

# Ἐλευθερία and Αὐτονομία in Fifth Century Interstate Relations

by Dr. Peter KARAVITES  
(State College, Bridgewater, Mass.)

## I

It has become a truism that Greco-Roman culture constitutes one of the main pillars of Western Civilization. One of the virtues for which the Greeks have been lavishly praised in history was their purported love of ἔλευθερία. The concept of freedom, however, is many-sided, and when one speaks today of freedom he may mean the freedom of the state from external compulsion, freedom from internal tyranny, political freedoms of all sorts, personal freedom as contrasted to slavery, economic freedom, etc. Although the concept of freedom had similar connotations for the ancient Greeks, few scholars have systematically explored its meaning among the Greeks <sup>(1)</sup>, and none, until recently, has investigated the historical evolution of the concept of freedom and its cognates in their historical context <sup>(2)</sup>. The same is true about the term αὐτονομία, whose mea-

(1) J. BLEICKEN, *Historia* 28 (1979) 148-172 is of a more general nature. More specifically, K.J. DOVER, *Talanta* 7 (1976) 24-53; M.I. FINLEY, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 6 (1963/64) 233-49; Id., *Talanta* 7 (1976) 1-23; B. WELLES, *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 15 (1965) 29-47.

(2) K.A. RAAFLAUB, in a MS under preparation. Also RAAFLAUB, *Arktouros, Hellenic Studies Presented to B.M.W. Knox*, G.W. Bowersock, W. Burkert, M.C.J. Putnam (edd.), (Berlin, 1979) 237-52; RAAFLAUB, in *Soziale Gruppen und Typenbegriffe im Alten*, E.C. Welkskopf (ed.), vol. 4 (Berlin, 1981-82) 29-35; RAAFLAUB, in *Studien zur antiken Sozialgeschichte*,

ning has not yet been fully analyzed. This paper is designed to examine the use of both terms in the fifth century B.C., especially in Greek interstate relations.

## II

While expressions such as ἐλευθερον ἡμας (*Il.* 6.455) and ἐλευθερον κορητῆρα (*Il.* 6.528) are found early in Greek literature, the substantive ἐλευθερία is not used until the advent of the fifth century. Whether this is due to some historical accident, the loss, that is, of literature which might have contained the term, the advent of greater linguistic inventiveness by the fifth century writers, or to new historical developments which might have necessitated the use of the substantive (developments such as the Cleisthenic reforms which made the individual politically prominent or the Persian Wars which threatened Greek freedom) is something that cannot easily be ascertained. At any rate, the first use of the term appears in the Decree of Themistocles where we read that the Athenians and aliens of military age were to embark on two hundred ships in order to fight the enemy for the sake of freedom<sup>(3)</sup>. It would not be possible or even useful to rehash here the battles over the authenticity of the decree but we cannot discount the possibility that the kernel of the decree is genuine and that the version we possess has been recopied because the original marble had been damaged or worn out. Herodotus 5.62.1 and 7.144 have been adduced in support of the genuineness of the decree<sup>(4)</sup>.

*Festschrift F. Vittinghoff*, W. Eck, H. Wolff (edd.), (Köln-Wien, 1980) 7-57.

(3) S. Dow, *Classical World* 55 (1961/62) 105-108; M.H. CHAMBERS, *Philologus* 111 (1967) 166-69; C. HABICHT, *Hermes* 89 (1961) 1-35; A. AMANDRY, *Bull. de la Faculté des Lettres de Strasbourg* 38 (1961) 413-35; C. HIGNETT, *Xerxes' Invasion of Greece* (Oxford, 1963) 458-68; A.R. BURN, *Persia and the Greeks* (London, 1962) 364-77; H. BERVE, *Sitz. Bericht. München* (1961) no. 3, 1-50; M.H. JAMESON, *Historia* 12 (1963) 385-404; B.D. MERITT, *Lectures in Memory of L.T. Semple*, 1, 119-32; H.R. HARDY and W.K. PRITCHETT, *BSA* 59 (1964) 30-31; P. SIEWERT, *Der Eid von Plataia* (Munich, 1972).

(4) M/L No. 23, p. 50.

Significantly, the employment of ἔλευθερία in the decree is chronologically in harmony with its use by Pindar in the *Isthmia*, *ἰατὰ δ' ἔστι βροτοῖς σὺν γ' ἔλευθερία* (8.1.16), one year or so after Salamis. Pindar also used the term in two other places,

τῷ [Δεινομένει] πόλιν κείναν θεοδμάτω σὺν ἔλευθερία,

*Pythia* 1.55 and

Αἰσσομαι, παῖ Ζηνὸς Ἐλευθερίου *Ol.* 12.1,

where Zeus becomes additionally prominent as the protector of Greek freedom. Moreover, the scholion to Pindar's *Pythia* 1.71 ff. described how Gelon fought off the Carthaginians and brought liberty to all of Hellas. Even if we were not to accept the decree as authentic, it would be clear that the substantive was in use by the time of the Persian Wars or immediately thereafter. In the period after the Persian Wars the tragedians employed it frequently, *καὶ νῦν ἔλευθερίας φῶς* (Aesch. *Choiphoroi* 808), *ἣ πῦρ καὶ φῶς ἐπ' ἔλευθερία* (Aesch. *Choiphoroi* 863-64). In Sophocles' *El.* the chorus praised the House of Atreus for getting out, at last, of its family troubles,

ὦ σπέρμ' Ἀτρέως ὥς πολλὰ παθὼν

δι' ἔλευθερίας μόλις ἐξῆλθες (*Electra* 1508-09)

while Electra advised her brother against carelessness until final victory over her father's killers was achieved,

ὅταν γὰρ εὐτυχίσωμεν, τότε

χαίρειν παρέσται καὶ γελῶν ἔλευθέρως (Soph. *El.* 1299-1300).

Obviously, in the years following the Persian Wars the word ἔλευθερία had acquired a strongly emotive quality, and as it appears from the above examples it was used in different occasions conveying different meanings. The reference in the Decree of Themistocles is associated with the external and internal freedom of the Athenians, for defeat would have entailed the loss of every thing the Athenians held dear. *Pythia* 1.55 alluded to the internal freedom of the city, though it might be suggestive of other facets of freedom as well. The same thing is true with the rest of the poetic citations above.

The variety of the meanings of freedom becomes more promi-

nent in the writings of Herodotus and Thucydides. The Medes proved their valor fighting for freedom against the Assyrians (Hdt. 1.95.2). Bias of Priene advised the Greeks in Ionia to migrate to Sardinia for otherwise they would have no hope of freedom (Hdt. 1.170.2). Xerxes claimed the Persian throne as a son of Atossa, daughter of Cyrus, the king who liberated the Persians from the Medes (Hdt. 7.2.4). In a campaign to the Red Sea the Egyptian Sesostris encountered some valiant people who fought him off for freedom (Hdt. 2.102.4). The Scythians told the Greeks at the river Ister that they would win their freedom if they followed the Scythian advice (Hdt. 4.133.2). These and many other references to freedom allude to the external freedom of a people. In other instances, references to freedom advert to freedom as an internal quality of the state, freedom from tyranny (Hdt. 3.82.5; 3.142.3; 3.143.2; 5.64.2; 5.91.3; 7.103.3) or may indicate both, the state of internal and external freedom (Hdt. 7.104.4). Further still, there is a case wherein the use of ἐλευθερία is somewhat obscure. Mardonius suggested to the Athenians in 479 that they would keep their freedom if they agreed to a defensive alliance with him, thereby equating ἐλεύθεροι with αὐτόνομοι. Mardonius' message contained the proposal for a defensive alliance tied to an *homologia* according to which the Athenians would be free (?) to run their own domestic affairs (ἔόντες αὐτόνομοι) probably under Persian suzerainty. This is most probably the meaning of *homologia* here as well as in Hdt. 7.139.4, where the Spartans would have been compelled to accept terms from a superior power, for the tenor of the Persian proposal (Hdt. 8.140.4) leaves little room to doubt Sparta's inferior status. This would be superior-inferior relationship intended by the proposal is further illustrated in Hdt. 8.140 by Alexander's assessment of Persian might. Thus, ἔστε ἐλεύθεροι, ἡμῶν ὁμοαγμίαν συνθέμενοι is apparently blurring the meaning of freedom, if by freedom is meant the absence of external coercion. Unless there is a clever play on words at this point, something unlikely since Herodotus does not allude to such a play, ἐλεύθεροι is incompatible with the customary meaning of the word, for the status of Athens would have resembled that of the Greek cities

of Asia Minor, where often a Greek strongman ruled the city on behalf of the Persian master and the Persians chose not to dabble in the daily affairs of the cities as long as they paid the tribute and caused no troubles<sup>(5)</sup>. At any rate, there is no doubt that if Athens had accepted Mardonius' proposal she would have forfeited her external freedom, partially at least. Herodotus, who consistently used the term Ἐλευθερία to indicate freedom from outside constraints, does not intimate any confusion in the translation from one language to another nor does he imply that the Persians considered freedom and autonomy as synonymous. One way out of this difficulty would be to suppose that ἔστε ἑλεύθεροι adverted to the existing status of the Athenians at the time the proposal was made, when the Athenians had still the freedom to make the best choice, namely, the choice given to them by Mardonius. In this case ἔστε ἑλεύθεροι would be interpreted as "act as freemen" as long as you have the choice, but whether this is the intended meaning is not clear. There is still another possibility which I shall discuss a little later.

A greater variety of nuances is contained in the text of Thucydides. After the Athenian-Corcyraean defensive alliance and the siege of Potidaea, the disenchanted Corinthians blamed Sparta for allowing Athens to deprive the Greeks of their freedom (Thuc. 1.69.1). Sparta's responsibility was so much greater as she claimed to be the liberator of Greece from the Persians and from tyrannical regimes<sup>(6)</sup>. The Corinthians also reminded the Spartans of their fathers' achievements and their struggles on behalf of Greek freedom (Thuc. 1.122.3).

The Lacedaemonians picked up the issue of freedom and made it their *cause célèbre* for declaring war against Athens. Archidamus, therefore, told the Plataeans that the war was being fought for the freedom of the Greeks (Thuc. 2.72.1). Responding to the challenge, the Plataeans reminded Archidamus of the

(5) L. HUBER, « Herodot und die politische Propaganda seiner Zeit », *Wiss. Z. U. Rostock*, Nos. 4-5. Naturally, the Asia Minor Greeks were expected to contribute military service also, Hdt. 1.171.1; 2.1.2.

(6) HCT on Thuc. 1.69.1.

time when Pausanias freed the Greeks (Thuc. 2.71.1), and how he did not fail to sacrifice to Zeus the Protector of freedom (Thuc. 2.71.2) (7). Since the Plataeans were the only Boeotians who in the Persian Wars rallied to the defense of Greece, Archidamus should not kill the Plataeans while claiming to liberate the Greeks (Thuc. 3.59.4). This Plataean contention was a direct slap at the Thebans, and the Thebans retaliated, stating that it would have been preferable if the Plataeans had renounced their alliance with Athens in order to help the Spartans liberate the Greeks (Thuc. 3.63.3). They further boasted about their earlier victories over the Athenians by which they freed the rest of the Boeotians (Thuc. 3.62.5).

But the person who used the issue of freedom most adeptly to win Athenian allies away from the alliance, obviating at the same time any potential moral objections to his policies, was the Spartan Brasidas. He had little trouble assuring the Acanthians of the sincerity of Spartan intentions (Thuc. 4.85.1) pointing to his presence in Macedonia as the fulfilment of Spartan promises to liberate the Greeks. On the other hand, he warned the Acanthians that it would be monstrous if they were to stand in the way of Greek freedom (Thuc. 4.86.5-6). Perceiving a suspicion among the Acanthians that he might seek to impose upon them an undesirable regime, he renounced any intentions to that effect, a wise policy that the Spartans failed to implement at the expiration of the Peloponnesian War. To dramatize his concern with the issue of liberty, Brasidas pointed to the unique opportunity of the Acanthians to lead in the liberation of the other Greeks (Thuc. 4.87.4-7). The potent issue of freedom was made the focal point of his mission, and Brasidas never tired of reminding the Greeks of his desire to liberate them from the Athenian yoke (Thuc. 4.108.2).

In 427 the Mytilenaeans dropped out of the alliance alleging the altering of the League's objectives as the reason for their apostasy (8). In light of the new political realities in Greece,

(7) Plut. *Arist.* 20.4-6; Paus. 9.2.5-7; HCT 2, *ad loc.*

(8) Compare to Thuc. 4.85-87; Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.23; D. GILLIS, *AJP* 92

their secession was morally imperative, inasmuch as it would contribute to the freedom of the other Greeks (Thuc. 3.13.1). In a similar vein, criticizing Alcidas for the senseless slaughter of captives, the Samians at Anaea cautioned him that his conduct belied the Spartan claim to be the liberators of Greece (Thuc. 3.32.1). During the Sicilian expedition, Hermocrates urged the Sicilian Greeks to follow his advice if they wished to keep their cities free from outside interference (Thuc. 4.63.2) and charged that the Athenians did not really fight for the liberty of the Greeks at Marathon and Salamis as they boasted (Thuc. 4.76.4).

Although examples of the use of Ἐλευθερία in Thucydides could easily be multiplied, sufficient evidence has already been adduced to demonstrate the importance of the concept in the interstate relations of the Greek states. Similar examples of the use of Ἐλευθερία in different contexts (freedom from internal tyranny, personal freedom, etc.) could easily be adduced<sup>(9)</sup>.

### III

From the evidence above it becomes clear that Ἐλευθερία in the fifth century had assumed an all-inclusive character and was used for an increasing variety of purposes as the century waxed. Nevertheless, as a catchword, tossed around with considerable facility because of its emotive nature, it could lead to dangerous misunderstandings. This may perhaps help explain the reasons for Brasidas' anti-peace stance prior to the conclusion of the treaty of Nicias. In this case, it may be unfair to ascribe to personal ambition his efforts to obstruct peace, though ambition might have something to do with it. Legitimate

(1971) 38-47; T.J. QUINN, *Historia* 20 (1971) 405-08; R.P. LEGON, *Phoenix* 22 (1968) 200-05; A. ANDREWES, *Phoenix* 16 (1962) 64-85; F.M. WASSERMANN, *TAPA* 87 (1956) 27-41; O. REGENBODEN in *Wege der Forschung* (Darmstadt, 1968) 23-58; H.D. WESTLAKE, *Historia* 25 (1976) 433-39.

(9) References pertinent to the fourth century in Xen. *Hell.* 1.7.24; 2.2.23; 2.3.6; 2.3.24; 2.4.17; 2.4.20; 3.1.3; and *Anab.* 1.7.3; 3.2.13; 5.8.5; 7.4.24; 7.7.24; 7.7.32; 7.8.23.

concern over the fate of the "liberated" cities might have been at the heart of Brasidas' objections, since he had personally assured those cities of the sincerity of Sparta's intentions, whereas peace was now negotiated on the principle of the status quo ante. Naturally, his personal reputation, as well as that of his country, was at stake, and Brasidas realized it. No doubt, for similar reasons the allies of Sparta refused to accept the treaty of Nicias, and when ordered to do so they rejected it as unfair. True, in this case, as in the case of Brasidas, the question of motives may be raised regarding the position of Sparta's allies, but questions of motives are always difficult to analyse. Nonetheless, there can be no doubt that many Greeks, including the Spartan allies, must have believed in Sparta's professions about Greek freedom. The treaty of Nicias showed these promises to have become subordinate to questions of expediency. No wonder then that the Spartans fell into disrepute after the conclusion of the treaty and they were despised by their allies (Thuc. 5.28.2; 29.2). Spartan ill-repute could not have been entirely due to Spartan misfortunes. The treaty of Nicias constituted, at least partially, the abandonment of those lofty ideals for which Sparta allegedly went to war, and the loftiest of them was the restoration of freedom among the Greeks. What the Acanthians, Sicyonians, Amphipolitans and others thought of Sparta as a consequence of the compromising treaty could not have been very flattering. Nor could Athenian estimate of Spartan pronouncements have been much higher. When later on the Athenians cautioned the Melians that of the men they conducted business with, the Spartans conspicuously placed state interest above principle (Thuc. 5.105.3), they must have had this type of "business" in mind. Sparta's readiness to compromise on the basis of self-interest stands in stark contrast to her earlier lofty claims as the champion of Greece, but Sparta's conduct here was not unique in the annals of Greek history. In 426 the Spartans had left their Ambraciote allies in the lurch in order to save themselves, nor did they shy away from an alliance with the inveterate enemies of Greece at the expense of the Greeks in Asia Minor (Thuc. 1.82.1).



In strict semasiological terms ἔλευθερία would mean the absence of coercion of any kind. It is superfluous, however, to point out here that in contrast to concrete terms many abstract terms are frequently given (or acquire) a multi-faceted quality. For example, one can see that all communist states may use "red" as their national color since there is no disagreement among them about the quality of "redness", although individual communist states may champion different brands of communism, while contending to be following the orthodox line. This discrepancy is due to individual differences in the conceptualization of what communist orthodoxy is. Something similar might have occurred with the meaning of ἔλευθερία. In these circumstances the word could not have been used for specific occasions such as interstate treaties where a determinate status of a city-state would be incompatible with the ramifications of ἔλευθερία, i.e. freedom from any coercion. A more exact term would be needed to express more succinctly a type of interstate relations among the Greek cities in the post-Persian Wars period. This term is αὐτονομία/αὐτόνομος.

The word *autonomia* seems to have its origins in the period of the Pentecontaetia, unless again the problem of the accident of our sources comes into play here. Its first appearance is in the *Antigone* whose dating is somewhere in the middle of the decade of 450-440 B.C. (?)

οὔτε ξιφέων ἐπὶ χεῖρα λαχοῦς',  
ἀλλ' αὐτόνομος ζῶσα μόνη δὴ  
θνατῷ 'Αἶδαν καταβήσῃ (Soph. *Antig.* 820-22).

The term is also mentioned in the Hippocratean essay *Airs Waters Places* whose dating is similarly the subject of controversy, but whose genuine character has not been seriously contested; therefore, the date of this work cannot be too far off the year 440<sup>(10)</sup>. "Οκου δὲ, μὴ αὐτοὶ ἐσσι τῶν κατεργαίων οἱ ἄνθρωποι μηδὲ αὐτόνομοι, ἀλλὰ δεσπόζονται (*Airs Waters Places* 16), where δεσπόζονται referred to the rule of tyrants. By the same token,

(10) See vol. 1, p. 68 in the *Loeb Class. Library* edition.

Ὀνόμοι γὰρ ἐν τῇ Ἀσίῃ Ἕλληνες ἢ βάρβαροι μὴ δεσπόζονται ἀλλ' αὐτόνομοι εἰσι ... οἷτοι μαχιμώτατοί εἰσιν πάντων referred again to the internal laws of a city and their influence upon the character of the citizens (*Air Waters Places* 16). But perhaps the use of *autonomia* is best exemplified in the usage of the historical writers and the official documents of the Greek city-states. Whereas the word ἐλευθερία appeared when a general status was to be indicated, the term *autonomia* seemed to have been preferred when a concrete situation was implied. The proposal of Mardonius to the Athenians conveyed the promise that the latter would be left free to run their own affairs, i.e. they would be autonomous. True, the juxtaposition of the ἔστε ἐλεύθεροι to the promise of *autonomia* muddles the meaning of the proposal. When Thucydides himself referred to the Athenian allies he was very careful to use words which best described the allies' legal status, based on previous contractual arrangements. Thus, while complaining to the Lacedaemonians about the Athenians, the Aeginetans contended that they did not enjoy the status of *autonomia* granted to them by the treaty with Athens (ἐνῆγον τὸν πόλεμον λέγοντες οὐκ εἶναι αὐτόνομοι κατὰ τὰς σπονδὰς, Thuc. 1.67.2). There is doubt here as to whether *spondai* refers to the Thirty Years Treaty with Sparta or to a separate treaty between Athens and Aegina, since the latter was forced into the League in the 450's. But in all probability the Thirty Years Treaty is alluded to here, inasmuch as Nicias' treaty contained a similar clause regarding *autonomia* (αὐτόνομος καὶ φόρου ὑποτελής, Thuc. 5.18.5). In describing the status of the allies at the formation of the League, Thucydides employed the term autonomous (ἡγούμενοι δὲ αὐτονόμων τὸ πρῶτον τῶν ξυμμάχων, Thuc. 1.97.1) <sup>(11)</sup>. After their victory over the Athenians (447/46 B.C.), the Boeotians were *autonomoi* again, not free (Thuc. 1.113.4). In 432 the Lacedaemonians demanded from the Athenians that they respect Aegina's autonomy as a condition for not declaring war (Thuc.

(11) A. GIOVANNINI and G. GOTTLIEB, *Thukydides und die Anfänge der Athenischen Arche* (Heidelberg, 1980) do not recognize the formation of the League.

1.139.1; see also 1.67.2). What sort of infraction of the Aeginetan autonomy is entailed at this point is not clear. Perhaps the point in question is the injunction regarding trade with Megara<sup>(12)</sup>. A later Spartan embassy to Athens proposed peace if the Athenians would let the Greeks (obviously the Greeks under Athenian control are meant here) autonomous (Thuc. 1.139.3). The Spartans were very circumspect at this point probably because (1) they were citing a clause from the Thirty Years Treaty which spoke of autonomy not freedom; (2) they had supported the formation of the Athenian League earlier and with it the principle of autonomy; (3) their own Peloponnesian League placed their allies in a similar autonomous status. The reply of Pericles was that the Athenians would restore autonomy to the members of the League, provided these members were autonomous when the Thirty Years Treaty was made, and that the Lacedaemonians should also restore the autonomy of their allies, not as the Lacedaemonians construed autonomy, but as autonomy was generally recognized, i.e. freedom to make one's own decisions with respect to domestic matters (Thuc. 1.144.2)<sup>(13)</sup>. Pericles was thus aiming a shaft at Spartan hypocrisy, for obviously the Spartans were not bothered by the lack of autonomy among many of the Greeks when they signed the Thirty Years Treaty, deriding them for using their allies to their interest while shamelessly pointing the finger at the Athenians as the guilty party. Exactly, how the Lacedaemonians, who had a looser league, used their allies to their interest is not spelled out, although the reference might be to the preference of Sparta for oligarchic regimes which constituted an interference in the allies' domestic affairs.

The Mytilenaeans at Olympia complained that they were autonomous only in name (Thuc. 3.10.6) intimating that they

(12) HCT *ad. loc.*; T.J. FIGUEIRA, CPh 76 (1981) 1-14; *Id.*, *Aigina, Society and Politics* (Univ. of Penn. Press, 1977).

(13) τὰς δὲ πόλεις ὅτι αὐτονόμους ἀφήσομεν, εἰ καὶ αὐτονόμους ἔχοντες ἐσπείσάμεθα καὶ ὅταν κάκεῖνοι ταῖς ἑαυτῶν ἀποδῶσι πόλεσι μὴ σφίσιν τοῖς Λακεδαιμονίοις ἐπιτηδείως αὐτονομεῖσθαι, ἀλλ' αὐτοῖς ἑκάστοις ὥς βούλονται (Thuc. 1.144.2).

were left autonomous for propaganda purposes (Thuc. 3.11.2). Cleon proposed a stiff penalty for the Mytilenaeans because they seceded, though enjoying, unlike others, the privilege of autonomy. Diodotus on the other hand, trying to soothe the Athenian anger over the Mytilenaeen revolt, described the secession as an effort πρὸς αὐτονομίαν, that is, the desire of the Mytilenaeans to acquire self-rule and not to shake off completely their Athenian connection (Thuc. 3.46.4). Archidamus reminded the Plataeans of their right to autonomy as well as their obligation to help free others (Thuc. 2.72.1; πόλιν τὴν σφετέραν ἔχοντας αὐτονόμους οἰκεῖν, Thuc. 2.71.2; and αὐτονόμους, Thuc. 2.71.4). Evidently, he did not contest them the right to choose their own government.

For the same reason documents containing treaties in the fifth century use the word autonomy/autonomous instead of the less concrete ἐλευθερία. The treaty of Nicias described Delphi as αὐτονόμους εἶναι καὶ αὐτοτελεῖς καὶ αὐτοδίκους where αὐτοτελεῖς καὶ αὐτοδίκους defined further the special standing of the oracle. Delphi was not to pay tribute, ὑποτελής, as a member of a group nor was any other state to interfere with the administration of Delphi's affairs (Thuc. 5.18.2). Another clause of the same treaty stipulated that the cities to be delivered to Athens by Sparta should remain autonomous on the condition that they paid the tribute fixed earlier by Aristides<sup>(14)</sup>. The injunction regarding the bearing of arms by the Athenians against the above cities as well as the right of these cities to remain neutral seemed to have been a face-saving device intended to mitigate the responsibility of the Spartans who had earlier promised these cities freedom through Brasidas and were now abandoning them to the status of tributaries<sup>(15)</sup>. They had been impelled into following the leadership of Sparta for the liberation of the Greeks but were now forced to the condition of tribute paying neutrals, an onerous condition that made a

(14) The cities in question are Argilus, Stagirus, Acanthus, Stalus and Olynthus, and Spartolus (Thuc. 5.18.5).

(15) HCT *ad. loc.*

mockery of the liberty slogan. Consequently, Athenian punishment of Scione must have had many of these cities petrified and justifiably blaming the Lacedaemonians as directly responsible for the massacre of the Scionaeans.

Besides the treaty of Nicias, other documents illustrate the meaning of *autonomia*. The honorary decree for the Samians in 405 B.C. bestowed upon them the right to Athenian citizenship as well as the right to self-government. When it came to other arrangements, the Samians were to comply with the treaty of 412 which described them as autonomous <sup>(16)</sup>.

In still another treaty between Athens and Selymbria the latter was to enjoy self-government <sup>(17)</sup>. But the treaty which best exemplified the essence of *autonomia* was the treaty between Athens and Chalcis in 446 B.C. The Athenians promised not to deport any Chalcidians, devastate the city, deprive anyone of his rights, punish anybody with exile or death, or take away anyone's property without trial and/or the concurrence of the Athenian people. The Chalcidians were to enjoy these protections *as long as they obeyed the people of Athens*. The Chalcidians in turn were obligated to pay the tribute and to assist and defend the Athenians (ταῦτα ἐμπ[ε]δόσο Χαλκιδεῦσιν πειθομένοις τοῖ δέ[μ]οι τοῖ Ἀθηναίων) <sup>(18)</sup>. Clearly, a subordinate position is assigned to Chalcis implying internal but not external freedom. This is the meaning of *autonomia* by 446. B.C.

Lastly, the list of the allies who fought in Sicily on the Athenian side is illuminating inasmuch as Thucydides broke

(16) M/L No. 94; Thuc. 8.21 and I.G. 1<sup>2</sup> 101; D. LEWIS, BSA (1954) 29-31.

(17) I.G. 1<sup>2</sup> 116; H. BENGTSON, *Die Staatsverträge des Altertums* (Munich, 1975) No. 207; Xen. *Hell.* 1.3.10; Diod. 13.66.4; Plut. *Alc.* 30; Ad. WILHELM, *Ath. Mitt.* 12 (1903) 445-456; G. BUSOLT, G.G. 3.2.1557; K.J. BELOCH, G.G. 2.2.1.400; W.S. FERGUSON, *The Treasurers of Athens* (Cambridge, Mass, 1932) 45; B.D. MERITT, JHS 63 (1943) 47-48; A.W. GOMME, HCT 1 (1945) 240; J. HATZFELD, *Alcibiade*, (Paris, 1951) 283-84.

(18) HCT 1.342; G.E.M. DE STE. CROIX, CQ 11 (1961) 270; H. MATTINGLY, JHS 81 (1961) 124-32; FGH 328 F 130; R. MEIGGS, JHS 86 (1966) 92-94; M/L No. 52.

down the Athenian allies into categories. Outside the colonists (Thuc. 7.57.2), there were subjects and οἱ ... ἀπὸ ξυμμαχίας αὐτόνομοι. Among the tributaries were the Chians, who, as Thucydides explained, were not φόρον ὑποτελεῖς but ναῦς παρέχοντες (Thuc. 7.57.4) <sup>(19)</sup>. The same was true about the Methymnaeans (Thuc. 7.57.5). Whether the position of Chios, although autonomous, was really different from the position of others in the sense that Chios was bound to Athens by the original oaths of the League but exempt from other encumbrances by which Athens held tighter control over the *arche* is not clear <sup>(20)</sup>. No distinction is made by Euphemus between Chios and Methymna; both were autonomous allies νεῶν παροικῶν. Equally, the Dorians who went to Sicily on the side of the Syracusans were described as autonomous, but being members of the Spartan League they were under some external compulsion (Thuc. 7.18.4), while others were bound by ties of kinship (Thuc. 7.57.3). Their *autonomia* meant that they were free to run their domestic affairs but obligated to comply with a certain foreign policy flowing out of their interstate agreements.

## IV

The instances so far adduced would seem to show a clear distinction in the meanings of ἐλευθερία and αὐτονομία. Alas, things are not so simple. It has been stated that *autonomia* first appeared sometime around the 450's, its appearance coinciding with the conversion of the Delian League into an empire wherein the former allies acquired a different status. It is quite possible, however, that the use of *autonomia* had been introduced earlier than the decade of 450-440 to designate a new political development, but that it surfaced now only as a result of a historical accident related to the availability of

(19) HCT *ad. loc.*; J. DE ROMILLY, *Thucydides and the Athenian Imperialism* (Oxford, 1963) 87 and note 6.

(20) HCT 5, 434; E.S.G. ROBINSON, *Hesperia*, Suppl. 8 (1949) 324-30.

sources. For example, speaking before the Greeks in Olympia (Thuc. 3.10.2-5), the Mytilenaeans maintained that they had become allies of the Athenians for the purpose of liberating the Greeks from Persia <sup>(21)</sup>. They had followed the Athenians gladly as long as the latter led them on equal terms (ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴσου). When they perceived the Athenians relaxing their anti-Persian hostility and enslaving their allies, the Mytilenaeans were filled with concern and remained in the alliance only out of fear.

If the term *autonomia*/autonomous was indeed coined during the period of the Athenian *arche*, particularly after 454 B.C., the use of the term at this point denoted the status of the Mytilenaeans at the time of their speech in Olympia. But this may not be the meaning of *autonomia* in this passage, for the passage does not really explain whether the Mytilenaeans considered themselves autonomous in 477, after they had opted to enter the alliance. As ἐλεύθεροι they had chosen to enter into an alliance with Athens to protect and preserve their condition of freedom. Their entry imposed certain obligations which entailed a diminution of their absolute freedom in the realm of foreign affairs but did not impair their right to run their domestic government, otherwise it is doubtful whether many of the allies would have accepted the alliance. Because their participation in the League was voluntary, several of them must have claimed the right to secede, and when they tried to do so they were coerced back, their voluntarism ended, and their internal freedom at the mercy of the hegemon. The Mytilenaeans, however, had not tried to secede till now. Consequently, they, along with the Chians, continued to "possess" their original status of *autonomia*, which had become by now minimal, for in fact their right to exercise a choice was non-existent. Thus, the Athenians considered the Mytilenaeans autonomous, while the Mytilenaeans conceived of their condition as autonomous in name only since the freedom which had led them into the alliance and the element of equality (τὸ ἴσον) that ought

(21) HCT *ad. loc.*; ATL 3.138-41; R. MEIGGS, JHS 63 (1943) 33; Id., *Athenian Empire* (Oxford, 1972) 131; A. ANDREWES, *Phoenix* 16 (1962) 64-85; J.A.O. LARSEN, CPh 44 (1949) 177.

to have prevailed among allies had long ceased to be actualities. In the Mytilenaeon view, *autonomia* would reflect the voluntary association of member states which imposed upon themselves limitations in the realm of interstate relations, not an enforced condition as interpreted by the Athenians in the 450's and 440's. It would be the inherent right of the Greek states to run their own affairs and to conclude alliances if they so desired, not a favor to be sought from without. This right, viewed as a "given" right by the Greeks, flowed from their immemorial *ἐλευθερία* and went back to the earliest times of Greek history but perhaps not articulated fully until now.

The value of the Mytilenaeon account at Olympia is probably somewhat reduced by the Mytilenaeon tailoring of it to suit the occasion and produce the maximum of propaganda effects. Nonetheless, there is no good reason not to think that the Mytilenaeon statements reflect something very much like the perceptions of the smaller cities in the empire. Significantly, the Athenians had earlier admitted that, overwhelmed by honor, fear and profit, they kept the empire originally *offered* (*αὐτῶν δεηθέντων*) to them by the allies. They further added that they were not the first to do so, since it had always been an established practice that the weaker should be constrained by the stronger (Thuc. 1.76.2-4). This is an admission that they had departed from the spirit upon which the alliance was first made. Furthermore, the Athenians' claim not to have been the harsh masters their interests dictated constitutes an a fortiori admission of illegality which they sought to justify before the Greeks. On the other hand, the Mytilenaeans asserted that their inalienable right of freedom to determine their destiny as well as the elements of equality among the allies (Thuc. 3.10.4), honesty (Thuc. 3.10.1), the pursuit of the objectives of the alliance (Thuc. 3.10.4), and the mutual trust which ought to characterize the allies (Thuc. 3.10.6) had ceased to be respected by the Athenians. Thus, equality, honesty, adherence to the purposes of the alliance, mutual trust seem to have been constitutive components of an alliance among free states which compensated for the voluntary surrender of freedom. They are



qualities which help explain the context of the status of *autonomia*.

This explication of *autonomia* may help throw some light on Mardonius' proposal which seemed to be at first sight incompatible with Greek traditional freedom. Mardonius, that is, might have purposefully stressed the condition of freedom to underline the special status he intended to grant the Athenians, if they agreed. The Athenians would be free to run their internal affairs (perhaps pay some type of contribution, though this is not stated) in return for the friendship of the King. Nevertheless, their alliance with the King would be the product of their "free" will inasmuch as the use of Ἐλευθερία at this point may connote their freedom to a choice between an alliance with the King for the purpose of avoiding further risks or the rejection of the proposal with its concomitant consequences. The victories of the Athenians (and the other Greeks for that matter) over the Persians might have prompted Mardonius to cede the Athenians a special status. The same victories coupled with Athenian suspicion of Persian tyranny certainly prompted the Athenians to reject the proposal.

Finally, the case of the Spartan League may strengthen the Mytilenaeen argument about autonomy. Sparta's allies joined the alliance voluntarily (at least most of them, like the Corinthians, Thebans, Megarians, etc.), were generally consulted before war was declared which affected them, and retained the option to refuse to follow Sparta if they disagreed<sup>(22)</sup>. They had also the right to propose a course of action and vented their anger against the leader of the League if the latter declined to live up to the expectations of the allies or to pursue the action proposed<sup>(23)</sup>. This type of alliance retained a modi-

(22) Hdt. 5.75; Thuc. 5.17.2; 5.25.1; 5.35.1; 5.37; J.A.O. LARSEN, *Repres. Govern. in Greek and Roman History* (Univ. of Calif. Press, 1966) 49-55; V. MARTIN, *La vie internationale dans la Grèce des cités, VII<sup>e</sup>-IV<sup>e</sup> s. av. J-C* (Paris, 1940) 126 ff. and 241 ff.; A. GIOVANNINI, *Untersuchungen über die Natur und die Anfänge der bundesstaatlichen Sym-politie in Griechenland* (Göttingen, 1971) 9.

(23) Thuc. 1.67; 1.68-71; 1.114.1; 1.120-124.

cum of the ἵσθον the Athenian alliance had lost by the 450's.

In conclusion, the term ἐλευθερία appeared immediately after the post-Persian Wars period with waxing frequency. If it were indeed a newly coined word, its appearance would be closely related to the internal developments of some of the Greek city-states and/or to the Greek victories over the Persians which saved the Greeks from the gravest of perils to their ethnic existence thus far. The magnitude of the danger and their amazing escape from it inspired them with the invention of a new term with which to celebrate their victories. Subsequent to the wars, the Greeks formed a League in order to preserve and protect their ἐλευθερία; participation in that League postulated the voluntary abridgment of their city-state sovereignty for a higher goal. The new status that resulted must have been designated as αὐτονομία, although the evidence is not entirely clear. What is certain is that in the process of the League's transformation from a free association of independent states into an empire this status was allowed to several of the Athenian allies, provided they discharged their obligations to the alliance either in the form of money or ships and honored the stipulations imposed by Athens. This state of affairs intensified the climate of hatred and suspicion towards Athens, particularly since the allies hankered after that type of *autonomia* which guaranteed them their self-respect through self-rule and equality.