

SIMICHIDAS' WALK AND THE LOCALITY OF BOURINA IN THEOCRITUS, *ID.* 7

The aim of this article is to offer what I consider to be necessary substantiation for the view that the description of the walk which acts as a frame for the singing contest in *Id.* 7 is based on a precise knowledge of the geography of the island of Cos and that the poem thus displays a topographical realism unique in Greek pastoral.

The view, which may be called the *communis opinio*, is founded on the researches of W. R. Paton, *CR* 2 (1888), 265, the same scholar and E. L. Hicks, *The Inscriptions of Cos* (Oxford, 1891), and R. Herzog, *Koische Forschungen und Funde* (Leipzig, 1899); it has been supported most recently by S. M. Sherwin-White, *Ancient Cos: an historical study from the Dorian settlement to the Imperial period*, *Hypomnemata* LI (Göttingen, 1978).¹ It is represented by the editors of Theocritus, including R. J. Cholmeley (London, 1909), A. S. F. Gow (Cambridge, 1952), and K. J. Dover (Basingstoke and London, 1971) and by recent interpreters of the poem, notably G. Lawall, *Theocritus' Coan Pastorals: a Poetry Book* (Washington D.C. and Cambridge, Mass., 1967), p. 75 *et passim* and F. Williams, 'A Theophany in Theocritus', *CQ* N.S. 21 (1971), 137 ff.

The traditional reconstruction of the walk of Simichidas and his friends may be summarized as follows. The walk starts from the city of Cos (ἐκ πόλιος, line 2)² and continues εἰς τὸν Ἄλεια (1). Views differ over the exact meaning of ὁ Ἄλεις. Paton and Hicks assume Theocritus is talking about the Coan deme named Haleis.³ Gow suggests it is a river, on the grounds that deme names in Coan inscriptions are not accompanied by the article and that the name is associated elsewhere with rivers (see his note on *Id.* 5.123). It would seem at least possible to identify the Haleis with the river that flows into the salt lake on the north coast of Cos, nowadays called Alike.⁴ Most recently, Sherwin-White has suggested that Haleis was a city, the centre of the deme of the Halentioi who took their name from it, though she admits that the exact position of a city named Haleis is at present unknown.⁵ But the general area of 'the Haleis', whatever it may be, is quite certain. The steps of the party can therefore be traced without difficulty. They lead along the main road west from the city of Cos with the northern coast facing modern Turkey on the right and the mountains of Cos on the left and to the south.

The next identifiable⁶ indication of the group's movements occurs at lines

¹ See also Herzog's *Heilige Gesetze von Kos* (*Abb. Pr. Ak. Wiss., Phil.-Hist. Kl.*, 1928), A. N. Modona, *L'Isola di Coa nell' antichità classica* (Rhodes, 1933), D. Hatze-amallos, *Κῶς τὸ νησί τοῦ Ἰπποκράτους* (Athens, 1952), and G. E. Bean and J. M. Cook, 'The Carian Coast III', *A.B.S.A.* 52 (1957), 119-27.

² So Gow *ad loc.* For the removal of the city in 366/365 BC from Astypalaea to the later site, see Bean and Cook, pp. 120 ff. and Sherwin-White, pp. 40 ff.

³ Op. cit., pp. 212 f., after Σ; Herzog,

Forschungen, p. 165, follows them in his location of the deme.

⁴ Even though they take Theocritus to mean the deme Haleis, Paton and Hicks remark: 'The stream which runs into the salt lake may have been also called Haleis' (p. 213). It is true, however, that Σ *ad loc.* do not mention a river.

⁵ Op. cit., p. 59.

⁶ There is no evidence from Σ, epigraphy, or historical sources concerning the precise locality of the tomb of Brasilas (11). (See addendum.)

130 ff. There we are told that Lycidas turns left, 'taking the road to Pyxa', but Simichidas and his friends turn towards Phrasidamus' and Antigenes' farm. Scholars are certainly right in placing Pyxa (or, according to the inscriptions, Phyxia) in the region of the modern *κοινότης*, Asphendiu, in the foothills west-south-west of the city of Cos.⁷ In that case, the course of the walk is quite plain: Lycidas turns left, thus heading due south, to the region of Asphendiu on the northern slopes of the mountain range, while Simichidas and his friends turn from the road (*στραφθέντες*, 132) and head due west to the area slightly south of the salt lake into which a river flows, possibly, as we have seen, called the Haleis. Paton suggested that the site of the pleasance described at lines 131 ff. may have been north-west of a 207m hill south of Alike, where there is an abundant spring. The walk can be followed on the accompanying map. (See p. 377)

There is one more landmark along the walk which has been located with reasonable certainty. In his condemnation of the enemies of 'the bard of Chios' (47: = Homer, *Σ ad loc.*) Lycidas mentions a mountain named Oromedon (46).⁸ It seems highly possible that this is in fact the highest peak of the mountain range on the party's left, which would have been plainly visible to the party as it walked west. The peak is nowadays called Dikeo. At its foot lies Asphendiu, the ancient Pyxa. Now Herzog discovered a sacrificial calendar at Asphendiu attesting a cult of 'Απόλλων Ὀρομέδων',⁹ which confirms the *Σ ad 130* who say that there was a temple of Apollo at Pyxa and that it was famous enough for the title Πύξιος to be conferred on the god.¹⁰ Dikeo is thus likely to be the ancient Oromedon; such, moreover, was the view of one *Σ ad loc.*, and, even if he appears to be deriving the name from *ὄρος*, he may only be offering an explanation for a name he knows existed: τὸ δὲ ἀληθές · Ὀρομέδων ἐστὶν ὄρος ἐν Κῶ ὑψηλότερον τῶν ἐν τῇ Κῶ ἐτέρων ὀρέων, κατ' ἑκτασιν . . . τοῦ ὁ. Theocritus is, then, adding a graphic touch of realism to Lycidas' literary-critical observations. Furthermore, Lycidas will be heading towards the mountain as he takes the road to Pyxa at its foot.

This reconstruction of the route taken by the party obviously attempts to fit

⁷ Paton and Hicks, pp. 212 f. discovered an inscription (No. 327) mentioning a δᾶμος ὁ Φυξιωτῶν in the ruins of a church to St. Paul; the tablets were not in their original position, but Paton and Hicks postulated that the town or village of Pyxa was not far away and suggested Asphendiu: 'The village of Phyxia lay therefore to the south of the direct road to Haleis, and may be placed on the hill in the neighbourhood of Asphendiu' (p. 212). They are followed by Herzog, *Forschungen*, p. 164, Gow *ad 130*, Sherwin-White, p. 59, *et al.* The *κοινότης* nowadays, like Pyli and Antimachia, consists of several small *συνοικισμοί*; it is interesting that the one that retained the name Asphendiu in Herzog's time (*Forschungen*, p. 164) no longer does so.

⁸ ὥς μοι καὶ τέκτων μέγ' ἀπέχθεται
δασις ἐρευνῇ
ἶσον ὄρευσ κορυφᾷ τελέσαι δόμον
Ὀρομέδοντος,

καὶ Μοισᾶν ὄρνιχες ὅσοι ποτὶ Χίον
αὐδόν
ἀντὶα κοκκύζοντες ἐτώσια μοχθίζοντι.
(45-8)

The case for the v.l. *Εὐρυμέδοντος* is weakened by Herzog's discoveries discussed below.

⁹ *Heilige Gesetze*, p. 17. Gow agrees with the identification, though he does not mention Herzog's discovery. *Σ* are unsure about the breathing (the smooth breathing is implied in the *Σ* quoted in the main text below) and perhaps we should follow the suggestion of F. Williams, *art. cit.*, 142 f. that the spelling Horomedon be adopted.

¹⁰ Paton and Hicks did not have Herzog's evidence confirming *Σ ad 130* about the cult of Apollo at Pyxa and dismissed them (p. 213); Herzog is followed e.g. by Sherwin-White, pp. 59 and 302 in locating Mt. Oromedon.

the facts of Coan geography, as we know them. But there is one geographical reference in the poem which has, perhaps, not been accounted for with the same cogency as the others. In lines 6–9 Theocritus celebrates the history and appearance of a spring on Cos, *Βούρῳα*, which, he says, was created by one of the ancestors of Simichidas' hosts, Chalcon. Now there is a spring called *Βουρίνα* on the island today.¹¹ It is approximately 5 km south-south-west of the city of Cos. Herzog identified it with the ancient spring. The name he considered an archaeological revival by early nineteenth-century scholars, a matter on which he has been followed, for example, by Gow and Sherwin-White, but he none the less claimed, with reasoning dangerously close to mere dogmatism, 'Die Identität ist für jeden Verständigen sicher' (*Forschungen*, p. 159 n. 4). But though the proponents of the traditional view have followed him, acceptance of his identification has been, one feels, somewhat uncritical, and the weakness in his argument has never been satisfactorily cleared up.¹² Theocritus' lines on Bourina have therefore been seized upon by protagonists of a rival view of the geography of the walk. In an influential article M. Puelma argued¹³ that Bourina should be identified with the scene of Phrasidamus' and Antigene's harvest festival described at the poem's close (131 ff.). He went further and attempted in a long footnote¹⁴ to prove his identification on internal grounds. T. G. Rosenmeyer made the same assumption: 'The two *loci* are, topographically speaking, identical.'¹⁵ G. Luck and U. Ott have also followed Puelma.¹⁶ Needless to say, this identification would throw discredit upon the traditional view of the walk and upon the notion that the setting of *Id.* 7 is geographically realistic, for it would place Bourina on Phrasidamus' farm in 'the Haleis', whereas in the traditional reconstruction the spring is located at least 5 km east of the farm's probable site. However, the arguments for the rival view are unconvincing¹⁷ and further evidence on the location of the ancient Bourina is necessary to settle the matter.

¹¹ The well-house is described by Herzog, *Forschungen*, pp. 159 ff., Gow *ad* 6 f., Sherwin-White, p. 17, *et al.* Older scholarship (represented e.g. by Herzog and, more cautiously, Gow) argued from the beehive construction of its chamber that it is of Mycenaean date; more recently, scholars have drawn attention to the fact that there have been no Mycenaean finds at the site: so Sherwin-White, p. 17 (with lit.), who suggests that a Hellenistic or Roman date seems more likely (see further *ibid.*, p. 284 n. 152).

¹² The identification is accepted without further comment by e.g. Gow *ad* 6 f. and Sherwin-White, pp. 16 f.

¹³ 'Die Dichterbegegnung in Theokrits "Thalysien"', *M.H.* 17 (1960), 144 ff.

¹⁴ pp. 162 f. n. 58.

¹⁵ *The Green Cabinet: Theocritus and the European Pastoral Lyric* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), p. 187.

¹⁶ G. Luck, 'Zur Deutung von Theokrits Thalysien', *M.H.* 13 (1966), 186 n. 3 and U. Ott, 'Theokrits "Thalysien" und ihre

literarischen Vorbilder', *Rb.M.* N.F. 115 (1972), 147 n. 44.

¹⁷ Puelma (*loc. cit.*) argues for his identification on internal grounds. He claims that if Bourina is not on Phrasidamus' farm then the Bourina description lacks point. But surely it has point enough as a typically Alexandrian *aition* meant in a complimentary manner to connect Simichidas', or, to follow Σ *ad* 21, Theocritus' hosts with the mythical antiquity of Cos. Moreover, Puelma notes the repetition of the phrase *ἀγέωροι πετέλει τε* in the lines on Bourina and the pleasure description (8 and 136); this, he says, proves the identification. But on a visit to the island in 1971 I saw elms and poplars at Zia, one of the *συνοικισμοί* of Asphendiu, and Mr John Raven has assured me that they could well have grown at Bourina and the likely site of Phrasidamus' farm in Theocritus' time; it is thus most probable that *ἀγέωροι πετέλει τε* is an actual description and that poetic stylization (or necessity) has grouped the words in this combination. (Puelma

I wish to propose here what I think to be a new proof of the identification of the ancient with the modern spring, though I accept that doubt attaches to whether the name has actually survived from antiquity and am prepared to believe that it is a revival; the change of accent, a minor issue, is perhaps merely due to the influence of the Italian still spoken on Cos. Firstly, we know that Claudius' personal physician, the Coan C. Stertinus Xenophon, improved the water supply of the famous Asclepieion on Cos by running pipes from the spring nowadays called Bourina to the temple;¹⁸ the spring is about 1 km south and upland of it. Secondly, we have indisputable evidence (independent of *Id.* 7.6 ff. and Σ ad loc.) that Bourina was a cult-centre of Asclepius; it is found in the invocation to Asclepius by Nero's personal physician, Andromachus of Crete: ἰληκοῖς ὅς τήνδε μάκαρ τεκτῆναο Παίων, / εἶπε σε Τρικκαῖοι, δαῖμον, ἔχουσι λόφοι, / ἢ Ῥόδος ἢ Βούρινα καὶ ἀγχιάλη Ἐπίδαυρος.¹⁹ Thirdly, it is highly probable that Andromachus would not have mentioned Bourina in the context of the other cult-centres, if it were not immediately associated with the Asclepieion on Cos; Tricca, Rhodes, and Epidaurus all had Asclepieia of note,²⁰ and it would be strange for Bourina to be mentioned in their company if it were not directly associated with the Coan; furthermore, Andromachus' lines are strikingly parallel to the beginning of a hymn to Asclepius spoken at the Coan²¹ Asclepieion in Herodas' fourth *Mime*, χαίροις, ἄναξ Παῖνον, ὅς μεδεῖς Τρίκκης / καὶ Κῶν γλυκεῖαν κήπιδανρον ὥκηκας (1–2),²² which further strengthens the probability that Andromachus associated Bourina with the Coan Asclepieion. If each of these premisses is accepted, then it is highly likely that Xenophon's spring was the ancient Bourina, from which it would inevitably follow that Theocritus' Bourina is correctly identified with the modern.

This argument lends necessary support to the traditional view of the geography

notes that Call. *H. Cer.* refers to elms (27) and a poplar (37) among other trees around a grove of Demeter in Thessaly; I suggest that Callimachus too is simply representing a reality of the Greek countryside: cf. *Od.* 6.291 f. and 17.208 f., and Mnasalces 15.3 (*H.E.*). See in general K. Lembach, *Die Pflanzen bei Theokrit* (Heidelberg, 1970), pp. 113–17). Puelma also argues that the beauty of the Bourina scene contrasts with the heat of midday described at 10 ff., 21 ff., that the same beauty at the poem's end is welcome relief after a long journey, and that the 'Dynamik' and 'Rhythmus' of the whole poem thus demand the identification; but *Id.* 7 can offer all these contrasts without our having to assume that the framing scenes are identical. Furthermore, it is a little unfair of Ott, loc. cit. to cite Herzog's view that the name Bourina is a nineteenth-century revival (see above, p. 375) in order to disprove the identification by Herzog *et al.* of the modern spring with the ancient! It is, moreover, in the light of modern archaeological discoveries merely perverse of him to claim that a reconstruction of the island's geography is largely based on *Id.* 7 and that

there can therefore be no conflict between Puelma's view and modern archaeology.

¹⁸ The pipes, still extant, have Xenophon's name stamped on them; see Sherwin-White, pp. 283 f. (with lit.).

¹⁹ *Ap.* Galen 14.42.168 ff. Kühn.

²⁰ For Tricca see *R.E.* II.2 (1896) s.v. Asklepios, col. 1662 f.; for Rhodes, *ibid.*, col. 1670 f.; for Epidaurus, *ibid.*, col. 1665 f.

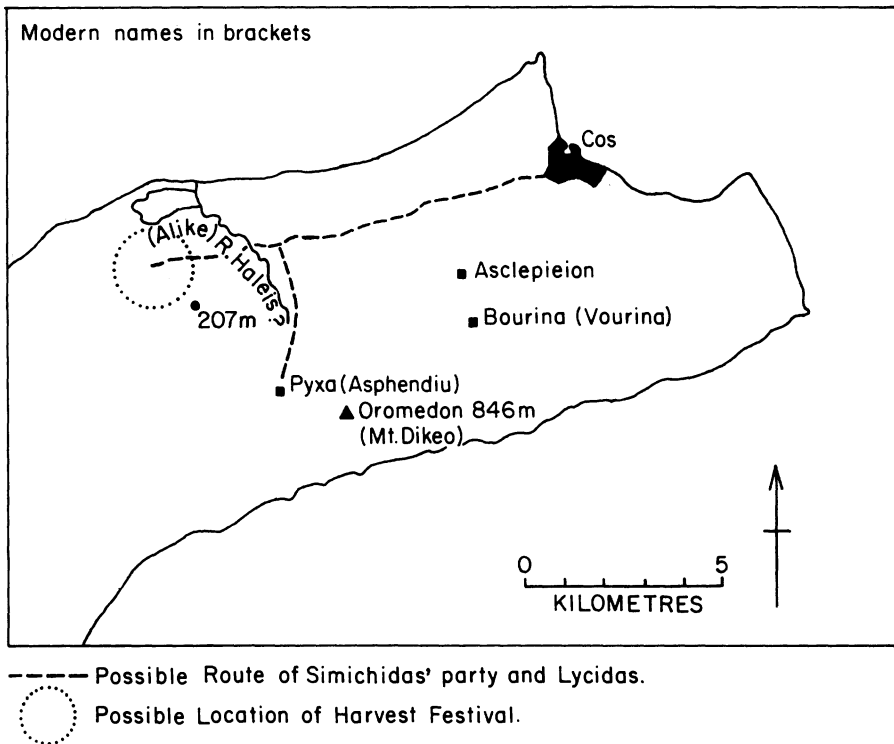
²¹ The view that *Mim.* 4 is set on Cos, upheld e.g. by W. Headlam and A. D. Knox, *Herodas: the Mimes and Fragments* (Cambridge, 1922), pp. xlv and 175 (on line 2), has been criticized by I. A. Cunningham, *CQ* N.S. 16 (1966), 113 ff. and *id.*, *Herodas: Mimambi* (Oxford, 1971), p. 2 n. 3 and p. 128, but Cunningham's view that the poem is probably not localized has been successfully refuted by Sherwin-White, pp. 349 ff. and n. 508, who brings convincing new evidence for a Coan setting.

²² Herzog, *Forschungen*, p. 160 quotes the two passages and draws attention to their similarity to prove a separate point.

²³ For the other *Idd.* see Gow, vol. i, pp. xix f.

of *Id.* 7 and attacks its rival, for as long as the traditional identification of Bourina rested on no more than an appeal to reasonableness, Puelma may have been right and the whole reconstruction of the walk was thus open to serious doubt. Moreover, since we may now, I hope, take it as fact that the topographical details of *Id.* 7 represent actual geography, we can conclude with perhaps greater certainty than before that Theocritus offers us in the poem a form of realism which is unparalleled in Greek pastoral.²³

The Eastern Section of the Island of Cos



Addendum

Since the completion of this article, W. G. Arnott, 'The Mound of Brasilas in Theocritus' Seventh *Idyll*', *QUCC* (N.S. 3 (1979), 99 ff.) has argued that the tomb of Brasilas (11) is to be identified with the hill which is marked 207m on my map. Arnott bases his argument on the barrow-like shape of the outcrop and its position on the road to the Haleis, for it 'becomes visible' (cf. *κατεφαίετο*, 11) just before the half-way mark 4 km outside Cos city. This is an attractive suggestion and would fit in with my reconstruction of the walk. However, Arnott denies the identification of the ancient with the modern Bourina; he follows Paton *et al.* in locating the festival on the flat piece of ground a little west of the 207m tumulus on an estate nowadays called Linopóti and identifies Bourina with the spring there; because of the evidence I have adduced here, I cannot agree with any such identification.