

T. Keith DIX , Carl A. ANDERSON

Was the Athenian Empire a Tyranny? The Case of the Eteocarpathians

That the Athenians thought of their empire as a kind of tyranny is well attested in fifth-century literature. Cleon's remarks in the Mitylenian debate come to mind immediately. Echoing and exaggerating Pericles' earlier characterization (Th. 2.63.2), Cleon tells the assembly that their empire is a tyranny over those "who are unwilling to be ruled and who plot against Athens" (Th. 3.37.2). The comic poets likewise exploit this conceit. Aristophanes' chorus of Knights happily assures the character Demos that "all men fear him, like they fear a tyrant" (1111-14). Documents such as the Eteocarpathian decree (*IG I3 1454*) provide a fresh perspective on the nature and operation of the empire. The decree suggests that the relationship between Athens and the Eteocarpathians was complex, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial.

The decree, redated by Lewis and Jameson to ca. 445-30, honors the *koinon* of the Eteocarpathians for sending a cypress beam from Apollo's precinct on Carpathos to the temple of *Athena Athenon medeousa* at Athens. The decree's provisions indicate political difficulties on Carpathos which led to Athenian intervention and to political privileges and higher political status for the *koinon* within the Delian League. This paper argues that the gift of the cypress and issuance of the decree are associated with the first appearance of the *koinon* on the Athenian Tribute List in 434/3 BCE (*ATL 274*). The *koinon* appears under the rubric, "cities which took the initiative in getting themselves assessed" (Lepper, *JHS* 82 [1962]); we can regard this action as evidence of Eteocarpathian initiative in working out the terms of its accession to the alliance.

Further evidence of that initiative may be seen in the use of the title *Athena Athenon medeousa*, which has been identified with Athena Polias, patron goddess of the Athenians, as viewed from outside Athens by her subject allies (Barron, *JHS* 84 [1964]). *Athena Athenon medeousa* and Apollo on Carpathos are both part of a family tree which links Athenians and Eteocarpathians in a common mythical ancestry. The Athenian stipulation that the inscription stand specifically in the sanctuary of Apollo had a compelling political reason: Apollo, patron god of the Eteocarpathians, was also ancestor of the Athenians and of the Ionians and (at least after the decree of Thoudippos in 425) of the Eteocarpathians as well.

The Eteocarpathians chose a gift which reflected the primary Athenian strategic interest in Carpathos as a source of timber, asserted their devotion to their ally's chief deity, and showed they could hold their own in competitive gift-giving among the allies (compare the comic inventory in Hermippus [*PCG* 5 fr. 63]). The inscription concerns formal relations between two states and so the gift must have been destined to a major temple rather than any other unknown temple of Athena. In the third quarter of the fifth century, the cypress could only have been used in the construction of one of two great temples on

the Acropolis: the Erechtheion or the Parthenon. In either case, the Eteocarpathians participated actively in the Athenian imperial enterprise and seem to have gained influence and advantage in exchange for their participation.