

## **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**

#### **Indigenous networks, hierarchies of connectivity and early colonisation in Iron Age Campania**

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The arrival of the Greeks in Campania is commonly regarded as a key event in early Greek history. Often envisaged as pioneers in a new and unknown context their permanent settlements are explained as following periods of furtive trade and exchange under the term pre-colonization. Their first settlement Pithekoussai (established on Ischia c750 BC) has seen much debate as either an *emporion* or *apoikia*. A consensus appears to have been reached, however, on its mixed character that incorporated Greek, Phoenician and Italic components (Ridgway 1992: 107-118, 1994). This initial establishment was followed by a move to the mainland at Cuma, an event seen as marking a change from ‘pre-’ to full colonial status. The general view sees this expansion as motivated by the lack of a Pithekoussan *chora* leading to interactions with local groups in order to procure food (Cerchiai 2010, 1995, D’Agostino 2006, 2008). The finds of Greek Middle Geometric cups (from Euboea, Attica and the Cyclades of semicircle pendant, chevron, meander or bird types) at Capua, Pontecagnano, the Sarno Valley and Prehellenic Cuma from 780 BC onwards are used to support this (Cerchiai 2010: 23, D’Agostino 1999:17, Conticello De Spagnolis 2001:69-72). Literary evidence suggests a two-phase colonization of the region (Strabo 5.4.4, Livy 8.22.5-6) to reinforce this movement from Ischia. The most important site in the region was therefore pre-Hellenic Cuma, which became the Greek Colony.

This indigenous settlement is central to the narrative for the region. The settlements found in Campania prior to Greek colonization include the Villanovan *facies* (Capua and Pontecagnano), seen as catalysts behind the “acceleration of processes of transformation” in the indigenous settlements culminating in the formation of an “articulated hierarchy of settlements” (Cerchiai 2005: 188). At the top of this hierarchy is pre-Hellenic Cuma, a site held as more advanced than its contemporaries in the Sarno Valley and Campanian plain (Cerchiai 2010, D’Agostino 2006). The evidence for this status is its ‘open’ character and possible role in controlling the straits in conjunction with Castiglione on Ischia (Cuozzo 2007: 244, Cerchiai 1995: 13-14). This hypothesis is used to justify the next significant event in the region: pre-Hellenic Cuma was razed to the ground by Euboian Greeks from Pithekoussai (c730 BC). This violent destruction was “born from a show of strength by the Greeks at the expense of the indigenous Opician inhabitants” (D’Agostino 2006: 233), and motivated by the need to eradicate the strategic control of the straits by pre-Hellenic Cuma and Castiglione. The evidence for this relies on literary accounts that imply conquest and destruction, particularly Phlegon of Tralles (*FGrH* II.257 F.36.x.53-5). This later

Hadrianic source recounts a Sibylline oracle that promises good fortune to the Greeks if they take the pre-Hellenic site and then set up a temple to Hera.

This source dates to more than 800 hundred years after the event, and even if based on an earlier account it does not explicitly state that conquest took place, only that the oracle requested it be done; there is no indication in the source that this request was fulfilled. The archaeological evidence for this is also far from clear. The violent destruction of the pre-Hellenic site was sustained by a lacuna between the last indigenous and first Greek graves and a possible destruction layer on one side of the acropolis. This was despite the rudimentary excavations of Cuma in the late 19th-early 20th century, when many objects found their way into private collections and thus removed from stratigraphic contexts. Furthermore, the destruction hypothesis and replacement of Cuma with the Greek colony was sustained despite no obvious signs of the early colony having been unearthed. The evidence for this hypothesis was widely accepted despite its fragmentary nature, until more recent work on the site under the *Progetto Kyme* team (D'Agostino *et al* 2005, Cuzzo *et al* 2006, Gasparri and Greco 2007).

This project has revealed the first Cumaean domestic context within which were found both Greek and local impasto ceramics (Greco 2010: 112). New evidence from the necropolis indicates that the pre-Hellenic burials continued after the Greek arrival, and the destruction layer now appears to have been the result of a later Roman alteration to the city which muddled the stratigraphy (Greco 2010: 110, 2008: 158). This strongly suggests Greeks and indigenes were living side-by-side after they moved to Cuma. The idea of pre-Hellenic Cuma being more politically advanced than its contemporaries is questionable as further evidence points to it being spread out and consisting of small nucleated settlements around the hill rather than one aggregated site. This poses questions to the perceived defensive system between pre-Hellenic Cuma and Castiglione.

If pre-Hellenic Cuma was a diffused settlement then its place at the top of the political hierarchy is questionable. The hierarchy envisaged for the region is akin to the neo-evolutionary paradigm, that views state formation as a teleological unilinear development, a view has seen recent criticism by classical archaeologists (Terrenato and Haggis 2011, also Yoffee 2005). These issues are compounded with the affinities the pre-Hellenic material culture has with the other *fossakultur* sites in the region.

The idea of Cuma being at the top of a hierarchy thus rests on its status as an 'open' settlement. Being 'open' to trade and exchange does not equate to being more advanced, and the idea of the settlement being razed to the ground on the basis of Roman literary sources can no longer be sustained (Greco 2010: 112). The structure at Punto Chiarito on Ischia suggests that the Greeks at Pithekoussai were not as desperate for food as has been painted, with evidence for vine, olive and cereal cultivation on the island (De Caro 1994: 40, Gialanella 1998: 96).

Furthermore, there has been much criticism of the colonization model, especially through the post-colonial discourse (Van Dommelen 1998, Hurst and Owen 2005). Scholars now recognise the agency of local groups in such encounters and the potential for the formation of mixed, hybrid cultures (Malkin 1998, 2002, Van Dommelen and Knapp 2010). There is therefore potential for the Greek arrival to be reassessed through new perspectives on mobility in the Mediterranean. This potential promotes alternative hypotheses on the interactions along the Tyrrhenian coast of Campania.

The establishment of the Greek settlements in Campania followed increased mobility from the east to west involving Sardinia, Italy and Cyprus from the end of the Bronze Age (Riva 2010: 46-59). Therefore the Greeks arrived not as pioneers in an unknown sea but as part of an intricate web of contact and connectivity (Horden and Purcell 2000). This transformed the Mediterranean into a global arena where specific commodities and cultural goods contributed to the formation of a shared

material culture. This common culture comprised objects associated with the Near East with Orientalising motifs, and Greek pottery (especially Euboian pendant semicircle *skyphoi*) which are found across the Mediterranean (Riva 2010: 55-56). This shared material culture can be viewed as akin to the global culture Hodos proposed for the Greek colonization of Iron Age Sicily (Hodos 2009, 2010a, 2010b). The shrinking of space in the globalization paradigm often triggers local reactions. Where these intersect they cause *glocalization*, a status that sees a potential reassertion of local identities (Hodos 2010a).

Alongside the awareness of heightened mobility in the Iron Age Mediterranean, scholars have utilised network theory as a tool to understanding how interactions took place (Brughmans 2010, Malkin *et al* 2009). This has been applied to areas as diverse as Viking Urbanism (Sindbæk 2007), the size and resource catchment of Bronze Age polities (Knappett *et al* 2008) and the Roman communications network of the Antonine Itineraries (Graham 2006). This approach has also seen recent application to Greek colonization by Malkin. He views the Mediterranean as undergoing a *phase transition* from a decentralized many-to-many type network in the archaic period, to a more homogenized structure with just a few key hubs by c500 BC (Malkin 2011: 40). This fits the pattern described by Riva and Hodos of a common material culture operating within a global space.

The indigenous networks prior to the establishment of Pithekoussai indicate a series of inter and intra-regional connections. This network changed with the foundation of Pithekoussai seen in diverse material culture. This network can be examined for its connections through the material culture of the region. A key question remains, however, on how to measure such connections. The notion of tie strength epitomised by Granovetter's 'strength of weak ties' is a potential tool to understand how 'strong' or 'weak' connections were (Granovetter 1973, 1983). This will be used here to offer an insight into the indigenous networks in the region prior to 'colonization' and how those networks benefitted from access to wider Mediterranean cultures in circulation.