

## Loving Brasidas

Thucydides' portrayal of the Spartan leader Brasidas, who in 424-423 BCE led numerous Athenian allies to rebel against Athens, has been much examined (e.g. Westlake 1968, Connor 1984, Hornblower 1996, Rood 1998, Stahl 2003, de Bakker 2013, Stadter 2017). This paper explores the ways in which Thucydides shows how Brasidas used the ties of friendship, affection, and admiration to bind others to himself: this facet of Thucydides' character portrait has remained relatively under-examined, despite the density of Brasidean analyses.

Thucydides' main introduction to Brasidas (4.80-81) shows how Athens' allies, chafed by Athens' cold power politics, came to value Brasidas personally: as they saw it, his fairness and moderation toward them were exemplary. As Brasidas moves through the north, he creates or tries to create strong ties between himself and those whom he persuades to rebel: he offers generous terms and personal support, and displays the military leadership that inspires admiration and trust among his adherents. In addition, he is a good orator. Through his speeches to Athens' allies and his own men, he forges resistance to Athens and wins outstanding devotion to himself. After a short time, his reputation precedes him, so that men who do not know him devote themselves to his cause (4.120); after his death, the Amphipolitans enshrine him in the center of their city (5.11). Thucydides thus represents Brasidas through his effect on others, as well as through his actions.

These actions are certainly impressive: Thucydides' Brasidas is a man of force. He takes cities by storm as well as by agreement; he threatens the Acanthians to waste their and afterward abandon them, if they won't accept his generosity (4.87.2 – 6); the Amphipolitans must also

expect an attack if they do not come to terms (4.104). Even here, however, φιλία plays a role: Brasidas' threats to abandon his friendship with those who will not join him have received far less attention in the scholarship than his threats to attack.

Modern scholarship's tendency to see Brasidas as a 'second Achilles' (e.g. Hornblower 1996, 38 – 61) have thus passed over Thucydides' concern to record Brasidas' representations of himself as a φίλος i.e. as personally concerned for those on whose behalf, so he argued, he was acting. The paper will review his appeals to his allies and men, in an attempt to add this perspective to the larger discussion about Brasidas and his role in Thucydides' *History*.

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