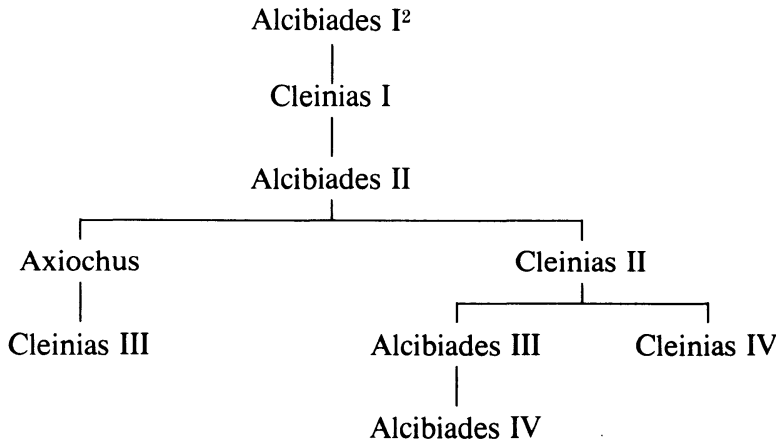


The Family Connection of Alcibiades and Axiochus

Phillip V. Stanley

ALTHOUGH THE ANCESTRY of the Athenian general Alcibiades III remains obscure for the sixth century, his genealogy is assumed to be secure for the fifth. The descent of the family from Alcibiades I to Alcibiades IV has been reconstructed by Vanderpool in the following way:¹

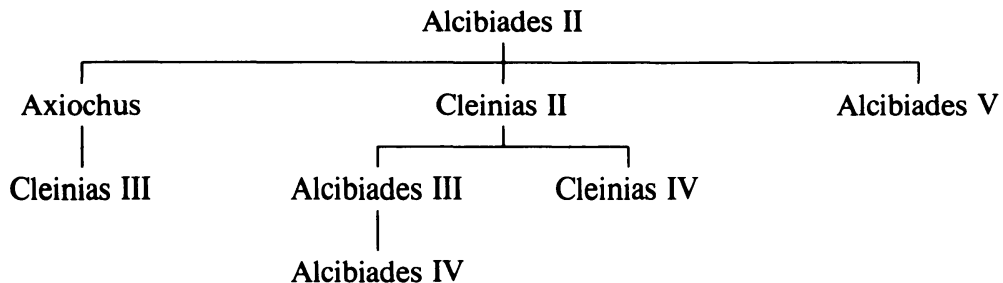


¹ E. Vanderpool, "The Ostracism of the Elder Alcibiades," *Hesperia* 21 (1952) 1-8, esp. 6. Cf. M. B. Wallace, "Early Greek *Proxenoí*," *Phoenix* 24 (1970) 196f; J. K. DAVIES, *Athenian Propertied Families* (Oxford 1971 [hereafter *APF*]) 10-12. According to Isoc. 16.25f (delivered by Alcibiades IV, son of the general), Alcibiades I, the ally of Cleisthenes when he expelled Hippias from Athens, was the great-grandfather (*πρόπαππος*) of Alcibiades III. The general difficulty stems from the apparent need to reduce the number of generations separating Alcibiades I from Alcibiades III, believed to be five: if the number is not reduced, Alcibiades I would actually be the great-great-grandfather of the general.

² Roman numerals are those assigned in *PA* and *APF*. These numerals will continue to be used even when homonyms are added to the family's genealogy. In order to avoid the confusion that might result if a major overhaul of the numerical system for this family were attempted, and to preserve the numerical descent established for the branch of the family to which Alcibiades III belongs, the newly identified individual will be assigned the next available Roman numeral, even though he may be earlier than an individual with the same name whose number is lower. The Roman numerals already assigned to the family (with one exception, Cleinius IV) follow in direct order the branch of Alcibiades III. This branch of the family was probably the senior one, since the names Alcibiades and Cleinius alternate with each other in each successive generation: the elder son bears the name of his grandfather rather than that of his father.

Despite its acceptance by most recent scholars, there are three major problems with this stemma: first, how many individuals named Alcibiades were sufficiently active politically to face ostracism in the mid-fifth century, one or two? second, was Axiochus actually the uncle of Alcibiades III, or a cousin? third, how many individuals by the name of Cleinias were members of the Socratic circle in the latter part of the fifth century, one or two?

In 1967 excavation in the southeastern section of the Athenian Agora uncovered four ostraca, two inscribed with the name Alcibiades. The deposit of sherds in which they were found can be assigned to the 450's, the latest date for any of the fragments discovered.³ On one of the ostraca the name of Alcibiades is clearly preserved in the first line; in the second line only the last letter of a patronymic remains, restored by Vanderpool as Cleinias.⁴ The second ostrakon (inv. P27683) also has two lines partially preserved: 'Αλκιβιά[. . .] / 'Αλκιβιά[. . .]. Vanderpool restores both lines identically: 'Αλκιβιά[δεις Κλινίο] / 'Αλκιβιά[δεις Κλινίο]. He admits that the second line of most ostraca contains the patronymic rather than a mere repetition of the first line, but denies that this presents a major problem for his restoration.⁵ He then identifies the Alcibiades mentioned here as Alcibiades II, who was ostracized in 460⁶ and renounced his proxeny with Sparta in the 460's.⁷ Wallace, following the usual sequence of names found on ostraca, restores the second line as the patronymic: 'Αλκιβιά[δεις] / 'Αλκιβιά[δο].⁸ He argues that the Alcibiades mentioned on this ostrakon is not Alcibiades II, son of Cleinias I, but another Alcibiades (V), who was a son of Alcibiades II; he suggests the following genealogy for the family of Alcibiades III:



³ E. Vanderpool, "New Ostraka from the Athenian Agora," *Hesperia* 37 (1968) 117.

⁴ Inv. P27693: 'Αλκ[ι]βιάδεις / [Κλινί]ο.

⁵ Vanderpool (*supra* n.3) 118.

⁶ Lys. 14.39; [Andoc.] 4.34. This Alcibiades appears on other ostraca: *cf.* Vanderpool (*supra* n.1).

⁷ Thuc. 5.43.2, 6.89.2.

⁸ Wallace (*supra* n.1) 197f.

Wallace suggests that this reading offers support for Dittenberger's postulation of an Alcibiades, son of an Alcibiades, who was active in the mid-fifth century and is mentioned by Lysias and Ps.-Andocides as having been ostracized.⁹ But while the ostrakon indicates the existence of an Alcibiades, son of Alcibiades, who was sufficiently prominent to be a candidate for ostracism, it need not follow that he is the same Alcibiades who was ostracized: the substantial number of ostraca that contain the name of Alcibiades, son of Cleinias, suggest that it was the elder Alcibiades (II) who is referred to by Lysias and Ps.-Andocides. This does not, however, rule out the possibility that Alcibiades V, son of Alcibiades II, like his father and his nephew (Alcibiades III), was ostracized in the mid-fifth century.

Although Wallace inserts a new Alcibiades (V) into the family genealogy, he makes Axiochus the brother of both Cleinias II and Alcibiades V, leaving Axiochus as the uncle of Alcibiades III, the general. There are certain difficulties with this position in the genealogy, primarily concerning the dates of the career of Axiochus, son of an Alcibiades (*PA* 1330), who is unknown before *ca* 415 but is afterwards active politically and closely associated with his relative Alcibiades III. Axiochus, along with Alcibiades III and Adeimantes, was involved in the profanation of the Mysteries and, like the other two, left Athens shortly after charges were registered against them for impiety (Andoc. 1.16). Since Andocides links the departure of the two from Athens, Axiochus may well have set sail for Sicily with Alcibiades III. After his departure his property was confiscated and sold by the state. The records of its sale by the *poletai* provide some indication of his personal wealth: he owned a *synoikia*, some agricultural land, household slaves, several other slaves (one of whom was a metalworker), and some unspecified property.¹⁰ The size of his estate indicates that by 415 he was a member of the upper class and in control of his own property.

By 407 he had returned to Athens and should be identified with the Axiochus who in 407/6 proposed the second decree for the Neapolitans of Thrace (*IG* I³ 101). In the same year he set sail with Alcibiades III for the Hellespont, where, according to Lysias, he and Alcibiades III married the same woman, Medontis of Abydos, and lived together with her. When in due course she gave birth to a daughter, it was unclear which of the two men was the father. Later, when the

⁹ W. Dittenberger, "Die Familie des Alkibiades," *Hermes* 37 (1902) 1–13.

¹⁰ *Hesperia* 22 (1953) 263 Stele IV.10f; 279 Stele VII.62f; 287 Stele X.6–9, 22f; *Hesperia* 30 (1961) 25f Stele II (j) 11–17; *Hesperia* 43 (1974) 319 Stele II.16–24.

girl was ready to be married, Axiochus contributed an equal share towards her dowry, but maintained that she was actually the daughter of Alcibiades III.¹¹ This would indicate that Axiochus was still alive in 392, if the girl was married at fourteen, the earliest age usual for marriage (the older she was at the time, the further down the date must be pushed). In 406 Axiochus had returned to Athens and helped to defend the generals after their defeat at Arginusae.¹²

Vanderpool suggests that Axiochus was born *ca* 465.¹³ Axiochus would thus have been about fifty when he became involved in the profanation of the Mysteries with Alcibiades III and Adeimantes—both young men—and almost sixty when he and Alcibiades III married Medontis in Abydos. When her daughter was married, Axiochus would have been seventy-three. While this is possible, it is unlikely that a man this age would have acquired a reputation to match his younger nephew's or have been so closely associated with his escapades. Further, since Axiochus was a man of some means, it is strange that after the death of Cleinias II at Coronea in 446,¹⁴ Pericles and Aripbron acted as guardians for Cleinias' two sons, Alcibiades III and Cleinias IV, rather than his brother Axiochus, which was the general practice in Athens.¹⁵ This deviation from the norm needs some explanation, as Davies indicates (*APF* 18):

The fact is noteworthy, for strictly the proper candidate for this unenviable job [the guardianship of Cleinias' children] should have been their nearest male relation, either their paternal uncle Axiochus or, if he was still too young, their maternal uncle Megacles (IV).

Zahn suggested that Cleinias had assigned the guardianship explicitly to Pericles and Aripbron in a will.¹⁶ This hypothesis is not wholly satisfactory, inasmuch as there is no mention of this arrangement by any ancient source. We should therefore assume that Axiochus failed to assume the guardianship of the children because he was either away from Athens at the time or too young to take on this responsibility. In the absence of evidence that Axiochus, prior to 415, was ostracized or expelled from Athens, the latter possibility is more likely. Since Axiochus' known career extends from 415 to *ca* 392, he was probably still fairly young when he became involved with Alcibia-

¹¹ Lys. fr.4 = Ath. 12.534F-535A.

¹² [Pl.] *Axiochus* 368D-369A.

¹³ Vanderpool (*supra* n.1) 6.

¹⁴ Isoc. 16.28; Pl. *Alc.* 112c.

¹⁵ Pl. *Alc.* 1.104B, *Prt.* 320A; Plut. *Alc.* 1.1.

¹⁶ B. Zahn, "Ostrakon des Themistokles," *AthMitt* 22 (1897) 347.

des III in the profanation of the Mysteries, perhaps the same age. If he were still a young man in 415, the rest of his career also would be more consonant with his age. Axiochus, like Alcibiades III, would have been the grandson of Alcibiades II, rather than his son, and his father, Alcibiades, should be identified with the Alcibiades (V) whose name was found on the ostrakon from the Agora. This would suggest that Axiochus' birth should be redated to *ca* 450, about the same time as that of Alcibiades III. Why Axiochus' father did not assume the guardianship of Cleinias II's children is difficult to determine; it is possible, however, that the ostracism recorded by the Agora ostrakon for the 450's was successful, and that by 446 Axiochus' father had not yet returned from exile and could not assume the guardianship of Cleinias' two sons.¹⁷ It is tempting to follow Dittenberger's suggestion that the Alcibiades whose ostracism is mentioned by Lysias and Ps.-Andocides was the son of an Alcibiades, and thus to be identified with Alcibiades V son of Alcibiades II; but the evidence is far from certain, and the behavior of Axiochus' father, Alcibiades V, in the matter of the guardianship after his brother's death must therefore remain obscure.

The third difficulty with the genealogy presented by Vanderpool concerns the identification of Cleinias III (*PA* 8511), who is taken to be the son of Axiochus mentioned by both Plato and Xenophon. There are certain irreconcilable differences in the evidence presented by these two authors, and the problem becomes even more acute when we recall that both probably knew Cleinias and his father personally. In several passages Plato states that Cleinias was the son of Axiochus, and calls him *neaniskos* and *meirakion*.¹⁸ In another passage Ctesippus, the *erastes* of Cleinias, refers to the latter as his *paidika* (*Euthyd.* 274c). Plato elsewhere uses the terms *pais* and *neaniskos* interchangeably in the same context to indicate that the individual so designated was an adolescent.¹⁹ This would indicate that Cleinias, son of Axiochus, was still very young, an adolescent, *ca* 405.²⁰ In Xenophon's *Symposium*, which takes place at the house of

¹⁷ Besides this ostrakon, two others (inv. P4506 and P27693) may record the vote for the ostracism of this Alcibiades rather than that for the elder Alcibiades. Both fragments have only the final letter of the patronymic preserved and have been assigned a date between 470 and 450. Vanderpool has restored the patronymic as [Κλιβί]ο, but the name [Αλκιβιάδ]ο is equally possible; cf. Vanderpool (*supra* n.1) 3 and (*supra* n.3) 117.

¹⁸ Pl. *Euthyd.* 271A, 273A-B, 275. Cf. [Pl.] *Axiochus* 364A, where Cleinias is also referred to as the son of Axiochus.

¹⁹ Pl. *Lys.* 205B-C; cf. Xen. *Anab.* 7.4.7.

²⁰ Although a precise dramatic date for the *Euthydemus* cannot be established, Méridier proposes *ca* 405, on the basis of several references in the dialogue: the date must

Callias *ca* 422,²¹ Cleinias is described as the lover of Critobulus, and a young man rather than an adolescent (4.12–14, 25); elsewhere Xenophon says that Critobulus' lover was the son of Alcibiades the elder (*Mem.* 1.3.8–10). Faced with this contradictory evidence about the father of Cleinias from two fourth-century sources, Davies, who maintains that the Cleinias mentioned by Plato and the lover of Critobulus were one and the same individual, concludes that “we should accept the possibility that Xenophon’s memory could have been faulty.”²²

Before we reject Xenophon’s testimony, the evidence for the identity of Cleinias’ father should be re-examined. If the Cleinias said to be son of Alcibiades the elder, the lover of Critobulus, and a member of the Socratic circle, was a young man *ca* 422, it is not likely that Plato would have described him as an adolescent *ca* 405. If both Xenophon and Plato were correct about the age and paternity of the Cleinias each mentions they cannot be referring to the same man; in other other words, Xenophon’s Cleinias, lover of Critobulus and son of Alcibiades, is different from Plato’s Cleinias who was the son of Axiochus and lover of Ctesippus. Since the name is so common in the family of Alcibiades III and Axiochus, it is not unreasonable to postulate still another individual by this name in the family, one who was the son of an Alcibiades. The Alcibiades who was the father of Xenophon’s Cleinias would not have been the general, Alcibiades III, since this Cleinias would have been about his age, nor is it likely that he was the son of Alcibiades II, since too many years separate them. Alcibiades II was born in the early decades of the fifth century, was active politically in the 460’s when he was ostracized, and was presumably dead by 447/6 when Cleinias II, his son, was killed at Coronea,²³ while Xenophon’s Cleinias, son of an Alcibiades, was a young man in the Socratic circle during the late fifth century and from Xenophon’s references to him appears to have been somewhat younger than Alcibiades III and Axiochus, who were both grandsons of Alcibiades II and were born *ca* 450. While it is possible that Xeno-

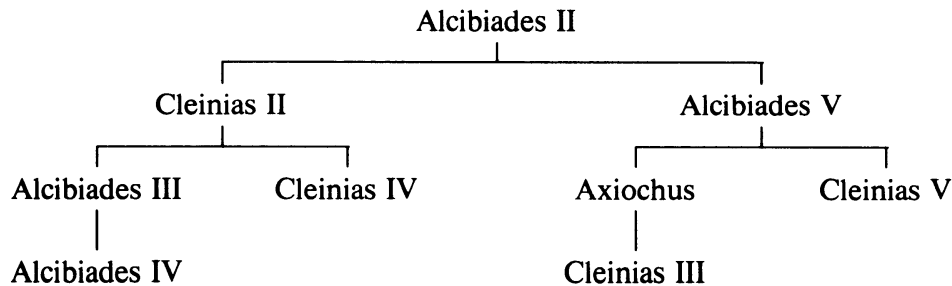
be after the death of Protagoras in 411, since he is mentioned as already dead (286c), but prior to 404, since Alcibiades III is still alive (275b). A date closer to 404 rather than one near 411 is more probable, since in several passages Socrates is said to be already old. Cf. L. Méridier, *Platon: Oeuvres complètes* V.1 (Paris 1964) 139.

²¹ H. R. Breitenbach, *RE* 9A.2 (1967) 1873 s.v. “Xenophon.”

²² *APF* 17. This is not the only genealogical error that Davies finds in Xenophon’s *Symposium*: he maintains (331) that Charmides is incorrectly identified as the cousin of Critias (*Symp.* 4.31). It is argued in the appendix below that Xenophon is correct and Davies has misplaced the events mentioned in the dialogue.

²³ *Isoc.* 16.28; *Pl. Alc.* 1.112c.

phon's Cleinias could have been the son of Alcibiades II, born late in the latter's life, just prior to his death, this seems unlikely. More reasonably he was the son of Alcibiades V who is mentioned on the Agora ostrakon and would be the brother of Axiochus and uncle of Cleinias III, son of Axiochus; he should be designated as Cleinias V. Such a reconstruction of the family genealogy of Alcibiades III eliminates the discrepancy between the statements of Plato and Xenophon, if they were referring to the same individual. I therefore propose the following genealogy of Alcibiades' family in the fifth century:



In summary, the extant evidence indicates that Vanderpool's genealogy of Alcibiades III, the general, needs to be modified to include two other members previously neglected: Alcibiades V, son of Alcibiades II, and Cleinias V, son of Alcibiades V. The evidence for these two individuals is supplied by an ostrakon found in the Agora and by references in the works of Plato and Xenophon. Further, the birth of Axiochus, also a member of Alcibiades III's family, must be down-dated from *ca* 465 to *ca* 450 B.C. to accommodate his career and to explain why he did not become the guardian of Alcibiades III and his brother, Cleinias IV, when their father died. He would then be the son of Alcibiades V and the nephew of Cleinias rather than the son of Alcibiades II and brother of Cleinias II.

APPENDIX: Charmides and the Confiscations of 414

In Xenophon's *Symposium* (4.31) Charmides, cousin of the tyrant Critias, explains that after he lost his foreign property, no longer received any rent from his land in Attica, and his household goods had been sold, his life changed drastically: he sleeps better, no longer pays for expensive liturgies (instead, the city now supports him), and can travel whenever and wherever he pleases. Davies understands this statement to be a reference to the public confiscations of 414, and concludes that "Xenophon has committed an interesting double confusion": first, since the dramatic date of the *Symposium* is 421, not 414 or later, Xenophon has misplaced the events that Charmides is

describing; second, the Charmides who in 414 was convicted and apparently lost his property was not Charmides the cousin of Critias, but Charmides son of Aristoteles (*APF* 331). Before we postulate such errors as these we should first rule out those interpretations that might preserve the integrity of the text.

Davies assumes without argument that Charmides is referring to the calamity of 414 and is implying that he had been convicted of a crime. But there are strong arguments to the contrary. Charmides nowhere states or even implies either that all his property had been confiscated or that he had lost control of all of it. He only says that he has lost the foreign holdings; about his land in Attica he only declares that he no longer receives any rent from it. The implication, in fact, is that he still owns it. The loss of rent could have been the consequence of a number of circumstances, among them the Spartan incursions into Attica, which would have made it impossible for anyone to farm the land. Others besides Charmides suffered a similar problem. Aristarchus tells Socrates that since the Spartan incursions, he has been unable to earn any revenue from his farm, and his capital reserves are being depleted (*Mem.* 2.7.11f). Similarly Polystratus was not only unable to work his farm but could not even inhabit it during the period of the Spartan invasions during the Peloponnesian War ([*Lys.*] 20.33).

Second, the confiscations in 414 referred to by Davies were not the only example of public seizure of private property. There were other confiscations in 411, just after the restoration of the democracy, and during the rule of the Thirty. Further, whenever the city was unable to meet its expenses during the Peloponnesian War, it confiscated private property to raise funds (*Lys.* 30.22). Besides public seizures of property, there were also private ones, usually the result of defaults on loans; moreover, a number of individuals were forced to liquidate their property to pay their debts to support their style of life. By the late 420's Megacles was heavily in debt and was obliged to mortgage his property, which was either repossessed by his creditors or sold to pay his debts (*Ar. Ach.* 615, Σ *ad* 614, 617). Moreover, Aristophanes claims that during the war many of the rich were forced, by debt and the need to sustain themselves, to pawn all that they owned (*Eccl.* 754f, *Plut.* 450f). Charmides was probably speaking about conditions like these, rather than to the events of 414, when he says that he lost his foreign land, was deprived of the rent from his Attic property, and sold his household goods.

Finally, in commenting that the state has been supporting him since his economic decline, Charmides does not appear to be a person who has recently been convicted by that same state of a serious crime, a conviction that would have carried as its penalty the loss of his property. For these reasons, I find no compelling argument to link Charmides' losses with the events of 414; his economic problems can as reasonably be placed at or just before the date of the *Symposium*, ca 422. Once the association of Charmides' financial problems with the calamity in 414 can no longer be taken as a given, there is no reason to believe that Xenophon has confused Charmides the cousin of

Critias with Charmides son of Aristoteles. Davies' claim that Xenophon has in this passage of the *Symposium* made two confusions cannot be maintained, and Xenophon's statements about the economic status of Charmides, the cousin of Critias, may stand.²⁴

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²⁴ This article is an expansion of a paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Philological Association in 1985 at Washington, D.C. I wish to express my thanks to Professors Lowell Edmunds, P. Johnston, and G. Perko for their valuable suggestions; remaining errors are entirely the responsibility of the author.