## HOW ARCHAIC GREEK COLONIZATION DEVELOPED AND WHAT FORMS IT TOOK

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**Premises for colonisation.**

A lively debate has developed in recent years around the nature and development of archaic Greek colonisation. This debate tends to prove that the model based on the oecist–metropolis–date of foundation relation that has been passed on to us through the ancient tradition in fact results from a later normalisation process, which did not occur earlier than the mid-7th century. For the most ancient period, archaeological evidence would suggest a different model, made up of heterogeneous colonial contributions and settlements following each other gradually[1]. In the light of this, the chapters of our books of history concerning Greek colonisation ought to be deleted and re-written. Colonists of different origin flow towards the earliest settlements, as is confirmed by the different origins of pottery; a consequence of this were settlements without a well-defined plan and expanding gradually, a fact which finds evidence in field studies. In the same perspective, Greek metropolitan *poleis* must be primitivistically conceived as communities similar to

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[1] Cf. Purcel, Osborne, and Braund.

either those of the Polynesian big men[2] or to the stateless communities of Black Africa[3].

It is a wave of primitivism that beats down on the way in which the archaic Greek society is perceived. Such a perception neglects the existence of Homer's poems (and all the lost works that accompanied it), Hesiod's poems and the whole world of which they were part; it neglects the existence of lyric poetry and what it tells us about its contemporary world. This view also seems to ignore the nature of the ancient *emporia*, which does not make for a mechanical identification between the origin of products and their users–think, for example of the ubiquitous spreading of Corinth ceramics and the presence of the archaic colonies of Kerkyra and Syracuse. And it also seems to forget the characteristics of the archaic *poleis*, developed following the two clashing models of the *katà komas* polis, Sparta[4], and of the synoecistic polis, Athens[5].

I am not going to examine the issue in a comprehensive way; I have already discussed this topic elsewhere.[6] Here I will limit my analysis to a criticism of the inorganic colonisation model.

It should be remembered that there are references to the colonisation dating from the time of the most ancient settlements in the 8th-7th centuries BCE These references are included in what E. Havelock defines as the Greek tribal encyclopaedia, that is Homer and Hesiod. Alongside these works are the specific evidence and the colonial models found in archaic Greek lyrical production: Callinus, Archilocus, Simonides, Mimnermus and Alcaeus. In particular, Callinus was able to recall a colonial movement from the past of the Troad region[7]; some poets, then, were directly involved in colonial enterprises: Archilocus, for example, took part in the colonial endeavour of Paros in Thasos[8], and described the foundation of Syracuse[9] and how the Ionians were fascinated by the site of Siris; Simonides of Samos, instead, founded Minoas on the island of Amorgos[10]. Past colonial enterprises had their

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[2] Quiller. Contra: Carlier.
[3] Berent. Contra: Hansen 162.
[4] Thuc. I, 10.
[5] Thuc. II, 15.
[6] Mele 2007
[7] F 7 West.
[8] FF 102.21.22.116.
[9] F 293 West.
[10] Sud., s.v. Simonides.

own bards: Samos had Simonides[11]; Colophon had Mimnermus, who, from his homeland also sang the war against Gyges[12]. Alongside them came Xenophanes, who sang the origin of Colophon and the recent foundation of Elea[13]. All these accounts must be taken into consideration when evaluating the complex phenomenon of the archaic Greek colonisation.

This is what we are going to attempt, starting from the archaic Greek encyclopaedia, the Homeric poems, to comment on what they say about colonisation. Homeric poems present the whole picture of the phenomenon of colonisation. First, they present the preconditions for the establishment of a colony, through an excerpt of the Odyssey about Goat Island, located in front of the Cyclops' land (IX 116-141). It is a wooded, uninhabited island, showing no sign of the presence of humans–no hunters, or shepherds, or ploughers–but grazing land for a multitude of goats. The island shows a good potential: its land is suitable for grazing and for growing vines and cereals. It has a safe harbour and water resources. But it has remained uninhabited because the Cyclops are not sailors and do not build ships to travel to other people's cities nor carry out the typical activities which men undertake when they cross the seas and meet with other men.

The meaning of this is clear. Colonies are born if some preconditions are met: a prior knowledge of the places (which only a community of origin that owns ships and is used to travelling and trading can obtain); an attractive destination with good resources for farming (for the growing of cereals and vines and for breeding); the possibility to moor and stop in a safe harbour; and feasibility of the enterprise, which in this case means the lack of any inhabitants. An implicit precondition is the presence, in the community interested in the colony, of people who do not benefit from these resources in their homeland and are therefore willing to move to the new settlement. All these preconditions should be seen in the perspective of the world in which Homeric *aedes* work, in the paradigmatic forms of the tribal encyclopaedia that express the typical premises for the foundation of a colony.

The fact that the chronological level at which this paradigm is formulated is that of the earliest colonial settlements finds further support in a number of other sources. When Hesiod, the other component of the

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[11] ibid.
[12] FF 9.10.13.14.
[13] D.L. IX.20.

Greek encyclopaedia, tells of his father's migration from the Aeolic Cyme to Ascra, he points out that his father had been involved in maritime trade and was urged to move to a place which turned out to be less attractive than it had seemed. In Cyme he had not been able to overcome his difficult economic conditions through his work[14]. We are in the second half of the 8th century.

Archilocus further supports the model for the first half of the 7th century. The territory to colonise must be attractive. This is not the case for Thasos, that is likened to a donkey's back covered with woods, while it is true for the area through which flows the river Siris, which is beautiful, desirable and pleasant[15]. It is misery that drives colonists from all over towards the island of Thasos[16], and it is poverty that urges him to do the same, leaving the island of Paros and a diet of figs and fish[17]. Towards the end of the same century, Mimnermus confirms Archilocus' auspice, recalling that his fellow citizens went to sea heading for "the desirable Asia and the pleasant Colophon"[18]. Even Apollo elects as his temple a pleasant place, which ensures crops and has nice meadows[19].

The premises and developments of the earliest contemporary Greek foundations in Italy correspond to this model. Sea journeys by *prospectors* since the late 9th century left a trace in the spreading of Cycladic cups and cups with chevrons in Apulia, Lucania, western Sicily, Campania and Etruria, followed by the late-geometrical colonial settlements[20]. The most relevant situation is that of Pithecusae, the island facing the mainland, which offered water and harbours, *eukarpia* and trading opportunities. Discovered by *prospectors*, it later became an agricultural-commercial settlement[21]. Zancles has a similar story: it was discovered as a harbour with an indigenous name[22] and exploited for the opportunities of maritime control and *tele* it offered, something which the victims of this exploitation viewed as piracy[23]; later it became a

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[14] Hesiod Op 618; 631-640.

[15] FF 21.22 West.

[16] F 102 West.

[17] F 116.Cf.P.,Py. 2,54-57; Critias 88 F 44 DK.

[18] F 9 West.

[19] H.Ap.,529-30.

[20] E.Greco, Archeologia della Magna Grecia, Rome-Bari,1992,pp. 3 ss.

[21] Cf. Mele 2003.

[22] Thuc.,VI.4,5; Strabo,VI.2,3,268; Paus.,IV.23,7.

[23] Strabo, IX,3,4,418-9, talking of Krisa, helps understand the link between the imposition of *tele* and the judgement given by those who were obliged to pay

colony owning a territory that was appreciated for its *eukarpia*, or *euoinia*, and excellent wine production[24].

The second of the Homeric data, that is the agricultural resources as a reason for settlements across the sea, appears again in the colonial settlements of southern Italy. The Delphian Oracle assigned a wealthy territory between the Satyrion harbour and the river Taras to the Parthenii[25]. Metaponto exhibits the ear of wheat on its coin and, thanks to its abundant crops of cereals, it offers Delphian Apollo a gold harvest[26]. We have seen what Archilocus thought of Siris. Sibari occupied a vast, fertile land between two rivers and thus enjoyed great prosperity[27]. Delphian Apollo assigned to Miscellus a great Kroton among the beautiful lands to plough[28]. Cuma was founded thanks to a Demetrian cereal rite, following the sound of cymbals that prepared Kore's return[29] and built its prosperity thanks to the *eukarpia* of the Campanian-Phlegraean plain[30]. Pithecusae owed its wealth to goldsmiths, but also, again, to its *eukarpia*[31]. In conclusion, the written texts of the Homeric encyclopaedia, other literary evidence and contemporary colonial realities in the West correspond very closely to what is passed on by the excerpt of the Odyssey mentioned above.

### How and why the colonisation took place: the case of Rhodes.

Rhodes provides a typical example of colonisation (Iliad 2.661-670). Tlepolemos, being the son of Herakles, was a brave and gallant hero, a famous spear-user, and head of the tripartite Rhodians in Troy. A grown-up man, he once happened to kill old Licymnius, his father's uncle on the part of his mother. Herakles' other children and grandchildren then

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them. On this interpretation of organised piracy, see the reaction of Etruscans and Campanians to the Phocean attempt to transform Alalia into a polis with its own exclusive territorial and maritime space: Hdt. I.166,1.

[24] Strabo,VI.2,3,268

[25] Antioch.555 .F 13.

[26] Strabo, VI.1,15,264.

[27] Tim. 50; Diod-,XII.9,1; Varro,RR,I,44,2.

[28] Diod., VIII,17.

[29] V.P.,I,4,1.

[30] D:H., VII.3,2; Strabo,V.4,2-3,242.

[31] Strabo, V,4,9,247.

convinced him to flee. He immediately started building ships and gathering great support. So he left, and not without suffering, he reached Rhodes. Here his comrades settled in three different places, one for each of the tribes and, being much loved by Zeus, obtained great wealth. This division into three groups recalls the first lines of the excerpt, 652-656, where the Rhodians are said to keep the island divided into three, between Lindus, Ialysus and Camirus.

The foundation of the colony is conceived as a unitary act, in which the role of the oecist appears essential. He is the military leader of the colonists; he is the one who builds ships and gathers colonists, chooses the place, organises the colony assigning different areas of the new territory to different tribes. A fundamental aspect is he is backed by a community in which he plays a leading role: he is a descendent of Herakles and can therefore build ships and gather followers. As for the reasons for leaving, for the oecist it is means accepting the consequences of a fault that keeps him isolated from his relatives; for his followers the colony will mean obtaining the land and the wealth they do not have in their homeland. In the light of these considerations the function of the colony becomes clear: is restoring the leader's lost prestige, and restoring the colonists' lost land and wealth.

The same tradition is found in Pindar's Olympian VII, which he composed in 464 BCE in honour of the pugilist Diagoras, an authoritative member of the Rhodian aristocracy. The poem chronicles the entire mythical history of Rhodes, the rising of the island from water, the relationship with Helios and his children including Camirus, Ialysus and Lindus, the worship of Athena and the arrival of Tlepolemos–and the Rhodians wanted to have it written in gold letters in the temple dedicated to Athena Lindia[32]. It is thus a poem in which the island's ruling class recognised itself. The tradition on Tlepolemos keeps the essential traits of the Homeric tale intact.[33] Tlepolemos was a very strong Heraklides, *oikistés* and *archagetas*, hence founder as well as religious and military leader: in the definition of the Rhetra, the *archagetai* were the Heraklides kings of the Spartans[34]. The colonists find themselves divided between the three cities on the island. The metropolis, implicit in Homer, is clearly the Argolides and Tiryns. The reason for the departure is the killing of Alcmena's brother Lycimnius. The colonists find an island rich in men

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[32] Gorgon di Rodi 515 F 18.
[33] Ol.,VII.,19-33; 64;77-81.
[34] Paus.,Lyc.,VI.8.

and animals, with a potential for great wealth. The function of the colony is to provide him with redemption from misfortune (lines 77-81) and the colonists with great prosperity (line 64).

There are some variations: the hero's mother was the Thessalian and Phtiotic Astydameia, the daughter of Ormenos[35], eponym of Ormenion near the gulf of Pagases[36], instead of Astyocheia of Ephyra; the murder was unintentional; Tlepolemos consulted Apollo's Oracle. All this is declared by the poet himself, who points out he has introduced a correction compared to the ξυνὸς λόγος, the universally widespread tradition, that is the Homeric tale. When he writes this, it is not the mere local tradition of Rhodes, but in Herodotus's words[37], it is the ξυνὸς Ἑλλήνων λόγος.

The paradigmatic version offered by the Greek encyclopaedia is thus that of a colony that is born out of a crisis within the ruling class: a Heracklides has done something wrong and must leave his land; a colony that is born thanks to the initiative of its future oecist, who uses his leading position to secure ships and partners, chooses the destination and assigns each of the three tribes to a different place. As has long been recognised, this tradition is backed by the memory of an early Achaean presence in the area[38] on the one hand, and on the other the anticipation of the future Doric presence on the island[39]. However, following the approach we have taken so far, it is not this point we should insist on, but rather the underlying model, which integrates the process with the data produced by the model we have examined earlier. The colony is born thanks to the action of the ruling class in the homeland, where the oecist, the means, the men, the resources come from.

### Tlepolemos and Archias.

The archaic nature and soundness of this model is clearly shown by the comparison between Tlepolemos and Archias, the founder of Syracuse. He is a Bacchiad, and thus member of the ruling class in his homeland Corinth, and as such he is a Heraklides[40]. He, too, has to leave

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[35] Hes.,F 232 M.-W.= schol.P.O.VII 42. Simon., F 554 Page.

[36] Strabo, IX.5,7,432; 5,15,436; 5,18,438; e,21,442 etc.

[37] IV.2,3.

[38] Marazzi, 1 ff.

[39] Musti, pp. ,39 f,.48,56,58,66 n.11.

[40] Thuc., VI,.3,2.

because he has killed someone unintentionally[41]. As the military leader of the colonists, he drives the Sikels out of Ortygia[42]. He, too, makes a *dasmòs* of lands, *kleroi*, among his fellow colonists, who therefore appear to have followed him to this purpose[43]. He, too, is the object of an annual worship as oecist: this is inferred from Callimacus, who started the list of the colonies where the nominal worship of the oecist was the rule with Syracuse[44].

What is particularly important in this case is the account of Archilocus, F 293 West, a poet who lived in the first half of the 7th century, around the time of the foundation of Syracuse. The poet told an exemplary story about love for pleasures and incontinence that had led a friend of Archias' who was going to found Syracuse, a certain Aithiops, to exchange the *kleros* he was going to receive in Syracuse for a honey cake. Some important facts follow: the well-known exemplary story, which involved Archias as the oecist, and the distribution of land among colonists once they had reached their destination. The tradition linked to Archias and the foundation of the colony was thus archaic when Archilocus wrote of a well-known fact, a ξυνὸς Ἑλλήνων λόγος, to which he could refer for a fact that was somehow exemplary. The mythical elements, which are present in the tradition about Archias as we will see shortly, cannot thus lead to discredit his work on the historical level, but are rather the counter evidence of the very ancient origin of this figure.

For more elements to judge the value of these oecist traditions it is possible to look at the way in which tradition has dealt with the problem of Archias' fault. Melissus Argivus, son of Habron, bound to Corinthian Dexandros by ties of hospitality, and thus a friend of the Corinthians, informs Dexandros of Phidon's intention to kill a thousand young men and, by doing so, actually saves their lives. For this reason he is exiled to Corinth where, on his way back from a *komos*, he involuntarily tears his son Actaeon, whom Archias loved, to shreds during an attempted kidnapping. Melissus does not obtain to see Archias punished by the Corinthians, so during the celebrations for Poseidon he kills himself, cursing those who were responsible for this. A plague strikes Corinth, and the oracle tells Archias that he is responsible for all this. So Archias

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[41] Alex.Etol. 3,7 Powell= Schol. AR IV,1212; Diod., VII,10; Plut.,Mor.,772 D-773 B.
[42] Thuc., VI.3,2.
[43] Archiloch., F 293 W.
[44] Callim., F 43 28-30 Pf. E scholl.ad loc.

organises the colony for Syracuse, where, after accomplishing the task and generating two daughters–Ortygia and Syracuse–he is killed by his previous *eromenos*, Telephos, who had followed him commanding a ship[45]. In the same period, another Bacchiad, Chersicrates, deprived of his political rights, *atimos*, has to abandon Corinth to found Kerkyra, so that the departure of two important members of the ruling aristocracy appears as a moment of crisis in the history of Corinth under the Bacchiads[46].

The story is well-known at the end of the 4th century, when Alexander Aetolus on the one hand and Callimachus and Apollonius Rhodius on the other refer to it, without feeling the need for a complete account. It may be proved, however, that it is an ancient tradition inspired by the Bacchiads. To start with, it confuses the departure of the two Bacchiads around 733 with the final expulsion of the Bacchiads by Cypselus in the mid-7th century–a typical example of the merging tendencies of oral traditions. On the other hand, in history there is a trace of solidarity between Phidon and the Bacchiads, which appears through a series of parallel, yet not identical, accounts. Nicolaos Damascenus knows that Phidon's death occurred in Corinth, where the tyrant had come to the rescue of the faction supporting him[47]. In the Bacchiad colony of Syracuse an argive *basileus* named Pollis was active.[48] Among the Bacchiads Phidon's name was one of the most ancient legislators.[49] The name of Actaeon, brought by the young son of Melissus, recalls connections with Boeotia and the homonymous figure who, too, was torn to shreds[50]: the relationship with Boeotia reappears at the time of the Bacchiads with the Corinthian and Bacchiad Philolaus, who was an exile in Thebes where he, too, was a legislator[51]. The same story, in the figures of Philolaus and Diocles, respectively *erastès* and *eromenos*, confirms the ordinariness of homoerotic practices among the Bacchiad aristocracy. Finally, from the Bacchiad point of view, the story provides the motivation for the departure of Archias and Chersicrates. The whole story appears thus to draw inspiration from the Bacchiads and preserves the

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[45] Al.Aet. 3,7 Powell;schol.AR., IV,1212; Diod.,VIII,10; Plut.,Mor.,772 D-773 B.
[46] Callim.,F 12,1-6 Pfeiffer; AR,IV,1210-16; Tim.,F 80..
[47] 90 F 35.
[48] Hippys F 4; Aristot.,F 585 R. = 602 Gigon.
[49] Pol.,1265 B 8-16.
[50]Diod.,VII,10; Max. Tyr., XVIII,1 Hoben.Cf. Hes.Cat.F 112 Colonna = Apd.,III.4,4; Cat.,113,Colonna= P.Oxy. 2509 ed.Lobel 1964.,
[51] Aristot.,Pol.,1274 A 21 –B 6.

memory of an archaic reality of which only isolated, yet consistent, fragments have reached us.

It is therefore interesting to analyse the texture of the whole story: what emerges from it is the heroic stature attributed to Archias, whereas the argive Dexandros, whose name exalts his role of host, appears as a functional hero. Likewise, his Corinthian guest Habron recalls the positive nature which the habrosyne had in archaic aristocracies and the close connection between practices of luxury and hospitality[52]. Melissus and Actaeon, instead, recall mythical heroes: Actaeon, homonym of the Boeotian hero who was torn to pieces by his dogs[53], and Melissus, the male of the bee, who recalls Aristeus, the god of honey and father of Actaeon[54]. Melissus' suicide takes place during the festival of Poseidon by *kremnismòs* in the *adyton* of Melicertes[55], another figure whose name was connected to honey. Ortygia and Syracuse are eponymous heroines. His murderer's name, Telephos, also has a heroic-mythical origin: like the Corinthian hero who joins Archias in commanding his ship, he leads the Achaeans towards their destination, Troy[56]. Archias therefore enjoys the status of hero.

But this is not all: Archias is involved in ritual practices of transition. The story of the relations with Actaeon is clarified in the light of the juvenile *nomima* περὶ τὰς ἐρωτὰς typical of archaic aristocracies. Through Ephorus[57] we learn that these existed in the Doric world, in particular in Crete and, in the light of what he says, we can describe the story of Archias and Actaeon. Actaeon is the *pais* who, because of his handsomeness, his valour and composure, is chosen as *eromenos* by a noble *erastès* like Archias. Archias wants to make him the object of *harpagé,* after a *komos*, aided by his *synetheis*. The young man's father, following the logic of hostility towards the Bacchiads and Phidon, considers him as *anaxios* and resists, thanks to the aid of his *philoi*. All this causes the death of the *pais-eromenos*, following which Archias founds Syracuse and is killed by his own *eromenos*, who is now an adult. The logic of the tale seems clear. The foundation of a colony is experienced as a rite of transition in which the colonists, *paides* (thanks to the oecist, *erastes*), die like Actaeon, to be able, as eromenoi who are now

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[52] Diod.,XIII.83,1. Cf.Emped., B 112 DK.
[53] Cf.n.39.
[54] Diod.,IV.81,4; Apd.,III,4,4 ( 30)
[55] Will 184.
[56] Cypr. Arg. 42 B; F 22 B.
[57] F 149.

adults and citizens, to embody Telephos, and get rid of the old oecist-erastes and therefore alter their status of subordination. It is the view of the colony as *lutron tes sumphoràs*, already experienced in Rhodes, which comes back with the full extent of its implications.

The two stories of Tlepolemus and Archias develop the same model. Is it a mere superstructure? Let us consider a few facts. Archias is a Bacchiad, who lived at the time when the Greek encyclopaedia was put down in writing. He is Eumelus' *syngenés*, he himself a Bacchiad and associated to him by a chronographical tradition that constructed its chronological associations starting from the work of the poets concerned: Archilocus, Simonides, Callinus. Eumelus is an epic poet who works under the influence of Hesiod[58], competes with Arctinus[59], draws on the theme of the *Nostoi*[60], develops the *archaiologia* of Corinth in the light of the Aeolic[61], Argonautic[62], Boeotian and Theban[63] traditions. This is the environment in which Archias is educated and works, the one which provides him with models: the fact that his story repeats that of Tlepolemus Heraklides of Argo, presented as exemplary in the Greek encyclopaedia, is not a mere coincidence, but rather the very way in which a colony at the time could become reality.

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[58] T 6 B.

[59] T 9.10 B.

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[63] FF 11.12.13. B

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