

σίδας δ' ὅτι τὰς ροιάς καλοῦσι Βοιωτοὶ Ἀγαθαρχίδης ἐν τῇ ἐννεακαίδεκάτῃ τῶν Εὐρώπιακῶν οὕτως γράφει· <<ἀμφισβητούντων Ἀθηναίων πρὸς Βοιωτοὺς περὶ τῆς χώρας ἣν καλοῦσι Σίδας, Ἐπαμ<ε>ωνῶνδας δικαιολογούμενος ἐξαίφνης ἐκ τῆς ἀριστερᾶς μεταλαβὼν κεκρυμμένην ῥόαν καὶ δείξας ἤρετο τί καλοῦσι τοῦτο. τῶν δ' εἰπόντων ῥόαν', ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς', εἶπε, 'σίδαν'—ὁ δὲ τόπος τοῦτ' ἔχει τὸ φυτὸν ἐν αὐτῷ πλεῖστον, ἀφ' οὗ τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἴληφε προσηγορίαν—καὶ ἐνίκησεν.>>

This incident has never found its place either in the history of the Theban hegemony or in the life of Epameinondas,¹ and even Jacoby's commentary on the fragment sheds virtually no light on the matter.²

The first problem is to determine the location of Sidai, and the only clues to that are the fact that the pomegranate grew there in abundance and that the place was on the Boiotian-Attic border. Although the early travellers are generally silent on this subject, C. Bursian suggested that Sidai was located in the fertile Skourta plain or else in the Oropia, and in this he was followed by Zwicker in *RE*.³ Yet according to Professor E. Vanderpool, who has for years explored the Skourta plain, Sidai was not likely to have been situated in the plain because the climate there is too cold to permit the growth of the pomegranate.⁴ Instead E. Arrigoni has recently argued that Sidai was located in the first valley of the Asopos river on the road from Athens and the Amphiareion, which runs over Mt. Pentelikon, to Oropos.⁵ He also pointed out that this valley is ideally suited for the cultivation of the pomegranate because it is well watered and low lying.⁶

Once Sidai is located in the Oropia, the historical setting for this incident is obvious. In 366 B.C. Themison, tyrant of Eretria and ally of the Boiotian Confederacy, conspired with some exiles of Oropos to seize the city.⁷ They did so, and then handed Oropos over to a Theban army. In response the Athenians sent an army under Chabrias to regain the city, but there was little that he could do in the face of the victors of Leuktra. Instead, on the advice of Kallistratos, Chabrias and his army 'ανεχώρησαν Θηβαίοις παρακαταθέμενοι τὸν Ὀρωπὸν μέχρι δίκης'.⁸ This is where Agatharchides' testimony finds its place. According

¹ It is not mentioned by G. Grote, *History of Greece*, x (London, 1869), 47; E. von Stern, *Geschichte der spartanischen und thebanischen Hegemonie* (Dorpat, 1884), pp. 208–9; K. J. Beloch, *Griechische Geschichte* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1922), III². 1. 189–90; M. Fortina, *Epaminonda* (Turin, 1958), pp. 71–2.

² See *F.Gr.Hist.* II C 152.

³ Bursian, *Geographie von Griechenland*, i (Leipzig, 1862), 249; Zwicker, *RE* iiA (1923), 2209–10. Geyer, *RE* iiA (1923), 2207–8, who called Sidai 'eine . . . strittige Landschaft', contented himself with quoting Agatharchides without suggesting where Sidai was located.

⁴ Personal communication of 5 Oct. 1975.

⁵ *Ἀθηνά* 72 (1971), 61–2. Professor

Vanderpool kindly drew my attention to this article.

⁶ C. Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, iii (Paris, 1884), 193, had earlier suggested that Sidai was perhaps located in the region of Oropos. Although A. Schaefer, *Demosthenes und seine Zeit*, i (Leipzig, 1856), 94 n.1, referred to Müller's suggestion, he did not commit himself on this point.

⁷ *Xen. Hell.* 7.4.1; *Diod.* 15.71.1; *Isok.* 5.53; *Aischin.* 2.164; 3.85 and schol.; *Dem.* 18.99 and schol.; and schol. to *Dem.* 21.64. For chronology, see J. Roy, *Historia* 20 (1971), 592.

⁸ *Xen. Hell.* 7.4.1; see also R. Sealey, *Historia* 5 (1956), 195.

to F 8, the arbitration that the Athenians demanded actually took place, and it is hardly surprising that the Thebans were willing to submit to such proceedings. The region of Oropos is geographically a part of Boiotia and had been Boiotian until some time early in the fifth century.¹ Still, the Athenians had never incorporated the area into their system of demes, and the Theban claim to the area was strong. Moreover, the Thebans had further strengthened their position by regaining possession of Oropos in 402 B.C. and holding it during the early part of the fourth century.² The Thebans could clearly show priority of possession, and had little to fear from impartial arbitration. The whole point of Epameinondas' use of the pomegranate was to illustrate that priority.

Unfortunately, little more can be said about the incident, and several questions must go unanswered, questions such as who acted as arbitrator and how that party was selected.³ Nevertheless, Agatharchides presents evidence which contradicts that of Demosthenes and Aischines, both of whom later in the fourth century decried the Theban recovery of Oropos as illegal.⁴ According to this tradition contemporary Greeks did not agree with the Athenians on this point; and Epameinondas, having successfully defended the Boiotian right to Oropos, vindicated in law the Theban recovery of the place.

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¹ J. G. Frazer, *Pausanias's Description of Greece*, ii (London, 1913), 463 ff.

² Diod. 14.17.1–3.

³ The alleged Achaian arbitration mentioned by Polybios (2.39.8–10) and Strabo (8.7.1) is certainly not authentic (see F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybios*, i (Oxford, 1957), 266–7) and has no bearing on this problem.

⁴ Isokrates too claimed (5.53) τὴν δ' ἡμετέραν πόλιν μέρος τι τῆς χώρας [sc. Oropos] ἀπεστέρουσιν. But even though Isokrates was fully a contemporary of these events, his testimony must be dealt with carefully, for P. Cloché, *Revue historique*, 193 (1942), 277–96, has amply proved Isokrates' deep and abiding hatred of the Thebans.