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## Lucania in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BC. Articulation of a New Self-awareness Instead of a Migration Theory

### *Introduction*

The ancient region of Lucania occupies a significant part of Southern Italy and most of today's Basilicata as well as parts of Calabria and Campania. The interior of the area is shaped by a mountainous landscape through which run broad river valleys. The Greek colonies left their mark on the region from the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. Taras, Metapontion, Sybaris and Poseidonia exemplify the influential Greek cities in Southern Italy. While the Greeks concentrated on dominating the coastal regions, the indigenous population settled in the mountainous hinterland. Already in the archaic period, both groups had contact with each other. This contact of the autochthonous population with the Greeks is clearly reflected in some of the archaeological material groups of the region<sup>1</sup>. We have, however, no differentiated picture of this indigenous culture. We know their names only from Greek written sources which gave them the general term Oinotri for this early period<sup>2</sup>. The names of the indigenous population in Southern Italy have, however, been changed in the antique texts in the period after the fifth century BC. Now we get to know various groups of population with different names<sup>3</sup>. Among them are the Lucani. This change in the designation, the characterisation of the people in the written sources as well as the archaeological material itself have in some investigations led to the fact that the Lucani were regarded as a tribe having moved from Central Italy to Southern Italy<sup>4</sup>.

In my article I would like to tackle the question if we indeed may assume an immigration of the Lucani into Southern Italy. Mainly the archaeological remains indicate that a new self-awareness had developed among the indigenous population of Southern Italy which can be seen in various forms of expression.

<sup>1</sup> PONTRANDOLFO GRECO 1982, 69–125.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus 1,167; Strabo 5,1,1; Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1,13,2, 2,1,2.

<sup>3</sup> Compare D'AGOSTINO 1989.

<sup>4</sup> SALMON 1967, 37–8; see also MELE 1996, 67 and Russo 2001, 15.

### ***The migration of the Lucani in the ancient written sources***

Greek and Roman authors are our main sources for the Lucani<sup>5</sup>. Unfortunately, there does not exist a particular Lucanian tradition. The assumed migration has been reconstructed mainly from several text passages by Strabo. He repeatedly points out the origin of the Lucani from the Samnitae, an indigenous tribe living in Central Italy:

Strabo 5,3,1<sup>6</sup>:

*„(...) the Picentini and the Samnitae are colonists (ἀποικιοί) from the Sabini, and the Lucani from the Samnitae (...).”*

Strabo 6,1,2:

*„But after the Samnitae had grown considerably in power, and had ejected the Chones and the Oinotri, and had settled a colony (ἀποικισάντων) of Leucani in this portion of Italy(...).”*

*“(...) and the Samnitae themselves, the progenitors (αρχηγέται) of these peoples (...).”*

Strabo 6,1,3:

*„The Leucani are Samnitae in race (γένος).”*

Strabo gives us a seemingly clear picture: According to this the Lucani are descended from the Samnitae<sup>7</sup>.

### ***Criticism of the tradition***

It is tempting to regard these written sources as historically convincing. We must, however, understand that Strabo describes in his paper on Lucania processes which he has not experienced himself, that is he was not an eye witness. Strabo who lived in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC uses sources of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC but his paper reveals clearly that he had strong reservations in relation to the indigenous population, also to the Lucani, as is clearly shown in the following quotation:

Strabo 6,1,2:

*I have already spoken of those whose territory borders on the Tyrrhenian sea, while those who hold the interior are the people who live above the gulf of Tarentum. But the latter, and the Brettii, and the Samnitae themselves (the progenitors of these peoples) have so utterly deteriorated that it is difficult even to distinguish their several settlements.; and the reason is that no common organisation longer endures in any one of the separate tribes; and their characteristic differences in language, armour, dress, and the like, have completely disappeared; and, besides, their settlements, severally and in detail, are wholly without repute.*

That means that Strabo's judgement is not unbiased. The Roman-friendly author seems to have been influenced in his description more by the political connection of the Lucani with the Samnitae in the social war of the early 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. Above all the Roman historians used in their descriptions the motive of immigration as the origin of many Italic peoples like, for instance, the Etruscans<sup>8</sup>. Their different and partly alien cultures did not allow another explanation.

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<sup>5</sup> Esp. 6,1-3; Pseudo-Scylax 12-13; see generally LA GRECA 2002.

<sup>6</sup> All Strabo quotations come from Jones 1961.

<sup>7</sup> Moreover the Lucani are supposed to have been colonists, while the English term “colony” used in the translation by Jones does not fully correspond with the Greek “ἀποικισάντων” meaning “those settling far from their homeland”.

<sup>8</sup> See Herodotus, 1,94; Thucydides 4, 109, Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1,28,3; Strabo 5,2,4.

The assumed migration of the Lucani is apparently characterised in more detail in the antique sources. Several authors report the belligerent invasion of the Lucani. Examples are given in the following quotations:

Strabo 6,1,2:

*„But after the Samnites had grown considerably in power (...) and had settled a colony of Leucani in this portion of Italy (...), the Greeks and the barbarians carried on war with one another for a long time.*

Strabo 6,1,3:

*„(...) but upon mastering the Poseidoniatae and their allies in war they took possession of their cities.“*

Diodorus Siculus, 14, 101<sup>9</sup>:

*„(...) when the Leucanians overran the territory of Thurioi(...). (...) For the Greek cities of Italy had an agreement among themselves to the effect that if any city's territory was being plundered by the Leucanians (...)*

Sextus Iulius Frontinus, Strategems 2,3,12<sup>10</sup>:

*“Cleandridas, the Spartan, when fighting against the Lucanians, (...) enveloped the enemy on the flank, and put them to rout.”*

Relatively often these sources are used in later investigations to describe the Lucani as very belligerent people who on their way to the South obviously created havoc like barbarian hordes<sup>11</sup>. Partially the mistake was made to look intentionally for confirmation of these antique descriptions in the archaeological finds and to interpret these features ethnically with respect to the Lucani. An example is the so-called Samnite belt which was widespread in Lucania and which we know from tomb contexts<sup>12</sup>. This belt is mainly to be found in tombs and in paintings of burial monuments in Paestum which were created in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC and are ascribed to the Lucanian inhabitants of the town<sup>13</sup>. However, immigration cannot be determined on the basis of seemingly ethno-specific artefacts but only by changes in the entire culture<sup>14</sup>.

Angela Pontrandolfo Greco has always warned that we should not judge generally on the basis of the written sources but also try to find other models of explanation for the changes in Lucania<sup>15</sup>; many academics have already followed her opinion in this respect<sup>16</sup>. One question has, however, not yet been answered: Can we prove a Lucanian migration archaeologically?

### **Archaeological provability of Lucanian migration**

A migration is a very complex process seen from the sociological point of view. The possibility of proving it archaeologically is very difficult and requires the analysis of a large number of groups of finds. These methods have been successfully applied in other archaeological disciplines, especially in pre- and early history. It is necessary to determine the following criteria for migration<sup>17</sup>:

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<sup>9</sup> OLDFATHER 1963, 277.

<sup>10</sup> BENNETT 1969, 113.

<sup>11</sup> This research aspect is described precisely by PONTRANDOLFO 1996, 171.

<sup>12</sup> HORSNAES 2002, 83–5 has pointed out that this belt was not part of the belligerent equipment but a sign of disunity; see also ROMITO 1995.

<sup>13</sup> CIPRIANI 1996; see also PONTRANDOLFO and ROUVERET 1996; also CIPRIANI ET AL. 2007.

<sup>14</sup> PRIEN 2005, 47, 305, 323; see also BRATHER 2000, 165.

<sup>15</sup> PONTRANDOLFO GRECO 1982; see also PONTRANDOLFO 1996, 171.

<sup>16</sup> HORSNAES 2002, 125–26; see also ISAYEV 2007, 13–14.

<sup>17</sup> After PRIEN 2005, 47.

1. Cause of migration
2. Type of migration
3. Process of migration
4. Effects of migration in the area of origin and in the target area

Below I would like to compare these individual points with the archaeological material of Lucania.

#### *Cause of migration*

We do not know the reason for the assumed migration of the Lucanians from Central Italy to the South. Strabo mentions only that the Samnitae let the Lucanians settle as colonists<sup>18</sup>. It has already been shown that the written tradition cannot be regarded historically. The reasons for migration cannot be determined by means of the archaeology<sup>19</sup>.

#### *Type of migration*

There exist different types of migration. They can be limited in time or long-lasting, consist of smaller groups of persons or occur as mass migration<sup>20</sup>. The written sources give no clues for this. A migration can, however, be characterized in more detail with the help of archaeology. One criterion for the determination of the type of migration is, for instance, the analysis of the structures of settlement<sup>21</sup>.

A clear change took place in Lucania from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. The settlements of the archaic and classical times were mainly abandoned. New settlements were set up which often are situated on mountainous land and surrounded by a wall, a circuit<sup>22</sup>. This clear change could be a sign of a mass migration<sup>23</sup>. The number of immigrants is thus quite large so that the structures of the autochthonous population vanish and are replaced by new structures<sup>24</sup>. That means that the Lucani would have displaced the Oinotri.

#### *Process of migration*

A migration process consists in most cases of several stages<sup>25</sup>: The first contact in the target area by so-called scouts, the actual migration movement of larger parts of the population as well as a backflow into the area of origin. Until now we have not yet found any archaeological indications for Lucania which could determine the migration process in more detail. It is possible to think of short-term outposts of the Samnitae in the later Lucania who could have established first contacts. It is very difficult to recognize them, if not impossible. The actual migration movement and its route cannot be reconstructed by archaeological means either<sup>26</sup>.

#### *Effects of migration in the area of origin and in the target area*

A migration leaves traces behind not only in the target area but also in the region where the immigrants come from<sup>27</sup>. If we assume that the Lucani migration was a mass migration, we should reckon on a provable decrease of population and settlements<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Strabo 5,1,3 and 6,1,2; see above.

<sup>19</sup> PRIEN 2005, 322.

<sup>20</sup> PRIEN 2005, 42–8.

<sup>21</sup> PRIEN 2005, 45.

<sup>22</sup> HORSNAES 2002, 39–52, see also ISAYEV 2001, ISAYEV 2007, 55–140 and DE GENNARO 2005.

<sup>23</sup> PRIEN 2005, 308.

<sup>24</sup> PRIEN 2005, 48.

<sup>25</sup> PRIEN 2005, 44–6.

<sup>26</sup> PRIEN 2005, 46.

<sup>27</sup> PRIEN 2005, 319.

In Samnium we can, however, observe the opposite. Just as in Lucania a large number of new settlements were set up from the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. Here too we find mainly settlements on high ground with strong surrounding walls<sup>29</sup>.

Another effect of migration is the displacement of the autochthonous population. As a result the Lucani had probably driven out the Oinotri and it should be possible to prove the existence of the Oinotri in another area to prove the mass migration of the Lucani. Such a proof does not yet exist. Furthermore, the archaeological material of Samnium also does not prove any backflow of emigrants which as a rule would follow a mass migration. For this we do not have, for instance, specific analyses of burial places to be able to give evidence on the population of the regions in question.

It thus becomes clear that we do not have sufficient archaeological material to prove a migration of the Lucani from Central to Southern Italy. Nevertheless, the cultural changes in the region are obvious and require an explanation. The example of the settlement structures is meant to show in which light we should regard the archaeological finds, even apart from the migration thesis.

### ***The fortified settlements***

As we have already said the settlement structures in Lucania changed remarkably with the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. A dense network of settlements developed. They were situated only a few kilometres from each other and have in common that each of them is situated either on a plateau or on high peaks according to the nature of the terrain. They are all surrounded by strong defensive walls<sup>30</sup>. Due to their high position, the fortified settlements overlook a large part of the surrounding landscape to the distant plains, river valleys and even to coasts. The question is raised why this type of fortified settlement which at first glance corresponds so well with the picture described in the antique literature on the belligerent Lucania developed especially in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

They probably fulfilled their strategic function. The erection of the circuits cannot be connected with a particular historic event<sup>31</sup>. Nevertheless, conflicts will probably have occurred between the indigenous peoples and the Greeks, the Romans already expanding to the South and also between groups of the indigenous peoples. The construction of such fortifications can, however, not only be regarded as a sign of critical stages but they also had – in addition – a highly impressive effect. They give evidence of territorial and military strength, both externally to strangers and internally to their own population. The Lucani demonstrated with this type of settlement their territorial control over obviously important trade routes along broad river valleys to the coasts dominated by the Greeks.

Until now only a few settlements have been investigated in more detail by surveys and excavations during the past decades. Nevertheless, we may already document important results. The places of settlement often had the function of central places. Some were related to the local territory, others took over a supra-regional function. Among them are Torre di Satriano, Roccagloriosa and Monte Coppolo<sup>32</sup>.

Smaller settlements and farmsteads on the slopes and in the plains lay in their hinterland. This gives evidence that the Lucanian settlements combined in the best possible way with the mountainous terrain of the region. In Lucania we see a settlement structure which we find in similar geomorphological regions not

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<sup>28</sup> Antique populations have mainly remained constant as a result of high birth and death rates. We should not assume an overpopulation. See PRIEN 2005, 27.

<sup>29</sup> OAKLEY 1995.

<sup>30</sup> ISAYEV 2007, 65 and DE GENNARO 2005.

<sup>31</sup> TRÉZINY 1983, 109–10.

<sup>32</sup> For Torre di Satriano see OSANNA and SICA 2005, 53–9; for Roccagloriosa see FRACCHIA 2001, 59–60 and ISAYEV 2007, 117–19; for Monte Coppolo see QULICI 2002, 137–47.

only in the whole of Italy (for instance in Samnium, Bruttium, Apennines)<sup>33</sup> but also in the whole antique world (for instance in Attica)<sup>34</sup>.

The circuits were not only refuge sites as was assumed up to a few decades ago<sup>35</sup>. Moreover, the representative character of the settlements continues in the townscape. In cases in which it was possible to investigate the interior structures we already find broad central road axes – as in Serra di Vaglio<sup>36</sup> – or even orthogonal street systems – as in Pomarico Vecchio<sup>37</sup> and Monte Coppolo<sup>38</sup> – as we know them from Greek towns. Consequently we can speak of a certain degree of urbanization.

Changes also exist in house architecture. In some places both in the fortified settlements and in the countryside real monumental buildings appeared, the complex ground plans of which are reminiscent of the Hellenistic houses of the Greek world or of the Atrium-houses of central Italy. Examples were found in Serra di Vaglio<sup>39</sup>, Citvità di Tricarico<sup>40</sup>, Pomarico Vecchio<sup>41</sup>, Cersosimo<sup>42</sup> and Moltone di Tolve<sup>43</sup>. Here characteristic is the mostly central yard around which the rooms are arranged as in a Peristyle or Atrium. The function of these houses was very complex. They were prestigious houses of the local elites and thereby expressed their economic strength and social status. Furthermore, they fulfilled the function of public buildings and even shrines, as in Roccagloriosa and Pomarico Vecchio<sup>44</sup>.

### ***The Lucanian self-awareness***

Consequently, the settlements deliver a clear picture: With the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC a period of flourishing economic and territorial strength began in Lucania. The inhabitants of Lucania expressed this with self-awareness in their settlements and buildings. In many cases they used forms which we mainly know from the Greek world but they partially adapted them and adjusted them to their own culture and their lifestyle. The fortified settlements show, for instance, a regular street grid but no public squares like, for instance, an Agora. The prestigious houses were also used as meeting places in which central cults were also practised. Other groups of finds like sanctuaries and necropolises confirm this picture and show that the society was probably of a strong hierarchical type and socially differentiated<sup>45</sup>. The reason for this prosperity was hardly a migration but rather stability on the basis of economic strength. This was presumably caused by the increased use of routes through the hinterland from which individual settlements profited.

Research gives as a reason for the prosperity a possible partial crisis in the Greek colonies creating a vacuum which the Lucani used to strengthen their own power<sup>46</sup>. It is hotly debated, if such a crisis occurred because we can also see a rapprochement between the Greeks and the indigenous peoples<sup>47</sup>. The best example of this is Poseidonia/Paestum.

Larger groups of indigenous peoples came to this area at the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC which becomes clear in the surrounding necropolises. The Greek town as a centre was probably attractive to the

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<sup>33</sup> Samnium: OAKLEY 1995; Bruttium: NOVELLIS 2006; Apennines: AVERINI and CERASUOLO, 2008, 509–15.

<sup>34</sup> LOHMANN 1993.

<sup>35</sup> OSANNA and SICA 2005, 45; see also ISAYEV 2007, 67.

<sup>36</sup> GRECO 1991, 48–49 fig. 112.

<sup>37</sup> BARRA BAGNASCO 1999, 122–24.

<sup>38</sup> QUILICI 2002, 85 fig. 81, fig. 143.

<sup>39</sup> RUSSO 1992, 160–67, fig. 97.

<sup>40</sup> RUSSO 1992, 182 fig. 109. DE CAZANOVE 1996.

<sup>41</sup> BARRA BAGNASCO 1999, 124–27.

<sup>42</sup> COSSALTER and DE FAVERI 2006.

<sup>43</sup> RUSSO 1992a, 173–81 fig. 106, 108; see also RUSSO, 1992b.

<sup>44</sup> For Roccagloriosa see FRACCHIA and GUALTIERI 1989, 223–30; for Pomarico Vecchio see BARRA BAGNASCO 1999, 124–27.

<sup>45</sup> See PONTRANDOLFO GRECO 1982, 127–65.

<sup>46</sup> MERTENS 2006, 420–37.

<sup>47</sup> PONTRANDOLFO 1996, 117.

Lucani. A kind of migration between areas took place and not a military occupation as antique written sources say. The splendid paintings on tombstones of Lucanian necropolises give evidence of a prosperity rather than of a crisis<sup>48</sup>.

The Lucani stand at the end of a long development of the indigenous Oinotri who were influenced by Greek settlements. It cannot be proved if they immigrated. It is likely to be the result of migrations in various directions rather than mass migrations. To sum up, it can be said that an adaptation of certain Greek elements took place but no assimilation. The local elites found in this a suitable means to demonstrate their strength and thereby were the conveyors of these ideas. This phenomenon was probably not restricted to Lucania. It was a process which took place with a different impact all over Southern Italy.

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<sup>48</sup> See ANDREAE 2007.

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