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Indigenous groups of the Early Iron Age in S. Italy

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Indigenous groups of the Early Iron Age in S Italy

Albert J. Nijboer

GIULIA SALTINI SEMERARI and GERT-JAN BURGERS (edd.), *EARLY IRON AGE COMMUNITIES OF SOUTHERN ITALY* (Papers of the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome, vol. 63; Palombi Editore, Rome 2015). Pp. 223, c.83 figs. ISBN 978-88-6060-689-2. EUR. 29.

The book under review presents 11 papers on mainly indigenous societies just prior to and during their early contacts with Greek-speaking settlers from the late 8th c. B.C. onwards. It therefore treats mostly the 9th to 7th c. and how those communities developed after the arrival of some overseas pioneers. Most of the contributions are case-studies of specific sites and territories from diverse coastal Italian regions stretching from the Gulf of Naples in the Tyrrhenian Sea to the Gulf of Taranto in the Ionian Sea. Coastal areas of the S Italian Adriatic are hardly mentioned since Greek culture had a limited effect there (see below).

This is a valuable set of articles because, taken together, they reveal the numerous, fragmented, small polities involved, both local and Greek, as well as the miscellaneous responses to the encounters, from opposition to eager reception and everything in between. First, however, the validity of the concept of Greek colonization needs to be addressed since it has become political and controversial. It is scarcely discussed in the volume, as if all have a clear notion of a ‘Greek colony’ in S Italy, yet, if that were the case, this book would be redundant. The terms “Greek” and “colonization” beg for semantics, being imbued with ideas drawn from later periods. For example, the word colony, rooted in the Latin word *colonia*, originally refers to Roman land-locked colonization from the 5th c. B.C. onwards, but it is also used for overseas exploitation of several European nations in more recent centuries. To quote I. Malkin,

We do not have an apt term, either in ancient Greek or in any modern language, for “Greek colonization”,

after which he focuses on the specific colonists’ right to return to the mother city in Greece.¹ In my view, the worst connection sometimes made of the Greek overseas migrations during the late 8th to 5th c. B.C. is that with modern imperialism in the decades around A.D. 1900, since the scale of the phenomena are totally mismatched – as if one could compare the need for assets of agricultural, household economies with those arising during and following the Industrial Revolution when farming had lost its dominance as the main occupation, leading to a massive, worldwide exploitation of resources. I will return to such issues below.

The papers were written following a workshop on the S Italian communities of the Early Iron Age held in May 2011 at the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome that aimed to bring together two lines of enquiry: socio-economic and political dynamics; and territorial organization and intra-group interaction. Aligning with both themes, the articles are arranged in three sections: Status (3 papers); Gender (4 articles); and Territory (4 contributions).

The section on Status opens with E. Herring examining male status-markers and the risks of bias, methodology and ideology. If imports especially signify rank, the analysis could reflect merely our greater capacity to recognize social standing. He focuses on Apulia, which is divided into several smaller territories. There is limited evidence for social stratification: “virtually no surviving burials from the Salento” are known prior to the 6th c. B.C. Most settlements were small (2-3 ha), containing a few huts. The fact that in some areas the first Greek settlers lived within indigenous communities, however, implies that those societies were dynamic and demonstrates endogamous change. Daunian sites in N Apulia especially grew rapidly. Herring is one of the few authors in the book to address the Daunians, who reveal little influence from the nearby Greek *poleis*, as if they opposed them culturally as well as denying them access to the Adriatic. In terms of responses to the newcomers, Apulia is extremely fragmented, as is stressed by some other contributors. Due to the trans-Adriatic contacts (evidence for gift-giving

1 I. Malkin, “Greek colonisation: the right to return,” in L. Donnellan, V. Nizzo and G.-J. Burgers (edd.), *Contextualising early colonisation II* (Rome 2016) 27-50, with quotation on 28.

and feasting) between Daunia and Dalmatia, the exchange of goods rather mirrors an élite networking system across the Mediterranean and the Adriatic in which peoples of diverse origin could participate, rather than 'just Hellenization': it indicates a competitive environment, but not colonization.

C. Pellegrino discusses Pontecagnano and the settlements in its immediate vicinity, an area of c.300 km². This long article, without subdivisions, concentrates on an analysis of several burial grounds next to the site of Pontecagnano itself around c.725 B.C. at the start of the Orientalising period. The evidence reveals a vibrant region with input from various peoples and groups, some living in the nearby hinterland (e.g., the 'Oliveto Citra-Cairano' complex) while others mark out more distant lands such as Samnium or the central Adriatic. These groups maintained some of their specific funerary customs but adjusted them as the result of increasing exchange, including with seafaring Euboeans. The considerable funerary variation at Pontecagnano and in its hinterland at this time indicates the gathering of groups of different stock, including those of Villanovan/Etruscan descent. The area never became colonized by Greek-speaking groups, although Pontecagnano gradually urbanized, maintaining its key position in the elaborate overland trading network.

The third paper, by F. Ferranti and F. Quondam ("Status nelle comunità costiere dell'alto Ionio nella Prima Età del Ferro") compares in c.40 pages two indigenous burial grounds (c.50 km apart) that are located in the foothills overlooking two of the coastal plains that lead to the Ionian Sea: the Macchiabate necropolis at Francavilla Marittima, and the Valle Sorigliano funerary complex at Santa Maria d'Anglona. Both cemeteries, classified as Oenotrian on account of some similarities in material culture, reveal specific funerary rituals as expression of a local identity. Together, they indicate a form of social stratification, having a couple of elaborately dressed burials that mark high-ranking individuals. Terms such as 'clan' with a leading family, 'proto-urban' and 'patron-client relations' are used to explain the archaeological data just before colonization of the nearby coastal plains took place. These terms might not be suitable for the socio-economic conditions in S Italy, though it is useful to detect that each indigenous settlement acted as a small polity and seems to have responded independently to newcomers from overseas as a result of their prevailing land-locked situation. The inland communication routes ran mainly along rivers and streams originating in the mountains that seasonally would flood the coastal plains.

Part II on Gender opens with R. D. Whitehouse, who contextualizes the other more specific contributions under this topic. She illuminates the major advances in the study of gender during the last 20 years but also sets out an agenda for future integrated research, advocating a more synthetic account. She stresses that contacts between indigenous communities in S Italy and the radically different cultures, ethnicities and languages to which the Phoenicians and Greeks belonged were of different types and of varying degrees of intensity. For example, at L'Amastuola, Incoronata and Metaponto, indigenous people and Greeks lived side by side. Subsequently, Whitehouse poses the pertinent question of whether the differing gender rôles in the two cultures, Italic and Greek, would have given rise to conflict and social change; I would think it did.

Next, M. Gleba examines textile production as a coherent *chaîne opératoire*. She includes tools and iconographic evidence. Some of the artifacts accompanied women in their graves, although every region and even every community had its own customs with respect to the type and number of implements chosen for deposition. Alongside other valuable goods, luxury tools in bronze and even ivory must have been purely for display, indicating the status of the female buried. She notes that this symbolism continued for centuries, since Roman brides carried a spindle and distaff during wedding processions. Scenes on the Verucchio throne and Daunian *stelae* illustrate the manufacture probably by élite women of intricate ceremonial clothes with tablet-woven borders. Such luxury textiles accompanied gift-giving among high-status individuals in Italy but also elsewhere in the Mediterranean.

The third piece relating to gender, by M. Cuozzo ("Identità di genere, status e dialettica interculturale nelle necropoli della Campania al passaggio tra Prima Età del Ferro e Orientalizzante"), focuses on high-ranking females and their *rapport* with the newly established centers

at Pithekoussai and Cumae. The archaeological data illustrate the different, competing strategies of local groups. Around 750-700 B.C., at sites such Pontecagnano, she says that there was openness towards the seafaring newcomers, while other areas such as the Sarno valley and the southern Irpino were more traditional, marking a silent resistance with an identity based on a local material culture. Greek ceramics or ceramics of Greek type are absent here until the 6th c. B.C., even from high-status contexts. Monte Vetrano, a site 2 km from Pontecagnano with more than 300 tombs, seems to reveal a reshuffling of socio-economic conditions that arises from within societies with new forms of display. Some of its élite tombs (even more so than at Pontecagnano) reveal widespread overland and overseas exchange. Women in this region seem to have played either a passive rôle representing the group and the economic status of their family or they seem to have been actively participating in a new aristocratic ideology as an intercultural agent by promoting interaction between several participants on an élite level. I would opt for the latter, dynamic rôle, in which one can detect a transfer of concepts and ideas from overseas since to make them suitable for local consumption we hardly encounter imitations without adaptations or reworkings.

Lastly, G. Saltini Semarari (“Towards a gendered Basilicata”) examines two published cemeteries, Incoronata (925-775 B.C.) and Santa Maria d’Anglona (8th c. B.C.). Looking at different gender rôles, she criticizes the still-popular application of particular Homeric values and beliefs to Early Iron Age S Italy on the ground that the existence of close links between indigenous groups and Greek traders or settlers differed from territory to territory. In Basilicata, this threshold of acculturation occurred at the earliest around 650 B.C. Women in this region could have gained some power or influence (particularly in the religious sphere) independently, which might point to gender rôles that are paired, combined and corresponding.

The 4 articles in Part III (“Territory”) begin with a paper on “Greek and Greek style pottery in the Sibaritide during the 8th century B.C.” authored by four scholars (J. K. Jacobsen, F. Ippolito, G. P. Mittica and S. Handberg), each with his or her own particular expertise (two recently received their Ph.D. at Groningen for research emanating from our own work at Francavilla Marittima, the main site discussed). Other contributions in this volume hinted at the activities of Greek-speaking men or craftsmen in indigenous settlements just prior to the foundation of nearby ‘colonies’, and this one presents details on that sort of co-habitation since the ceramics produced locally are partially based on Euboean tablewares in style and technique from c.800 to 750 B.C. onwards, two or three generations before the foundation of nearby Sybaris. This article opens with an account of the indigenous site, based on a detailed presentation of the Bronze Age ceramics recovered at the specific location (Area Rovitti) in the settlement where Oenotrian-Euboean ceramics were produced. The authors note the restricted distribution of this Oenotrian-Euboean pottery even at Francavilla Marittima itself (in its sanctuary, cemetery and other parts of the settlement). Local production of tablewares in the matt-painted ceramic tradition did continue, although it was gradually altered in the following century, whereas production of Oenotrian-Euboean pottery appears to have seen a low output at first, indicating limited workshop activity resulting from limited demand (to call this a “Kerameikos”, as some do, is stretching the evidence).² In other articles of the volume being reviewed here one occasionally refers to native settlements in which cohabitation between pioneers from overseas and the original population is attested, but at Francavilla Marittima one can gather the specifics of such living together. One hopes that the authors will shortly be able to re-open their excavations at the site.

M. Osanna discusses settlement developments in the N part of Lucania during the Iron Age. He is the only one to concentrate on an inland, mountainous area not in the immediate vicinity of the ‘colonies’ but some 80-100 km away. This territory is linked to the Ionian Sea by several river valleys, but also to the Adriatic by the Ofanto river, being, like so many other Italian regions, highly connected. The territory of c.200 km² appears to be resettled during the 8th c. B.C. Only in rare cases can continuity from the Late Bronze Age onwards be detected. By

2 On the matt-painted ceramics at Francavilla Marittima: M. Fassanelli Masci, *La produzione della ceramica geometrica Enotria nella Sibaritide durante l’Età del Ferro* (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Groningen 2016).

focusing on the matt-painted tablewares especially of Torre di Satriano, Baragiano and Ripacandida, Osanna can construct native identities that are related to specific valleys such as those of the Bradano and Basento, and that suggest exchange and migrations. These small local communities which started steadily to exploit the agricultural potential of their lands are intriguing, with the material culture showing that these inland polities prospered until Romanization set in.

In two complementary papers on the Salento Isthmus, one by G.-J. Burgers ("Territorio, insediamenti e dinamiche sociali nel Salento tra IX e VII secolo a.C."), the other by G. Semeraro ("Organizzazione degli abitati e processi di costruzione delle comunità locali nel Salento tra IX e VII sec. a.C."), the former analyses survey data while the latter focuses on excavations of domestic structures and fortifications. The area in question is the c.70-km strip of land in the northern Salento that connects Taranto on the Ionian Sea to Brindisi on the Adriatic and that separates both Greek, coastal settlements from the Daunians. In this period the native population both expanded its settlements and cleared and occupied lands that previously had been used only marginally. The size of the settlements varied from 3 to 70 ha, the centrally located Oria being the largest. Even in this relatively small area one can detect a settlement hierarchy that was mostly controlled by indigenous groups. By contrasting the smaller site of L'Amastuola (3 ha) with Oria, Burgers successfully shows this region to have been dynamic, partially in response to the Greek settlers at Taranto. He does not detect a dichotomy between newcomers and natives; both are portrayed as segmented and divided while simultaneously expanding their territorial claims, especially in the decades around 700 B.C. At some sites Burgers also detects groups that were merging receptively and openly, which indeed seems to me to have been the prevailing scenario, since Greece itself would have been depleted during the 7th c. if so many had to move westward; instead, Greece urbanized itself.

Finally, Semeraro describes the excavations at Oria, Castello di Alceste and Castellucio. She points to habitation and supervision over resources and output that was increasing and intensifying. Many of the settlements were set on higher ground providing good visibility of the immediate agricultural land but also of the network of sites that arose around Oria. On average, the habitations cover 40 m², providing shelter for a nuclear family; some have infant burials in the vicinity that stress lineages. The structures seem to be clustered in small compounds within the settlement and appear to develop over time. Native communities of kinship groups also become more visible archaeologically as stable settlements from the fortifications that were constructed even at the smaller sites.

Discussion

The progress made in study of the segmented, Iron Age, indigenous groups in S Italy is remarkable. Their vital rôle in the story of 'Greek colonization' had been recognized by some since the 1970s, but it is only in the last decade that we seem able to move towards a more realistic, heterogeneous account, instead of seeing a straightforward Hellenization of the whole region, with passive peasants in the interior ripe to be exploited. Few processes of colonization in history resulted in stable socio-economic polities that lasted for centuries. More and more, we seem able to reconstruct a living together of groups of different origins, instead of the dichotomy indigenous *versus* Greek. Even so, I am aware of at least a few members of the Società Magna Grecia, founded in 1920, who contest such an account by frequently pointing to the larger, more successful 'Greek colonies' such as Sybaris, Syracuse or Selinunte. The present account, however, is in line with the research results of the Copenhagen Polis Centre that identified numerous small Greek city-states and only a few larger ones that were able to expand their territory. In this sense, the indigenous polities in S Italy appear to be as segmented as those in Greece itself. In addition, the endemic warfare between Greek city-states, starting with the Lelantine wars around 700 B.C. that seem to have curtailed the relatively short-lived, Euboean overseas exchange-network, points to a failure to form larger, more stable states. This inclination towards war, fragmentation and struggle was carried overseas too. However prosperous and successful Sybaris may have been during the 7th-6th c. B.C., it was defeated by neighboring Kroton in the decades around 500.

Nonetheless, these proceedings do not focus on the colonies themselves but on the surrounding and more distant hinterland in various parts of S Italy. These regions seem to be controlled by indigenous communities who responded to the newcomers in diverse ways, creating a decidedly hybrid blend; some even prospered while opposing Greek-style urbanization. I was dazzled by the diversity of responses and the territorial splitting, though assured by the vitality at play between the various indigenous communities and overseas immigrants. It seems to have been a missed opportunity not to have provided a synthesis of the case-studies presented, although as a collection of papers the authors succeeded in joining the two lines of enquiry, being socio-economic and political dynamics, as well as territorial organization and intra-group interaction.

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University of Groningen

The development of Etruscan studies in Italy

Jean MacIntosh Turfa

MARIE-LAURENCE HAACK (textes réunis par), avec la collaboration de Martin Miller, *LA CONSTRUCTION DE L'ÉTRUSCOLOGIE AU DÉBUT DU XX^e SIÈCLE. Actes des journées d'études internationales de 2 et 3 décembre 2013 (Amiens)* (Ausonius Éditions, Scripta Receptorica 3, Bordeaux 2015; diffusion De Boccard). Pp. 222, figs. including color. ISBN 978-2-35613-139-3. EUR. 25.

This compendium of papers presented at a conference in 2013 holds rich information for specialists in historiography and modern history, offering fascinating background for the development of Etruscan studies in Italy. The indices (207-22) of places, terms, gods and persons are useful (and rarely furnished in anthologies). A single bibliography (189-205) covers all the papers, many of which include illustrations ranging from portrait photographs, pictures and maps of archaeological finds or sites, to facsimiles of archival, handwritten or antiquarian printed materials, as well as some transcribed documents.

Between an Introduction and Conclusion by the editor M.-L. Haack, the 10 papers (5 in French, 3 in Italian, 2 in German) are artfully arranged under categories: Veii and the birth of a new Etruscology; The delays of linguistics; The internationalization of Etruscology; Research into origins). The subjects of individual papers, which are tantalizing, will leave many readers in need of much additional background and explanations to bridge them.

Haack's initial and concluding essays give fine surveys and surmises, taking us "From Etruscomania to Etruscology" at the beginning of the 20th c. to an examination of "Etruscology to Etruscophobia" during the same period. She notes a consensus among the contributors that Etruscology developed as a natural sort of evolution, first perceived as local history, then morphing into Italian national history; it was only converted to an international research field when it was made accessible by the creation in Tuscany of institutions for the promotion of this study. It then focused around two distinct poles: Italian and German scholarship. While not directly associated with Fascism, the field was certainly affected by the political developments of the 20th c.

As early as the Florentine Republic, there was interest (and political connotation) in archaeology (certain of the Medici were avid and dangerous collectors of Etruscan antiquities). A sort of Etruscomania was generated in the 18th c. by antiquarian and dilettante publications and galleries. The delayed publication in 1726 of Thomas Dempster's book *De Etruria regali*, written for Cosimo II in 1616-19, stimulated English Etruscomania — at least, what they thought was Etruscan, since hundreds of Greek vases, scarce in Greece itself, were labeled Etruscan on rational, statistical grounds, coming as they did from Etruscan tombs. In due course, corpora of Etruscan art (mirrors, urns) and inscriptions (the *Corpus Inscriptionum Etruscarum*) appeared, but scientific organization of the field into a proper discipline really came only with the 20th c. and the creation of its own journal, *Studi Etruschi*, by the new Istituto di Studi Etruschi. (What's