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

Colonization or "Colonization"?

Irad Malkin,

The naming of any historical phenomenon is arbitrary by definition. A shadow falls between *les mots et les choses* and we need not be surprised to discover that our terms do not seem fitting for any given historical reality. There is a fresh awakening in the air, as a new generation of scholars finds itself facing this (old) problem. In recent years, in view of the apparent discomfort (a discomfort which is also quite old) with the term colonization, some of us started to imprison it within inverted commas. Yet we do not use such scare quotes around terms such as the *Renaissance*," "*Les Lumières*," or the "Bronze Age"; Why? The sun was not shining more strongly at the time of the *Lumières.* The reason for the lack of scare quotes is trivial, a matter of aesthetics or convention. Basically, the term colonization with or without scare-quotes is as ill-fitting to any historical reality as any other.

That the term "colonization" needs constant critical evaluation, especially because of its anachronistic overtones, is no news, in spite of the enthusiasm of scholars who wish to make their mark in the world. Some have positioned themselves as *avant-garde* against (only slightly) older scholarship, sometimes labeling it an "orthodoxy," a label which is both demagogic and unfair. With some, it is the rhetoric of older scholarship that comes under attack rather than its claims: Thomas Dunbabin, for example, is accused of imperialistic overtones, an accusation which is mostly based on a meager number of quotes from the preface to his *magnum opus.* On the other hand, scholars such as Jean Bérard, who, fifty years ago, had explicitly warned us against anachronism and confusion with modern colonialism *(e.g., La France outre mer),* are conveniently not cited, thus making room for the appearance of fresh and courageous criticism which is often nothing more than a diluted and somewhat muddled repetition of precisely the same notions which were articulated a generation or two ago.

Historians are always "citizens of the present" and need to be aware of their *Zeitgeist* in order to understand where their questions come from. With such awareness it is easier to preserve a critical distance. Such distance needs to be kept with the use of analogies that may be good to think with (as Jean Bérard has done), yet need to be treated with caution. The historian's task often consists in saving us from excellent analogies.

Aside from rhetorical and terminological aspects, there is also the kind of criticism that combines discussion of terminology with questioning of the very phenomenon of cities as new foundations

(sic!) and in relation to mother cities. So far, the most engaging and serious effort was achieved by Robin Osborne who has given us a sampling of some such issues. However, what we have not seen is a systematic and comprehensive evaluation that may justify placing an entire field in doubt.

This sampling consists of an argument against the value of "tradition" (an amorphous term that includes all written evidence); the implications of the archeological evidence for city foundations; the claim of anachronism in our sources: colonial traditions were based on the Classical Model and retrojected into the past.

In answer (some already published by Malkin)* one needs to realize that tradition needs painstaking *Quellenforschung* in specific contexts; that archeology is open to a wide variety of interpretative models; that the few sites which point to mixed habitations need not imply a general rule for city foundations; Baou St. Marcel, Bézier, the farmlands of Istria, or Incoronata , enrich our vision of human mobility and settlement, but are not mutually exclusive with the phenomenon of foundational colonies. The "Classical Model," I have claimed, is a figment of scholarly imagination and never existed and, if anything, Classical practices were a self-aware deviation from Archaic practices. Moreover, the claim that all we have are "invented traditions" does not even confront the issue of mother cities: who might have invented them? Why do we hardly ever find claims that Corinth founded Byzantium or that Megara founded Cyrene?

Entire corpora of evidence have simply been overlooked, especially sets of *nomima* (the characteristic, *formal* attributes of a Greek polis) and their consistent similarity among colonies, colonies of colonies, and mother cities that often saw themselves as colonies founded within the human *spatium historicum.* Indeed the whole set of issues of colonies and mother cities, discussed by John Graham (but hardly since) has equally been ignored.

My own criticism was directed to the common image of the mother city. In my view the early Archaic period was equally formative for the mother cities that could solidify as poleis once discrete groups would depart while retaining a notion of affiliation. Hence the title of my article: "colonization and the foundation of the mother city." In my recent book, *A Small Greek World*: *networks in the ancient Mediterranean* (OUP 2011), I give equal value to the "back-ripple effect" observable in network terminology and covering the Mediterranean and Black Sea. Colonization, I have been arguing (and not alone) since 1982, did more for the rise of the polis than vice versa.

So we may need a comprehensive international project assessing colonization that should involve historians, philologists and epigraphists, and archeologists. We need to go back to some of the basics in the field. We need to read what the sources actually tell us, and not to paraphrase them (e.g., Thucydides says that 'some Chalkidians from Euboia sailed with Theokles as oikist' not that "Chalkis was a mother city of Naxos"). We also need to realize that pace in history is never constant; Katana shook off Theokles and chose an *oikistês* for itself. I see the colonial situation as very dynamic, frontier-oriented, where the authority of a prominent individual could be easily shaken off by an evolving community conscious of itself and its deserts precisely because of the novelty of the situation. Colonization was a 'middle ground' of experimentation both in relation to the native world and politically, in the relation of individuals to their newly created, 'colonial' society.

We urgently need to re-examine terminology and practices that relate to colonies and mother cities. Such an examination may reveal entire networks of affiliations, ongoing, links, and implications for the actual foundation of new poleis in the Mediterranean.

Metropolis, for example, appears to have been a neologism, whereas *apoikia* seems a much older term, relating to exile, marriage, and movement in relation to a "home." In general (as observed by Silvia Montiglio) identity is marked by points of origins, not final destinations.

The notion of a home-oikos, and the network aspects of colonies and mother cities, comes to the foreground with the "Right of Return" to the mother city and the re-integration of individuals in their communities. Mental and practical notions of origins and identity form lines that connect a mother city and a colony especially during the first and second generation of foundation. This ought to come as no surprise. The foundation decree of Naupaktos (460?), a (re)colonization by the Eastern Lokrians, appears to deviate from earlier practices in degree, granting very comfortable terms for inheritance rights: a colonist may inherit in the home community and vice versa. This is an important point as it envisages an ongoing network of personal connections with some political implications, since property and communal rights were usually bound together in a Greek polis. Similarly, colonists and citizens of the moter cities were perceived as belonging to the same ritual community, an importan aspect in a society where religion was universal and cult politically exclusive. Similarly, an inscription from Gortyn in Crete, relating to Lato and dating to around 500, specifies that "among those who have returned whoever wishes may settle himself (*katFoikidethai*) and become a citizen of Lato on equitable [or "complete"] and equal rights" *epi tai FisFai [kai t]ai omoiai*" and nobody may enslave him. Those "fair and equal terms" will be discussed as pertaining directly also to the nature of the Greek colonial phenomenon, made explicit, for instance, in the Corcyrean debate the purpose of which was to argue the meaning (but not the existence) of traditional practices.

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        *Irad Malkin, "'Tradition' in Herodotus: The Foundation of Cyrene" in **Herodotus and his World: Essays from a conference in memory of George Forrest.** Edited by Peter Derow and Robert Parker Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 153-170; Irad Malkin, 'Exploring the Validity of the Concept of "Foundation": A Visit to Megara Hyblaia'. In V.B. Gorman and E.W. Robinson (eds.), **Oikistes: Studies in Constitutions, Colonies, and Military Power in the Ancient World. Offered in Honor of A.J. Graham** (Leiden, Boston, Köln, 2002). Pp. 195-224; Irad Malkin, "Foundations" in Kurt Raaflaub and Hans van Wees (eds.), *A Companion to Archaic Greece*. Malden; Oxford: Wile-Blackwell (2009) 373-394.