

COERCIVE DIPLOMACY IN GREEK INTERSTATE RELATIONS¹ (with special reference to *presbeis autokratores*)

I. INTRODUCTION: DIPLOMACY AND CONFLICT

Diplomacy is the corpus of procedures and institutions used in foreign relations by an independent state.² It is the method by which a state seeks to attain its objectives in foreign policy, namely to secure for its citizens prosperity and justice through negotiations with other states.

Literary and epigraphic evidence from the classical period highlights the fact that the numerous Greek city-states realized the importance of maintaining diplomatic relations among themselves in order to safeguard their interests. Envoys were sent out to complain of wrongs against their state, or seek the release of citizens from captivity, or represent the intentions of their people, or convey the will of their state authority so as to conclude peace with an enemy or cement an alliance.³

In the period under discussion the most commonly used title for envoys is *presbeis*, sometimes qualified by the word *autokratores* or the phrase *telos echontes*.⁴ The obvious question is: What is the precise meaning of such qualifications? It has been suggested that they both mean ambassadors plenipotentiary.⁵ More specifically, it has been said that the word *autokrator* qualifies someone 'who has the sovran power delegated to him for some special business or emergency so that his acts (within the scope of his Autokratia) require no ratification'.⁶ But the Athenian *presbeis autokratores* to Sparta in 405/4 did not exercise any sovereign power: a peace treaty was finally signed only after they had reported the peace terms Sparta sent and the Athenian assembly had discussed them. It has also been suggested that 'in practice the term means only that the envoys were empowered to give formal assent to provisions previously accepted by the assembly'.⁷ D. J. Mosley goes beyond the sources in maintaining that Theramenes and his fellow envoys brought back to the Assembly provisions 'which had been mooted in previous negotiations'.⁸ Yet what has not been

¹ My thanks are due to Dr Paul Cartledge, Dr Peter Garnsey and to the late Professor M. I. Finley for their help and advice in the preparation of this article.

² P. H. Gore-Booth reminds us in his memoirs *With Great Truth and Respect* (London, 1974), 15, that foreign policy is *what* you do and diplomacy is *how* you do it. Also Quincy Wright, *The Study of International Relations* (New York, 1955), 158, defines diplomacy as 'the art of negotiation in order to achieve the maximum of group objectives with minimum costs within a system of politics in which war is a possibility'.

³ The history of ancient Greek diplomacy may be traced back to Homer's period when κήρυκες and ἄγγελοι were sent either to claim something or to conclude a treaty: e.g. *Il.* 3.205; 7.381–415; *Od.* 3.14; 3.82; 21.15–21. For a chronological narrative of Greek interstate relations and a survey of the methods and institutions of Greek diplomacy see F. E. Adcock and D. J. Mosley, *Diplomacy in Ancient Greece* (London, 1975).

⁴ See D. Kienast, *RE*, Suppl. XIII (1973) s.v. 'Presbeia'.

⁵ See, for example, D. J. Mosley, *Envoys and Diplomacy in Ancient Greece* (*Historia Einzelschriften* 22, 1973), 35; G. E. M. de Ste Croix, 'The Alleged Secret Pact between Athens and Philip II concerning Amphipolis and Pydna', *CQ* N.S. 13 (1963), 116 and A. Andrewes, *HCT* iv. 52.

⁶ H. T. Wade-Gery, *Essays in Greek History* (Oxford, 1958), 144 n. 3; also p. 132 n. 1.

⁷ K. J. Dover, *HCT* v. 165; see also A. Andrewes, *HCT* iv. 52: 'Such "full powers" need not amount to much'.

⁸ Mosley (1973), 32.

noted in previous studies is that ambassadors sent to capitulate were designated as *presbeis autokratores*.

Conflict was endemic in Greek interstate relations. It could however provide the setting for bargaining or negotiating, characterized not only by positive inducements but also by threats. Greek history provides many examples of strong states brow-beating others into submission; if the weak negotiator did not concede, he might be warned in advance that he would be savagely destroyed (as in the classic example of the Melians). But in a bipartite relation a weaker city could also sound a warning to the stronger negotiator that it might be the loser if it did not accede to the advice offered or the demands made. For example, the element of threat was very important in the effort made by the Achaian envoys to convince the Lakedaimonians to help them against the Akarnanians in 389; 'their way of covertly threatening to withdraw from their alliance with the Lakedaimonians' is underlined by Xenophon himself (Xen. *Hell.* 4.6.3).

Between enemies, there were situations of confrontation in which the termination of the conflict depended upon the direct use of armed force. For example, in 403 King Pausanias sent envoys to the men in Peiraeus and 'bade them to disperse to their homes; and when they refused to obey, he attacked them' (Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.31). On the other hand, there were instances in which the termination of the conflict was regulated by a series of coercive actions which affected the relation between the adversaries psychologically rather than simply physically. In such cases, one of the protagonists does not, for whatever reason, destroy his adversary at once, but through coercive tactics tries to influence his motivation or will so that he eventually accepts any terms given. The main difference between the direct application of force and coercive diplomacy is that the latter tries to initiate behaviour; it is the adversary who acts 'voluntarily' in order to avoid complete destruction and, thus, capitulates.

The concept of coercive diplomacy offers the context for two of the nine known cases of the dispatch of *presbeis autokratores* by Greek cities in the fifth and fourth centuries. The Athenian embassy in 405 and the Olynthian embassy in 379 were both sent to Sparta to avert the imminent threat of complete destruction.⁹ In an attempt to contribute to a better understanding of *presbeis autokratores* in such settings, I shall investigate the mission of *presbeis autokratores* in 405/4 in order to establish the causal sequence of events. I shall then examine other instances of embassies to see whether there is a case for grouping them together as a class of similar events rather than as unique occurrences, and of specifying their common content.

II. *PRESBEIS AUTOKRATORES* IN 405

The events

In 405, after the Spartan victory at Aigospotamoi and Lysandros' blockade of the Hellespont, the situation worsened in Athens, and famine became a serious threat. When men started to die of starvation,¹⁰ the assembly sent an embassy to Agis in

⁹ The other instances of *presbeis autokratores* are: the Athenian embassy to the Persian king in 449: Diod. 12.4.5; the Athenian embassy to Sparta in 446/5: And. 3.6; the Spartan embassy to Athens in 420: Thuc. 5.45; the Athenian embassy to Sparta in 392: And 3.33; the Spartan embassy to Athens in 391: And. 3.39; the Spartan embassy to Athens in 369: Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.1; and the Macedonian embassy to Athens in 346: Aiskh. 3.63 (cf., however, 2.18). In all seven instances the state that sent *presbeis autokratores* was not threatened with total destruction by the state that received the embassy, and for this reason I do not discuss them in the present article.

¹⁰ On the famine in Athens see Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.11, 14, 16 and 21; Diod. 13.107.4; Plut. *Lys.* 14.3 and Justin. 5.8.1-3.

Dekeleia, offering to conclude a treaty with Sparta, if Athens could keep both her Long Walls and the fortification of Peiraeus (Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.11). Claiming that he had no authority in the matter, the Spartan king directed the Athenian delegation to proceed to Sparta. The Athenians dispatched their ambassadors to Lakadaimon, but before they reached their destination, the ephors met them at Sellasia (on the border of Spartan territory), refused even to entertain a discussion on their terms, and sent them back to Athens with the advice that if it was peace that they wanted, they should come back 'with better counsel' (Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.15). Not long after this, Theramenes offered to go on a personal mission to Lysandros to explore Sparta's motives and intentions, to find out whether they insisted on the demolition of the walls with a view to enslaving the Athenians or merely as a guarantee of good faith. Theramenes remained with Lysandros for more than three months (Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.16–17). Upon his return, he reported that Lysandros had detained him and said that an embassy should go to Sparta because only the ephors had the authority to deal with matters of war and peace. It is worth noting that Xenophon and Lysias both reject Theramenes' explanation and assert that he was really waiting until starvation had so demoralized the Athenians that they would agree to any terms whatever.

Indeed, as they were suffering more and more from famine, the Athenians dispatched ten ambassadors *autokratores*, and Theramenes was one of them (Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.16–17; cf. Lys. 13.10–11).¹¹ When the ephors learned that the Athenian envoys had been sent as *autokratores* they received them (Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.19). The envoys came back to Athens. Against strong opposition (Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.22; cf. Lys. 13.13, 17, 47 and 48) during the meeting of the Athenian assembly, Theramenes recommended the adoption of the following Spartan terms: the Long Walls and those of Peiraeus were to be destroyed; the Athenians were to leave all the cities and to possess their own land; the political exiles were to be taken back; Lemnos, Imbros and Skyros were to be left in the hands of those currently living there; Athens was to be governed according to the ancestral constitution;¹² the Athenians were to have the same friends and enemies as the Lakadaimonians and to follow them wherever they might lead on land or sea; and the number of Athenian ships was to be reduced to twelve (Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.20 and 23; Diod. 13.107.4 and 14.3.2; Plut. *Lys.* 14.4; And. 3.11–12; Lys. 13.14; Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 34.3).¹³

An interpretation

From Xenophon's narrative one can see that the Athenian embassy to Agis communicated the city's interests as unambiguously as possible: it offered to conclude a treaty with Sparta if Athens could keep her walls. In dealing with such a clear exposition of Athens' interests Sparta could either avoid further provocation and end the crisis by accepting the Athenian proposals, or demonstrate a calculated willingness to intensify the conflict. The latter is reflected in the procrastinations of both Agis, first, and Lysandros, a little later; both were interested in protracting the siege of Athens by claiming that only the authorities in Sparta were empowered to deal with matters

¹¹ On Theramenes' two missions see R. Sealey, 'Pap. Mich. Inv. 5982: Theramenes', *ZPE* 16 (1975), 279–88.

¹² Among modern scholars there is doubt about the 'ancestral constitution' provision in the peace treaty: see P. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia* (Oxford, 1981), 427–8; but cf. Paul Cartledge, *Agisilaos and the Crisis of Sparta* (London, 1987), 280–1.

¹³ According to Mosley (1973), 32, the Spartans regarded the embassy with Theramenes and the others as being in their interest 'since they could deal more efficiently with the Athenians in this way'.

of war and peace. This underlines the fact that the Spartan authorities did not have any interest in resolving the crisis immediately on Athens' terms. The ephors' refusal to receive the Athenian embassy at Sellasia reveals no interest in resolving the crisis except on Sparta's own terms. In brief, procrastinating tactics were used by Sparta in order to intensify the crisis inside Athens.

Meanwhile, the combination of stress and uncertainty led the majority of Athenians towards a single-minded determination to safeguard the democracy and suffer devastation rather than surrender and become Sparta's subject. Accordingly, they refused Sparta's terms that they should tear down their Long Walls.¹⁴

Both the adversaries knew that food in Athens was limited. Whereas the Athenians perceived that their task could become immeasurably more difficult when the food supply was completely exhausted, the Spartans saw that this would work to their advantage. Indeed, the plan of Lysandros, aided by Theramenes, resulted in reducing the time available for coming to a decision. This limited decision-time diminished Athens' ability to search for and assess alternatives. Her opportunities to bargain were nil. There was no choice but to capitulate. And the process of capitulation started with the dispatch of the *presbeis autokratores* to Sparta.

The word *autokrator* denotes that the person, or thing, to which it is ascribed must not be in a position of subordination, but free, independent. This meaning is easily understood when the word is used to qualify states as, for example, in Thuc. 4.63.2.¹⁵ Used with nouns like *λογισμός*, reasoning, or *μάχη*, battle, it underlines their decisiveness, e.g., Thuc. 4.108.4¹⁶ and 4.126.5.¹⁷ On the other hand, when it qualifies words like *βουλή*, council, *στρατηγός*, general and other titles of officials, it is implied that the Assembly had delegated special powers – for example, to its generals in 415 to lead the Sicilian expedition (Thuc. 6.8.2) and to its council (And. 1.15) to investigate the profanation of the Mysteries and the affair of the *Hermokopidai*, because of the distance and the state of emergency respectively.¹⁸ Yet, as has been emphasized, no Athenian officials, even those designated as *autokratores*, were free from rendering accounts.¹⁹

But of what was an envoy *autokrator* independent? And what kind of special powers did he enjoy? Etymology is by itself insufficient, I believe, to explain the formula. Any conclusive interpretation must depend on a careful examination of what the *presbeis autokratores* would mean for any of the two contracting parties, that is, the state that sent the embassy and the state that received it.

We know that a Greek city might send envoys with specific instructions beyond which they would not accept discussions or proposals. For example, in 481/0 an embassy was dispatched by the 'Hellenic congress'²⁰ to Argos to seek help against Persia. After the envoys spoke 'as they were charged' *λέγειν τὰ ἐντεταλμένα*, the Argives replied that 'they would do as was asked of them if they might first make a thirty years' peace with Lakedaimon, and the command of half the allied forces were theirs' (Hdt. 7.148–9). The Spartan envoy then said that the demand for a thirty years'

¹⁴ Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.15: 'No one wanted to make any proposal involving the destruction of the walls; and when Archestratos said in the council that it was best to make peace with the Lakedaimonians on the terms they offered he was thrown into prison, [...] and a decree was passed forbidding the making of a proposal of this sort'.

¹⁵ See A. W. Gomme, *HCT* iii. 616.

¹⁶ Ibid. 583.

¹⁷ Ibid. 616.

¹⁸ See also Thuc. 8.67; Dover, *HCT* v. 165; cf. Thuc. 1.126.8 and Gomme, *HCT* i. 426.

¹⁹ Mosley (1973), 31, has conclusively argued this against the compiler of the *Suda* who interprets *αὐτοκράτωρ* as *ἀνπεύθυνος*. See also *HCT* v. 165.

²⁰ P. A. Brunt, 'The Hellenic League against Persia', *Historia* 2 (1953/4), 135–63 at p. 136.

settlement should be referred to their general assembly, obviously because they had no instructions as to how to deal with such a request; but they had been given specific instructions with regard to the command of the Greek armed forces, namely that 'it was impossible to deprive either the Spartan king of his command, but there was nothing to hinder the Argive king from having the same right of voting as their two had'. The Argives 'bade the envoys depart from the land of Argos before sunset, else they would be treated as enemies' (Hdt. 7.149).

The 'Hellenic congress' had also sent an embassy to Gelon of Syracuse. He promised to send military reinforcements and provisions for the whole Greek army on the specific condition that he should 'be general and leader of the Greeks against the foreigner', which again the Spartan in the embassy rejected (Hdt. 7.158–9). When the tyrant modified his demand by offering to leave the command of the army to the Spartans while himself receiving the command of the fleet, it was the Athenian envoy's turn to reject it, 'for the command of the fleet is ours, the Lakedaimonians desire it not for themselves. If they desire to lead it, we withstand them not; but none other will we suffer to be admiral' (Hdt. 7.161).

As E. Bickerman has suggested, one may safely infer from the sources²¹ that envoys were given written instructions, or a draft of a treaty which would have been approved already by their city.²² In 420, Nikias and his colleagues were sent to Lakedaimon with specific instructions on what to discuss and how to justify it before the Spartan authorities (Thuc. 5.46.2–3). This is also implied by Xenophon's narrative of the embassies from Greek cities to Thebes in 367/6. They had been invited by the Thebans 'to hear the letter from the King [...] although the Thebans directed them [...] to swear to these provisions, the representatives from the cities replied that they had not been sent to give their oaths, but to listen' (*Hell.* 7.1.39).

A dispatch of emissaries with specific instructions to follow is advantageous for the sender, and for a democratic city, it was the procedure that ensured that the will of the people would not be thwarted by their envoys. From the receiver's point of view, however, an embassy arriving with specific instructions and proposals may be thought of as a restriction of its own powers. It is readily intelligible that the receiver would be able to lift such restrictions only under special conditions which would turn the balance of power in his favour. In a war special conditions often occur which make the relations between unequals different in quality from free negotiation between equals, namely when one of the adversaries is ready to act 'voluntarily' in order to avoid complete destruction. Accordingly, in 405 the war between Sparta and Athens had evolved in such a manner that Sparta was now able to impose her own terms as to how the two opponents would proceed. Her coercive tactics (blockade, famine, stress, limited decision-time) aimed at leading the Athenians 'to agree to anything and everything which might be proposed' (Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.16). Thus, the ephors at Sellasia refused to conduct the Athenian emissaries to Sparta when they heard they had specific proposals – indeed, the same as those which they had presented to Agis (2.2.13). On the other hand, they received the embassy that included Theramenes, when they found out that its members had been designated as *autokratores* (2.2.19).²³

²¹ Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 43.6; And. 3.35; Aiskh. 2.50; Dem. 19.278; Pollux, *Onom.* 8.96; and Polyb. 23.2.4–5.

²² E. Bickerman, 'La trêve de 423 av. J.-C. entre Athènes et Sparte', *RIDA* 1 (1952), 199–213 at p. 207. He has also shown that Thuc. 4.118.1–10 constitutes the 'aide-mémoire', the written instructions that the Spartan envoys had submitted to the Athenian *prytaneis* in the negotiations of an armistice treaty in 423. See also Mosley (1973), 21.

²³ Comparison may be made with the procedure of the Roman *deditio* as we know it from an early example, the surrender of Collatia to Tarquin the Elder, which is recorded in Livy's

Xenophon's wording in the *Hellenika* reveals that different tasks had been assigned to the various embassies:

(2.2.11) ἐπεμψαν πρέσβεις παρ' Ἄγιν βουλομένοι σύμμαχοι εἶναι Λακεδαιμονίοις ἔχοντες τὰ τεῖχη καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις συνθήκαις ποιείσθαι.

(2.2.13) καὶ ἐπίθοντο οἱ ἔφοροι αὐτῶν ἃ ἔλεγον, ὅνα οἰάπερ καὶ πρὸς Ἄγιν, αὐτόθεν αὐτοὺς ἐκέλευον ἀπιέναι, καὶ εἴ τι δέονται εἰρήνης, κάλλιον ἦκειν βουλευσαμένους.

(2.2.19) ἐρωτώμενοι δὲ ἐπὶ τίνι λόγῳ ἦκοιεν εἶπον ὅτι αὐτοκράτορες περὶ εἰρήνης, μετὰ ταῦτα οἱ ἔφοροι καλεῖν ἐκέλευον αὐτούς.

(2.2.21) Θηραμένης δὲ καὶ οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ πρέσβεις ἐπανάφερον ταῦτα εἰς τὰς Ἀθήνας.

(2.2.22) ἀπήγγελλον οἱ πρέσβεις ἐφ' οἷς οἱ Λακεδαιμόνιοι ποιοῖντο τὴν εἰρήνην.

Whereas the envoys to Agis and the Sellasia embassy both play an active role in bringing the Athenian peace proposals to the Spartan authorities, the *presbeis autokratores* seem to participate rather passively: Xenophon does not mention them in his description of the assembly of the Spartans and their allies, who discussed whether to destroy Athens totally or to call upon her to surrender. The most the Athenian ambassadors could do was to move their enemies to clemency as other embassies did under similar circumstances. For example, in 480, after his decisive victory over the Carthaginians at the battle of Himera, Gelon received their *presbeis autokratores*. The role of these 'ablest orators and counsellors' was to 'beg Gelon with tears to treat them humanely' (Diod. 11.24.4 and 25.2). I infer that the function of the embassy with Theramenes was not to discuss Athens' proposals but to listen and finally to take home Sparta's declaration calling upon Athens to surrender 'unconditionally'. The function of the *presbeis autokratores* in 405/4 B.C. is, in my view, parallel to that of a community's representatives with 'full power' in the Middle Ages. By the end of the thirteenth century a medieval king usually specified that communities send representatives with '*plena potestas*'. Was the *plena potestas* an expression of involuntary consent to the acts and decision of the king or a consent which limited the royal authority? Examining the question from the vantage point of the royal prerogative in the face of individual and community rights, G. Post writes: "'Full power'" was consent to the decision of king and court and council, consent given before the assembly was held. But in the assembly the representatives had the right to use all legal means of shaping the final decision in favour of their constituents'.²⁴ Nonetheless, I have argued that *presbeis autokratores* did not have the capacity to shape the final decision. This is because conditions of war explicitly favouring only the enemy define their 'full powers'.

III. *PRESBEIS AUTOKRATORES* FROM OLYNTHOS IN 379

The delegation of *presbeis autokratores* from Olynthos to the Spartan victors in 379 is in many ways similar to the mission from Athens we have just examined. In the war with Olynthos Sparta followed the same coercive tactics: the blockade of Olynthos resulted in severe famine which intensified the stress of the inhabitants and reduced considerably their time to search for alternatives through negotiations. Like Athens, Olynthos had to accept dictated terms; she had 'to count the same people enemies and friends as the Lacedaemonians did, to follow wherever they led the way, and to

account of the end of the war between Romans and Sabines. While the Spartan ephors asked whether the *presbeis* were *autokratores*, independent, the Roman king asked the delegates of Collatia whether the People of Collatia was its own master: 'Estne populus Collatinus in sua potestate?' (Liv. 38.1.2).

²⁴ G. Post, 'Plena Potestas and Consent in Medieval Assemblies', *Traditio* 1 (1943), 355–408 at p. 404.

be their allies'. In brief, both cities became subordinate allies within the Peloponnesian League.

On the other hand, the two events in 405/4 and 379 are different in the following respect: in 405/4 Theramenes and the other Athenian ambassadors did not conclude a settlement. They returned and reported the Spartan terms to the Athenian Assembly which finally felt compelled by the circumstances to accede to Sparta's harsh demands. Unlike their Athenian colleagues, the Olynthian *presbeis autokratores* concluded a treaty and gave the oaths (Xen. *Hell.* 5.3.26). On the basis of this difference it is plausible to infer that the power to conclude a treaty was a power which the *presbeis autokratores* did not always exercise. But then the question is, under what circumstances could they exercise it?

The short answer is that the decision to 'sign' would depend upon agreement among themselves. Although no Greek writer, to my knowledge, comments on the significance of the size of an embassy and agreement among its members, my speculation rests upon the following. As P. Briant suggests, the degree of confidence in the envoys is reflected in the size of the embassy: the greater the confidence the smaller the number of delegates.²⁵ Because in a democracy different political interests may be represented in an embassy, Athenian delegations often had more than three members,²⁶ whereas only one Spartan instance is known with five emissaries: in 370/69 five ambassadors went to Athens.²⁷ Most important, Sparta's readiness to delegate full discretionary powers even to one person is seen in the dispatch of King Agesilaos to Mantinea in 370 (Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.4). Further, documents from medieval history indicate that dissension among envoys hindered negotiations. For example, in 1303 full power was given by King Edward I to four envoys (the Bishop of Winchester and others) to negotiate a treaty of peace with France. The associated document²⁸ specifies that, if the four envoys should not all agree, then three of them would have special full power and special authority to treat for the confirmation of peace and control. Hence, consensus within the embassy may perhaps be seen as the principle that allowed the *presbeis autokratores* from Olynthos to accept and swear to the treaty proposed by Sparta, whereas dissension among themselves forced the Athenian *presbeis autokratores* in 405 to refer the proposals to their assembly.²⁹

In brief, I would argue that the dispatch of *presbeis autokratores* in 405 and 379 was determined by the critical conditions of surrender. The envoys did not have the power to negotiate but were compelled either to conclude a settlement on imposed terms if the members of the mission all agreed, or, if they did not, to bring back to their city the opponent's proposals, which did not include any provisions of mutual interest and obligation, but expressed only the will of the conqueror.

²⁵ P. Briant, 'La Boulé et l'élection des ambassadeurs à Athènes au IV^e siècle', *REA* 70, (1968), 7–31 at p. 20. Contrary to Briant, D. J. Mosley, 'The Size of Athenian Embassies Again', *GRBS* 11 (1970), 35–42, has argued that both small and large embassies were appointed for apparently 'significant and minor issues alike' (p. 41). Despite the number of small embassies, mentioned by Mosley, which probably included dissentients, the difference that emerges in the diplomatic practice of Athens and Sparta, discussed below, is of great importance for my analysis.

²⁶ Mosley (1973), 55–7. It is noteworthy that in honouring the Samians in 405 Athens made a provision that if the Athenians should send an embassy, those present from Samos should jointly send any envoy they wished: *IG* II²1 (I³127). There is no doubt that different political interests were represented by the Athenian *presbeis autokratores* sent to Sparta in 392: some of them had been proposed by Sparta and some had been elected by the Athenian people; *Argum. Andok.* or. 3: F. Jacoby, *FGrHist* 3 B, p. 142. ²⁷ Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.33. Mosley (1973), 50.

²⁸ Cited in Jean Dumont, *Corps universel diplomatique du droit des gens* (1726–31), i(1), 333–4.

²⁹ One may plausibly infer dissension among the Athenian ambassadors to Sparta in 392: see also above, n. 26.

IV. OTHER CASES OF SPARTAN COERCIVE DIPLOMACY

Having categorized the patterns of behaviour of two opposing states in situations where power is unequally divided, I will try now to generalize the findings and shall advance the speculation that *presbeis autokratores* were sent not only in 405 and 379 but also on other occasions reported by Xenophon in his *Hellenika*, even when the term itself does not appear.

In 402 the Spartan ephors and assembly took the decision 'to bring the Eleians to their senses'. Accordingly, Spartan ambassadors went to Elis to tell her people what was right to do, namely to give the '*perioikic*' cities in Eleia and Triphylia their independence. As the Eleians refused to obey 'for the reason that they held the towns as prizes of war', the ephors declared war on them (3.2.23). Agis and his army invaded the Eleian land twice and laid it waste (3.2.24), while the presence of the Lakedaimonian army encouraged revolt among Elis' dependencies (3.2.25) and civil strife inside the city; it ended only when the oligarchs were forced to flee to Sparta (3.2.27–9). The plundering of the countryside continued until the summer of 400, when the commons were compelled to send *presbeis* to Sparta. Although Xenophon is not explicit about the reasons that made Thrasydaïos, the leader of the commons, capitulate, it was, I believe, the prolonged devastation of the country, which apparently resulted in famine and suffering, that compelled the Eleians to accept terms worse than the ones they had rejected in 402. They concluded a treaty of peace and alliance according to which they had not only to leave all their '*perioikic*' cities, apart from Olympia, independent – they had been asked to do this in 402 – but also to tear down the walls of Phea and Kyllene (3.2.30–1). If the treaty in 400 may be seen as a treaty of capitulation, the Eleian envoys may also be seen as *presbeis autokratores* who were compelled to go to Sparta not to negotiate but to receive a harsh settlement.

The Eleians were not the only people in the Peloponnese to suffer from the coercive diplomatic tactics of Sparta. After the Peace of Antalkidas, the Lakedaimonians resolved to punish those of their own allies who 'had been more favourably disposed toward the enemy than toward Lakedaimon and to put them in such a situation that they could not be disloyal' (5.2.1). Thus, in 386 Spartan envoys were dispatched and ordered the Mantineians to tear down their wall. When the Mantineians refused to do so, the Lakedaimonians mobilized against them. Under the leadership of Agesipolis, they first laid waste the land and then dug a trench and built a wall round the city with the aim of convincing the Mantineians, apparently through famine, that they had to give in if they wanted to avoid a catastrophe. After having found that corn in the city was abundant, the Lakedaimonians dammed the river which flowed through the city. In order to avoid enslavement the Mantineians offered to surrender on terms much worse than those settled a year earlier. They agreed not only to tear down the walls but also to dwell apart in villages (Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.1–7).

It is interesting to follow Agesilaos' tactics over the forcible restoration of oligarchic exiles to democratic Phleious. When the Spartan king marched against them in 381, the Phleiasians sent envoys to negotiate terms so that their country would not be invaded. Agesilaos then asked them to hand over their acropolis. Upon their refusal he invaded, built a wall around the city and besieged them. Once again, starvation brought *presbeis* to Sparta³⁰ whose task was not to negotiate but 'to leave it to the

³⁰ For our discussion it is not important that the envoys asked Agesilaos only to give them safe conduct for going to Sparta nor that Agesilaos, 'angered because they treated him as one without authority, sent to his friends at home and arranged that the decision about Phleious should be left with him': Xen. *Hell.* 5.3.23–4.

authorities of the Lakedaimonians to do whatever they would with the city' (5.3.23). Accordingly, in 379 the Phleasians were compelled to restore the oligarchic exiles. Further, under the protection of a garrison which Agesilaos left in the city, fifty of these restored exiles and fifty of the other (no doubt oligarchic) citizens would determine, first, who ought to be put to death and second, what the constitution of the city would be (5.3.25).

V. CONCLUSION

The five cases examined above all involved protracted wars which ended in a capitulation, of the Athenians in 404, the Eleians in 400, the Mantineians in 385, the Phleasians in 379 and the Olynthians in 379. All these states fought against Sparta. The latter's threats against them were well communicated and highly credible but at the same time insufficient to convince. This points to her opponents' strong ideological motivation, a willingness to pay a high price in order to save their walls, fleet or acropolis, all things which they had gained and preserved at the cost of time, money and human lives; their loss was viewed as highly dangerous for their democracy or their federal state (Olynthos).³¹ In all cases Sparta achieved her aims through coercive diplomacy. On each occasion the capitulation treaty included no mutual advantages or obligations but imposed terms upon the vanquished. On the basis that all five cases exhibit the same general pattern of coercive diplomacy, i.e. blockade, famine, suffering, limited decision-time, I would suggest that the envoys whom the vanquished sent to Sparta for the settlement of capitulation in 400, 385 and 379 would have been *autokratores* like those dispatched by Athens and Olynthos in 405/4 and 379 respectively.

In addition, the use of a similar wording in several cases strengthens the interpretation of *presbeis autokratores* offered in this paper. In the instances under consideration, they were special envoys dispatched by a city ready to capitulate to its stronger opponent; they were not expected to make any proposals on behalf of their own city but only to accept, either by 'signing' or taking back home, whatever the conqueror wanted to propose (all references from Xenophon's *Hellenika*):

(2.2.16) ὁπότε Ἀθηναῖοι ἐμελλον διὰ τὸ ἐπιλελοιπέναι τὸν σῖτον ἅπαντα ὃ τι τις λέγοι ὁμολογήσειν.

(5.3.23) δεδόχθαι γάρ σφισιν (sc. the Phleasians) ἔφασαν ἐπιτρέπειν τοῖς τελέσι τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων χρῆσασθαι τῇ πόλει ὃ τι βούλονται.

(5.3.25) ἡ πόλις (sc. Sparta) ἐπιτρέποι Ἀγισιλάῳ διαγνῶναι τὰ ἐν Φλειούντι ὅπως αὐτῷ δοκοίη.

Further, compulsion-words like ἀναγκάζειν (Xen. *Hell.* 3.2.31; 5.3.26) and ἀνάγκη (5.2.5) and words of punishment like σωφρονίζειν (3.2.23) and κολάζειν (5.2.1) definitely assign to Sparta the role of a coercing power. In all the cases I have examined, and more explicitly in the aggressive treatment of the Peloponnesian cities, Sparta increased the number of self-regarding demands and bound her opponents into a settlement of submission.³² In addition, presumptions of strength are reflected in these expressions, in particular where Xenophon reports decisions of the Spartan authorities with reference to the question of power in the Peloponnese: 'the ephors and the assembly in Sparta [...] determined to bring the Eleians to their senses' (3.2.23). They also resolved to chastise all those among their allies 'who had been more favourably

³¹ On the federal state of the 'Chalkidians' led by Olynthos see Cartledge (1987), 269ff.

³² Compare 2.2.20 to 2.2.11 and 15 (Athens); 3.2.30–1 to 3.2.23 (Elis); 5.2.5 and 7 to 5.2.1 (Mantineia) and 5.3.25 to 5.3.13 (Phleious).

inclined toward the enemy than toward Lakedaïmon and put them in such a situation that they could not be disloyal' (5.2.1; cf. 5.3.13 and 27). Such punitive foreign policy guidelines indicate an imperialistic ambition which the historian explicitly assigns to Sparta in 5.3.27.³³ Through coercive diplomacy she dictated terms to those who might have resisted her. For her opponents the choice was between two evils, total destruction with enslavement, or surrender. In the five cases we examined they chose to send *presbeis* to capitulate. It is true that lack of evidence prevents us from knowing with certainty whether the ambassadors in 400, 385 and 379 (Phleious) were designated as *autokratores*. Nevertheless, all three incidents provide examples of coercion functionally similar to the events in 405 and 379 (Olynthos) and show that the diplomatic process being analysed occurred repeatedly in Greek interstate relations.

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³³ On the Spartan policy see Cartledge (1987), esp. chapters 13 and 14.