

## THE FAMILY OF EUXITHEUS (DEMOSTHENES LVII)

Euxitheus son of Thoucritis was struck off the *lexiarchicon grammateion* (or roll) of the deme Halimous (the Halimousioi), probably in the *diapsephisis* (revision) of 346/5 B.C. Speech 57 in the Demosthenic corpus (against Euboulides) is his reply to the demarch at the hearing of his appeal. This paper attempts (1) to correct the stemma given for him in J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families 600–300 B.C.*, pp. 94–5, by identifying his children from those of Protomachus, (2) to draw conclusions (from the stemma) about family property-management, (3) to suggest a reason why the Halimousioi might have struck him off, and (4) to show that, whatever may be the picture shown by the other evidence, this family provides no evidence for large families of the Athenian poor, but striking evidence for child mortality.

### 1. EUXITHEUS' FAMILY TREE

In order to prove his case Euxitheus had to show that his father and mother were both citizens.<sup>1</sup> In the part of his speech concerned with his mother's relatives, his proof consists of two arguments: first that her agnatic relatives were-citizens (sections 37–40), then from the circumstances of her two marriages (40–3).<sup>2</sup> It is in this latter part that Euxitheus' stemma requires reconsideration.

As is normal, the orator states what he is going to prove (40) τῇ δὲ μητρὶ . . . ἐγώ; there follows a narrative which fills in some details ( (40) ὃν δὲ τρόπον . . . τιθεῖσαι (42) ) and ends in a clause designed to elicit sympathy (to ποιῶσα). Section 43 (from φαίνεται) introduces the depositions which comprise the evidence to support his assertions.

To my mother [he says] there were born first of all a daughter by Protomachus to whom Timocrates her full brother gave her in marriage (ἔδωκε), then later, by my father, myself. Now I must explain how she came to be married to my father (συνώκησε). . . . Protomachus was poor, but when he became eligible to marry (κληρονομήσας) a rich epikleros, he persuaded Thoucritis my father to take my mother as he wished to give her away in marriage (ἐκδοῦναι) . . . and my father contracted a marriage (ἐγγύεται) with my mother from her brother Timocrates before witnesses [named].

The correctness of the terminology throughout stresses the legality of the arrangements. Euxitheus continues (42) 'And some time after this, when two small children had already been born to her, and my father was out of the country on campaign with Thrasyboulus, as she was without any means of support she was compelled to act as wet nurse to Cleinias the son of Cleidicus.'

Whose were the two small children? J. K. Davies (*Athenian Propertied Families*, 600–300 B.C., p. 94, and stemma facing p. 95) thinks they were sons of Protomachus, and in consequence that the woman (whose name was Nicarete) continued to live with Protomachus after he had been awarded the epikleros and had persuaded Thoucritis to marry Nicarete. While such an arrangement is not

<sup>1</sup> *Atb. Pol.* 42.1; since he faced enslavement if he lost the case, it might be thought that he had confidence in it.

<sup>2</sup> There are also arguments about her being a well-known seller of fillets in the

*agora* without paying aliens' tax or being anyone's slave (30–1), and about her having been a wet nurse (35–6 and 44–5), which are not relevant to this paper.

impossible (if the *epikleros* was below marriageable age) the clear indication of § 42 is that Nicarete was economically dependent on Thoucritus. She must therefore have been living with him, not with Protomachus. Moreover, in § 43 (following) Euxitheus offers to call as witnesses 'those who attended when my father contracted himself and the relatives (*οἰκείωι*) among the phrateres to whom my father gave a wedding feast for my mother'; this must show that when Euxitheus says *ἐγγυᾶται* he means that marriage followed, as was normal, and that the two children were therefore Thoucritus' children, not Protomachus'.

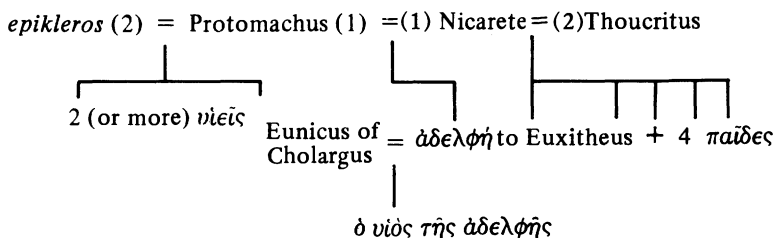
The orator now sums up:

Well it is evident then that it was not my father who first took my mother to wife, but Protomachus (*ποιησάμενοι παῖδας*) (a man) who bred legitimate children, and gave a daughter in marriage; for even if he is dead, he still bears witness by his actions that she (i.e. Nicarete) is (both an *αστή* and a *πολίτις*) a citizen in possession of full rights.

In evidence he announces (1) Protomachus' *νιεῖς*, (2) those present at the *ἐγγύη*, (3) the phrateres who attended the *γαμηλία*, (4) Eunicus of Cholargos, who married 'my sister', (that is, the daughter of Protomachus and Nicarete), (5) 'my sister's son'.

The point of all this is that since Protomachus' actions proved that he was a citizen, Nicarete, the first woman he married, must have been a citizen too. In consequence, the *παῖδας* whom he procreated are his *νιεῖς* (§ 43) and not his daughter by Nicarete (mentioned immediately after) and an otherwise unknown son (as supposed by A. T. Murray, the Loeb editor — Demosthenes 6. 263). Nor are they the *παῖδια* of § 42, since it is inconceivable that Euxitheus should have called Protomachus and Nicarete's daughter who married Eunicus of Cholargos 'my sister', and not have called Protomachus' sons 'my brothers' if Nicarete had been their mother. It therefore follows that they are the sons of the *epikleros*, whose interest in Euxitheus' case is marginal, and arises only from the fact that their father Protomachus had previously married Nicarete as if she were a legitimately a citizen. They are, in fact, something of a red herring, but these are common enough in the Greek orators.

The correct version of this part of Davies's stemma (facing p. 95) is therefore:



## 2. FAMILY SOLIDARITY

This family also provides a remarkable example of family solidarity after the Peloponnesian War, in a period in which it is commonly stated that Athenian society was losing its old qualities. Thoucritus was taken prisoner in the course of the Deceleian War, sold as a slave and taken to Leucas (§ 18); this is probably the same campaign as that mentioned in § 42 as being responsible for Nicarete's impoverishment. The fact that in the later passage it is referred to as 'campaigning with Thrasyboulus' merely shows a Greek orator's typical presentation of

facts — when his father was taken prisoner he suppresses the fact that the commander was Thrasyboulus, who was one of the heroes of the democratic renaissance in the fourth century, but when he explains his mother's penury (42) he mentions Thrasyboulus, and suppresses the fact that his father was made a prisoner and enslaved.

Moreover, Euxitheus' defence of his mother's action in becoming Cleinias' wet-nurse is associated with a claim that many other reputable women took menial employment 'under pressure of the disastrous events that happened to the city at that time'. (ὕπὸ τῶν τῆς πόλεως κατ' ἐκείνους τοὺς χρόνους συμφόρων — 45). Cf. *ὅθ' ἡ πόλις ἡτύχει* (35). Such expressions are usually taken to refer to the disasters of 405–403 B.C., when siege, starvation, and civil war befell the city. In consequence, the marriage of Thoucritis and Nicarete belongs to the period 410–405 (later probably rather than earlier in the period), and not *c.* 395 B.C. (as supposed by Davies *op. cit.*, p. 95).

Thoucritis was a prisoner a very long time (πολλοστῶ χρόνῳ) long enough for him to be noticed as a foreigner on his return to Athens (ἐξένιζεν — he spoke with an un-Athenian accent, so LSJ. s.v. *ξενίζω* III). How long does it take a grown man so to alter his manner of speech that when he returns to his native place he can be detected as having a foreign intonation? Experience (in New Zealand) suggests that it could not have been less than a decade, but for biological reasons it could not have been much more than fifteen years.

Nicarete had borne three children before Thoucritis was captured; even if she were married at fourteen to sixteen (as was normal) (Lacey, *Family in Classical Greece*, pp. 107, 162) it is not likely that she was much under twenty, though, as she must have been breast-feeding her younger child, its birth will not have preceded her destitution by very much. When Thoucritis returned from his imprisonment she bore three more children before her menopause, so that she cannot have been much over thirty-five when she resumed child-bearing. Besides, when Thoucritis returned, the two children he had left with Nicarete had not yet passed their *dokimasia*, and hence the elder could not have 'appeared to be eighteen years old' — the yardstick, at least in Aristotle's day (*Ath. Pol.*, loc. cit.), for being qualified to be entered on the deme's *lexi-archicon grammateion*. This also sets about fifteen years as the maximum period for Thoucritis' enslavement.

Nicarete did not remarry in this period, and it appears that she acted as wet-nurse only to Cleinias son of Cleidicus (44–5); from this it might be deduced that, when peace returned to Athens after 404 B.C., she received some support from her husband's kinsmen. Certainly these kinsmen (the uncles (*θεῖοι*) of § 19, named Charisius and Lysanias, §§ 20–1) kept the family property (*οὐσία*) undivided during Thoucritis' absence overseas and in the minority of his two sons, to whom, in the lack of any other determination, they would be guardians, since division did not take place until Thoucritis was able to get back to Athens. From this it is natural to suppose that the property was farm-land, which would explain Nicarete's destitution in the Deceleian war when neither she nor Thoucritis' uncles would have got any income at all from it, but the uncles could have started working it again at the end of the war. Their conduct thus represents a remarkable example of family solidarity, and of honesty in the two surviving half-brothers in protecting their nephew's share in the property which derived from his deceased father's entitlement.

## 3. EUXITHEUS' FINANCES

Euxitheus claims his father was poor (§ 25), and that he was also poor himself, evidence for which is that the family (he uses the plural *we*) sold head-bands (or fillets) in the *agora*, an activity for which he claims to feel some shame (*ὁμολογούμεν ἤν οὐχ ὄντινα τρόπον βουλόμεθα* – § 31). Orators frequently claim poverty, but it seems likely to be genuine enough in this case, and the opponents' assertions to the contrary untrue (§§ 52 ff.). Even if we assume that when Thoucritus 'went on campaign' he went as a hoplite, it is likely that he will have had to repay Cleander the actor through whose good services he had been released from slavery (§ 18). How Cleander procured his release we are not told; if he had ransomed him, the ransom would have had to be repaid; on the other hand Cleander might have done no more than enabled Thoucritus to run away by concealing himself in his troupe, or even have intimidated the Leucadians into allowing a man Cleander asserted to be a freeborn Athenian to go free – whatever the circumstances, it is likely that Cleander will have been owed something by Thoucritus. But there is no evidence – except possibly that the demesmen's case against Euxitheus might have been based on the accusation that he was the son of a runaway slave – there seems little other ground for them unless Euxitheus had obtained an unusually large number of perjured witnesses, and Euxitheus' silence on how Thoucritus came to be 'rescued' may be significant.

## 4. THE SIZE OF THOUCRITUS' FAMILY

This family has been used as evidence in support of the view that the Athenian poor had large families. But this it will not do. Protomachus and Nicarete when poor had one daughter; when Protomachus became well off (or at least better off) he begat two sons from his *epikleros*, so his family was three, as he will have kept in his family the daughter Nicarete had borne him. In due time he gave her a dowry and married her (though it may not have been large, as he could not have used the property of the *epikleros* for this). She had one son (at least only one is called to give evidence, § 43).

Thoucritus and Nicarete had two children when he was of hoplite status; Nicarete reared these two in her husband's absence, so by the time he returned they were in their teens, and hence probably contributing to the family income. When Thoucritus returned, he and Nicarete had three more children, of whom only Euxitheus survived childhood; this can be deduced from § 28, in which Euxitheus claims that Thoucritus buried four children in the family's ancestral tombs. It must be concluded that two were the children born before Thoucritus' capture (the *παῖδια* of § 42), two born, like Euxitheus himself, after Thoucritus' return. Certainly Euxitheus himself cannot have been born during the Deceleian war since he cannot claim to have been born before Euclidean (403/2 B.C.) – cf. § 30.

It is thus not possible to show that there were at any time five living children in the family, let alone five small children; indeed the opposite is much more likely, and that though joy in Thoucritus' return is very likely to be the cause of the first birth, it is probable that the other new children were sought to replace dead ones – precisely what Pericles had recommended that the parents of those who fell in the first year of the Peloponnesian war should do (Thuc. 2. 44. 3). Euxitheus' silence certainly strongly suggests that he had no living brothers at

the time he was struck off the list, and the speech casts a sobering light on the expectations of life in Classical Athens.

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