

Social networking in Ancient Greece has been a subject of much interest in recent years. Important studies have explored the tangible benefits that social connections, whether across the Mediterranean world or between different parts of Attica, could bring their participants (Malkin 2009, Ober 2008). Ancient social networks, however, also had less idealistic and well-intentioned applications. In a culture that emphasized harming one's enemies no less than helping one's friends, social networks played an important role in feuds. Networking strategies that gave a competitive advantage in some situations could lead to greater vulnerability in others.

Specifically, this paper will examine the feud between Euxitheos and Euboulides, as known to us from Demosthenes 57, and the roles that social connections played in it. The decree of Demophilos in 346/5 BCE required every deme in Attica to re-examine their membership rosters. In this scrutiny, the small deme of Halimous voted that one of its members, Euxitheos, had never actually been a citizen. The speech was written for his appeal, and charges Euboulides, the demarch who presided over the meeting, with abusing democratic procedure in order to harm a personal enemy. According to Euxitheos, Euboulides drew out the meeting until well after dark so he could secretly give his allies several voting-pebbles each; and so, Euboulides mobilized his friends to unjustly disenfranchise an Athenian citizen.

This speech bears upon social networking in two major ways. First, Euxitheos' family had followed a strategy of forming marriage alliances with families in several demes — a strategy which Ober praises as offering social and economic opportunities in multiple parts of Attica, but which also meant that many of Euxitheos' male relatives were ineligible to vote in his defense. Marriage connections with families in other demes would have brought commercial and other opportunities, but relatives outside the deme of Halimous were powerless to protect Euxitheos when the deme voted on his citizenship. Cox 1998 examines ways in which families balanced exogamous and endogamous marriages in order to protect inheritances; Euxitheos' misfortune illustrates another kind of risk which such strategies would also have managed.

Second, it shows groups acting together against a common enemy in both legal and extralegal ways. Not only was Euboulides able to mobilize enough Halimousians to overrule the supporters of Euxitheos, but Euxitheos also accuses a group of his personal enemies of conspiring to commit an array of crimes against his property and prestige. Just as the courts were often used in private feuds (Cohen 1995), participants in feuds used deme-level institutions and social networks as both shields and weapons.

Thus, while recent work on Greek social networks has focused on mutually beneficial ties, such benefits are only half of the picture. Feuds involved networks, not just individuals; and, as the case of Euxitheos shows, the decision to make particular social connections was never without risk.