

## **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**

**The current state of archaeological research in the Aegean at the time of the colonization of the West (8th - early 7th centuries B.C.)**

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During the last years, recent field work and numerous studies have enriched our knowledge of the archaeological data in the Aegean area for the eighth and early seventh centuries BC. The aim of my paper is to bring together the recent archaeological documentation, in order to understand better the organisation of Greek communities in the Aegean area. It is hoped that the new data will contribute in elucidating some of the questions related to the early colonisation of the West. In this paper I will discuss new evidence which has emerged from the settlements situated in the areas that were active in the colonisation movement towards the West, such as Euboea, the Cyclades, the North-East Peloponnese, the Dodecanese, focussing on questions of architecture and urbanisation.

Special attention will be addressed to an old controversy, i.e. whether the mother cities at the time of the foundation of the Western colonies had already developed into *poleis*. It will be argued that the town planning was in a sense already in place in the motherland at the time of the foundation of the earliest colonies in the West, even in places where apsidal and oval architectural forms prevailed, as in Euboea and Oropos.

An interesting remark is that several settlements within the areas which were actively involved in the colonisation movement both towards the Northern Aegean and towards the West, declined and occasionally were abandoned around 700 BC. Several factors were probably responsible for this situation, such as the process of synoecism, the long lasting Lelantine War, but also the depopulation due to the sending out of colonies, not only towards the West Mediterranean, but also towards the Northern Aegean.