

Comptes rendus / Book Reviews

Barry S. Strauss — *Fathers and Sons in Athens: Ideology and Society in the Era of the Peloponnesian War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. Pp. xv, 283.

Barry Strauss has written an insightful book on how the father-son relationship was viewed by the ancients in the fifth century BC, and particularly how the ancients viewed father-son conflict during the Peloponnesian War. In his introductory chapter Strauss relates that there were two contradictory sets of images — fathers and sons showed both solidarity and conflict. Strauss proposes to show that father-son conflict was a symbol for the Peloponnesian War: that, although father-son conflict was not unique to the war, the symbol of conflict reflected a burgeoning and flourishing democracy eager to prove its power. Father and son reflect the democratic ideology both of equality and hierarchy and of co-operation and conflict.

Strauss's second chapter begins with a study of semantics. In particular, the terms for father were related to power both in the *oikos*, or household, as well as in the political sphere. The *polis*, or city, for instance, was viewed as the fatherland. The terms for son, on the other hand, emphasized childhood, play, and education and underlined the hierarchy between father and son. Because both spheres, the private *oikos* and the public *polis*, were related, the familial was political and behaviour in the *oikos* was tied in with behaviour in the *polis*. The orations or law court speeches emphasize that the family was the ideal unit for the *polis* but was not a utopia — the orators expected that there would be conflict in the family.

Chapter 3 of Strauss's book focuses on how fathers and sons displayed solidarity. According to the law a father had to transmit his property to his sons, and the older man could be sued for incompetence by his sons should he squander his estate. The father had power over the son: he chose to accept or reject the son at birth, and once he accepted the child he had to name the infant. Sons were expected to love their fathers and to gain their respect. On inheritance, the son received not just his father's property but also the older man's friends and enemies.

As chapter 3 focuses on images of solidarity, chapter 4 considers images of father-son conflict, which, as Strauss points out, could erupt over inheritance. A

son at 18 was considered an adult but, if his father was still living, the son could not assume ownership of the estate. Strauss then enters into a long discussion of the myth of Theseus, the Athenian hero who unintentionally caused the suicide of his father. The Theseus myth was prevalent in the vase painting, sculpture, and drama of the day. The myth emphasized that youth was essential to democracy, was master of the constitution, and replaced the older generation without overtly attacking it.

For Strauss, the Theseus legend emphasizes the ambivalence of the father-son relationship, and in chapter 5 he turns to a study of how, particularly in the 420s, youthfulness and filial rebellion were idealized and revered. Rhetoric increased in importance and allowed youth influence in the political sphere. The democratic ideal actually encouraged filial rebellion, and, though in reality father-son unity might be strong, the drama and comedies of the day emphasized father-son conflict. The rebellion of the son was a metaphor for the political and social changes which were challenging tradition.

After the utter defeat of Athens in the Sicilian disaster, however, Athenians attempted to restore the ideology of paternal authority, and it is this ideology and the return to traditionalism that is the subject of chapter 6. Political oratory, for instance, stressed loyalty to the father and the fatherland. The famous philosopher Socrates was prosecuted and finally executed because he criticized the fathers of society and encouraged youths to question their elders. Strauss concludes that father-son conflict continued after the Peloponnesian War but was given a different ideological construction.

Strauss has provided both a diachronic and synchronic analysis of the ideology of the father-son dyad, an approach that can run into difficulty at times. Strauss uses some sources such as the orations to describe ideologies across time in the classical era, but then uses these sources to discuss differences in ideologies before and after the Peloponnesian War. Nevertheless, he has examined a wide spectrum of sources and has a good control over his material. Because of Strauss's emphasis on symbolism and ideology the reader will not find an analysis of everyday life in the family and household. There is little discussion, for instance, of everyday concerns for a particular father and son in the household and *polis*. Nor will the reader find a discussion of other dyads in the family. Rather, the reader will learn how the symbol of the household, or *oikos*, was closely tied in with the ideology of the city and democracy, an ideology which pervaded the court speeches, the tragedy, the comedy, and the myth of the day. Because at the private level sons inherited from their fathers to the exclusion of daughters, who received a dowry, the father-son dyad formed the basis of succession practice. This practice was ideologically represented at the state level by an emphasis on father-son unity and conflict. The ideological dichotomy of unity and conflict then changed after Athenian democracy and authority were challenged at the end of the Peloponnesian War. With the end of the war, Strauss maintains, a new ideological construction was put on father-son conflict. This new construction deserves further discussion, to which Strauss's concluding chapter could perhaps have provided an introduction. In any case, this very readable book will be of great use to both the historian of antiquity

and social historians in general, as it provides a good foundation for the study of paternal ideology and symbolism in early democracy.

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Courtemanche, Andrée — *La richesse des femmes. Patrimoines et gestion à Manosque au XIV^e siècle*, Montréal/Paris, Bellarmin, 1993, 327 p. (Coll. « Cahiers d'études médiévales », n° 11).

Même si de nombreuses études ont abordé la question de leur place dans la société médiévale, l'analyse de la situation réelle des femmes médiévales reste toujours opportune, dans la mesure précisément où la société médiévale, tout à l'opposé d'une société monolithique, était faite de sociétés diverses, petits microcosmes où se jouaient différemment les règles du droit ou des coutumes, où s'entrelaçaient de façon toujours originale mentalités, idées préconçues et capacité d'innover. Le problème du pouvoir des femmes, de leur capacité d'influer non seulement sur le cours de leur propre vie mais aussi sur celui de leur famille et de leur milieu a été décortiqué sous de multiples angles. Andrée Courtemanche l'aborde ici par le truchement de la gestion des biens de la famille, et à travers le contrôle que les femmes pouvaient exercer sur les destinées du patrimoine familial. Composé d'éléments divers, venant d'abord de sa propre famille puis de son époux aussi bien que des actes posés ensemble pendant la durée du mariage, ce patrimoine ne faisait que permettre à la femme de survivre en cas de décès. Il pouvait également lui assurer, dans la mesure où lui étaient reconnus le pouvoir et l'autorité d'infléchir l'usage qui en était fait, une certaine reconnaissance sociale, une autorité dans la perpétuation d'une famille où elle n'était pas traitée comme une mineure. Le lecteur s'apercevra donc vite qu'Andrée Courtemanche ne traite pas seulement, dans ce livre de la « richesse des femmes », au sens comptable du terme, mais qu'elle y traite en réalité de la place réelle des femmes dans la société manosquine.

Le texte est divisé en cinq chapitres traitant successivement, après une mise en contexte posant le cadre de vie des femmes de Manosque, des voies d'accès des filles au patrimoine, de la richesse des épouses, de la gestion du ménage et de la destinée des veuves. L'analyse de l'auteure suit donc la chronologie naturelle de la vie des femmes, du moment où elles sont « bonnes à marier » à celui où, veuves, elles cherchent davantage à assurer leur propre survie ainsi que la gestion des biens qu'elles transmettront ensuite à leurs enfants, filles ou garçons. Le livre fournit au lecteur quelques cartes, des tableaux généalogiques et une bonne bibliographie de départ pour tous ceux qui désireraient creuser la question.

Les sources utilisées par l'auteure sont essentiellement des sources notariales auxquelles se sont ajoutées des registres de la cour criminelle et de la cour civile. Les données émanant de ces documents ont été traitées de façon à la fois quantitative et qualitative. Au plan quantitatif, on pourra reprocher à l'auteure un manquement parfois très approximatif des statistiques et une volonté de les tirer dans un