

Sally C. Humphreys

Kinship in ancient Athens



Meinen ersten akademischen Titel erhielt ich in Oxford in Litterae Humaniores- klassische Sprachen und Literatur, Philosophie und Alte Geschichte. Ich begann Forschungen über Handelsschiffe und Handel im Mittelalter, die mich zur Anthropologie führten. Drei Jahre als Bibliothekarin am Warburg Institute (1965-68) ermöglichten es mir, alles Interessante zu lesen, und trugen dazu bei, meinen Ruf, eher ein „intellektueller Fuchs denn ein Igel“* zu sein, zu bestätigen. 1972 wurde ich als Dozentin für Geschichte und Anthropologie an das University College London berufen. Ich trug die Verantwortung für das ‚B.A. Combined Studies Program‘ für Alte Geschichte und Sozialanthropologie. 1985 wechselte ich an die Universität Michigan, wo ich als Professor für Griechische Geschichte und zugleich in den Bereichen der Anthropologie und der Klassischen Philologie tätig bin. Augenblicklich leite ich das ‚Interdepartmental Ph. D. Program‘ für Geschichte und Anthropologie. In der Forschung befasse ich mich mit der griechischen Gesellschaft und Kultur des Altertums aus anthropologischer Sicht. Ich habe zwei Sammelbände mit Aufsätzen veröffentlicht und arbeite zur Zeit an einem Buch über verwandtschaftliche Beziehungen im alten Athen (750-300 v. Chr.). Adresse: Department of History, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1045, USA.

During my three months at the Wissenschaftskolleg (January-March 1989) I worked on a book on kinship in ancient Athens. I was able to complete a long chapter on the rôle played by kin in *rites de passage*, and in the course of writing it developed some new ideas about the introduction of the public funeral for the war dead in Athens in the 460s BC, which I presented to the Fellows' Colloquium, to a small group of Fellows working in classical studies, and in a seminar at the Classical Institute of the Freie Universität. I also revised several other chapters of the book.

* Berlin, Isaiah, *The hedgehog and the fox; an essay on Tolstoy's view of history*. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967.

It poses certain problems of presentation, since I am trying to combine a rich and densely-packed collection of data on interaction between kin in classical Athens with a contribution to the anthropological theory of kinship, particularly in relation to long-term historical developments. Discussion of my ideas on the place of contradictions in culture, at the seminar on methodology organized by Rivka Feldhay and Yehuda Elkana, was very helpful here. I was also pleased to have the opportunity of talking to Wilfried Nippel about Max Weber. I benefited greatly from discussing my work with Glenn Most, and from reading the *Eumenides* with him.

A secondary project for my stay was to gather ideas for a report which I have to write in September on current research on the origins and diffusion of science in antiquity and the middle ages, for the 1990 Historical Congress in Madrid. Colloquia and seminars on the history of science and the place of science in culture were helpful in giving me a sense of current trends in research on more recent periods.

I particularly valued the opportunity offered by my stay at the Kolleg — though from this point of view it was certainly too short — of learning more about current developments in West Germany in history, classics and anthropology. It would be presumptuous of me to hazard any definite judgments; I can only record my impression that historians now seem to have a solidly established international culture, that among classicists in Berlin as elsewhere there is some tension between those concerned for the maintenance of traditional philological skills and the proponents of more interdisciplinary approaches (in which I find myself sympathizing with both sides), and that anthropology in Germany is pursuing a rather different tack from those with which I am familiar in England, the U.S. and France. I was surprised not to find the convergence of history, sociology and anthropology which is increasingly prominent elsewhere. But perhaps I missed something. I hope to return soon and learn more.