

BOOK REVIEW

Kinship in Thucydides: Intercommunal Ties and Historical Narrative. By MARIA FRAGOULAKI. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xii + 443. Hardcover, \$150.00. ISBN 978-0-19-969777-9.

The most striking feature of Thucydides' text that Fragoulaki's monograph brings out is the extent to which the language of kinship infiltrates his narrative of the Peloponnesian War. Fragoulaki offers a hearty reminder that Thucydides provides his readers with much more than analyses of power, *stasis*, war, justice, and expediency. Much of the language of these analyses points towards the interrelatedness of communities on several levels, and Fragoulaki successfully shows how attention to this interrelatedness brings out the strong emotional undercurrents at work in Thucydides' text.

In her first chapter, Fragoulaki introduces and justifies her focus on kinship. She divides kinship into two separate types: (1) the narrower concept of *xyngeneia*, which describes "kinship by intercommunal descent through colonization and/or simply racial affiliation" (5) and claims of shared genealogies, and (2) the looser concept of "relatedness" which describes ties forged through shared history and religious practice, *proxenia*, naturalization, and relationships between individuals. She follows modern anthropological models of kinship to suggest that "ties of intercommunal relatedness simulate ties of *xyngeneia* closely, and can be equally affective, binding, and exploitable to the latter" (6). Her goal in outlining these two concepts is to show that kinship is a "total" phenomenon that incorporates both biological and social ties between communities. Her point is well taken here, yet in the chapters that follow, Fragoulaki separates her analysis of the relationships between communities into her two established types, which paradoxically undermines her goal of presenting these as a single theme.

Fragoulaki acknowledges that historiographical analysis is two-fold: the text must be read as history and as literature. She hopes, in the pursuit of the theme of intercommunal kinship in Thucydides' account, "to offer new readings and appreciations of the author's narrative technique and style, and his interaction with his literary context and contemporary and later audiences" (26). Throughout the book, Fragoulaki often brings in comparisons with Herodotus (she includes an

index of kinship descriptions that overlap in Herodotus and Thucydides, Appendix II), Aristophanes, and inscriptional evidence from the fourth century, which has often (and incorrectly, as Fragoulaki shows) been interpreted in light of Thucydides' descriptions of communal interrelatedness. She also suggests that "awareness of the kinship dynamics between the actors/speakers (and interlocutors) in the work, or absence of them, may offer new insights not only into the rhetoric dynamics and arguments used, but also into Thucydides' choices as regards the allocation of speeches, even their very form" (28). In chapters three to seven, Fragoulaki shows that the debates Thucydides includes model different kinds of interrelatedness between communities. These set pieces may explain why Thucydides does not offer direct debate at other points in his narrative between similarly related communities.

Fragoulaki's second chapter provides a detailed study of the kinship terminology used in Thucydides' text. Overall, it is invaluable for laying out the key terms and phrases used for describing or implying kinship relationships between communities in the *History*, but Fragoulaki's tendency to categorize many types of phrases as *xyngeia* creates confusion for the reader later. Despite her emphasis on close reading, it is sometimes hard to tell what term Thucydides uses in specific passages without constant reference to Thucydides' text (since she is sparing in providing long direct citations in Greek).

The next five chapters offer case studies of intercommunal kinship. She focuses on Corinth (Chapter 3), the Aiolian communities of Mytilene and Plataia (Chapter 4), Sparta (Chapter 5), and Athens (Chapter 6). Chapter 7 explores intercommunal relationships between Greeks and non-Greeks in the west. Fragoulaki's analysis in Chapter 3 of the *Kerkyraika* (1.24-55) and how it compares to debates in Syracuse is especially well done and shows how Thucydides' inclusion of ties of kinship strengthens the emotional force of Corcyra's conflict with Corinth. Her discussion of the Melian dialogue in Chapter 5 (162-179) shows how the Athenians and the Melians dispute the meaning of Melos' ties of *xyngeia* to Sparta while at the same time make no mention of any kind of relatedness between their two communities. This sets the Melian dialogue up as a strong foil to the debates in the *Kerkyraika* and the *Plataika*, where ties of relatedness between the disputants are heavily emphasized both by the narrator and the speakers. Fragoulaki describes the Melian dialogue as a perverted symposium (with special attention to Plato's *Symposium*). While intriguing on its own, this idea does not fit in well with her larger argument.

Throughout these chapters, Fragoulaki overwhelms her reader with evidence. She tracks down the many terms and phrases in Thucydides that connote relatedness between parties, and she highlights places where relatedness does exist (according to evidence from external sources) but is not mentioned in the *History*. The result left this reader convinced of the importance of the kinship theme, but unsatisfied. Fragoulaki *shows* us the ubiquity of kinship in Thucydides' text, but does not tell us what it means for reading Thucydides' narrative.

For example, in Chapter 5 she offers a strong reading of how Amphipolis rejects its ties to Athens and turns to Sparta by removing the shrine to its Athenian founder and installing the bones of Brasidas, their new founder, in its place. She notes that, although the Amphipolitans do this, the terms of the Peace of Nicias give Amphipolis back to Athens a year later despite the Amphipolitans' unwillingness to go back. Amphipolis is consistently associated with Athens throughout the fourth century. This episode offers a space for exploring how a community's positioning seems to matter less than how they are perceived by others, but Fragoulaki sums up the episode thus: "In effect, the fading of Sparta in Amphipolis' later life confirms what we have seen so far: ritual and claims of kinship are deeply historical. Through their dialogue with the past, they reflect and at the same time shape the conditions of the present" (200). It is hard to see how this comment relates to her analysis of the realignment of Amphipolis. What is missing are the explanatory and thematizing steps that connect the evidence she so ably brings to the fore with her larger claims about kinship.

In her conclusion, Fragoulaki argues that ignoring the impact kinship traditions had on ancient authors "impose[s] modern hierarchies and systems of belief and critical control on our ancient evidence, thus leading to arbitrary inferences about ancient minds and subjectivities and obscuring rather than enhancing our contact with the material under examination" (318). And yet Fragoulaki often asks readers to imagine the content and emotional force of exchanges between states that Thucydides does not provide. This is an important question to ask but at times her imagination seems to take on the force of argument, and thus she may fall into the same trap.

Overall, Fragoulaki succeeds in part of her goal for this book. She brings out the multiple ways in which kinship is experienced and expressed in Thucydides' text, and she shows how a broader knowledge of kinship networks in the fifth century further illuminates Thucydides' literary artistry. What is missing is a better explanation of *how* these kinship relationships are used and abused by the

actors (both individuals and states) in Thucydides' war narrative—she shows us that Sparta treats kinship ties differently from Athens, but she does not offer clear analysis of what that difference means for interpreting the *History* as a whole. Regardless, the book is an important study for advanced readers of Thucydides and it is hoped that Fragoulaki's emphasis upon kinship will motivate other scholars to take it into account.

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