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# EMOTION, PERSUASION AND KINSHIP IN THUCYDIDES: THE PLATAIAN DEBATE (3.52–68) AND THE MELIAN DIALOGUE (5.85–113)\*

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## INTRODUCTION

Thucydides' speeches surely reflect rhetorical practices (and probably theoretical works) of his own day, but he might also himself have influenced the development of the genre. This can be inferred from the study of the surviving samples of fifth-century oratory (such as fragments of Antiphon) and from the richer evidence we have on fourth-century speeches and rhetorical treatises, such as the *Rhetoric to Alexander*.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the persuasion exercised by the speakers in the *History*, Thucydides' own authorial persuasion vis-à-vis his audience offers another means of tracing his affinities with oratory. These affinities go well beyond the speeches and include major features of his historical writing. For example, the restriction of the range of motives so as to guide his audience's attention to the explanation he himself favours is characteristic of forensic oratory;<sup>2</sup> and so are his historical method and the explicit aim of discovering the truth.<sup>3</sup> This discussion will look at the role of emotions in Thucydides' speeches, paying special attention to the presence, or absence, of intercommunal kinship ties between the cities taking part in the process of persuasion. Two levels of persuasion will be taken into account: the persuasion that takes place among the speaking historical actors in the *History* (which can be termed here 'internal') and the

\* I would like to thank the participants of the conference for stimulating discussion and the editors, Ed Sanders and Matthew Johncock, for their meticulous care and suggestions; all improved my discussion in a number of ways. Omissions and mistakes remain my own. In this chapter, all passage citations bearing no indication of author refer to Thucydides; and all dates are BCE, unless otherwise stated.

1 Macleod (1983) chs 9, 10, 11 *et passim*; Hornblower (1987) 45–72; Pelling (2012) 281–315 also subtly considers tragedians' and comedians' versions of rhetorical reality. See Lucian *Hist. Conscr.* 51 on the difference between the historian's task and that of the orator. On speeches in Thucydides and the relationship between oratory and history, see e.g. Luschnat (1971) 1162–83; Stadter (1973); Pelling (2000) chs 2, 4, 6; Grethlein (2010) 205–40; Marincola (2011), containing further bibliography.

2 Baragwanath (2008) 85.

3 Plant (1999); Rood (2006).

persuasion that takes place between Thucydides as historical author and his audience ('external').<sup>4</sup>

Emotional and ethical factors are central to all wars, and especially ethnic conflicts. The Peloponnesian War was a destructive war between Greek communities, mainly Sparta and Athens and their respective allies, which took place between 431 and 404. Thucydides' everlasting impact on history writing is owed to the combination of a wry and detached analysis of the factors that motivate and govern wars and pages of astonishing pathos and emotionality. His political analysis is artfully combined with his reporting of an ethnic war in which he himself took part, and the final outcome contains rich and valuable material on collective and individual emotions and ethics: dramatic descriptions of destruction, mourning and death, along with the moral condemnation of total warfare and the social dissolution caused by the war, but also hope, desire and *erôs*.

Emotions and ethics are central to all processes of persuasion. Two of the three interrelated categories of 'artificial evidence' (*entechnoi pisteis*, proofs constructed by speech), according to Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* (1.2, 1356a 1–25) are: *êthos* ('the moral character projected by the speaker in order to establish himself as a credible source of information and opinion'), and *pathos* ('the emotion induced in the hearer as a means of creating in him a state of mind favourable to the speaker and unfavourable to his opponent').<sup>5</sup> All three categories of *entechnoi pisteis* are interrelated in the process of persuasion. Emotion cannot be dissociated from the perception of moral character or from reasoning, cognition and construction of argument. Aristotle's dichotomy between persuasion through character and persuasion through the emotions produced in the hearer has at times led to false distinctions between arousal of emotions and judgment, which are not underpinned by modern theories of emotions; for example, there is no such thing as an 'unemotional and impartial auditor'.<sup>6</sup> Oratory, therefore, is the natural space for the study of emotions and the ways in which they affect decision-making and action.

Speeches in the Greek historians of the Classical period are no exception. About 'austere' Thucydides, it is worth remembering that his *enargeia* ('vividness') and *pathos* have been praised since antiquity (Plut. *Nikias* 1.1), and that in the fifth century (as well) '[t]he same citizens who were audience and judges of theatrical or musical competitions were also audience and "judges" of political competitions and public orations'.<sup>7</sup> This discussion will take into consideration

4 For in-text and extra-textual audiences and different levels of persuasion in Herodotus, see Baragwanath (2008) 298–300 *et passim*.

5 Carey (2007) 229. The third category was, according to Aristotle, *logos* itself (rational argument).

6 Fortenbaugh (1992) 228; *pace* Gill (1984). Turner and Stets (2005), for modern theories of emotions (see also main text below with note 20). Carey (1994) 36–45, on the importance of *êthos* in law-courts.

7 Chaniotis (2013) 215–16; cf. Thucydides' Cleon's famous invective *κακῶς ἀγωνοθετοῦντας ... θεαταὶ λόγων ... ἀκροαταὶ ἔργων* (3.38.4); for Cleon's own theatrical demeanour in public speaking, see Plut. *Nikias* 8.6. Chaniotis (2013) makes ingenious use of some Hellenistic decrees, which are held to reflect the emotional language, vividness and theatricality of actual

two dimensions of *pathos*: the emotions which the speakers aim to induce in their audiences, the ‘target’ of persuasion, and the emotional statuses of the speakers themselves in the course of their addresses.<sup>8</sup> Evidence of emotion (*pathos*) in the speaker affects in fact the way in which the moral character of the speaker (*êthos*) is perceived by (internal and external) audiences and reminds us of the connections between *êthos* and *pathos* made by ancient criticism.<sup>9</sup> *Êthos* will be examined not only in connection with the Aristotelian definition of the term in the *Rhetoric* (‘the moral character of the speaker’), but also with the theatrical sense of the term, as applying to Aristotle’s *Poetics* (15, 1454a 22–24): there *êthos* is the aspect related to the truthfulness and plausibility of the character, or else to dramatic characterization (τὰ ἀμύρτοντα ἦθη, ‘appropriateness of character’).<sup>10</sup>

Although they clearly relate to the forensic, deliberative and epideictic samples of ancient oratory, Thucydides’ speeches are also part of a historiographic project, which means that they are hybrids of real-life situations and the author’s own rhetorical strategies and construction of persuasion. The best representation of their hybrid nature (rhetoric and history) is Thucydides’ own famous methodological statement about the composition of his speeches and the degree and kind of his intervention in reporting ‘what was actually said’ (τὰ ἀληθῶς λεχθέντα, 1.22.1–3); it has been discussed exhaustively by scholars and no further analysis will be offered here.<sup>11</sup>

The *History* contains not only direct but also indirect speeches, which deserve equal attention, both in terms of rhetoric and internal persuasion, and in terms of their role in the narrative.<sup>12</sup> This generates questions related to the author’s choices and/or sources of information, such as the reason why a speech is reported directly or indirectly, its length, or its position in the whole structure, along with another set of questions pertaining to the number and the names of the speakers. Sometimes Thucydides uses an enigmatic plural to describe the speakers who address an assembly in a political/civic or a military context, leaving us to wonder about the details of this group address, resembling the voice of a chorus. This is the case for example with both speaking parties of the Melian Dialogue, or with

speeches and of Hellenistic historiography. One of these documents is the famous Xanthos-Kytenion decree (third century, Curty (1995) no. 75), whose emotional impact lies precisely in the predominant role of intercommunal kinship in it.

- 8 Hagen (this volume) considers the importance of the speakers themselves feeling the emotion that they are trying to engender in their audience.
- 9 Gill (1984); Russell (1990).
- 10 Carey (1994) 39–43.
- 11 See e.g. Orwin (1994) 207–12; Rood (1998) 46–8; Greenwood (2006) 63–8.
- 12 For the need of equal attention to both direct and indirect speeches, see e.g. *CT* III.32–5; Scardino (2012). Arist. *Rh.* (1.3, 1358b20–9) for expediency or harm, as the aim (τέλος) of the deliberative speaker; and justice or injustice, as the aim of the forensic speaker.

the addresses of the Thebans and the Plataians in the Plataian debate.<sup>13</sup> Of special interest is also the naming and non-naming of the speakers. As one might expect, when a speech is attributed to a single speaker, we are often given his name – but not always.<sup>14</sup> Conversely the expectation in the case of a ‘choral’ address is that the speakers are anonymous. A remarkable exception though are the two Plataian speakers in the Plataian debate, who appear with their names and patronymics. This creates a sharp contrast with the anonymity of the group of Theban speakers (whose number is not specified either) and the five anonymous Spartan judges, who are the deciding body of this debate, and to whom both the Plataians’ and the Thebans’ persuasion is directed.<sup>15</sup>

The majority of the speeches in Thucydides belong to the broader category of deliberative speeches, as they have a clear political dimension concerning matters such as gains and losses of diplomatic, territorial and economic nature, which affect a city’s position on the map of power relations and ultimately its position and fate in the war. Yet, as already mentioned, especially in times of war, practical motives and questions are closely related to ethical ones; arguments relying on past character and deeds influence decisions about the future, and assemblies are at times transformed into courtrooms. This is also apparent in the deliberative speeches in the *History*, which often have a forensic aspect, some to a greater degree than others.<sup>16</sup> The forensic aspect of the speeches is occupied with questions of retribution, conventional morality and hierarchical order on the interstate level, which are related to the cultural values of the society in which the debate takes place. The interlocking of the deliberative and forensic strands might also be seen in the frequency of the rhetorical *topoi* of *xumpheron* (expediency) and *dikaion* (justice) in the *History*, which appear in close relation to each other. But even when the actual words *xumpheron* and *dikaion* are not used, these concepts are central to all processes of collective decision-making in Thucydides (and beyond).<sup>17</sup> *Antilogies* (exchanges of longer antithetical speeches) such as the debate on the so-called *Kerkyraika* affair (1.32–44) or the Mytilenaian debate (3.37–48) are representative examples of the mixture of deliberative and forensic elements, and so is the Plataian debate, one of the two debates discussed in this chapter. There is a consistent preoccupation with moral questions and juxtaposition of ex-

13 This choral idea of address is often found in pre-battle exhortations. Cf. 7.65.3, where the address is attributed to ‘the generals and Gylippos’; with *CT* III.683; *HCT* IV.444. For battle speeches in Thucydides, see Luschnat (1942); Leimbach (1985); Pritchett (2002), esp. 37–80.

14 6.25, the short indirect speech of ‘a certain Athenian’ might be seen as a structural match with the short direct speech of a Syracusan general in 6.41.

15 See below. 3.52.5 (Plataian speakers), cf. Hornblower (1987) 51–3.

16 Of the longer speeches, in addition to the deliberative (or symbouleutic) and forensic (or dikanic) genres, there is also the Funeral Oration (2.35–46), the only epideictic (display) speech in the *History*, and a number of pre-battle exhortations (for the problem of historicity, see e.g. Hansen (1993); Pritchett (1994)). For a categorization of oratory in Thucydides, see Marincola (2001) 82–3; Carey (1994) 33–4, on similarities between forensic and political oratory and processes. For a mixture of registers in Herodotus’s speeches, see Zali (2014) 255–7.

17 For the use of moral language in interstate relations from different perspectives, see Low (2007); Fragoulaki (2013).

pediency with justice in the Melian Dialogue as well, so a forensic dimension might be detected there too, although it has been viewed as ‘an ideal form of deliberation’, on the grounds that the Melians’ reliance on conventional morality is refuted by the Athenians’ pragmatism and prudential line of argument, and it is the latter who set the rules of the deliberation.<sup>18</sup>

The following discussion of emotions and persuasion in Thucydides will take into consideration a parameter that has not received adequate attention so far: the kinship ties between the communities represented in Thucydides’ speeches. In real-life courtrooms, kinship connections between the litigants – and/or between the litigants and the witnesses they present to court – are an important factor, since they interact with a set of material, ethical and emotional parameters integral to the decision-making process.<sup>19</sup> By the same token, at critical moments when the fate of whole communities is usually the object of decision-making, as in Thucydides’ speeches, it is necessary and revelatory to pose the question: what is the relationship, if any, among the communities who take part in the deliberations, that is, the cities who deliver the speeches by means of their representatives and the city assemblies (and city-representatives) who act as audiences and deciding bodies? This discussion adopts a relational and contextual approach to emotions. Drawing on the methodological traditions of sociology and anthropology, the relational approach analyses emotions *in situ* ‘as they occur during sequences of interaction’.<sup>20</sup> Power and social hierarchies have an important influence on these sequences, and consequently intercommunal kinship provides a valuable cultural framework for the study of collective and individual emotions. This chapter argues that it is only through awareness of the intercommunal kinship dynamics that we are able to understand fully and assess the emotional dynamics of persuasion in the Plataian debate and the Melian Dialogue, and the ways in which emotions, or absence of them, influence decision-making and action.

In order to assess the role of intercommunal kinship in the web of ethical and emotional criteria in deliberative processes, a preliminary note is needed on terminology and the theoretical approach employed.<sup>21</sup> Kinship has been central to a long trajectory of anthropological enquiries. Modern approaches have challenged traditional models used to describe and understand the ways in which entities can be related to each other. Since the 1970s there has been a gradual destabilization of the dichotomy between nature and culture (or substance and code) and in ‘the ways in which boundaries – of nations, cultures, species, races, persons, bodies,

18 Macleod (1983) 55–6. Yet even if the standard features of courtroom procedure are absent in historiography (most obviously the implementation of a punishment on the defendant, if found guilty, as in the cases of the Mytilenaian and the Plataian debates in Thucydides), standard forensic language and moral reasoning are arguably enough to sustain the forensic dimension: e.g. 1.42.2–4, the possibility of counterbalancing a past offence with a present favour (observe *ἐγκλημα λύσαι*, ‘absolve of offence’); cf. 1.140.2 *ἐγκλήματα διαλύσασθαι*.

19 Humphreys (1986); Griffith-Williams (this volume).

20 Spencer, Walby and Hunt (2012) 5; cf. Barbalet (1998); Kemper (1978).

21 Fragoulaki (2013) 1–29.

cells – have been breached'.<sup>22</sup> New reproduction technology (such as IVF treatment), surrogacy, or new narratives and perceptions about adoption have been put on the map of kinship today. And in the so-called 'pre-modern' societies of today's world, a variety of transmitted substances other than blood have been recognized as creating kinship, such as milk, semen, bones; or memory itself. For the Amazonian peoples, for example, memory is a form of substance that is located in the body and creates kinship.<sup>23</sup> These modern data might provide useful cultural intermediaries for our dialogue with ancient societies.

The question of 'intercommunal ties' as represented in Thucydides' speeches will be addressed through two main categories of ties: that of *xungeneia* (Thucydides' word) and that of 'relatedness', an established term nowadays among anthropologists who study kinship patterns beyond biology.<sup>24</sup>

(a) *xungeneia* refers to ties involving descent between communities: the relationship between a colonizing *metropolis* (mother-city) and its *apoikia* (colony) or, by an extension of an obvious sort, the relationship between colonies of the same mother-city, what we could call 'sister-cities'. This category also includes the racial affinity through membership of the same ethnic group of the Greeks (Ionians, Dorians, Aioliens etc.); and it also includes claims of shared mytho-historical genealogies. In this last case, both mythical and historical ancestral figures that are shared between communities may be equally effective in the construction of kinship claims. As is amply documented in literary and epigraphic sources, the relationship between these communities was characterized by a high degree of emotionality, and there were certain formal obligations, both in peace and in war, which kin communities were expected to fulfil towards each other, and especially an *apoikia* towards its *metropolis*.<sup>25</sup> The breach of these expectations was of course a common phenomenon, especially in war contexts, where alliances were often made in spite of *xungeneia*. It should be noted that such kinship ties were often taken for granted, not only by Thucydides, but also by Herodotus, who is generally thought of as much more outspoken about these connections.<sup>26</sup>

(b) The category of 'relatedness' comprises various forms of kinship between communities that are not based on intercommunal descent (that is, on *xungeneia*), but on a range of socio-cultural and political institutions of the ancient Greek world. These included interstate links through interpersonal connections by means

22 Franklin and McKinnon (2001) 21.

23 Sahlins (2013) 8–9 *et passim* – cf. “‘Substance’ is as constructed as “code” – for what is to be conveyed in procreation is not mere physical substance but social status’ (4); land and geography as part of one’s human substance, among peoples of New Guinea and New Britain, compared to the ancient myth of Athenian autochthony (7 with note 3).

24 Carsten (2000).

25 E.g. *IG I3* 46 (= ML 49; Brea, c. 445); RO no. 29 (Paros, c. 372); 1.25.3–4. Cf. Curty (1995); Graham (1964).

26 For explicit and implicit (e.g. Knidos-Taras, Hdt. 3.138.2) statements of kinship ties in Herodotus, see Hornblower (2013) 21–3.

of ritualized friendship (*xenia*); *proxenia*;<sup>27</sup> intermarriage; grant of citizenship (naturalization); shared cults and festivals; and the export and exchange of cultural products and forms. These cultural and political institutions had the value of foundational events, that is, moments of special significance and meaning in the collective memory of communities that initiated new self-perceptions and life-cycles. In terms of a community's attachments and affiliations, they created new kinship statuses.

Emotions, subjectivities and cultural factors played a preponderant role in the experience and expression of all types of intercommunal kinship. To put that another way, all types of kinship (both *xungeneia* and non-*xungeneia* ones) constituted a unified and essentially cultural whole. We will see this in the examination of the Plataian debate and the Melian Dialogue, in which awareness of the kinship ties, or absence of them, between Thucydides' speaking historical actors brings to the fore the emotional dynamics and the ways in which they are used in the construction of persuasion.

#### THE PLATAIAN DEBATE (3.52–68)

'The Plataian debate' is a hybrid genre of deliberative and pseudo-forensic character. It takes place in 427 in Plataia, a small city of Boiotia in central Greece with a huge symbolic importance for all the Greeks of the Classical period. The city was a locus of panhellenic memory, on account of the famous battle which the Greeks fought and won near Plataia some fifty years before the debate and marked their freedom from the Persians. In 427, the Plataians were forced to capitulate after a prolonged siege by the Spartans. The debate records the final act of the Plataian drama, which stretches intermittently over books 2 and 3 (out of the eight) of Thucydides' unfinished *History*, over the years 431–27. The object of these deliberations is the fate of the Plataians after their capitulation to the Spartans: the decision that is to be taken is critical, because it concerns the salvation or destruction of the city and the remaining inhabitants. The representatives of three Greek communities take part in this debate, which consists of an exchange of speeches delivered first by the Plataians, then by the Thebans, before an audience of five Spartans who would act as judges (*δικασταί* is Thucydides' term (3.52.2)). In judicial terms, the Plataians and the Thebans are fellow litigants, while the Spartan judges are those who are going to take the final decision, thus being the target of persuasion. It is obvious why this exchange of speeches about the fate of Plataia is often referred to as a trial.<sup>28</sup>

27 Where an individual works, by diplomatic representation in his own city, for the interests of another city.

28 Cf. Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 42, who calls the Plataian speech a 'defence' (*ἀπολογία*). On the debate: Macleod (1983): 227–46; Connor (1984) 91–5; Debnar (2001) 125–46; Price (2001) 103–26; Morrison (2006) 65–80; Grethlein (2012); Fragoulaki (2013) 119–39; Steinbock (2013) 120–3, 135–6; Pelling (2000) 61–81 (on the whole sequence of Plataia).

It must be emphasized from the start that, in the very texture of the arguments that both sides employ in order to persuade the Spartan judges about the rightness of their cause, ties of intercommunal kinship play a prominent role. These ties relate not only to the three communities whose representatives are present in the trial, but also to a fourth one, who are physically absent, but omnipresent in the speeches of both the Plataians and the Thebans. These are the Athenians: the fourth major pole in the intercommunal dynamics of this trial and of the whole of the Plataian episode.

The matrix of kinship ties between the four cities involved (Plataia, Thebes, Sparta, Athens), as emerging from Thucydides and external sources, is as follows: Plataia was an alleged colony of the Thebans and therefore both cities belonged to the same ethnic group, that of the Aiolians. This assertion in its strongest form is focalized through the Thebans in the debate (3.61.2; cf. 7.57.5). But each of the two Aiolian cities, Thebes and Plataia, were related by powerful ties, of different sorts, to the two big enemy-cities of the Peloponnesian War, Dorian Sparta and Ionian Athens: the Thebans, and consequently their colonial offspring, the Plataians, are related with the Spartans through mythical genealogical links between the Aiolian and the Dorian *ethnê* that reflect oral traditions, as early as the seventh century.<sup>29</sup> Yet there is also an episode of more recent history that joins the Plataians with the Spartans, and this is the Persian Wars and the common struggle for freedom, to which we will return. At the same time, the Plataians enjoy a form of Athenian citizenship in virtue of a rare and very interesting collective grant, which had been made at some earlier date: normally citizenship of one *polis* excluded citizenship of another.<sup>30</sup> Thucydides records this puzzling citizenship and a generally intimate connection between the Plataians and the Athenians, which is also supported by external sources and simulates closely that of a loyal colony with its mother-city. This tie was so strong that by the third century the Plataians are said to have actually claimed that they were colonists of the Athenians.<sup>31</sup> This was in fact an act of collective ethnic transformation, since the Plataians had ‘broken off’ from the relationship with their mother-city, Thebes, and consequently from the Aiolian ethnos, their ‘natural’ ethnic space on account of their colonial descent from Thebes. As with the bad relationship between Dorian Kerkyra and its own mother-city Corinth, the hostility between Thebes and Plataia is another in-spite-of-kinship case in the *History*, which generates, on the side of the *apoikia* (Plataia), a need for justification of this choice and, on the side of the *metropolis* (Thebes), a need for condemnation and retribution. As in human families, emotions run high and the arguments of both sides are constructed on both practical

29 Aiolos and Doros, sons of Hellen: Hesiod fr. 9 MW; Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.7.3. Date of composition of the Catalogue, c. 580 (Fowler (1998)). Also: Megara–Boiotia, 4.72.1, with Hellanikos *FGrH* 4 F 78. Cf. *CT* II.240 and 67–8; Curty (1995) no. 11, recording *συγγένεια* between Akraiphia in Boiotia and Megara, second half of the second century CE.

30 For collective grants, see e.g. ML 94, with Austin and Vidal-Naquet (1977) 95.

31 Citizenship: 3.55.3, 63.2. Cf. 2.6.2–4, 3.56.6; Hdt. 6.108. 1; Lys. 23.6; Apollod. [Ps.-Dem.] 59.104–6; fr. 11 Austin (2006) 200, third century, ascribed to Ps.-Dicaearchus or to Heraclides Creticus.

and moral grounds. On the intercommunal level, these grounds pertain on the one hand to national security, and on the other to thwarted expectations and feelings of resentment, hatred and disappointment at what is perceived by each community as violation of the ethical order of kinship.

In the Plataian debate, the Plataians refer repeatedly to their alienation from and hatred towards their mother-city Thebes, expressing in fact feelings that go some way back to the end of the sixth century (3.54.1 πρὸς τὰ Θηβαίων διάφορα ‘in the quarrel with Thebes’; 3.59.2, 4 ἐχθίστοις ‘most hateful’ (twice)).<sup>32</sup> The Thebans, on the other hand, being in the position of the mother-city which has been slighted, and disadvantaged in practical terms, express their deep resentment at what they feel as unlawful abandonment of ancestral Boiotian customs by the Plataians. For ancestral customs the Thebans use the key word *πάτρια* (‘hereditary’, ‘ancestral’; cognate of *πατήρ*, ‘father’), which reflects, in linguistic terms, the analogies between familial and intercommunal models of kinship (3.65.2, ἐς τὰ κοινὰ τῶν πάντων Βοιωτῶν *πάτρια καταστήσαι*, ‘restore you to the ancestral traditions of the whole Boiotian community’; 3.66.1; cf. 3.61.2, ἡμῶν κτισάντων *Πλάταιαν*, ‘we founded Plataia’). The Thebans charge the Plataians with injustice and defiance of kinship obligations, for the sake of their attachment to the (Ionian) Athenians, which they consider unlawful and ‘unnatural’, because it lies outside the circle of the ‘natural’ friends of the Plataians, who ‘properly’ belong among the Aiolian family:

They acted unlawfully without having received provocation at our hands, but through hatred (*μίσση*) rather than according to a just (*δίκη*) judgment, and they could not possibly pay now a penalty equal to their guilt, for they will suffer a lawful sentence (*τιμωρίαν*). (3.67.5)<sup>33</sup>

The Thebans accuse the Plataians of being motivated by hatred in their dealings with their mother-city, while they themselves experience anger and hatred; at the same time they try to make the whole of the Greek world participants in these negative feelings, including of course the Spartans. The first instance of fierce hostility between two communities in the *History* linked by colonial ties is the feud between Corinth and Kerkyra, described in paradigmatic detail by Thucydides.<sup>34</sup> Here in the *Plataiika* the pattern is repeated and is immediately recognizable. Appeals to *ὀργή* were often combined with requests for *τιμωρία* or *κόλασις* (punishment) in Athenian courts, and this is precisely the case with the Theban speech.<sup>35</sup> The Theban plea was successful and Thucydides’ concluding

32 Cf. Hdt. 6.108. See Eckert (this volume) on the cross-generational emotional effect of cultural trauma.

33 Cf. 3.64.4: ‘Who, then, would more justly be hated (*μισοῖντο*) by all the Hellenes than you...?’

34 Fragoulaki (2013) 121, on the *Kerkyraika* and the *Plataiika* as two big narrative circles in the *History*, where the *xungeneia* theme is dominant; Crane (1998) 97–124, on the anger of Corinth.

35 For appeals to anger and punishment as strategies of pre-empting the opponent’s appeals to pity, see Rubinstein (2004); Allen (2000), on anger and punishment; Allen (2003); Konstan (2006) 41–76 on anger, 185–200 on hatred; Sanders (2012), on hostile emotions in Athenian

remarks on the whole episode provide an explanation of the decision of the five Spartan judges and their hostility towards the Plataians:

Indeed it was almost wholly for the sake of the Thebans that the Lakedaimonians in all their dealings with the Plataians showed themselves so thoroughly hostile (οὕτως ἀποτετραμμένοι) to them, thinking that the Thebans would be serviceable in the war then just beginning. (3.68.4)

This condemnatory verdict and the whole of the debate reflect the role of emotions in the process and outcome of persuasion, and their interaction with practical and ethical considerations. The kinship dynamics in this quadrilateral of cities have a vital role in this interaction.

Both the Plataians and the Thebans meet the expectations concerning the rules of persuasion, in the sense that both aim to convince the Spartan judges about their just and righteous character and conduct (their *ēthos* in the rhetorical sense). Especially for the Plataians this was undeniably a great challenge. Pity (ἔλεος) was a staple of trial speeches and according to Aristotle it was an emotion felt for the undeserving victim of adversity (*Rh.* 2.8, 1385b13–16; *Poet.* 13, 1453a 3–5).<sup>36</sup> As expected by people who struggle to save their lives, the Plataians' plea aims to stir the pity of the five Spartan judges, and a powerful emotional card they play is that of expected gratitude, a standard mechanism of arousing clemency. In disputes between individuals taken to Athenian law courts, a claim to *charis* (a service to the community) aimed at reminding the audience of a debt of gratitude, which could be repaid in the form of compassion (ἔλεος) or leniency (συγγνώμη). A legal case was particularly appropriate for such recompense, since the defendant needed to demonstrate a record of democratic ethos and patriotism.<sup>37</sup>

In the trial of Plataia, as a highlight of their self-justificatory argument, the Plataians stress their crucial role in the land-battle of Plataia in 479, which they present as a benefaction of their city to the Spartans and the whole of the Greek

oratory (mainly 420–322 BCE); Sanders (this volume), on forensic and deliberative emotions in Thucydides' speeches.

36 Konstan (2001) 34–5, 46–7 *et passim*; also discussing problems of Greek terminology and corresponding English words (pity, compassion etc.); cf. Konstan (2006) 201–18; Johnstone (1999) 109–25. On the interrelation of pity and anger in Athenian law-courts: Rubinstein (2014); Bers (2009) 77–98.

37 Carey (1994) 33: 'The importance of gratitude was universally acknowledged, and it is common for litigants to remind the jury of benefactions bestowed on the city by self or family, including ancestors, in order to stake a claim, often explicit, to their gratitude (Lys. 3.47, 18.27, 20.30; Isaeus 4.27, 7.37–41; [Dem.] 50.64)'. On *charis* in law-court speeches, see Rubinstein (2000) 212–31; Fisher (2003), on liturgies, *eisphorai* and public displays in Athens, as forms of *charis* (benefactions), keeping the envy of the *dēmos* at bay. On gratitude, Konstan (2006) 156–68. For gratitude (χάρτις) in Thucydides' speeches, see 1.32.1, 33.1, 41.1, 42.3; 2.40.4; 3.37.2, 6.12.1 *et passim*. Macleod (1983) 112–13, 116–17, 121–2, on pity in the Plataian debate. For claims of benefaction in interstate kinship rhetoric, see Fragoulaki (2013) 11, 86, 130, 229, expressed by terms such as *charis*, *euergesia*, *eupragia*, *eu paschein* etc.

world (3.56.4, 57.1). The Persian Wars were an exploitable piece of panhellenic history and collective memory, which had the power to create close connections between those Greek cities that had a role, or claims of a role, in this self-defining moment of Hellenism. This memory was so strong, lasting and unmediated, that it was arguably kinship itself, as in the case of the Amazonian peoples of South America, mentioned earlier. It is no accident that memory has a special place in the Plataian battle for persuasion. As we saw already, the only named individuals in the debate are the two Plataian speakers. Both bear names and patronymics that are significant, and appropriate for the occasion: Astymachos, son of Asopolaos, and Lakon, son of Aeimnestos. All names might be authentic, but I would like to pause briefly at the second pair. It is possible that Lakon's father, Aeimnestos ('Mr Everlasting Memory' (3.52.5), the second half of the word being a cognate of μνήμη 'memory'), had taken part in the battle of Plataia and then named his son Lakon, in commemoration of a significant and famous episode described in Herodotus.<sup>38</sup> But even if he is not the same man as the one in Herodotus, or even a relative of his, the significance of this patronymic in Thucydides is that it has the power to evoke the Persian Wars context in a compelling manner; and to resonate unmistakably with memory words such as ἀμνημονεῖν ('to forget') or ἀναμνησκόμεν ('we remind'), which the Plataians use repeatedly in their pleas to the Spartans not to forget (3.54.5 οὐκ εἰκὸς ἀμνημονεῖν 'should not be forgotten'; 3.59.2).<sup>39</sup> 'Real' or 'fictitious', Aeimnestos's name is part of Thucydides' artful studding of the Plataian debate with memory words and must not be missed.

As for the words πατέρες ('fathers') and πάτριος ('ancestral'), they are used by the Plataians (unlike the Thebans, as we have seen) not in connection with ancestors of their own or of their mother-city, that is Boiotians or Thebans, but in connection with the forefathers of the Spartan judges who fought at Plataia. The Plataians dwell on the fact that the Spartan ancestors were buried in the soil of Plataia, on their tombs as significant nodes of memory, and the rituals that have kept this memory alive (3.58.4–5). These Spartan ancestors are presented as nothing less than kinsmen of the Plataians themselves and of all the Greeks in an extended sense, by means of panhellenic kinship (3.58.5, πατέρας τοὺς ὑμετέρους καὶ ξυγγενεῖς). The Plataians do not use their Aiolian ethnic background as a point of connection with the Spartans as Aioliens towards Dorians; this would be inept, because it would also evoke the Plataians' 'natural' closeness to the Thebans. Instead the Plataians invest in their connection with the Spartans as the two Greek

38 Hdt. 9.72.2 (alternatively, but probably wrongly, Arimnestos; cf. Hdt. 9.64.2); cf. *CTI* 1.443–4; Fragoulaki (2013) 126–7.

39 Notice 3.57.3 ἐκ παντὸς τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ... ἐξάλειψαι ('you then obliterate [Plataia] and its entire population from the whole Greek world'): ἐξάλειψαι has semantic overtones of *damnatio memoriae*, especially since it is in contrast to ἀναγράφαι ('inscribe'), used in the same context for the inscription of the name of Plataia on the tripod at Delphi (Serpent Column). For epigraphic uses of ἐξάλειψαι for the obliteration of something inscribed, see e.g. *SEG* 33.679, ll. 8–9, ἐξάλειπται ἢ ἐγγέγραπται τῶν γραμμάτων τῶν μνημονικῶν, *et passim*, second century; *IMT Skam/NebTaeler* 182, ἐξάλειψαντας τ[ὸ] [ὄνομα], ll. 129–30; cf. ll. 124–5. For 'literary epigraphy' and the challenges of the task, see Liddel and Low (2013).

cities which saved Greece from the Persians, since the Spartans had a special claim as liberators of Greece. Thinking in terms of Aristotle's definition of the *entechnoi pisteis* (see above), the Plataians are very much occupied with both *êthos* (the moral character of the speaker that makes him worthy of confidence) and *pathos* (the emotional effect of the speech on the hearer).<sup>40</sup> While the Plataians try to elicit the pity of the Spartans, at the same time they try to retain their citizenship, alliance and intimate connection with the Athenians, defending it as just: it would not have been honourable, they say to the Spartans, to betray the Athenians, who offered them alliance and citizenship at a critical moment when they needed protection from the Thebans, whereas the Spartans, to whom they first turned for help, rebuffed them and bade them apply to the Athenians instead (3.55.2).

How effective was the Plataian persuasion? We have already referred to the pseudo-forensic character of this debate. This exchange of speeches is often called a mock-trial, a pseudo-debate or a 'travesty of legal forms',<sup>41</sup> because the final decision seems clearly to have been predetermined, and besides the forensic procedure was seriously violated. Thucydides reports that when the Spartan judges arrived at Plataia they presented no charges, but simply summoned the Plataians and asked them a single question: had they done anything to the benefit of the Spartans and their allies in this current war? (3.52.4) The inevitable answer would have been 'nothing', but the Plataians requested that they be given the opportunity to speak at length, and they were thus allowed to deliver their speech.

Almost all discussions of this debate point out the weakness of the Plataians' moral position and emotional appeal, and the overall ineffectiveness of their speech ('a waste of time'),<sup>42</sup> as the tragic end of the city also showed. But the *effectiveness* of the Plataian persuasion and its impact on the form of the debate itself require more attention as well.<sup>43</sup> As Thucydides says, the Thebans were afraid that the Spartans might be moved and yield somewhat to the Plataian plea. It was as a consequence of this fear that the Thebans demanded that they deliver a speech as well, so as to counterbalance the longer speech of the Plataians; 'we wouldn't have asked permission to make this speech, if the Plataians had briefly answered the question', is the opening sentence of their address (3.61.1, with 3.60). The Plataian speech was as persuasive as it could be in these circumstances, and in order to appreciate it fully we must be conscious of the role of inter-communal kinship in the 'trial of Plataia': kinship was a powerful motivator of

40 Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Thuc.* 42) praises the Plataian 'defence' as 'adorned with authentic natural colouring (ἀληθεῖ δὲ τινὶ καὶ φυσικῷ κεκοσμηθῆναι χρώματι). The arguments are full of emotion (πάθους μεστά) and the language does not distract the listener from them.' See Greenwood's (2006) 57–60 analysis of Dionysius's passage against a Gorgianic background. Konstan (2005), on the workings of pity in the Plataian episode and in Athenian politics more generally.

41 Macleod (1983) 105.

42 Macleod (1983) 108; Connor (1984) 91–5, on the weakness of both the Plataian and the Theban speech; Pelling (2000) 72.

43 Cf. Debнар (1996) 96; Debнар (2001) 136; Pelling (2000) 80.

collective emotions, a central value of ancient Greek society, and ultimately an important factor in collective decision-making and action.

### THE MELIAN DIALOGUE (5.85–113)

As in the case of Plataia, the debate about Melos marks the culmination of a period of aggression against the people of another small city of Greece, this time a Dorian island of the Cyclades, who have found themselves entangled in the conflict between Athens and Sparta in the course of the Peloponnesian War. The aggressors now are the Athenians, who, as Thucydides reports, in the summer of 416 decided to attack the Melians for a second time with the clear intention of bringing them into the Athenian empire. The first Athenian attack had taken place ten years earlier and is briefly recorded by Thucydides in his narrative of the summer of 426. As in that first attack, this time again the Melians ‘did not want to obey’ (*hupakouein*), as Thucydides says (5.84.2; cf. 5.114.1; 3.91.2, first attack).<sup>44</sup> Yet the Athenians make it clear that the Melians would have to make a choice between war and security (5.111.4). Choosing war practically meant annihilation for the Melians, in view of the complete lack of balance of power and resources between the two cities, at least in Thucydides’ presentation, and as the outcome of this conflict confirms.<sup>45</sup>

The Melian Dialogue is placed by Thucydides in the summer of 416, that is in the context of the second Athenian attack against Melos, and it is the only debate in the *History* cast in dialogue form. It is generically path-breaking: it has been called ‘our earliest example of dialectic in a dramatized and historicized dialogue form’.<sup>46</sup> Thucydides stages the debate as taking place in Melos between the representatives of the two communities who are the interlocutors: the Melians and the Athenians. The Athenians place before the Melians a dilemma of life and death: they try to persuade them to take the more sensible path of interest combined with security, as opposed to justice and honour practised with danger, as they point out, and to agree to become tributary allies of the Athenians (5.111.4 with 5.107; cf. 5.84.2–3). The Melians on the other hand try to persuade the Athenians to let them enjoy their freedom by being friends and allies of neither the Athenians nor the Spartans (5.94, 5.112.3). As in the Plataian debate, the arguments of both sides are constructed around the big rhetorical *topoi* of expediency and justice, viewed

44 Greenwood (2008) 15–28 on *hupakouein* in the nexus of power politics and dialectic.

45 For the discrepancy between Thucydides’ representation of the Melian community as weak and that emerging from external sources, see in more detail Fragoulaki (2013) 161 with note 140 (e.g. the Athenian assessment for the Melian tribute as the robust sum of 15 talents in 425/4 (*IG I3* 71.1.65), archaeology etc.). See ML 67 for the Melian contribution to the Spartan war fund, with *IACP*, p. 759.

46 Lowe (2000) 93. The bibliography on the Melian Dialogue is extensive; see e.g. De Romilly (1963) 273–310; Hudson-Williams (1950); Stahl (2003) 159–72; Macleod (1983) 52–67; Connor (1984) 147–57; Bauslaugh (1991) 142–6; Bosworth (2009); Crane (1998) 237–57; Price (2001) 195–204; Kallet (2001) 9–20; Morrison (2006) 81–99; Tritle (2006) 485–7; Scardino (2007) 467–82; Greenwood (2008) 15–28; Barker (2009) 219–21; Pothou (2011) 270–2.

from different angles by each side. Unlike the Plataian debate though, persuasion circulates, as it were, between the two interlocutors, since the speaking parties are the only internal audience. There is no third-party arbitrator who is going to take the final decision. Both sides have a decision to make, as we saw, but it is clear that the resolution of the matter lies with the Athenians, who possess the power of determining the final outcome of this conflict. In a sense, the Athenians are both one of the two opposing parties of persuasion and the decision-makers. Thus they are both in and outside the *battle* of persuasion. In fact for them persuasion is not really a battle: it is rather a *game* they can either play or not. And they choose to play it. The Greek word *agôn* (ἀγών) (5.101) serves in fact both meanings ('battle' and 'game') and it might be argued that its use in the debate expresses the different perspectives of persuasion: a battle for the Melians and a game for the Athenians. If the 'trial' of Plataia is a travesty of legality, the Melian Dialogue is one of dialectic, as has been aptly pointed out.<sup>47</sup>

The Athenians are cast in the role of the ruthless exponents of political realism, while the Melians are the embodiment of dignity in the face of danger and steadfastness in eternal values and moral principles: justice, manly honour and, above all, *xungeneia* (e.g. 5.90, *παρὰ τὸ δίκαιον τὸ ζυμφέρον*; 5.101, *οὐ περὶ ἀνδραγαθίας ὁ ἀγών*; cf. 5.91.2; 5.104; 5.105.3; 5.111). The *xungeneia* based on the colonial tie between the Spartans and their *apoikoi* the Melians, along with the ethical obligations emanating from kinship are recognized by both the two interlocutors and the historical narrator (5.84.2, 89, 104, 106, 112). The Melians are confident that they have justice on their side and that their mother-city, Sparta, will come to their help, if not for any other reason, at least on account of *xungeneia* and shame (5.104; cf. 5.84.2, 106; Hdt. 8.48; Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.3). In their replies, the Athenians clearly state that the Melians are unreasonable and naïve to think that the Spartans will help them; instead they urge them to abandon their big illusion and behave more sensibly while there is still time (5.111.3). The outcome of the Melian episode, as Thucydides presents it, is that the Melians were indeed living a big illusion: the fate of the city was death, slavery and repopulation. As for the Spartans, the kinsmen on whom the Melians based their hopes, they are the biggest absentees in this drama.

Readers from antiquity to the present have found the Dialogue untruthful and unpersuasive: it could not have taken place, they protest.<sup>48</sup> The way the Melians give their battle for persuasion defies expectations: people facing death do not normally discuss power and justice so academically and with such emotional detachment. One of the striking paradoxes of this debate is that it is in fact the Athenians who appear to be more engaged with the emotion of fear, rather than the Melians, who demonstrate an astonishing composure. The fear of the Athenians though is related to a status of power and not one of weakness. It is brought

47 Macleod (1983) 109.

48 Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 41 (protesting that the language and behaviour of the interlocutors do not match their characters and situations; 'I do not know how these words can be considered appropriate (προσήκοντα) in the mouths of Athenian generals', ch. 40); cf. Hudson-Williams (1950).

in as an explanation of their policy regarding their national security and the administration and maintenance of their empire: if they yield to the Melians' proposal, they fear that they might themselves appear fearful and weak before their subjects, which will incur danger for their empire (5.97, 99, 111).<sup>49</sup> A stylistic indicator of the absence of emotionality between the interlocutors of the Dialogue is the absence of addresses. As Dickey argues, '[a]ddresses are used to set off key points in the dialogue, such as the climax of an argument or a moment of emotional intensity'.<sup>50</sup> Out of the twenty-nine consecutive speeches in the Melian Dialogue, she also notes, none 'contains an address except the Melians' last statement, in which they report their final decision to the Athenians', not to yield and defend their freedom (5.112).<sup>51</sup> Thinking in Aristotelian terms, the Melians' dramatic characterization, that is, their *êthos* as Aristotle defines it in the *Poetics* (5, 1450a 5–6), is unsuccessful. But their *êthos* in the ethical sense, that is their moral character as defined in the *Rhetoric* (1.2, 1356a 4–6), is impeccable.<sup>52</sup>

The Plataian speakers in the Plataian debate are the exact opposite. Their moral character is arguably questionable, but their dramatic characterization is absolutely convincing. We saw them doing their best to induce pity in the Spartans by stressing what united them, while at the same time defending their close relationship with the Athenians; and they did not perform too badly.<sup>53</sup> By contrast, the Melians, instead of trying to find points of convergence with the Athenians, persistently stress their kinship with the Spartans, the Athenians' enemies, and their faith not only in the moral but also in the practical value of this connection (5.104, 110, 112). Even if we discern, with Macleod, the Melians' effort in 5.90 to induce pity in the Athenians, by suggesting that they themselves might meet with adversity in the future and thus be in need of fair and equitable treatment, by 5.110 we find the Melians having moved so far from such a line of argument, as to remind the Athenians, in a tone of almost concealed threat, of the vulnerable points of their own empire, which would provide the Spartans with alternative ways to support the Melians.<sup>54</sup> It is revealing that, in reply to this point, and at an advanced stage of the Dialogue, the Athenians deliver their longest retort, which

49 Cf. Macleod (1983) 58.

50 Dickey (1996) 194.

51 Dickey (1996) 194. On the emotionality of addresses, see Griffith-Williams (this volume).

52 See above on these two types of *êthos*.

53 Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Thuc.* 42) considers the Plataian speech the best among those speeches in Thucydides' work that are 'pure, clear and suitable for the battles (or: contests, ἀγῶνας) of real life'; cf. note 48.

54 Macleod (1983) 58–9 takes *Thuc.* 5.90 as 'a good example of the application of rhetorical psychology like Aristotle's', on the basis of Aristotle's definition of pity (*eleos*) (2.8, *Rh.* 1385b13–16). I see it though as a technical analogy, reflecting Thucydides' own purposeful interaction with rhetorical conventions, rather than psychological truth. Pelling (2012) 295 aptly protests: 'there is an eloquent difference from the self-directed aspects of pity, as Aristotle defined it and as we see it in Herodotus and tragedy'. The pity the Melians seem to evoke does not result from the realization of the fragility of the human condition, which is universal; what Diodorus, via his speaker Nikolaos, calls 'the sympathy which nature has planted in all' (ἡ κοινὴ τῆς φύσεως ὁμοπάθεια); with Konstan (2001) 89–91.

rounds off the main argumentative phase of the debate, by pointing out the unexpectedness of the Melians' making of their case:

But what strikes us is that, though you agreed that this would be a negotiation for your survival, at no point in this long discussion have you said anything which people might take as grounds for thinking that you will survive ... so far there has been no logic in your attitude (πολλήν τε ἀλογίαν τῆς διανοίας παρέχετε). (5.111.2)

The Athenians with some astonishment state that what they have heard so far is surely not what we would call *ta deonta* (the appropriate things), which is Thucydides' own term in his methodological statement.<sup>55</sup> Had the Melians' reaction to threat not been so unexpected, what sort of arguments could they have used which might have made their salvation a less remote possibility? And, since it is the function of emotions in the process of persuasion that occupy us in this discussion, how could they have tried to elicit the pity of the Athenians in a sustained and pithy manner, and also elicit a more favourable attitude overall towards people in their position? Kinship was undoubtedly for the Greeks one of the most effective mechanisms for stirring *pathos* and for creating an emotional background that could promote the aim of persuasion. So could the Melians, Dorians as they were, have found something to connect them with the Ionian Athenians? 'He who seeks will find' is often applicable in kinship diplomacy.<sup>56</sup> The Persian Wars could certainly have been exploited by the Melians. We know from Herodotus, with whom Thucydides often interacts, that the Melians were the only Dorian islanders (apart from the Aeginetans, a naval power in their own right) who took part in the battle of Salamis in 480 (Hdt. 8.46.4, 48; the single piece of information about Melos in Herodotus). The Melians could have called upon this shared past; earlier in the *History*, we hear the Athenians capitalizing upon their role in Salamis and their service to the Greeks in the Persian Wars (1.73–5).

How then can we address the Dialogue's unreality or untruthfulness? And how can this untruthfulness be reconciled with the fact that the Melian Dialogue has been acknowledged both as a compelling piece of historical analysis and as artful writing? To put this another way, has the seeming untruthfulness of the Dialogue weakened Thucydides' own persuasive power over his ancient and modern audiences? The generic cross-fertilization of the Dialogue is a scholarly topos: epic, drama, lyric and, above all, the philosophical dialogue are acknowledged influences.<sup>57</sup> Thucydides' consistent engagement with sympotic literature in the Melian Dialogue also deserves special attention, as I have argued elsewhere.<sup>58</sup> We

55 Thucydides' *ta deonta* (1.22.1) seems to have a rational and a psychological dimension (a 'what' and a 'how', we may say), i.e. what the most rational approach to a practical problem is and by what means the presentation of the case will be made most effectively. 'How' may also be related to Aristotle's explanation of *pathos*, the second of the three kinds of artificial evidence (see above), 'putting the hearer into a certain frame of mind' (τὸν ἀκροατὴν διαθεῖναι πῶς, *Rh.* 1.2, 1356a3); cf. Macleod (1983) 68–9, *ta deonta*.

56 For the term, see Jones (1999).

57 *CT* III.219–20; Hudson-Williams (1950).

58 Fragoulaki (2013) 162–79.

must be alert to the fact that Thucydides' contemporary audiences were surely readier to read the sympotic code of the Dialogue through its texture.

I would like to suggest that there are two things that lend dramatic credence and persuasiveness to this bold generic experiment of Thucydides. First, the fact that this dialogue between state representatives is presented as taking place behind closed doors: the Melian *dêmos* was kept away from the Athenian delegations, as Thucydides notes (5.84.3). Second, and most important, the absence of any claim of kinship between the interlocutors. It is the absence of kinship that permits and dramatically justifies the absence of emotion in this contest (or battle, or game) of persuasion between 'strangers' (the actual word *agôn* is used in the Dialogue, as we saw). Clashes between kinsmen produce fierce emotions and passionate rhetoric, as Thucydides shows with consistency in his *History*. If the Melians were to call upon some form of kinship with the Athenians, their tone and language would have to be different, in line with other speakers in the work who protested to their kinsmen or supplicated them in the name of kinship. But Thucydides, who knew well the emotional and ethical realities of kinship, saved for the Melians a different and unique role in his work. This role was the idealized weak, isolated and resistant Greek Other against the imperialist Athenians. The key factor that enabled Thucydides to cast the Melians in such a role with persuasiveness was their unrelatedness to the Athenians.

## CONCLUSION

I have argued that intercommunal kinship was a powerful mechanism of political persuasion in the ancient Greek world, which formed the basis of the construction of arguments used and of the emotional dynamics of persuasion. I have used the Plataian debate and the Melian Dialogue in Thucydides as two representative and complementary examples of the role of emotions in contexts of kinship diplomacy. Awareness of kinship ties (or their absence) between the actors/ speakers in Thucydides' *History* can provide a socio-political framework which enables us to delineate and assess the function of emotions in political persuasion between Greek communities and Thucydides' own construction of 'persuasiveness' as author of a pioneering historical prose.

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