

Island Strategies : the Case of Tenedos

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ISLAND STRATEGIES : THE CASE OF TENEDOS *

Brian RUTISHAUSER**

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Mots-clés. – Ténédos, commerce, économie.

The importance of the grain route through the Hellespont to the food supply of Athens has been long debated by many scholars¹. Research on this subject has often

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1. The following are a representative sample : M. WHITBY, « The grain trade of Athens in the fourth century », in H. PARKINS and C. SMITH, eds., *Trade, traders, and the ancient city*, London 1998, p. 102-28 ; P. GARNSEY, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World*, Cambridge 1988, chapters 9 and 10 ; H. MONTGOMERY, « Merchants Fond of Corn : Citizens and Foreigners in the Athenian Grain Trade »,

centered upon islands that were sites of Athenian klerouchies, namely Lemnos, Imbros, and Skyros². The island of Tenedos, however, which also had a strategic position in regards to the grain route to the Hellespont, has received comparatively little attention. Most of our information on this island and its history is admittedly fragmentary, with epigraphic and literary sources often producing more questions than answers. In addition, there has been relatively little archaeological excavation or survey performed in modern times on Tenedos (modern Bozcaada, under Turkish jurisdiction)³.

Nevertheless, there are two aspects of Tenedian history that warrant further analysis. Tenedos apparently had a reputation for sterling loyalty to Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., a sentiment that was often not shared by other πόλεις in the same region. Secondly, despite its obviously advantageous position in regards to the Hellespontine grain trade, the precise nature and degree of Tenedian participation in this trade is difficult to ascertain. The available evidence may, however, be more illuminating if it is interpreted in terms of how the Tenedians may have best protected their political sovereignty and economic prosperity, given the circumstances of their relatively small territory and population as compared to other πόλεις. Such approaches could be characterized not just as strategies for subsistence and survival, as has been discussed by some recent scholarship⁴, but as methods for a community to maximize its overall economic potential. It is in the fourth century, particularly the mid-fourth century, that such policies may have brought Tenedos to a position of some real standing in the eastern Aegean. Strong connections between Athens and Tenedos, and the increasing importance to Athens of the Hellespontine grain route in the fourth century⁵, would have contributed to this state of affairs.

Tenedos had been a loyal member of the fifth-century Delian League. This is in sharp contrast to other πόλεις in the Hellespontine area such as Byzantion. On at least two occasions, once in 411 and again in 390, Athenian commanders established a customs post at Chrysopolis near Byzantion, which levied a ten-percent duty on all shipping passing through the Hellespont⁶. But this level of Athenian control over the area did not last. Byzantion was briefly taken out of Athenian hands by Epaminondas of Thebes in 364/3⁷, and eventually seceded from

SO 61, 1986, p. 43-61 ; T. FIGUEIRA, « *Sitopolai and Sitophylakes in Lysias' 'Against the Graindealers'* : Governmental Intervention in the Athenian Economy », *Phoenix* 40, 1986, p. 149-171.

2. Most recently N. SALOMON, *Le cleruchie di Atene*, Pisa 1997 ; J. CARGILL, *Athenian Settlements of the Fourth Century B.C.*, London 1995.

3. The lack of visible antiquities was noted by X. K. BOZIKES in 1913 : « Περὶ τῶν ἀρχαιοτήτων τῆς νήσου Τενέδου », in *Thrakika* 1, Athens 1978, p. 262-263. See also P. K. ENEPEKIDES, *Archipelagos : Imvros, Tenedos, Lemnos, Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Patmos 1800-1923*, Athens 1988 ; M. S. AYGEN, *Butun yonleriye Bozcaada*, Afyon 1980. At the time of writing, I have not yet seen N. SEPHOUNAKES, *Imvros-Tenedos*, Athens 1996.

4. Most notably T. W. GALLANT, *Risk and Survival in Ancient Greece*, Stanford 1991.

5. S. M. BURSTEIN, « The Origin of the Athenian Privileges at Bosphorus : a Reconsideration », *AHB* 7.3, 1993, p. 81-83.

6. Xen., *Hell.*, IV.8.27. It had previously been established by Alkibiades in 410 : Xen., *Hell.*, I.1.22. ; Diod. XIII.64.2 ; Polyb. IV.44.4.

7. Isoc. V.53 ; [Dem.] L.6 ; Diod. XV.79.1.

the Second Athenian League in 357 after joining Chios and Kos in the Social War⁸. It is interesting to note that during the Social War, rebel forces appear to have spared Tenedos from attack even though she remained an Athenian ally. Certain islands were ravaged during the revolt, but all appear to have been sites of Athenian *klerouchies*⁹. If only Athenian citizens were attacked, especially those living in the unpopular *klerouchies*, this may have been calculated to draw more Athenian allies into the rebel camp. Another reason, however, may have been connections between Tenedos and Byzantium that could have lent some protection to the Tenedians at this moment.

An inscription records gifts of money to the Boiotians for the Sacred War, which extended over a period from 355 to 351¹⁰. Included in the first set of such contributions, those given under the year of the Boiotian archon Aristion (355), are sums presented by the πόλις of Byzantium, as well as a smaller gift made by Athenodoros, the Tenedian πρόξενος of the Boiotians¹¹.

Attempts have been made to downplay the significance of these contributions, and from a purely financial standpoint they apparently did little to further the Boiotian cause in the Sacred War¹². However, it is not Boiotian cash flow problems that are at issue, as much as the political overtones of these gifts. This contribution dates from the end of the Social War, when Byzantium had already left the Second Athenian League and had concluded a treaty of alliance with Thebes¹³.

Although the gift presented by the Tenedian πρόξενος appears to have been a private one, it must be kept in mind that this would have been a very *public* contribution from the standpoint of propaganda, made by the official representative for the δῆμος of Tenedos, that certainly would not have gone unnoticed in Athens. Nevertheless, the Athenians would not have benefited from any censure of Athenodoros or the Tenedians in response to the gift. The end of the Social War in 355 was a time when the Athenian economy was in dire straits, when metics and traders are attested as having abandoned the city¹⁴. In particular, the grain supply would have remained paramount in importance. Byzantium was no longer an official Athenian ally ; although this did not preclude the continuation of trade with Athens, it would have been desirable for the Athenians to maintain allies in the Hellespontine area that could help ensure that grain supplies were not cut off¹⁵.

The importance that Tenedos had achieved in the region by the middle of the century can be seen in several instances. A Tenedian named Aglaokreon is attested as having joined in the embassy to Philip II that resulted in the Peace of Philokrates in 346¹⁶. Certain inscriptions are even more telling. *IG* II² 233 shows the Tenedians providing a cash loan to

8. Dem. XV.3 ; Diod. XVI.7.3.

9. Diod. XVI.21 mentions Lemnos, Imbros, and Samos specifically.

10. *TOD* II 160.

11. *Ibid.*, lines 9-11 and 20-21 for Byzantium, lines 14-15 for Athenodoros.

12. In 351 the Persian King sent 300 talents ; Diod. XVI.40.1-2.

13. Dem. IX.34.

14. Isoc. VIII.19, 21, 69 ; Dem. X.37.

15. To be sure, Tenedos was not the only ally Athens had in the area. Elaios on the Thracian Chersonese was also rewarded for its loyalty- see Dem. XXIII.158 ; *IG* II² 1443, 93ff ; *TOD* II 174.

16. Aeschin. II.20, 97, 126.

help lift the siege of Byzantion by Philip in 339¹⁷. The Tenedians were granted an exemption from paying the σύνταξις in return for their assistance, an exemption due to last for a year until the loan was repaid by the Athenians¹⁸. At approximately at the same time, the Athenians honored the Tenedian Aratos and his brothers, as well as the δῆμος of Tenedos collectively, under circumstances that are probably related¹⁹. Obviously the Tenedians had become allies of some real substance to Athens.

But how did Tenedos achieve this level of influence in the Second Athenian League ? As mentioned above, involvement in the grain trade would seem to have been the most likely benefit from the strategic position of the island. Ron Stroud has recently made a strong case for the participation of foreign merchants in bringing grain to Athens, particularly in regards to cargoes detailed in Agyrrhios' law of 374/3²⁰. However, direct evidence for Tenedian participation in the grain trade, or indeed in any commercial activity at Athens, is elusive²¹.

It is curious that Demosthenes, in the context of a discussion of Athenian resources that could be utilized against Philip II of Macedon, mentions nearly every other major island on the grain route *except* Tenedos²². It is possible that Demosthenes intended to mention only islands that produced grain that could be used as supplies by the fleet, and from evidence such as Agyrrhios' law it is easy to see why Lemnos, Imbros, and Skyros fit his qualifications²³. But if grain ships regularly docked at Tenedos, it could be presumed that it would have been relatively easy for the island's inhabitants to keep stockpiles on hand.

Evidence for stockpiling on Tenedos is extant from a much later period. During the fifth century AD., the Byzantine Emperor Justinian ordered the construction of a granary on Tenedos to accommodate supplies coming from Egypt to Constantinople²⁴. Procopius, who recorded this event, explains that grain ships were often prevented from entering the Hellespont until a wind blowing from the south appeared. The granary was intended as a temporary storehouse so that the grain fleet could make several trips to Egypt and back during the sailing season, while other vessels could then shuttle the grain to Constantinople as soon as winds became favorable again.

In 1957 Benjamin Labaree published an article on the question of access to the Black Sea by Greek ships in antiquity²⁵. Labaree cited meteorological observations which demonstrated

17. For other discussion of this inscription see L. MIGEOTTE, *L'Emprunt public dans les cités grecques*, Paris 1984, p. 23-25 ; M. DREHER, *Hegemon und Symmachoi*, Berlin 1995, p. 44-45 ; P. BRUN, *Eisphora-Syntaxis-Stratitotika*, Paris 1983, p. 103 ; J. CARGILL, *The Second Athenian League*, Berkeley 1981, p. 185-186.

18. *IG II²* 233, lines 22-30.

19. For Aratos, *IG II²* 232 ; for the δῆμος, *TOD II*, 175.

20. R. STROUD, *The Athenian Grain-Tax Law of 374/3 B.C.*, *Hesperia Supplement* 29, Princeton 1998.

21. A speech of Apollodoros does mention a loan taken from two friends of Pasion resident at Tenedos, Kleanax and Eperatos- [Dem.] L.56.

22. *Dem. IV.32*.

23. In regards to the law of Agyrrhios, Athenian klerouchs may have had more opportunity to become the πριόμενοι discussed under the provisions of this law than merchants from an allied state such as Tenedos. This may have been due to motivations of security or simply priority extended to Athenian citizens.

24. Procop. *Aed.* V.1.6-16.

25. B. W. LABAREE, « How the Greeks Sailed into the Black Sea », *AJA* 61, 1957, p. 29-33.

that during the primary sailing months of late spring and summer, winds at the Bosporos alternate between northeastern and southwesterly, thereby alternating the days on which vessels could enter the Bosporos channel from the Aegean²⁶. These “windows” of sailing opportunity could come as often as “four or five days at most” in spring, or in the summer “a week or more might pass before a southwest wind might come up”²⁷. Consequently, during periods of northerly winds, ships would have “arrived off the Bosporos prepared to wait” for more favorable conditions²⁸.

It is curious that Labaree did not speculate on exactly where these ships would have docked in order to await winds from the south to take them through the channel- it is particularly intriguing that he did not take note of Procopius’ description of the Tenedian granary²⁹. It is highly probable that Tenedos was an ideal stopover point for any vessels entering the Bosporos, whether those earmarked to bring grain and other goods back to Athens, or those from other Greek states. The amount of harbor activity at Tenedos is further attested by the existence of a guild of boatmen (πορθμικόν)³⁰.

Other items are known to have been shipped along the grain route, including wine from islands such as Thasos, Peparethos, and Skiathos that was directed towards the Bosporan kingdom and other areas of the Black Sea³¹. This wine trade had been operating since at least the late fifth century B.C., as has been shown by the presence of Peparethian amphorae onboard the Alonnesos shipwreck discovered in 1991³². But it is probable that such trade peaked during the second quarter and middle of the fourth century, based on a recent study of amphorae workshops excavated on Peparethos (modern Skopelos)³³.

These amphorae may provide the answer to an objection recently raised by G. Tsetschladze, that very little valuable material appears to have been sent to the Black Sea area to pay for all the grain supposedly shipped to Athens in the Classical period³⁴. While it is

26. *Ibid.*, 32.

27. *Ibid.*, 33.

28. *Ibid.*, 33.

29. Louis ROBERT identified Tenedos as « la porte des Dardanelles, où les navires attendaient, parfois longtemps, le bon vent qui permet de lutter contre le courant descendant » in « L’argent d’Athènes stéphanéphore », *RN*, 1977, 10 and n. 33, based on the discussion of A.-J. REINACH, *Revue épigraphique, voyage épigraphique en Troade et en Eolide* I-II, 1913-14. Nevertheless, Robert did not mention Labaree’s article from twenty years before nor did he cite Procopius’ text.

30. Arist. *Pol.* IV.4.21 1291 b. ; S. HORNBLOWER, *Mausolus*, Oxford 1982, p. 128 n. 179 speculates that the πορθμείς were primarily engaged in shuttling goods back and forth from Tenedos and her περσεία, but service to the many large vessels that would have filled the harbors of Tenedos, sometimes for weeks at a time, are just as likely to have provided gainful employment to these individuals.

31. Dem. XXXV.10,35 ; J. BOUZEK, « Athènes et la mer Noire », *BCH* 113, 1989, p. 249-59.

32. E. HADJIIDAKI, « The Classical Shipwreck at Alonnesos », in S. SWINY, R. L. HOHLFELDER, and H. W. SWINY, eds., *Res Maritimae : Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean from Prehistory to Late Antiquity : Proceedings of the Second International Symposium “Cities on the Sea”*, Nicosia, Cyprus Oct. 18-22, 1994, p. 125-134.

33. A. DOULGERI-INTZESSIOGLOU and Y. GARLAN, « Vin et amphores de Péparéthos et d’Ikos », *BCH* 114, 1990, p. 361-389.

34. G. R. TSETSKHLADZE, « Trade on the Black Sea in the Archaic and Classical periods : some observations », in H. PARKINS and C. SMITH, eds., *Trade, traders, and the ancient city*, London 1998, p. 52-74.

true that this wine did not come from Athens itself, it is possible that Athenians had a hand in various dealings connected to the shipment of this product³⁵.

Another aspect of Tenedian economic and political power that may also have seen expansion during this same period was the area of territory on the mainland of Asia Minor under her control. The possession of such a περαία was a common attribute of other major island states along the Ionian coast, particularly Samos and Rhodes³⁶. Unfortunately, there is less direct evidence for the extent and characteristics of the Tenedian περαία than for those of other, larger islands.

The main ancient source on the Tenedian περαία is Strabo³⁷, while the most detailed modern attempt to reconstruct its boundaries and extent has been that of J. M. Cook³⁸. Strabo states that the two πόλεις of Larisa and Kolonai had once belonged to the territory of Tenedos, and many scholars have accepted this. Cook surmised, however, that Larisa and Kolonai had instead been part of Mytilenian, not Tenedian, territory on the mainland³⁹.

There is another possibility, however. Strabo's text mentions Larisa and Kolonai as locales that "once belonged to the περαία of Tenedos" (τῆς Τενεδίων περαίας οὔσαι πρότερον)⁴⁰, whereas in the passage before, where Strabo first mentions the περαία, he equates it with the area called the Achaïion (ἡ Τενεδίων περαία, τὸ Αἰαίον, καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ Τένεδος)⁴¹. The text is confusing, but it may be that Strabo intended to differentiate Larisa and Kolonai from the rest of the Tenedian περαία. This could imply that Tenedos had once had some sort of temporary control over these two πόλεις.

If this is correct, the question remains as to exactly when Larisa and Kolonai could have been annexed by Tenedos. It is highly probable that the King's Peace of 387/6 effectively severed the περαία from Tenedos, as it must have had from all the other Ionian island states such as Samos and Rhodes⁴². It is also probable that portions of these lands were then awarded to certain Persian grandees as estates. In 360 Memnon and his brother occupied the territories of Skepsis and Kebren, most likely in the upper valley of the Scamander⁴³. Some have suggested that the entirety of the old territory of the Tenedians was included in this grant, and this is a distinct possibility⁴⁴.

35. Pasion's interests on Peparethos are an example of Athenian economic ties, Dem. XLV.28.

36. For a discussion of the περαία of Samos, known as the Anaia, see G. SHIPLEY, *A History of Samos 800-188 BC*, Oxford 1987, p. 31-37; for Rhodes, P. M. FRASER and G. E. BEAN, *The Rhodian Peraea and Islands*, Oxford 1954, p. 123-131. See also P. DEBORD, in this volume p. 205-218.

37. Strabo XIII.604.

38. J. M. COOK, *The Troad*, Oxford 1973, p. 189-198.

39. *Ibid.*, 198. The older view had been elaborated by W. LEAF, « Strabo on the Troad », Cambridge 1923, p. 223-227.

40. Strabo XIII. 604.47.

41. Strabo XIII. 604.46.

42. HORNBLOWER, *Mausolus*, p. 128.

43. Dem. XXIII.157; COOK, *Troad*, p. 327ff; A. B. BOSWORTH, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander*, Oxford 1980, p.131.

44. HORNBLOWER, *Mausolus*, p. 128, 144.

During the Social War of 357-55, however, conditions in the area became much more chaotic. In 356 the Athenian general Chares made an expedition into the Troad in support of the rebellious satrap Artabazos, inflicting a major defeat on the Persian forces and capturing both Lampsakos and Sigeion⁴⁵. According to a papyrus fragment he also ravaged the lands belonging to Tithraustes⁴⁶. Although he was forced to desist from aiding Artabazos after the Persian King threatened Athens with war⁴⁷, Chares remained active in the Hellespontine area in the following years, capturing Sestos in 353⁴⁸, and retaining possession of a fortress near Sigeion to which he retired in 333⁴⁹.

It may be that at some point in the 350's the Tenedians attempted to regain or perhaps even expand their former περᾶία, perhaps enjoying a newfound assertiveness due to the presence of Chares' forces. Aristotle records a controversy between Tenedos and Sigeion which strongly implies that the Tenedians had recently attempted to redraw boundaries on the mainland, based on an old ruling of the tyrant Periander of Korinth⁵⁰. It is noteworthy that Strabo refers to Alexandria Troas, a site close to Larisa and Kolonai, as having once been called "Sigia"⁵¹. It is possible that at some period before Chares' campaign, Sigeian influence had become extended far southwards down the coast, and the Tenedians now had the opportunity to challenge this influence. Larisa and Kolonai, however, may not have been part of the original περᾶία or mentioned in Periander's ruling, and may have been gained as new territory by the Tenedians at this time.

If this theory is correct, there is reason to suspect that whatever land taken back by the Tenedians in the 350's was still being held by them in the 330's. In 333/32 Persian forces compelled both the Tenedians and the Mytilenians to destroy the inscribed pillars that contained their agreements with Alexander, and to return to the conditions of the Peace of Antalkidas, or King's Peace, of 387/6⁵². This would have effectively returned the περᾶία of both to Persian control. The Macedonians recovered the islands within a year, so the new arrangement was short-lived⁵³. But it may indicate that the Persians, particularly Memnon, were anxious to regain possession of these valuable lands.

It is unclear what economic assets were possessed by the lands of the Tenedian περᾶία, although Cook observed that the land at the time of his survey was rich in several agricultural crops, as well as pine and oak trees⁵⁴. The mainland territory of Samos seems to

45. On the campaign, Schol. Dem. IV.19 ; Schol. Dem. III.31 ; Diod. XVI.22.1 ; W. K. PRITCHETT, *The Greek State at War II*, p. 79.

46. F. JACOBY, *FGH* 105 F4 ; C. WESSELY, *Festschrift zu Otto Hirschfeld*, Berlin 1903, p. 100-103 ; PRITCHETT *War*, p. 80.

47. Diod. XVI.22.2.

48. Diod. XVI.34.

49. Arr., *Anab.*, I.12.1.

50. Arist., *Rhet.*, I.5.1375b 29-31 ; L. PICIRILLI, *Gli arbitrati interstatali greci I*, Pisa 1973, p. 207-208.

51. Strabo XIII.604.47 : COOK, *Troad*, p. 183.

52. Arr., *Anab.*, II.2.2 ; on the gloss of "Darius" in place of Artaxerxes, see BOSWORTH, *Commentary*, p. 181-84.

53. Arr., *Anab.*, III.2.

54. COOK, *Troad*, p. 191 notes corn, cotton, sesame, melons, almonds, fruit trees, maize, olives, and grapes.

have possessed similar resources⁵⁵. A boundary dispute between Samos and Miletos in the 440's closely resembles in some ways the Tenedian-Sigeian controversy. It has been suggested that many wealthy Samians owned land in the area and were prepared to fight as hoplites to defend it⁵⁶. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the situation regarding the Tenedian περσεία was a similar one⁵⁷.

Although several of the conclusions in this paper are admittedly speculative, much of the available evidence suggests that Tenedos reached some new level of economic and political prominence ca. 350-330 B.C.. I must stress the term "available", for we are unfortunately greatly hampered by the extremely fragmentary nature of the evidence concerning this tiny island. Although the epigraphic evidence points to the existence of a democracy on Tenedos in the fourth century, we know very little of its mechanisms or of prominent individuals on the island who influenced its policies. We are also unaware, beyond a handful of names mentioned above, of how many individuals on Tenedos were involved in commerce. And even if Tenedos did see increased prosperity in the mid-fourth century, it is by no means clear that all the inhabitants of the island would have benefited equally. It is quite possible that prominent families, such as that of Aratos and his brothers, reaped the majority of economic advantages from the increased grain trade and perhaps from increased estates on the περσεία.

It must also be stressed that the existence of strong connections with Athens need not have meant that the Tenedians were unable to pursue independent policies. The gift to the Boiotian war fund mentioned above is an example of an action that would not have found favor at Athens. It is perhaps best to see the Tenedians as primarily concerned with Tenedian interests, which may not always have coincided with the interests of larger powers. In order to survive in these circumstances, however, it would have been necessary for smaller states like Tenedos to become very adept at maximizing resources and advantages while maintaining good relations with powerful cities such as Athens.

Although Tenedos was destined to slide into commercial decline after the establishment of Alexandria Troas in 310⁵⁸, it is clear from the construction of the Justinianic granary and other later events⁵⁹ that the island could still be a focus of activity, political, military, and economic, for many centuries to come. It may be, however, that the hypothetical political and economic strategies described in this paper were only effective in the milieu of the fourth century B.C..

55. Strabo XIV.636 ; SHIPLEY, *Samos*, p. 33-34.

56. SHIPLEY, *Samos*, p. 36.

57. A. J. HEISSERER, *Alexander the Great and the Greeks : The Epigraphic Evidence*, Oklahoma 1980, p. 232, surmises that returning to the terms of the Peace of Antalkidas in 333 would have been an attractive proposition for the Tenedians and Mytilenians, since they would then have been free from tribute or garrisons imposed by the Macedonians. But as it would also have meant the dismemberment of their περσεία, this would seem a most unlikely hypothesis.

58. Paus. X.14.4.

59. Note its strategic importance in early Roman times : Polyb. XVI.34, XXVII.7 ; Livy XXXI.16, XLIV.28 ; Cicero, *pro Arch.*, 9 and *pro Murena* 15 ; Plut., *Lucullus*, 3.