos* of Pherae in Thessaly.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>95</sup> E.g. schol. *Ol.* 9 104a and 106a (I 292 Dr.). Another tradition held that Menoetius' father Aktor was the son of Myrmidon and Peisidike, daughter of the Thessalian king Aeolus: see E. Wüst, "Patroklos." *RE* 18 (1949) 2274.

<sup>96</sup> The decree was published by Y. Béquignon, "Etudes Thessaliens, XI," *BCH* 88 (1964) 395–412. Wallace, *Phoenix* 24 (1970) 204, also places it in the archaic period. Contrast *SEG* XXIII 415 which gives a later date (ca. 450–425).

*Pythian 12*

I will close my discussion with *Pyth.* 12 for Midas of Acragas who won a victory in flute-playing, most likely in 490 B.C.<sup>97</sup> The ode is exceptional in that it is the only extant epinician composed for a victor in a musical competition. Even though much has been written about the poem's central myth, an action for the invention of the *polykephalos nomos* and the art of *aulêtikê* by Athena,<sup>98</sup> questions relating to Midas and the ode's commission have largely been ignored. It is to these issues that I would shift attention.

Apart from commemorating a victory in flute-playing, *Pyth.* 12 is also exceptional because, like *Ol.* 9, it contains no reference to the victor's family. Throughout the poem no other kin (victorious or not) is mentioned, while Midas is not even assigned a patronymic. The poem centres on the mythical section (6–27), while in the opening strophe the city of Acragas receives an elevated encomium; it is praised as being lover of splendor (*φιλάγλαε*), loveliest of mortals' cities (*καλλίστα βροτέων πολίων*), abode of Persephone (*Φερσεφόνας ἔδος*), well-built (*ἔϋδματον κολώναν*), and rich in flocks (*μηλοβότου*). In lines 4–5 Acragas is also beseeched to receive Midas' victorious crown, a figurative and symbolic act which concretizes the individual victory to an *agalma* of the entire city.<sup>99</sup>

Whereas in *Ol.* 9 and *Nem.* 3 Pindar's silence about the victor's family has been variously interpreted, in *Pyth.* 12 this omission has been taken to provide an argument *ex silentio* for

<sup>97</sup> On the dating of the ode see Cummins, *CJ* 105 (2010) 325 n.14.

<sup>98</sup> A. Köhnken, "Perseus' Kampf und Athenes Erfindung (Bemerkungen zu Pindar, Pythien 12)," *Hermes* 104 (1976) 257–265; J. Clay, "Pindar's Twelfth *Pythian*: Reed and Bronze," *AJP* 113 (1992) 519–525, at 519; D. Loscalzo, "Pindaro e la canna auletica della palude copaide," *QUCC* N.S. 62 (1989) 17–24; B. Gentili and F. Luisi, "La *Pitica* 12 di Pindaro e l'aulo di Mida," *QUCC* N.S. 78 (1995) 7–29; B. Gentili et al. (eds.), *Pindaro: Le Pitiche* (Milan 1995) 307–313 and 671–684.

<sup>99</sup> Note that here it is the city which is asked to accept the gift.

Midas' descent from a non-illustrious background.<sup>100</sup> As our analysis so far has made clear, however, such omissions are normally conditioned by more complex factors and point either towards intrafamilial tension (or antagonism, in the case of the Sicilian odes), or to the commission of the ode by a third party. Could any of these possibilities apply here as well? The former seems less probable, for even if Midas' relationship with his father/family was strained, one would naturally expect that his encomium, now squeezed into two lines (δέξαι στεφάνωμα τὸδ' ἐκ Πυθῶνος εὐδόξω Μίδα αὐτόν τέ νιν Ἑλλάδα νικάσαντα τέχνα, 5–6), would have been much more elaborate and extended. A more plausible scenario, therefore, would be that the ode was commissioned by a third party. In light of this, the conjecture put forward by Gentili et al., that Pindar could have been contracted by the Emmenidae for Acragas, is definitely worth considering. It has the merit of sufficiently explaining not only the absence of Midas' family, but also Pindar's opening gambit, that is, the imposing and elevated invocation to the city of Acragas. Gentili et al. justify their suggestion with an *argumentum e contrario*: Midas could not have commissioned the poem himself because the absence of his family suggests that he was “di familia non particulamente illustre.”<sup>101</sup> Put as vaguely as this, the thesis bears little credence, as it accounts neither for the motives of the Emmenidae nor for the fact they are not explicitly commemorated as patrons in the ode.<sup>102</sup> Accordingly, it is necessary to tackle these particularities first. As already mentioned, Midas won his victory in 490 B.C. Theron became tyrant of Acragas two to three years later, in 488/7:<sup>103</sup> he was not a tyrant at the time. Even so, it is legitimate to assume that he and his younger brother Xenocrates were high in the Acra-

<sup>100</sup> Gentili et al., *Le Pitiche* ad loc.; Clay, *AJP* 113 (1992) 519.

<sup>101</sup> Gentili et al., *Le Pitiche* 307.

<sup>102</sup> See e.g. *Pyth.*10, where Thorax, the patron of the ode, is explicitly and highly praised.

<sup>103</sup> See N. Luraghi, *Tirannidi arcaiche in Sicilia e Magna Grecia* (Florence 1994) 241–242.

gantive hierarchy, particularly powerful and influential.<sup>104</sup>

Let me, *modo pindarico*, make a digression. Xenocrates won his first Pythian chariot victory also in the Pythia of 490 B.C. Pindar was contracted to commemorate the event and Xenocrates' athletic distinction was celebrated in one of his earliest odes, *Pyth.* 6.<sup>105</sup> What strikes us about *Pyth.* 6 is that, unlike other odes for tyrants, Xenocrates' family is quite prominent. Though the poem commemorates the distinction of Xenocrates, most of it is actually devoted to the praise of his son, Thrasybulus. From its very opening the recent victory is emphatically configured as a victory of the family of the Emmenidae and Acragas, with the name of Xenocrates sandwiched between two bold references to his family (5–9 and 14–18):<sup>106</sup>

Πυθιόνικος ἔνθ' ὀλβίοισιν Ἐμμενίδαις  
ποταμῖα τ' Ἀκράγαντι καὶ μὲν Ξενοκράτει  
ἔτοῖμος ὕμνων θησαυρὸς ἐν πολυχρύσῳ  
Ἀπολλωνία τετειχίσται νάπα·

...

φάει δὲ πρόσωπον ἐν καθαρῷ  
πατρὶ τεῶ, Θρασύβουλε, κοινάν τε γενεᾷ  
λόγοισι θνατῶν εὐδοξὸν ἄρματι νίκαν  
Κρισαίαις ἐνὶ πτυχαῖς ἀπαγγελεῖ.

In fact, near the end of the poem Pindar also makes a more specific, albeit anonymous, reference to Theron, exclaiming that Thrasybulus rivals his uncle (not his father) in every virtue (44–51):

τῶν νῦν δὲ καὶ Θρασύβουλος  
πατρώαν μάλιστα πρὸς στάθμαν ἔβα,

<sup>104</sup> Luraghi, *Tirannidi arcaiche* 239.

<sup>105</sup> On *Pyth.* 6 see, among others, Gentili et al., *Le Pitiche* 541–552; L. Kurke, “Pindar’s Sixth *Pythian* and the Tradition of Advice Poetry,” *TAPA* 120 (1990) 85–107.

<sup>106</sup> Contrast Cummins, *CJ* 105 (2010) 324 who argues that the first 18 lines of the poem dwell on Xenocrates’ victory.

πάτρῳ τ' ἐπερχόμενος ἀγλαΐαν ἅπασαν.  
 νόῳ δὲ πλοῦτον ἄγει,  
 ἄδικον οὐθ' ὑπέροπλον ἦβαν δρέπων,  
 σοφίαν δ' ἐν μυχοῖσι Πιερίδων  
 τίν' τ', Ἐλέλιχθον, ἄρχεις ὅς ἱπιᾶν ἐσόδων,  
 μάλα ἀδόντι νόῳ, Ποσειδάν, προσέχεται.

Although Theron's name is suppressed, the particular mention he receives here is surprising, considering that he had no athletic victories at the time. What is even more striking is that the virtues of Thrasybulus, itemized here (wise expenditure of wealth, justice, prudence, poetic sensitivity and patronage), are by analogy projected upon Theron himself.<sup>107</sup> Cummins tried to resolve this rather unexpected reference and subtle encomium of Theron by looking at the pragmatics of the ode. As she remarks, given that at the time Theron was poised to establish a tyranny at Acragas, Xenocrates' distinction was likely an aid to his brother's political ascent and advancement. A similar remark has been made by Luraghi, who stresses the close relationship between equestrian victories and political power in antiquity.<sup>108</sup> Xenocrates' Pythian chariot-victory epitomised in the most eloquent way the status of the Emmenidae, while its commemoration by means of an epinician allowed Theron to legitimise his political aspirations and boost his prestige in an implicit and non-provocative way. I wonder whether Thrasybulus' prominence in *Pyth.* 6 could also be explained from this aspect: his portrait as a nobleman and, in particular, his association with poetry leave it to be inferred that perhaps Thrasybulus combined certain features that rendered him an ideal model for the appealing public image that the Emmenidae and, more importantly, Theron opted to construct

<sup>107</sup> Luraghi, *Tirannidi arcaiche* 241; Cummins, *CJ* 105 (2010) 325.

<sup>108</sup> Luraghi, *Tirannidi arcaiche* 240. As he stresses, an equestrian victory was "un modo per sfoggiare ricchezza e potenza"; cf. D. G. Kyle, *Athletics in Ancient Athens* (Leiden 1987) 155–168.

and project for themselves.<sup>109</sup>

Returning to *Pyth.* 12, I suggest that we should read it in a similar way. By employing Pindar to commemorate the victory of an Acragantine in a Panhellenic musical competition,<sup>110</sup> Theron, the tyrant-to-be (and the Emmenidae in general), could stress his power and status in a non-provocative and subtle way. At the same time, he could fashion himself as patron of poetry and as a generous benefactor of his community, thus claiming for himself a much more refined image than that of other tyrants, such as his predecessor Phalaris of Acragas, notorious for his cannibalism and violence.<sup>111</sup> What is more, commissioning the epinician would not have been considered by the Acragantines as buying prestige and would not have caused their contempt, because of the concealment of the name of the Emmenidae as patrons of the ode and because the poem is first and above all cast as an encomium for Acragas. Perhaps it is not coincidental after all that *Pyth.* 12 conveys the impression that Midas is configured as a symbol rather than as a historical person. He seems to symbolise the current lustre of Acragas and to point towards the even more glorious and promising future that Theron's ascent to power would inaugurate. Indeed, the very name "Midas," whether a professional name or not, was apt and conducive to this politically motivated symbolization given its mythological connotations of gold and affluence.

<sup>109</sup> From the mention of the Pierides in line 49, some scholars (e.g. G. Norwood, *Pindar* [Berkeley 1945] 156; R. W. B. Burton, *Pindar's Pythian Odes* [Oxford 1962] 23) argued that Thrasybulus might have been a poet. Kurke, *TAPA* 120 (1990) 99, observes that this reference probably means that "Thrasyboulos is an avid consumer and patron of poetry." Thrasybulus' association with poetry is also pointed out by Gentili et al., *Le Pitiche* 551.

<sup>110</sup> Note the emphatic way in which Pindar refers to the Panhellenic nature of the victory by comparing it to "a defeat of Greece": δέξαι στεφάνωμα τόδ' ἐκ Πυθῶνος εὐδόξω Μίδα, / αὐτόν τε νιν Ἑλλάδα νικάσαντα τέχνα (5–6).

<sup>111</sup> Pindar briefly refers to Phalaris in *Pyth.* 1.95–98. On the Phalaridae see Luraghi, *Tirannidi arcaiche* 21–49.

*Conclusion*

Kurke is undoubtedly right in so emphatically stressing the crucial and multi-layered role that family plays in the Pindaric epinicians. Yet as I hope to have demonstrated, her thesis glosses over some important particularities and variations, in so far as the emphasis that Pindar places upon the victors' family is not always the same. In fact, as we have seen, in three cases the victor's family is totally absent. These deviations from the norm, I suggest, are not circumstantial or insignificant, but depend on, and are prefaced by, specific factors such as the patron of the song. The identity of the patron is crucial for the way in which the praise of the family is shaped and structured. Thus, in epinicians commissioned by the victor's *patra*, the praise of the broader family was more extensive, while important figures such as the victor's father could be easily eliminated, especially when their relationship with their clan was tense, antagonistic, or problematic. Apart from individual commissions, though, as my analysis of *Nem.* 3 and *Ol.* 9 shows, cities could also act as contractors of encomiasts. This is an important and novel observation which invites us to examine the odes from a quite different perspective and allows a better grasp of the social and political function of epinician poetry in the archaic period.<sup>112</sup>

*September, 2011*

Open University of Cyprus  
Nicosia, Cyprus  
mpavlou04@yahoo.gr

<sup>112</sup> The article was completed during my stay at the University of Cincinnati as a Summer Tytus Fellow (2011). Special thanks should go to the Department of Classics for granting me the fellowship, to Prof. Getzel Cohen for his hospitality, and to the Blegen librarians Jacquie Riley and David Ball. I would also like to thank Professor Oddone Longo for sending me his article on kinship terminology in Pindar, and to express my gratitude to the anonymous referee and the editor of *GRBS* for their acute criticisms and suggestions.