Two Notes on the Myth of Aeacus
in Pindar

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IT HAS LONG been recognized that Pindar could refashion, recombine, and sometimes totally replace traditional source-material in formulating the highly complex and detailed mythical narratives for which his odes are famous.[1] Although it is no longer so popular as it once was to reconstruct lost and unattested cyclic epics as sources for every detail in Pindar's mythology, it remains controversial to speculate just where Pindar is innovating upon his sources and where he is not; nor is it always certain exactly what his sources may have been, given the scant remains of his predecessors and the frequent necessity of extrapolating from later evidence. More recent Pindaric scholarship, intent on viewing all aspects of a poem's composition from the standpoint of its encomiastic program, has tended to minimize the importance of the mythical narrative generally (as a merely 'decorative' or 'ornamental' component) and the poet's relation to his sources in particular.[2] But this question is not an idle exercise in *Quellenfor-*

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[1] For discussion of various specific cases of mythological revision in Pindar see M. C. van der Kolf, *Quaeritur quomodo Pindarus fabulas tractaverit quidque in eis mutavit* (Rotterdam 1923); F. Dornseiff, *Pindars Stil* (Berlin 1921) 126f; G. Pini, "Correzioni di miti in Pindaro," *Vichiana* 4 (1967) 339–82; A. Köhnken, "Pindar as Innovator: Poseidon Hippios and the Relevance of the Pelops Story in Olympian 1," *CQ* N.S. 24 (1974) 199–206, and "Mythological Chronology and Thematic Coherence in Pindar's Third Olympian Ode," *HSCP* 87 (1983) 55–58. All references are to Bowra's *OCT* edition.

[2] Notable exceptions to this tendency are found in the work of D. C. Young, *Three Odes of Pindar* (Leiden 1968) and *Pindar Isthmian 7, Myth and Exempla* (Leiden 1971), and A. Köhnken, *Die Funktion des Mythos bei Pindar* (Berlin 1971), in addition to his articles cited *supra* n.1. But perhaps more typical is the attitude of E. Thummer, *Pindar: Die Isthmischen Gedichte* (Heidelberg 1968) II 134, who presents exhaustive commentary on other details in the composition of the ode but says in regard to one notable case of mythological innovation, "Es ist hier nicht notwendig, die von Pindar gewählte Version . . . gegenüber der anderen Mythentradition abzugrenzen und Verbindungslinien aufzuzeigen. . . . Für die Beurteilung Pindars ist es von zweitrangiger Bedeutung zu wissen, ob er die Version . . . erfunden oder aus dem bereits bestehenden Sagengut ausgewählt hat. Wichtig ist jedoch die Feststellung, dass er eine Sagenversion genommen hat, die ganz auf das Lob des aiginetischen Heros Peleus und somit letztlich auf das Lob des aiginetischen Siegers abgestimmt

schung: as I propose to show in the following notes, an understanding of Pindar's relationship to the mythological tradition is often essential to a proper interpretation of individual passages and details within his extremely variegated texts. Whenever Pindar does challenge or innovate upon his sources, he does so not out of passing fancy but with good reason for deviating from received tradition;[3] criticism of Pindaric myth must account for the often significant nuances of emphasis and attitude created by this process of revision.

I. *Isthmian* 8.23–32: the 'Judgment of Aeacus'

σὲ δ' ἐς νᾶσον Οἰνοπίαν ἐνεγκὼν
κοιμᾶτο, δῖον ἔνθα τέκες

25   Αἰακὸν βαρυσφαράγῳ πατρὶ κεδνότατον ἐπιχθονίων. ὃ καὶ
δαιμόνεσσι δίκας ἐπείραινε· τοῦ μὲν ἀντίθεοι
ἀρίστευον υἱέες υἱέων τ' ἀρηΐφιλοι παῖδες ἀνορέᾳ
            χάλκεον στονόεντ' ἀμφέπειν ὅμαδον·
σώφρονές τ' ἐγένοντο πινυτοί τε θυμόν.
ταῦτα καὶ μακάρων ἐμέμναντ' ἀγοραί,

30   Ζεὺς ὅτ' ἀμφὶ Θέτιδος ἀγλαός τ' ἔρισαν Ποσειδὰν γάμῳ,
ἄλοχον εὐειδέα θέλων ἑκάτερος
ἐὰν ἔμμεν· ἔρως γὰρ ἔχεν.

The myth of *Isthm.* 8 begins with a reference to the special appropriateness of the relationship between the Theban poet and his Aeginetan patrons, for the nymphs Aegina and Thebe were both daughters of Asopus and both found favor with Zeus (17–22). We are told that Zeus conveyed Aegina to the island that would eventually bear her name, where she gave birth to Aeacus, Zeus' favorite among mortal men and the legendary founder of an illustrious heroic dynasty. Before moving on to the better-known exploits of the Aeacidae, the one detail from Aeacus' career that the poet chooses to mention is that he "concluded disputes even for the gods" (25f: ὃ καὶ δαιμόνεσσι δίκας ἐπείραινε). Commentators universally have assumed that this statement refers to

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ist." While this indifference represents an extreme case, it is evident that criticism focusing on the objective encomiastic program, in the tradition of Bundy and his followers, has been much less productive in accounting for the selection of particular details or variants (the "paradigmatic" axis) than in describing the order of presentation of the ode's constituent elements (the "syntagmatic" axis); see T. K. Hubbard, *The Pindaric Mind: A Study of Logical Structure in Early Greek Poetry* (Leiden 1985) 2f.

[3] For the same point see N. Tonia, "Bemerkungen zu den Prinzipien der Myth-Interpretation bei Pindar," in E. G. Schmidt, ed., *Aischylos und Pindar* (Berlin 1981) 39–44.

an otherwise unknown episode (and perhaps more than one) in which Aeacus settled a dispute among the gods.[4]

Aeacus was a rather shadowy figure at best in Greek mythology, and the possibility of local Aeginetan traditions associated with his cult (for the existence of which *cf. Nem.* 5.53 and Paus. 2.29.6–8) cannot be ruled out. But it is not Pindar's practice to make quick, passing allusions to obscure local myths or myths that he himself invented: the brief allusions are generally confined to stories familiar in the Panhellenic tradition, and the more obscure or innovative myths are usually the subject of at least some elaboration.[5] Why, then, should this obscure or invented aspect of Aeacus' career be the one singled out for mention? Thummer plausibly suggests that it may be meant to foreshadow the dispute of Zeus and Poseidon narrated at length at 30–52.[6]

Indeed, I would argue that the statement about Aeacus does not merely foreshadow and parallel the later narrative, but that it is in fact the beginning of his story. It is not uncharacteristic of Pindar to credit a father with what was in fact the achievement of his son;[7] Aeacus was ultimately responsible for begetting and rearing such noble sons (whose many virtues are listed immediately following in 26–28)[8] that

[4] *Cf.* L. Dissen *apud* A. Boeckh, ed., *Pindari opera quae supersunt* II.2 (Leipzig 1821) 544; F. Mezger, *Pindars Siegeslieder* (Leipzig 1880) 358; J. B. Bury, *The Isthmian Odes of Pindar* (London 1892) 143; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Pindaros* (Berlin 1922) 197; L. R. Farnell, *The Works of Pindar* II (London 1932) 379; K. Fehr, *Die Mythen bei Pindar* (Zürich 1936) 42f; H. North, "Pindar, *Isthmian*, 8, 24–28," *AJP* 69 (1948) 306; A. Peuch, *Pindare*[3] IV (Paris 1961) 77; C. Carey, *A Commentary on Five Odes of Pindar* (Salem 1981) 193; Thummer (*supra* n.2) II 133. The last believes that there may be some parallel in *Pae.* 6.155f, but this is based on Snell's highly speculative reconstruction of the lacuna, which in turn seems to rely on the received interpretation of *Isthm.* 8.25f.

[5] One possible exception is Heracles' battle against the gods in *Ol.* 9.29–35. But the innovation here is rather in the combination of three separate confrontations into one than in absolute invention of the material, and even here, we do have something more than one line devoted to the subject; it should also be noted that the poet intentionally breaks off the myth and thus makes a rhetorical point of not elaborating it (which is certainly not the case with *Isthm.* 8.25f). Some critics also believe that Pindar is rejecting a canonical myth in his allusion to the death of Heracles' children in *Isthm.* 4.68–74, but it is probable that this passage simply reiterates the traditional Theban verson of the myth: *cf.* Paus. 9.11.3, Dissen (*supra* n.4) 509, Hubbard (*supra* n.2) 115 n.34.

[6] Thummer (*supra* n.2) II 133.

[7] Many Pindaric myths begin with a brief description of the main character's parent: one thinks of Pitane in *Ol.* 6.28–33, Amphiaraus in *Pyth.* 8.39–43, and Hypseus in *Pyth.* 9.14–18. The praise of the parent provides the perspective of inherited nobility that lies behind all achievement in the Pindaric world; achievement is meaningless except as a broader reflection on one's entire family, clan, and social context.

[8] North (*supra* n.4: 304–08) argues that this enumeration expresses the standard canon of four virtues.

the gods were able to find in Peleus a suitable spouse for Thetis, and thus a way of resolving the rivalry of Zeus and Poseidon along with the dangers inherent in their desire. Although the metonymy is a bit extended, it is not un-Pindaric. In the same way Cleander's athletic victory redounds to the credit of his father Telesarchus, whose house is now full of revelers (1–5); since it is the father who has invested so heavily in his son's athletic training and travel to the various contests (not to mention commissioning the present epinician ode), the glorious achievement of victory is also his and the whole family's.[9]

This interpretation is further supported by several grammatical and rhetorical considerations. First, it should be noted that the phrase δίκας ἐπείραινε does not occur elsewhere;[10] it need not mean that Aeacus actually acted as a judge or mediator who settled disputes between the gods, only that he somehow "provided an end" (πέρας) to their dispute(s). Second, the emphatic καὶ δαιμόνεσσι signals that even Pindar regarded this as an obscure or, more likely, invented story—apparently modelled on Aeacus' more familiar rôle as judge of men in the underworld.[11] The ambivalence of δίκας ἐπείραινε assimilates the one situation to the other, even though Aeacus' manner of influencing the two kinds of disputes is quite different. The indicated novelty of Aeacus' involvement in divine quarrels need not point to an obscure and extrinsic story so much as serve to anticipate the innovative elements of the ensuing myth about Zeus and Poseidon, where the similar emphasis of καὶ μακάρων (29) opens the narrative of that story itself, in effect resuming and recapitulating the statement about Aeacus in 25f. The ταῦτα which the "assemblies of even the gods remember" include not only the heroic virtues of Aeacus' sons enumerated in 26–28, but also Aeacus' own status as a favorite of Zeus (25); the implication of the lines leading up to 29 is clearly that the gods' selection of Peleus as Thetis' mate reflects not merely on the hero's individual excellence, but on the virtues and divine favor

[9] This is true particularly if Cleander was a boy-victor, as seems likely (see Thummer [*supra* n.2] II 127 n.4). Mention of the victor's father is in any event formulary (Thummer I 49–54; R. Hamilton, *Epinikion: General Form in the Odes of Pindar* [The Hague 1974] 15), sometimes even when dead (*cf. Nem.* 4.13f, *Ol.* 8.81).

[10] Noted by Bury (*supra* n.4) 143. It should also be mentioned here that ἐπείραινε is actually Triclinius' correction of the codices' unmetrical ἐπέραινε. M. L. West, "Melica," *CQ* N.S. 20 (1970) 212, proposes emending to ἐπέκραινε, which does have parallels with δίκας. Even with this emendation, however, the meaning of the verb would be essentially the same.

[11] For which *cf.* Pl. *Ap.* 41A, *Grg.* 523E–524A; Isoc. *Ev.* 15; Hor. *Carm.* 2.13.22; Prop. 2.20.30, 4.11.19; Ov. *Met.* 13.25f; Sen. *Apocol.* 14. The motif is well-represented in fourth-century art; *cf. LIMC* I.1 311f.

characteristic of his whole family as well. If the goddess must be wedded to a mortal, it is only appropriate that the mortal should be one whose father is δῖον . . . Αἰακὸν βαρυσφαράγῳ πατρὶ κεδνότατον ἐπιχθονίων (24f) and whose brothers are ἀντίθεοι (26f); the parallel of καὶ δαιμόνεσσι and καὶ μακάρων emphasizes the long-standing relationship of Aeacus' family to the gods, and it is in this sense that Aeacus can be said to be the one ultimately responsible for the gods' selection of Peleus as a solution to their problem.

Further connections between 25f and 26–28 are worth noting. The sentence describing Aeacus' sons and their virtues begins with a μέν-solitarium and the demonstrative genitive τοῦ, referring back to Aeacus. While Slater has noted that Pindar often joins μέν-solitarium with the oblique case of a demonstrative to refer to the subject of the preceding sentence,[12] it should also be observed that this pattern (except when used as a simple connective in dialogue: cf. Ol. 1.75, 7.32; Pyth. 4.120) usually has an illustrative, explanatory, or completing function in regard to the preceding sentence, and thus operates not unlike a γάρ or a μήν.[13] A particularly apt parallel to this construction occurs later in Isthm. 8 itself, in another context of mutually reflected merit among kinsmen: 69–71 exhort the chorus to celebrate the victor's late cousin Nicocles, who was also an Isthmian victor, and the relevance of this praise is explained in 71f (τὸν μὲν οὐ κατελέγχει) by the statement that Cleander has not dishonored his memory (i.e., has done honor to it)[14] with his own Isthmian victory. So in the present case, the allusion to Aeacus' conclusion of a dispute among the gods is explained by the virtues of his sons (26f, τοῦ μὲν ἀντίθεοι ἀρίστευον υἱέες), which caused the gods to select Peleus as Thetis' husband and thus resolve the rivalry between Zeus and Poseidon. The τοῦ μέν . . . requires us to read this entire passage as a continuous logical unity, rather than as a discrete series of isolated segments. The allusion to Aeacus is thus effectively the starting-point of the mythical narrative,

[12] W. J. Slater, *Lexicon to Pindar* (Berlin 1969) 323.
[13] See Denniston, *GP*² 360f, who concludes: "When μέν follows a pronoun at the beginning of a sentence which is not introduced by a connecting particle proper, it seems to acquire a quasi-connective, progressive force (cf. μήν, III). Here, again, there often appears to be no need for stressing the pronoun." This usage is common in Homer, and Denniston cites several Pindaric examples; add to his list *Ol.* 1.86f, 13.60–62; *Pyth.* 3.68–76, 4.50–56, 4.171–75, 9.17f; *Isthm.* 4.58–68, 8.52–64, and the passage discussed below.
[14] On such litotes of praise see A. Köhnken, "Gebrauch und Funktion der Litotes bei Pindar," *Glotta* 54 (1976) 63, and generally, H. Fraenkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, tr. M. Hadas and J. Willis (Oxford 1975) 448f n.18; W. J. Slater, "Futures in Pindar," *CQ* N.S. 19 (1969) 93; W. H. Race, "Negative Expressions and Pindaric Ποικιλία," *TAPA* 113 (1983) 105–08.

introduced by a relative pronoun in characteristic Pindaric fashion,[15] and just as characteristically opening the myth at its temporal conclusion.[16]

As we noted above, the parallel καὶ δαιμόνεσσι (25f) and καὶ μακάρων (29) appear to signal the presence of a myth unfamiliar to the audience. Farnell long ago proposed that Pindar originated the idea of Themis' prophecy about the birth of a stronger son, as well as the rivalry between Zeus and Poseidon for Thetis' hand,[17] on the basis of the prophecy that Metis would bear a son stronger than his father (*Theog.* 886–900, modelled in turn on the overthrow of Cronus by Zeus at 463–65). Farnell acutely notes that the earlier *Nem.* 5 neither mentions Themis' prophecy nor suggests any dispute between Zeus and Poseidon, but simply identifies the latter as the brother-in-law of

[15] On the use of relatives to initiate extended mythological digressions see A. B. Drachmann, *Moderne Pindarfortolkning* (Copenhagen 1891) 259f; E. L. Bundy, *Studia Pindarica* I: *The Eleventh Olympian Ode* (Berkeley 1962) 8f n.27; Köhnken (*supra* n.2) 133–35.

[16] For this form of ring-composition, in which the narration of the myth commences with a brief statement of its outcome, *cf.* L. Illig, *Zur Form der pindarischen Erzählung* (Berlin 1932) 57–63, and more recently, W. J. Slater, "Lyric Narrative: Structure and Principle," *CSCA* 2 (1983) 117–32.

[17] Farnell (*supra* n.4) I 287f, II 379f. G. Norwood, *Pindar* (Berkeley 1945) 146f, follows him at least in regard to the story of the rivalry between Zeus and Poseidon; Fehr (*supra* n.4) 44–46, on the other hand, believes that Themis' prophecy was Pindar's innovation, but that the quarrel of Zeus and Poseidon was a very old tradition (although he presents no evidence for this conclusion); similarly van der Kolf (*supra* n.1: 61f) regards Themis as a Pindaric addition intended to establish a context for Aeginetan justice but considers the rest traditional. Pindaric originality on both points seems to be indicated by the remarks of Σ *ad Isthm.* 8.57b, 67 Drachmann. R. Reitzenstein, "Die Hochzeit des Peleus und der Thetis," *Hermes* 35 (1900) 74f n.1, is followed by A. Lesky, *RE* 19 (1937) 293 *s.v.* "Peleus," and, with some modifications, J. Kaiser, *Peleus und Thetis* (Munich 1912) 58, in regarding Pindar's version of the myth as derived from an earlier epic source, in view of the superfluous details at 45–49 about Chiron's cave and the full-moon night as the place and time for Peleus and Thetis' first night together; but while these details may well have been taken from the *Cypria* or elsewhere and inserted by Pindar into the prophecy of Themis, it need not follow that the prophecy itself appeared in the same source. At the same time, these details do not contradict the *Cypria*'s story of a well-attended wedding on Mt Pelion (B3.1 Bethe), for Chiron's cave was in fact on Mt Pelion, and Euripides (*IA* 705) tells us that the wedding took place just outside the cave (*cf.* the similar implication of Alcaeus fr.42.5–10 L.-P.). Nor, with B. Graef, "Peleus und Thetis," *JDAI* 1 (1886) 196–200, need we assume two different traditions because the story of Peleus' wrestling with Thetis at Sepias (*Nem.* 3.35f, 4.62–65) seems inconsistent with the *Cypria*'s location of the wedding on Mt Pelion: *Nem.* 4.62–68 seems quite comfortable in placing the two events immediately side-by-side, with the wrestling as a preliminary trial of Peleus' suitability to be the goddess' consort. R. Stoneman, "Pindar and the Mythological Tradition," *Philologus* 125 (1981) 58–62, is correct in rejecting the various theories put forward to establish two separate epic traditions concerning Peleus and Thetis; less convincing is his belief that the prophecy of Themis could also have been derived from the *Cypria*. See the discussion below.

the Nereids, persuaded by Zeus to consent to Thetis' marriage with Peleus (35–37). Although this could well be the original context for Pindar's thinking of Poseidon as the other major god who might be interested in Thetis,[18] it seems to preclude the existence of any dominant pre-Pindaric tradition of Zeus and Poseidon as implacable rivals in need of a *dea ex machina* in the form of Themis.

The evidence for the myth in other sources tends to support this conclusion. The post-Homeric *Cypria*, describing the origins and early history of the Trojan War, apparently related the story of Peleus and Thetis' marriage in some detail (*cf.* A10, B3.1 Bethe), explaining it with the story that Thetis fled marriage with Zeus out of respect for Hera, after which Zeus in anger swore that she should live like a mortal.[19] Homer makes only one brief allusion to the background of the marriage (*Il.* 24.59–61), in which we are told that Hera reared Thetis and gave her as spouse to Peleus; this accords well with the story in the *Cypria* and *Ehoiai*, revealing the motivation behind Thetis' regard for Hera and accenting Hera's rôle in the affair generally. Although it does not mention the other details (for which there is no need in the context), the Homeric allusion almost certainly relies on the same tradition and would seem to indicate a common archetype in pre-Homeric oral epic. The details of Hera nurturing Thetis from infancy and her responsibility in selecting Peleus may also have appeared in the *Cypria*, to judge from Apollonius Rhodius (4.790–809), where we hear of Hera's reminder to Thetis that she reared her,[20] of Thetis' resistance to Zeus in order to please Hera, of Zeus' angry oath, and Hera's choice of Peleus as Thetis' mate.[21] It is far more likely

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[18] It should also be noted that Poseidon was a frequent competitor with other gods—with Apollo for the hand of Hestia (also unsuccefully: *Hymn.Hom.Ven.* 22–28), with Athena not only for the patronage of Athens but also over Troezen (Paus. 2.30.6), as with Hera over Argos (Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.1.4, Paus. 2.15.5) and with Helius over Corinth (Paus. 2.1.6; Lucian *Salt.* 42). I am not persuaded by the proposal of A. Köhnken, "Gods and Descendants of Aiakos in Pindar's Eighth Isthmian Ode," *BICS* 22 (1975) 28, that the rivalry between Zeus and Poseidon is meant to reflect Cleander's victories at the Nemean and Isthmian games respectively.

[19] *Cypria* B2.1 Bethe. The fragment goes on to identify Hesiod (=fr.210 M.-W.) as a source for nearly the same story; indeed, the *Ehoiai* may have been Pindar's immediate source for material on the Aeacids, since it apparently contained a section on Aegina and her descendants (frr.205–14), including a fairly substantial section on Peleus and the wife of Acastus (frr.208f, probably the source for *Nem.* 5) and on the wedding of Peleus and Thetis (fr.211). For a more detailed reconstruction of this section of the *Ehoiai* see J. Schwartz, *Pseudo-Hesiodeia* (Leiden 1960) 390–96; on its position within the overall structure of the work, see M. L. West, *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women* (Oxford 1985) 100f.

[20] This detail is also joined to the others by Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.13.5, on which see below.

[21] In Pindar's version Themis, not Hera, was responsible for suggesting Peleus. This

that Apollonius found this sequence of details in one place than that he
spliced a passing allusion from the *Iliad* into the account in the *Cypria*.
Nevertheless, the lines on Themis' prophecy (4.799–804) appear to
have been imported from another source altogether: for to Themis' re-
fusal and Zeus' curse they add a second and superfluous motivation
for abandoning the pursuit. Apollonius himself seems to recognize this
awkwardness at 4.799: ἔμπης δ' οὐ μεθίεσκεν ὀπιτεύων. . . . That Pindar
was his source for the Themis-motif is suggested by the close
correspondences in the wording and word-order of the prophecy: com-
pare Apollonius' πέπρωται ἀμείνονα πατρὸς ἑοῖο παῖδα τεκεῖν (4.801f)
with Pindar's πεπρωμένον ἦν φέρτερον πατέρος ἄνακτα γόνον τεκεῖν
(*Isthm.* 8.36).[22] Apollonius' failure to mention the quarrel of Zeus and
Poseidon would be explained by its irrelevance in the context of Hera's
speech to Thetis.

The thesis that Themis' prophecy was totally foreign to the early
epic tradition is also supported by Apollodorus, who at *Bibl.* 3.13.5
clearly distinguishes three separate versions of the story (αὖθις δὲ . . . .
ἔνιοι δέ φασι . . . τινὲς δὲ λέγουσι . . . .), the first corresponding exactly to
Pindar's (with the rivalry of Zeus and Poseidon resolved by Themis'
prophecy), the second omitting any mention of a rivalry but trans-
ferring the prophecy to Prometheus (and thus corresponding to the
'Aeschylean' plot),[23] and the third being the epic version discussed
above.[24] It seems most likely that Pindar was the inventor of the

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is one more indication that Pindar's version and the epic tradition are mutually
exclusive, contrary to the thesis of Stoneman (*supra* n.17: 58–62). Moreover, in the
earlier *Nem.* 5.34–37, which betrays no awareness of Themis' prophecy, Zeus himself
selects Peleus; it could be that this is the variant Pindar found in the *Ehoiai* (which,
as we have observed [*supra* n.19], was more likely to be a direct source for him than
the *Cypria*), or simply that this is a minor variation that Pindar himself contrived to
suit the context of *Nem.* 5, where Peleus refuses Hippolyta's advances out of
reverence for the hospitality-relationship and Zeus Xenios (*Nem.* 5.33f). Pindar felt
in no way bound by a monolithic epic tradition.

[22] The similarities are remarkable despite the difference in meter; it is scarcely cred-
ible that the similar word-order could be a result of both authors copying the same
epic source.

[23] *PV* 907–27. This seems to have been the dominant version of the myth among
later mythographers: cf. Σ *ad Il.* 1.519 Dindorf; Quint. Smyrn. 5.338–40; Hyg. *Fab.*
54. Ov. *Met.* 11.221–28 shifts the prophecy once again, this time to Proteus.

[24] The passage has traditionally been so interpreted. Stoneman (*supra* n.17: 61) con-
tends, however, that the third clause (τινὲς δὲ λέγουσι . . .) is in fact a parenthetical
continuation of the first, and that only the second gives a true alternative version by
shifting the prophecy to Prometheus. A number of syntactical objections can be made
to this construction: ἔνιοι δέ φασι and τινὲς δὲ λέγουσι are obviously parallel, and if the
former is to be construed as an alternative, the latter must be as well. If τινὲς δὲ λέ-
γουσι simply introduced an extra detail found in some sources, in addition to the
prophecy of Themis (as Stoneman contends), it would immediately follow the clause
beginning αὖθις δὲ γαμεῖ, rather than being interrupted and confused by an alternative

prophecy and that the motif was taken over by the author of the *Prometheia*, who transferred the prophecy from Themis to her son Prometheus and discarded the rivalry between Zeus and Poseidon in favor of a more dramatic contest between Zeus and the holder of the prophecy himself.[25] It is entirely possible that Aeschylus could have been familiar with at least some of Pindar's odes[26] and was inspired by the dramatic possibilities of the lyric poet's mythical variations; at the same time, the myth of an individual Pindaric ode would have been sufficiently unfamiliar to the general theatrical audience that the dramatist could feel quite free to reshape and transform it in still further ways. Given the substantial unity of the epic tradition (Homer, Hesiod, the *Cypria*) about this myth and the absence of any other cyclic epic that seems likely to have treated Peleus and Thetis at length, it is difficult to see any possibility of a common archetype for Pindar and Aeschylus. Their respective mythical versions can only be the work of poets with the capacity for individual vision and creative imagination.

Once we have determined that this version of the myth is sub-

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(not addition) in ἔνιοι δέ φασι. It is clear that the first and third clauses provide totally separate motivations for Zeus' dismissal of Thetis, and Apollodorus uses no formula to connect or reconcile them (such as we find in Ap. Rhod. 4.799, which, though awkward, at least smooths over the apparent redundancy). If Apollodorus meant to say what Stoneman's thesis about the *Cypria* requires him to say, he could easily have found a less opaque way of doing so.

[25] It is probable on both chronological and dramatic grounds that *Isthm.* 8 was earlier than the *Prometheia*. *Isthm.* 8 is securely dated to 478, whereas the *Prometheia* was either a late work of Aeschylus (*cf.* E. C. Yorke, "The Date of the *Prometheus Vinctus*," *CQ* 30 [1936] 153f; D. S. Robertson, "On the Chronology of Aeschylus," *PCPS* 169 [1938] 9f) or, if not the work of Aeschylus, then post-Aeschylean (*cf.* M. Griffith, *The Authenticity of "Prometheus Bound"* [Cambridge 1977] 225). It is also easier to imagine the rather demure and temperate prophecy of Themis as a source for the more dramatic prophecy of Prometheus than to suppose that Pindar would have reduced Prometheus' revolutionary defiance and threat of cosmic upheaval to the present admonition. On Pindar as the direct source for *PV*, *cf.* Farnell (*supra* n.4) I 287f, II 379f; Norwood (*supra* n.17) 259 n.20; J. H. Finley Jr, "Pindar and the Persian Invasion," *HSCP* 63 (1958) 128f; Köhnken (*supra* n.18) 33f. n. 19; M. Griffith, *Aeschylus: Prometheus Bound* (Cambridge 1983) 224, 251.

[26] On the diffusion of written texts of Pindar's odes at this early stage see J. Irigoin, *Histoire du texte de Pindare* (Paris 1952) 8f. Some critics have been so uncomfortable with the idea of Pindaric influence on a contemporary that they have attempted to posit a common epic source even for the eruption of Mt Aetna described at *Pyth.* 1.15–28 and *PV* 351–72: *cf.* A. von Mess, "Der Typhon-mythus bei Pindar und Aeschylus," *RhM* 56 (1901) 167–74; H. Usener, "Eine Hesiodische Dichtung," *RhM* 56 (1901) 174–86. For a refutation of this theory see M. Griffith, "Aeschylus, Sicily and Prometheus," in R. D. Dawe, ed., *Dionysiaca: Nine Studies in Greek Poetry* (Cambridge 1978) 118–20. It is by no means necessary to conclude, with Wilamowitz (*supra* n.4: 178f) and F. Solmsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus* (Ithaca 1949) 128f, that the author of the *PV* had a source for Themis' prophecy earlier than Pindar.

stantially a product of Pindar's invention, it remains to analyze his reasons for changing and reformulating the myth as he does. It should first be observed that Pindar's version, although it features a divine rivalry, is ultimately more creditable to the gods than is the epic tradition: we do not see an adulterous Zeus being fended off by a chaste Thetis and then in anger afflicting her with a rash curse; instead, we see a desirable goddess with two notable suitors who are persuaded to desist in favor of the noble Peleus by a prophecy of dire consequences otherwise. While the earlier myth emphasized Zeus' lust and its defeat, Pindar's version renders it more acceptable by extending it to another god and makes its termination more dignified; and in view of the reservations Pindar elsewhere professes about portraying the gods in an unfavorable light (*Ol.* 1.35, 52f; 9.35–41), such considerations cannot be discounted. But perhaps even more important is the way in which the two versions of the myth reflect on Peleus: in the epic version Thetis' marriage to a mortal is presented as an unquestionable punishment (and thus scarcely glorifies the man to whom she is to be married), while Themis' prophecy and nomination of Peleus places his rôle in a far more positive light, elevating him to a level just short of Zeus and Poseidon.[27] As often in Pindar, a mortal's achievement is presented as a combination of divine favor with his own efforts and innate excellence, which the narrative highlights as the reason why he should be singled out for divine favor (44; *cf.* 25–28). Pindar's revision of the myth thus appears carefully designed to accord both with his standards of τὸ πρέπον as regards the gods and with his encomiastic strategy generally, aiming at the greatest possible glorification of the Aeacids and, through them, of Aegina and Cleander.

For a deeper understanding of the function of the myth within the context of *Isthm.* 8, we must examine the historical background of the ode; this is not a matter of veiled allegory but is quite explicitly announced by the poet's own words on the ἀτόλματον Ἑλλάδι μόχθον (12), expressed in the image of the stone of Tantalus (10f). It is universally agreed that this ode was composed and performed in the immediate aftermath of the Persian War and thus of Plataea as well, for the victory celebrated here must have been won in the Isthmian games of 478. But while its opening verses (esp. 5–16) clearly resonate with a tone of recent grief combined with hope for the future, com-

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[27] The argument of encomiastic propriety is the focus of attention for Pini (*supra* n.1: 344) and Thummer (*supra* n.2: II 134); K. Friederichs, *Pindarische Studien* (Berlin 1863) 104 (and, by implication, Thummer: *cf.* the quotation in note 2 above), is extreme in asserting that this is the only consideration.

mentators have not agreed on precisely what the focus of the poet's complex feelings is meant to be. Most recent critics have taken the expressions of anxiety and relief to pertain to the common experience of all Greece in fighting the Persians but deny the lines any specific reference to Thebes' situation in the wake of Plataea.[28] As a Theban, Pindar could not help but be conscious when writing these lines that Thebes had special reasons for grief, having suffered the humiliation of defeat at the hands of her fellow Greeks, with the proscription of her leading citizens. Pindar's Aeginetan audience would have also been sensitive to the fact that the poet here celebrating the war's end was the native of a city that had been on the other side of the conflict and was now in a state of some disgrace. The situation is analogous to that of a German writer addressing an American audience in 1946 on the subject of the war's recent end; it is absurd to suppose that the author would either write or be read in polite ignorance of his national identity or his country's current position. This need not imply that Pindar either supported or dissented from Thebes' failed policy of Medism,[29] merely that he acknowledged it.

The poet quite explicitly calls attention to the question of national identities by beginning the mythical sequence with an allusion to the eponymous nymphs Thebe and Aegina, twin daughters of Asopus (17–24). Herodotus (5.80) tells us that this story originated in the late sixth century to promote the anti-Athenian alliance of Thebes and Aegina. Pindar and his audience cannot have failed to notice the irony that the states' present relationship was quite different and not at all one of sisterhood. Evidently the "hope" expressed by the poet in 16 (ἰατὰ δ' ἐστὶ βροτοῖς σύν γ' ἐλευθερίᾳ καὶ τά. χρὴ δ' ἀγαθὰν ἐλπίδ' ἀνδρὶ μέλειν) is that there will be a reconciliation between Thebes and Aegina, and, by implication, between Thebes and the rest of Greece. It is in this context of hoping for an end to strife among natural allies that we

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[28] Cf. K. Merentitis, ʿΟ "Μηδισμὸς" τοῦ Πινδάρου (Athens 1968) 38–41; Thummer (*supra* n.2) II 127; J. K. and F. S. Newman, *Pindar's Art: Its Tradition and Aims* (Berlin 1984) 137. C. A. P. Ruck, "Marginalia Pindarica III," *Hermes* 96 (1968) 671f, regards the allusions to grief in 5–16 as directed to those who died in the war—quite specifically to the dead, such as Nicocles, in the victor's own family. *Cf.* Carey (*supra* n.4) 186f. For a reassertion, however, of Wilamowitz's view that these lines apply specifically to Thebes, *cf.* G. Méautis, *Pindare le dorien* (Neuchâtel 1962) 305–08, and W. Kierdorf, *Erlebnis und Darstellung der Perserkriege* (Göttingen 1966) 33–35.

[29] On Pindar's ambivalent and even detached attitude towards Theban policy during this period *cf.* Finley (*supra* n.25) 123–25; J.-C. Even, "L'attitude de Pindare pendant les guerres Médiques," *EtCl* 26 (1958) 47–49; W. Mullen, "Pindar and Athens: A Reading in the Aeginetan Odes," *Arion* N.S. 1 (1973/4) 460f. Critics are generally right in rejecting Polybius' interpretation of fr.109 Snell (=Polyb. 4.31) as evidence of Medizing sympathies.

come to the statement about Aeacus with which we opened our inquiry: Aeacus put an end to disputes *even* among the gods, since he reared noble and virtuous sons; *even* the gods recognized their excellence, when Zeus and Poseidon were quarreling over the hand of Thetis, and Themis prophesied that the Nereid should instead be given to a worthy mortal to insure that neither Zeus nor Poseidon be overthrown and that the Olympian order be preserved. If the recognition of good men's merits can help resolve disputes *even* among the gods, surely it can do the same for cities and other mortal institutions. Since Thebe and Aegina are naturally sisters, just as Zeus and Poseidon are brothers, they can be reconciled by joining together in praise of Telesarchus, his victorious son Cleander, and his late nephew Nicocles, even as the Olympians were for Aeacus, his son Peleus, and the swift-fated Achilles.[30]

Telesarchus, in commissioning the present ode from the Theban Pindar, helps in a small way to promote this political reconciliation: here is something that both Thebans and Aeginetans can agree upon.[31] Whatever their recent differences, all Greek cities share a community of inherited values that has been institutionalized in the four great Panhellenic festivals; it is the nature of the athletic competitions to encourage the various states to put aside their quarrels, if only temporarily, and celebrate the achievements of personal excellence they all revere. Seen in this light, the entire mythical sequence of *Isthm.* 8 forms a deliberate and organic unity that is fully integrated with the surrounding ode and its circumstances, as well as with the ideology of the Panhellenic games; we need not regard it merely as a long series of discrete allusions to various stories of greater or lesser familiarity.[32]

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[30] The parallel between the early deaths of Achilles and Nicocles is made quite clear by 62–69. On the effectiveness of this paradigm as a *consolatio*, with Achilles' mortality presented as a necessary part of the universal order supporting Zeus' power, see Mullen (*supra* n.29) 469f. In preserving order and freedom, Achilles' death is paradigmatic not only for Nicocles, but for all the war dead.

[31] For the *topos* of the victor's celebration as something that can unite all men, even enemies of different political persuasions, cf. *Pyth.* 9.93–96.

[32] My interpretation of the myth is in some respects anticipated by Finley (*supra* n.25) 129f, who saw the quarrel between Zeus and Poseidon as a parallel to the contemporary political situation among the Greek states generally, and took Themis' prophecy as a supernatural plea for peace. I cannot agree with Dissen (*supra* n.4: 542f), who regards Aeacus and Peleus as paradigms for the peacemaking rôle that Pindar, on this interpretation, expected Aegina to play between Thebes and the rest of Greece. Whatever else Peleus may be, he is not a mediator or arbitrator among the gods—nor is Aeacus, unless we accept the old thesis on 25f, which it has been the purpose of this note to challenge.

II. *Olympian* 8.37–46: The Omen of the Three Serpents

γλαυκοὶ δὲ δράκοντες, ἐπεὶ κτίσθη νέον,
πύργον ἐσαλλόμενοι τρεῖς, οἱ δύο μὲν κάπετον,
αὖθι δ’ ἀτυζόμενοι ψυχὰς βάλον,
40 εἷς δ’ ἀνόρουσε βοάσαις.
ἔννεπε δ’ ἀντίον ὁρμαίνων τέρας εὐθὺς ’Απόλλων·
“Πέργαμος ἀμφὶ τεαῖς, ἥρως, χερὸς ἐργασίαις ἁλίσκεται·
ὡς ἐμοὶ φάσμα λέγει Κρονίδα
πεμφθὲν βαρυγδούπου Διός·
45 οὐκ ἄτερ παίδων σέθεν, ἀλλ’ ἅμα πρώτοις ῥήξεται
καὶ τερτάτοις.”

The omen of the three serpents in *Ol.* 8.37–40 offers another case of
an internal allusion that has often been misunderstood as referring to a
separate myth. This again occurs in the context of a myth about Ae-
acus and the Aeacids—here, the story of Aeacus assisting Apollo and
Poseidon in the construction of the walls of Troy. After the three
builders have finished their task, three snakes leap up against the walls;
two of the snakes fall back dead and one succeeds in leaping over, after
which Apollo interprets the omen to mean that Troy will be stormed
through the section of the wall built by the mortal Aeacus, and by the
agency of Aeacus’ descendants. Commentators have disagreed over
which part of Apollo’s prophecy is to be connected most closely with
the omen, and thus over the interpretation of the omen itself. The
scholia, followed by the most widely-used commentaries and most
recent critics, believe that the three snakes represent Aeacus’ descen-
dants, two of whom (Achilles and Ajax) die before Troy is taken, and
one (Neoptolemus) succeeds.[33] On the other hand, some early critics

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[33] *Cf.* Σ *ad Ol.* 8.52a, 53e; Boeckh (*supra* n.4) 182; B. L. Gildersleeve, *Pindar: The
Olympian and Pythian Odes* (New York 1885) 196; Farnell (*supra* n.4) I 45, II 64; D.
E. Hill, “Pindar, *Olympian* 8.37–46,” *CR* N.S. 13 (1963) 2–4; E. K. Borthwick,
“Zoologica Pindarica,” *CQ* N.S. 26 (1976) 203. In an interesting variant upon this
interpretation, A. J. Beattie, “Pindar, *Ol.* 8.45–46,” *CR* N.S. 5 (1955) 1–3, proposed
that the three snakes represented the three separate generations of Aeacids, only one
of which (Neoptolemus’) succeeded in destroying Troy permanently. But this requires
us virtually to ignore the sack of Troy in Peleus’ and Telamon’s generation;
Telamon’s successful participation in this expedition along with Heracles and Iolaus
is not only a familiar myth well attested in all the standard mythographic sources (*cf.*
Hellanicus *FGrHist* 4F109; Lycoph. 469; Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.135; Diod. 4.32.5; Ov. *Met.*
13.23; Serv. *ad Aen.* 1.619), but was alluded to by Pindar in at least four other
Aeginetan odes (*Nem.* 3.36f, 4.25f; *Isthm.* 5.35–38, 6.27–31), as well as in 45f here
(on which see *infra* n.35). After being praised by Pindar in so many earlier odes for
his success in sacking Troy, it seems hardly likely that Telamon would here be
portrayed as a dead snake falling back from Troy’s walls.

believed that the omen refers directly to Apollo's prediction, namely, that Troy's wall will be breached in the one section built by Aeacus, while remaining remaining impervious in the two sections built by the gods.[34] This latter is clearly the most straightforward view and probably the correct one.

There are several objections to be raised against the interpretation of the scholia, even apart from the extraneous nature of the allusion to Ajax and Achilles, who are nowhere mentioned or implied in Apollo's interpretation. What Apollo does say when mentioning Aeacus' descendants is that Troy will be taken twice, in the first and third generations, i.e., by Telamon as well as by Neoptolemus.[35] But this makes

[34] Cf. L. Dissen, *Pindari carmina quae supersunt*[2] (Gotha 1847) II 113; L. Schmidt, *Pindars Leben und Dichtung* (Bonn 1862) 344; A. de Jongh, *Pindari Carmina Olympia* (Utrecht 1865) 450; W. Schmid, *RE* 1 (1893) 924 *s.v.* "Aiakos." L. Lehnus, *Pindaro, Olimpiche* (Milan 1981) 139, assigns the omen this meaning but argues that it also means that Troy falls twice (with the snakes symbolizing the strength of the Trojan walls). But on this latter interpretation, what does the successful snake symbolize? It seems to me that the omen cannot mean both things at once.

[35] We should probably follow Schroeder, Bowra, and Snell in accepting Ahrens' τέρτατοις for τετράτοις in the codices. τέρτος is well attested as the Aeolic and Thessalian form of τρίτος (on the regularity of the phonetic transformation see M. Lejeune, *Traité de phonétique grecque*[2] [Paris 1955] 123 n.1); it is quite possible that a poetic form τέρτατος may have evolved on analogy with Homeric/poetic τρίτατος, for the expansion with -ατος is regular with the other ordinals (see O. Szemerényi, *Studies in the Indo-European System of Numerals* [Heidelberg 1960] 90, 93) and has its roots in the broader Indo-European tendency to assimilate ordinal and superlative forms (*cf.* E. Benveniste, *Noms d'agent et noms d'action en indo-européen* [Paris 1948] 161–63). Lack of attestation elsewhere should not surprise us, since we would not expect to find this poetic form in inscriptions, and our remains of true Aeolic verse are slender; even τέρτος is attested only once in Aeolic poetry. The use of such an uncommon form here may be attributed to metrical necessity (none of the other alternatives for 'third' fit), but Professor E. D. Francis suggests to me that Pindar's use of an Aeolic form here may be consciously intended as an allusion to Neoptolemus' Thessalian origin (*cf. Nem.* 7.64: Ἀχαιὸς ἀνήρ). On Pindar's relatively free and creative employment of Aeolisms, see C. Verdier, *Les éolismes non-épiques de la langue de Pindare* (Innsbruck 1972), and specifically with regard to this crux, P. von der Mühll, "Weitere pindarische Notizen," *MusHelv* 21 (1964) 51. On the other hand, if τετράτοις is indeed the correct reading, it may be that Pindar wanted Apollo's prophecy to sound oracular and thus omitted Aeacus from the counting of generations in πρώτοις but included him with τετράτοις (*cf.* Σ *ad Ol.* 8.59, 60a–c Drachmann). Beattie (*supra* n.33) 1–3 and Hill (*supra* n.33) 2–4 argue that we should retain τετράτοις and understand the πρώτοις in reference to Aeacus himself rather than to Peleus and Telamon, on the argument that Aeacus is the one who initiated the process that would have its ultimate fulfillment in Neoptolemus. This interpretation might be plausible in itself (and is not dissimilar to what we have proposed in regard to Aeacus' rôle in *Isthm.* 8) but it founders in requiring us to ignore Telamon's sack of Troy in the (on this reckoning) "second" generation, for which problem see *supra* n.33. The story of Telamon and Heracles' sack of Troy was so familiar to Aeginetans that this is what would be suggested by 45f, without invoking a strained zeugma of the verb to cover the markedly different actions of Aeacus and Neoptolemus.

nonsense of any interpretation of the omen to mean that two Aeacids fail while only one succeeds. The problems go further when we recognize that Neoptolemus was not the only Aeacid, even of the third generation, to be involved in the second capture of Troy: Epeius, the grandson of Phocus, was the architect and builder of the Trojan horse and thus equally instrumental. Teucer was also an Aeacid, and it is not pedantic to note that Ajax was not killed while assaulting Troy.

This interpretation can also be excluded, and our own suggestion ratified, by arguments intrinsic to the rhetoric of the narration. The grouping of three, which is explicitly mentioned in the text at both the opening (31f) and close (46–52) of the myth, comprises Apollo, Poseidon, and Aeacus. Everything about the structure of the myth seems designed to emphasize the point that a mortal's co-operation was needed in building the walls so that they would be at least partly vulnerable: this is the explicit point of the lines immediately before the omen (33–36) and of Apollo's first remark in interpreting it, as he foretells that Troy will be taken ἀμφὶ τεαῖς, ἥρως, χερὸς ἐργασίαις (42). Lines 43f make it quite clear that this remark refers to the preceding omen and to nothing else. On the other side, it is neither indicated by the text nor in keeping with general principles of encomiastic propriety to suppose that the omen contains a hidden allusion to the death and defeat of Achilles and Ajax.

The emphasis on Aeacus' segment of the wall is also warranted by the probable novelty of the myth: if the story of Aeacus' participation in building the wall and his responsibility for its 'mortal' portion were elements new or unfamiliar to Pindar's audience, one can readily see why he singles these out for amplification with the omen and prophecy. Σ ad Ol. 8.41a (Drachmann) tells us that Didymus believed that Pindar originated the whole story, since it was not to be found in earlier authors and among later ones only in Euphorion (=fr.54 Powell; obviously Euphorion could have borrowed from Pindar). Didymus' authority in such matters should be taken seriously, for, like other Alexandrian scholars, he had available to him virtually the entire corpus of Greek literature written both before and after Pindar.[36] Indeed, we do have in extant literature many allusions to the divine construction of the walls of Troy, as to Telamon's sack of Troy and its final capture with the Trojan horse; none of these makes any claim that

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[36] For Didymus' care as a compiler of source materials see U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Einleitung in die griechische Tragödie* (Berlin 1910) 162–64; J. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship* I (Cambridge 1921) 143; R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford 1968) 276f.

Aeacus or any other mortal builder was responsible for a weak section in the wall.[37] *Iliad* 6.433–37 refers to a place along the wall near a fig-tree, where the Trojans were apparently hard-pressed by repeated Greek attacks, but no further mention of this is made, nor does it seem to have anything to do with bringing the Trojan horse into the city; it may be demanding too much logic of the epic to suppose that Troy could not even be hard-pressed unless part of its wall was built by mortal hands.[38] Indeed, the story of the Trojan horse seems to obviate this difficulty altogether by providing a way for Troy to be penetrated without actual destruction of the walls; there is no inherent need for Aeacus or anyone like him in the epic tradition. He is far more likely to be the fanciful addition of a later poet, such as Pindar, anxious to establish some precedent for the stories of Troy's capture by later Aeacids.

Despairing of any real evidence in the epic tradition, some critics take refuge in the notion that Pindar must have been relying on a purely oral local Aeginetan tradition.[39] It is of course impossible either to prove or to disprove such a thesis, but anything to do with the building of Troy's walls seems far more likely to be the stuff of literary tradition than of cultic aetiology, the source of most local traditions at this date. We noted in our discussion of *Isthm.* 8 that the Hesiodic *Ehoiai* featured a section on Aegina, replete with stories of Aeacus and the Aeacids (frr.205–14 M.-W.), and much of its material is likely to have been drawn from 'local' sources; indeed, given the nature of the *Ehoiai* as a mythological/genealogical catalogue and compendium, it seems probable that it would have included so important a story as that of Aeacus' rôle in building the walls of Troy if such a story had been known in Aegina at the time of its composition.[40] But clearly the *Ehoiai* did not contain this myth, since Didymus, who was surely

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[37] For a survey of this material see von der Mühll (*supra* n.35) 53f.

[38] Much is made of this passage by de Jongh (*supra* n.34) 450 and Farnell (*supra* n.4) I 45f. Wilamowitz (*supra* n.4) 405 also insists that Aeacus must have been part of the legend all along, since Troy could never have been taken otherwise.

[39] *Cf.* Boeckh (*supra* n.4) 181, van der Kolf (*supra* n.1) 30f, von der Mühll (*supra* n.35) 53f. Even Farnell (*supra* n.4) I 45f suggests this possibility, despite his theory that it was already implied at *Il.* 6.433f. Wilamowitz, *Homerische Untersuchungen* (Berlin 1884) 245–47, rightly emphasizes that the Dorian nobility of Aegina were interested in creating an 'Aeacid' genealogy and saga quite independent of epic tradition, but such propaganda-myths are more likely to have been devised by literate poets who enjoyed the specific patronage of the nobility than to have evolved from amorphous folk-traditions handed down orally until Pindar heard them in the fifth century.

[40] The most recent, and definitive, treatment of the question (West [*supra* n.19] 127–37) assigns the *Ehoiai* to a single post-Hesiodic compiler and places its date in the mid-sixth century.

conversant with the *Ehoiai*, would then have known the story and would not have ascribed its invention to Pindar.

Pindar's telling of this myth is entirely appropriate within its context; while it is possible that he may have been merely felicitous in his selection of a fitting myth from prior tradition, it seems more likely that this myth was tailor-made. Boeckh noted that the prophecy-motif echoes the proclamation of Olympia as an oracular site in the first strophe,[41] where seers test the entrails to divine what Zeus has to say ἀνθρώπων πέρι μαιομένων μεγάλαν ἀρετὰν θυμῷ λαβεῖν (4–6); these prophecies are surely as important to athletes and their future (particularly for a boy-victor like Alcimedon) as Apollo's prophecy (also interpreting a sign from Zeus: *cf.* 43f) is to the future martial success of the Aeacids. Such details as the omen of the three serpents and Apollo's prophecy in any event seem literary rather than aetiological and are at the very least Pindar's invention, even if the basic idea of Aeacus' building the wall were not.[42]

More than likely the whole story is Pindaric.[43] The inspiration for the genesis of the myth was doubtless the involvement of two generations of Aeacids in Troy's capture, a favorite theme in Pindar's other Aeginetan odes (especially *Nem.* 3, 4, 7; *Isthm.* 5, 6, 8). By foreshadowing these heroic exploits with an exploit of the clan's founder Aeacus—clearly sanctioned by divine participation—Pindar unifies the history of the entire family and gives the subsequent deeds divine sanction as well: the later achievements become reflections and fulfillments of an ancestral destiny handed down from generation to generation. This theme of inter-generational reflection of glory, with descendants' deeds seen by ancestors and foreshadowed by the virtues and deeds of these ancestors, was very much on Pindar's mind when writing *Ol.* 8: the young victor's father Iphion and uncle Callimachus[44] were recently deceased and are said at 81–84 to witness Alcimedon's Olympic victory from Hades, even as the boy's grandfather is inspired and reinvigorated by the sight (70f). Alcimedon's present triumph and

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[41] Boeckh (*supra* n.4) 181.

[42] Similarly it is thought that Bellerophon's ἐγκοίμησις and dream with Polyidus' interpretation (*Ol.* 13.65–82) are at the very least Pindaric: *cf.* Fehr (*supra* n.4) 126f and my "Pegasus' Bridle and the Poetics of Pindar's *Thirteenth Olympian*," *HSCP* 90 (1986) 27–48.

[43] This conclusion I share with Didymus and the scholia, as do Fehr (*supra* n.4: 61) and Pini (*supra* n.1: 373).

[44] The identification of Callimachus as uncle is only a speculation of some of the scholia (Σ *ad Ol.* 8.106f,k Drachmann). Beattie (*supra* n.33: 3) may be right in identifying him as the great-grandfather, in which case four generations of Alcimedon's family are represented, parallel to Aeacus' family.

his brother's Nemean victory (15f) both belong to the whole family, through his training and the values that the elders have instilled in him,[45] even as Telamon's and Neoptolemus' conquests of Troy were prepared in advance by Aeacus' labors, and even as Peleus' virtues attracted divine notice in *Isthm.* 8 because Aeacus was so virtuous and so dear to the gods.

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[45] Praise of the trainer Melesias (54–66, immediately after the myth) also plays an important rôle here; but inasmuch as Melesias was hired by the family to supervise Alcimedon's athletic training, his activity is ultimately a reflection on the family and its provision for Alcimedon's future success.