



Introduction: The Mythology and Iconography of Colonization: An International Conference

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The papers in this issue of *Electronic Antiquity* come from a conference titled *The Mythology and Iconography of Colonization: An International Conference*, held in October 2006 at the Villa Vergiliana in Cuma, Italy. The conference was co-sponsored by Virginia Tech (Blacksburg VA, USA) and the Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II (Naples, Italy). Ann-Marie Knoblauch (Art & Art History) and Terry Papillon (Classical Studies) were the Virginia Tech organizing faculty; Gioia Rispoli, Rossana Valenti and Raffaele Grisolia were from Naples. Professor Alfonso Mele of Naples kindly joined us as sponsor and key note speaker.

The project was a result of Virginia Tech's first International Faculty Development Program in 2005. Twelve faculty members (two each from six colleges) traveled to Virginia Tech's Center for European Studies and Architecture in Riva san Vitale, Switzerland to develop and promote individual international research projects, as well as consider ways to

enhance the University's mission on an international stage. We were fortunate to be members of that 2005 class as a representative from the College of Architecture and Urban Studies, School of Visual Arts, and the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. Collaboration between us made sense since we both do research on the classical world. As a result, we spent the spring of 2005 exploring a project that would allow us to pursue mutual research interests in an international setting. We developed the idea to hold an international conference, the topic of which would treat the rhetoric and iconography of colonization.

We created a connection with the three professors in Naples, and during our time in Switzerland, we traveled to Naples to meet with them and learn about the Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi per la Magna Grecia and the work of Professor Mele. This visit resulted in our plans for the conference, to be held in October 2006 at the Villa Vergiliana in Cuma, Italy. Our choice of location was twofold: first, Cuma, near the Bay of Naples, is in a part of the world in which ancient Greek colonization had early and strong roots; and second, the intimate setting of the Villa Vergiliana invited a level of collegiality that could extend well past the formal paper sessions.

An excerpt from our call for papers expresses our goals for the conference:

The process of colonization affects most world cultures and by definition includes the colonizer, the colonized, and the resulting hybrid community that communicates what its new values are. But the reasons for and impact of colonization differ dramatically in different situations. This conference encourages discussion of the rhetoric of the hybrid community that colonization produces. Furthermore, the concept of colonization appears in many different contexts, including military occupation, political posturing, economic planning, and modern academic discourse, such as post-colonial studies. This conference uses ancient Mediterranean colonization as the starting point for broader discussions of the impact of colonization.

We were excited and intrigued by the abstracts we received and the conference that followed. We spent five days at the Villa Vergiliana, where we welcomed speakers from Italy, Greece, Israel, Russia, Spain, Portugal, Norway, and the United States. Our conference on the hybridity of colonization became a metaphor for the conversation and collegiality of an international group of scholars working on diverse topics within diverse periods and parts of the world. The setting of the Villa Vergiliana allowed for on-going conversations about the nuances of colonial contact and impact, as well as site visits to Cuma, Pompeii, Paestum, and the Naples Archaeological Museum.

Colonization

Colonization in one form or another has been a consistent theme throughout much of human history, up to and including the present day. Current political, military and commercial activities allow us to witness at a rapid pace the ever-changing ways in which cultures compete and coalesce on a global stage. Different actors are often able to manipulate the assimilation process in ways that suit their interests, and the results are often met with ambivalence by the world audience. Whether discussing the spread of Coca-Cola or democracy, most of us recognize that when something is gained, something else is lost. Can such trends be observed and analyzed in other periods, and if so, how can they be measured?

The theme of colonization interested us both and we recognized that it could be fruitful for bringing together different disciplines to discuss the topic from different methodological approaches. Ann-Marie works with archaeology and iconography while Terry works with rhetoric and oratory; thus we could already see many possible approaches to colonization just from our own perspectives. Ann-Marie's disciplines (particularly archaeology) tend to identify colonization through the material remains by pinpointing those elements that are an enduring and transportable part of a group's cultural identity (burial practices, the manifestation of religious beliefs, etc.) and document them in the archaeological record, charting the local and non-local trends to separate the colonized from the colonizers. Terry's research field of rhetoric often looks at the way discourse meshes and distinguishes colonizers and colonized. Through our project, we aimed to investigate ways that multiple voices could lead to more robust commentary about the ways in

which cultures take an active or passive role in the evolution of a hybrid culture.

The notion of colonization is a complicated one, both in antiquity as today. What does it mean when a foreign group descends onto a place, and how do we measure the impact on both the colonized and the colonizer? Is assimilation of culture an automatic outcome of colonization? If so, how can we (de)construct this process of assimilation in order to determine the roles played by the two (or more) cultures involved? While in some contexts (for example political, military and economic power) the colonizer might be dominant by default, when it comes to cultural assimilation in a non-local (and sometimes non-familiar) region, does the colonized have a visible and/or lasting advantage? Is it possible to move beyond biased official and/or historical reports of “successes” or “failures” of colonies to understand the consequences on every day people? Finally, is there an “expiration date” on these questions? In other words, after the physical act of colonization occurs, at what point (if ever) do two cease to talk of colonizer and colonized, and instead address the assimilated culture?

We did not intend for our conference to provide explicit answers to these questions. In fact, it goes without saying that every region, every period and every culture creates its own algorithm that produces uniquely local results when cultures come together through force or convenience. The opportunities to advance the conversations provided by a conference such as ours, however, enabled interdisciplinary engagement and a broader view of history and humankind.

The Conference Papers

We intentionally wanted the conference to cover a broad range of topics, starting with the classical world, of course, but allowing other areas and time periods to inform and enlighten our inquiry. The papers thus cover a wide array of times and places. This created an invigorating environment for conversation.

For this issue, we give pride of place to the keynote paper by Professor Mele, where he argues for a reconsideration of the inorganic colonization through close attention to Homer, Hesiod, and Greek lyric poetry focusing on the Rhodian example of Tlepolemus.

We have set the rest of the papers out more or less geographically, beginning in the East and traveling to the West. This was not meant to prioritize the West, or imply a dominance of that West as a colonizer. It came about more from the papers treating the East being chronologically earlier.

Thus we begin in Anatolia, with Itamar Singer's paper on Hittite influences in Anatolia, focusing on the charter myth of the Queen of Kanesh and the additional possibilities of a return myth. Anastasia Leriou continues with a discussion of the rhetorical nature of archaeological discussion, using the example of descriptions of the Mycenaean colonization of Cyprus. Dobrinka Chiekova then treats Greek and Thracian interaction on the coast of the Black Sea. She clarifies how religious cultic choices shows an interaction between Greek and original Thracian thought. Sandra Blakely concludes the section dealing with eastern Mediterranean topics with a discussion of Kadmos and Jason on Samothrace, using the myth of initiation to highlight the interaction.

In the central Mediterranean region, Rebecca Schindler takes us to Locri Epizephyrii in southern Italy to look at how the presentation of Aphrodite represents connection. In a jointly authored paper, Yolanda Gamboa and Noemi Marin take us up the west coast of Italy and upward in time to look at Naples in the 17th century. They analyze the notions of Naples as a rhetorical and colonial concept in Spain. Angela Ziskowski looks at evidence for women in Sicily and southern Italy and their role in informing us about colonial patterns; the Greek colonists took local women as wives. Antonella Carfora analyzes a specific example of colonial mythmaking with the example of Archias of Syracuse. Next, Kristoffer Momrak contributes a more theoretical piece dealing with the idea of colonization and metropolis, or mother city, using examples from Sicily and North Africa. He argues that the narratives of the historians hide the multiplicity of motives for colonization during the Archaic period. Finally, we reach Spain and the west with Domingo Plácido's paper on the colonization of the northwest Iberian peninsula by Phoenicians and Greeks.

We are glad to offer this collection of papers that will show the variety of perspectives and the variety of topics that come from some deceptively simple questions.