

Contestualizzare la “prima colonizzazione”:

Archeologia, fonti, cronologia e modelli interpretativi fra l'Italia e il Mediterraneo

Contextualising “early Colonisation”:

Archaeology, Sources, Chronology and interpretative models between Italy and the Mediterranean

Approaching Euboean “colonisation”. A methodological experiment drawing on network theories.

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There is hardly a need to demonstrate that two radically opposed interpretations of the process of Greek overseas contact and settlement formation exist.

The first group readily accepts the information provided by ancient authors on the foundation of overseas settlement. Although very few scholars have fully developed a real “model” it is explored in detail in the work of Irad Malkin (most recently: *A small Greek world*, Oxford, (2011).

The other group of scholars, for convenience grouped under the label “post-colonial and post-modern approaches”, rejects static representations in terms of a single foundation act, as it is presented by later antique historians. The first substantial critique of Osborne (1998), followed by Yntema (2000), stressed the process of becoming an apoikia, instead being founded as one. According to Osborne, the relation between colony and mother city was a tool to express and facilitate good relations between two poleis. Foundation stories, as we know them, date from the late archaic to the classical period, and reflect therefore necessarily the representation from that time. Creative colonial memory has been explored by others (recently: Giangiulio, M., 2011, *Memorie coloniali*, Roma, or Calame, C., 2003, *Myth and history, the symbolic creation of a colony*, Princeton).

The two models are perceived as radically opposed, although that more nuanced opinions certainly exist.

As both the existing - and radically opposed - approaches are not completely satisfactory, an attempt is made in this paper to identify alternative paths, which may contribute to a better understanding of EIA societies in the Greek motherland and overseas and their mutual relationship. Using network theories, this paper wants to challenge instrumental views of early Greek societies, by focussing on local dynamics of exchange and identity construction. At the same time, the paper seeks to confront abstract theory with tangible evidence. By means of classifying published material from excavations of Euboean metropoleis and apoikiai (here a case-study of Pithekoussai, with references to other early Euboean foundations) according to origin, the connectedness of sites involved in the “colonisation” can be mapped and analysed. This is done following principles of graph theory and definitions of network analysis. The results of this analysis discussed here indicate that some of the traditional questions, and models, should be refocused.

Recent advancements in the study of interaction have been made using network theory. The study of interaction and exchange in EIA contexts by archaeologists is not new, and several volumes have been dedicated to it (Gras, M., 1985, *Traffics tyrrheniens archaïques*, Rome; Sheratt, A. & Sheratt, S., 1993, The growth of the Mediterranean economy in the early first millennium BC, WA 24, 361-78, to list just a few). Jean-Paul Morel was the first to apply the idea of networks, or “résaux” to Greek colonisation (in: *Il dinamismo della colonizzazione greca*, Napoli (1997), 59-70). Braudelian influences are further found in Horden & Purcell’s *Corrupting Sea*, published in 2000.

The new Mediterranean perspective was among historians of Antiquity first adopted by Irad Malkin, who dedicated a special volume of the *Mediterranean Historical Review* to it in 2003. Quickly afterwards, the network perspective was integrated even further in the study of Greek Antiquity, again by Malkin. This resulted most recently in a book which focusses on the small world principle, and how the expanding Greek world resulted in a shared Hellenic identity (cited supra).

Other developments on networks in archaeology have been made very recently by Carl Knappett (*An archaeology of interaction*, Oxford (2011)). Recently, several other scholars are experimenting with networks and network analysis, but there is certainly not yet unified set of definitions or applications for the study of the past. Without any doubt, more work will be done in the very near future to explore the possibilities of network analysis.

An attempt is made here to apply network theory to the study of interaction of communities, thought of in terms of colony and mother city, or apoikia and metropolis. It is believed here that a better understanding of interaction leads to answers and refocuses questions insufficiently addressed by other interpretative models.

Network analysis is a scientific approach, shared by many different disciplines, which analyses relationships among entities. Network analysis has been applied to the study of the internet, the spreading of HIV, corporate businesses, world trade, intermarriage between the leading families of 16th century Firenze and so on. Central to network analysis are some basic principles. These are that there are “actors”, which might be individuals, groups of people, schools, countries, and which have ties or relations with each other. Network analysis focusses then on these relations and the actors which maintain central - or key-positions in the network.

One of several ways to study networks is the use of graph theory. Graph theory was invented as early as the 18th century to study mathematical problems. Basically, the idea is to translate networks in images, which facilitates analysis. Thus, actors are drawn as nodes, and their ties as lines. In this way a pattern emerges, which constitutes the network. For the analysis here, the software programme PAJEK was used.

Although that the basic principles of network analysis are not too complex, even for an archaeologist, some difficulties and traps exist. No templates for the execution of network analysis of archaeological data exist, and have been developed especially for this study, hence the title of this presentation “a methodological experiment”.

The choice for an analysis of metropolis and apoikia is here made for the Euboeans. The Euboean colonisation is exemplary for the existence of opposed models. Praised as the pioneers, and first colonists by some scholars, and reduced to phantoms by others, they constitute an interesting case. On the archaeological level there is not a complete, but at least significant data set at our disposal via publications. Basis for the analysis here are the metropoleis Lefkandi, Eretria, Chalkis, Kyme and Pithekoussai.

Using images of graphs, representing the networks, the sites are analysed. For a better understanding it is useful to look at the settlements separately in different periods (MG II - LG I - LG II).

In Lefkandi, the SPG III phase shows the dominance of the Toumba-node, a position which it already held in SPG II (not shown). Quite remarkably, on the other hand, is the absence of a connection with other regions, like the Italian peninsula. If the Lefkandians were pioneers in early

overseas contact, wouldn't they have brought anything home? Time does not allow to dwell upon the issue of carriers of Euboean pottery, but the absence of a significant Italian tie is significant. Much better documented for the next periods is Eretria. As can be seen from the graph representing Eretrian relations, the distribution of ties is not equal. Some ties are mainly in the hands of one node, and they remain for some time dominated by this node. This pattern could reflect the hereditary practice of *xenia*, the gift-giving relations between elites, if one accepts the hypothesis made here, that a node represents a "meaningful group of contexts" which is correlated to a family or *oikos*.

Before moving to the Italian peninsula, it is worthwhile to consider some other networks. Very little information is available for Chalkis. Nevertheless, the available data point to a local pottery production similar to the one known at Lefkandi for the PG period, and closely following the general trends at Eretria, during the GP. Some overseas contacts are attested as well. A brief glimpse at the networks of Euboean Kyme shows that Kyme had more contact with the Cycladic islands, a links which, interestingly, is absent in the rest of Euboea.

Going overseas, we see that the Pithekoussan networks show differences in structure with the Euboean ones. The minor importance of Attika and the prominent position of Korinth have been noted repeatedly by scholars. Also here, preferential ties seem to exist for some nodes, but overall the pattern is differs from the one of the motherland.

To list some (recapitulatory) observations:

- The diversity of the ties of the nodes is clear. Overseas relations, and by consequence, the use of material culture were not universally shared in the Euboean settlements. Other features, for example burial practices, confirms this pattern of diversity. This leads to the conclusion that there was no such thing as a shared culture, or a "Euboean culture" or habits, which could have been exported to the foundations overseas. Presumably, internal competition and personal choices determined behaviour. There was the pertinence of a continuous transformation, negotiated interactions and local dynamics and not a unified "Euboean culture".
- The Euboeans were not "phantoms". Although that the ratio of Euboean pottery is low at Pithekoussai, as well as in other sites connected to Euboean apoikism (not discussed in detail for reasons of limited space and time), there is sufficient local production of Euboean influenced pottery, writing, house construction in the whole Italian peninsula (and Sicily) to suggest that there have been small groups of Euboeans who migrated there.
- On the other hand, to continue the former point, it can be doubted that these Euboeans maintained close connections with the motherland. The only exception, limited in time, is the similarity in tomb types at the Eretrian West Quarter and Cuma, and the deposition of some fibulae and other metalwork at the Aire Sacrificielle.

- This leads to the “why question” of overseas foundation and again to the case-study: why was Pithekoussai founded? Traditionally, it is assumed that Pithekoussai was the Euboean stepping stone for the trade in metals with the indigenous settlements in the Italian peninsula. Remarkable is then the striking absence of iron objects and iron working at Eretria (the only site sufficiently documented for the 8th century). Bronze is more abundant, and is locally worked, but the quantities and the diversity of objects produced are not that large to believe that Eretria had managed to secure access to a flourishing overseas network of metal trade. This is at least an intriguing question.
- To conclude, using a network approach to map ties and connecting these to organisational aspects, it can be said that both existing “models” of Greek colonisation touch upon real issues. Network analysis enables the integration of both approaches, and shows that some new questions rise, which have not yet been answered.