

Pithekoussai (Ischia): Colonisation vs. Participation

Eicke Granser

Over the last decades of archaeological as well as historical research and progression of theoretical approaches, the Mediterranean was perceived as a coherent social and spatial unit of analysis.¹ Thereby, the migration of individuals or groups driven by a huge variety of motives since the earliest stage of the Neolithic period² must be taken into consideration as a constant factor. In this framework, trade represents only one part of a wide spectrum of different motivations,³ but also one of the best detectable parts through the exploration of the materiality of the past. The diffusion of goods can be read with the use of certain parameters as indicators for human movements, which lead to temporary situations of social encounters. Therefore, the contact and exchange could encourage ties between two or more social groups and induce changes inside the involved societies. The Mediterranean people have been participants – in an active or passive manner – of a comparatively stable network.⁴ With the foundation of Pithekoussai on the island of Ischia in the second half of the 8th century BC, this network expanded with a new node or a new agent (fig. 1). Thus, the aim of the following approach is to examine some possible strategies of the new agent: Was the migration westwards a conquering process or a tentative attempt to become a participant of already established structures?

From the 1950s onwards, Giorgio Buchner conducted excavations in the Valle di San Montano and discovered about a thousand late geometric tombs.⁵ Since that discovery, the intention of a Greek mission westwards and its impact in the central Mediterranean have been controversially debated.⁶ The tombs have been identified as burials of Greek colonists and linked to the concept of Euboean colonisation.⁷ Migration westwards was previously regarded as enforced by the constant search of resources and new markets⁸ and Pithekoussai's importance as a Greek gateway to access the Italic iron ore deposits has been emphasized by plenty of scholars.⁹ The present paper is neither focused on debating the concept of colonisation in general, which has been convincingly criticised during the last years,¹⁰ nor will the question be pursued in how far Pithekoussai was Greek or Euboean at all.¹¹ Instead, the present approach is driven by the idea that the settlement of Ischia was a successive and decentralized process where people of various regions and social environments were involved.¹² As heterogeneous the involved individuals may have been, their motivation for migration was probably equivalently as heterogeneous. Referring to the archaeological method, tracing an overriding intention for the settlement of Pithekoussai remains a difficult task. Instead of asking for reasons, one should rather consider the possible options of actions for the settlers at their new place of living.

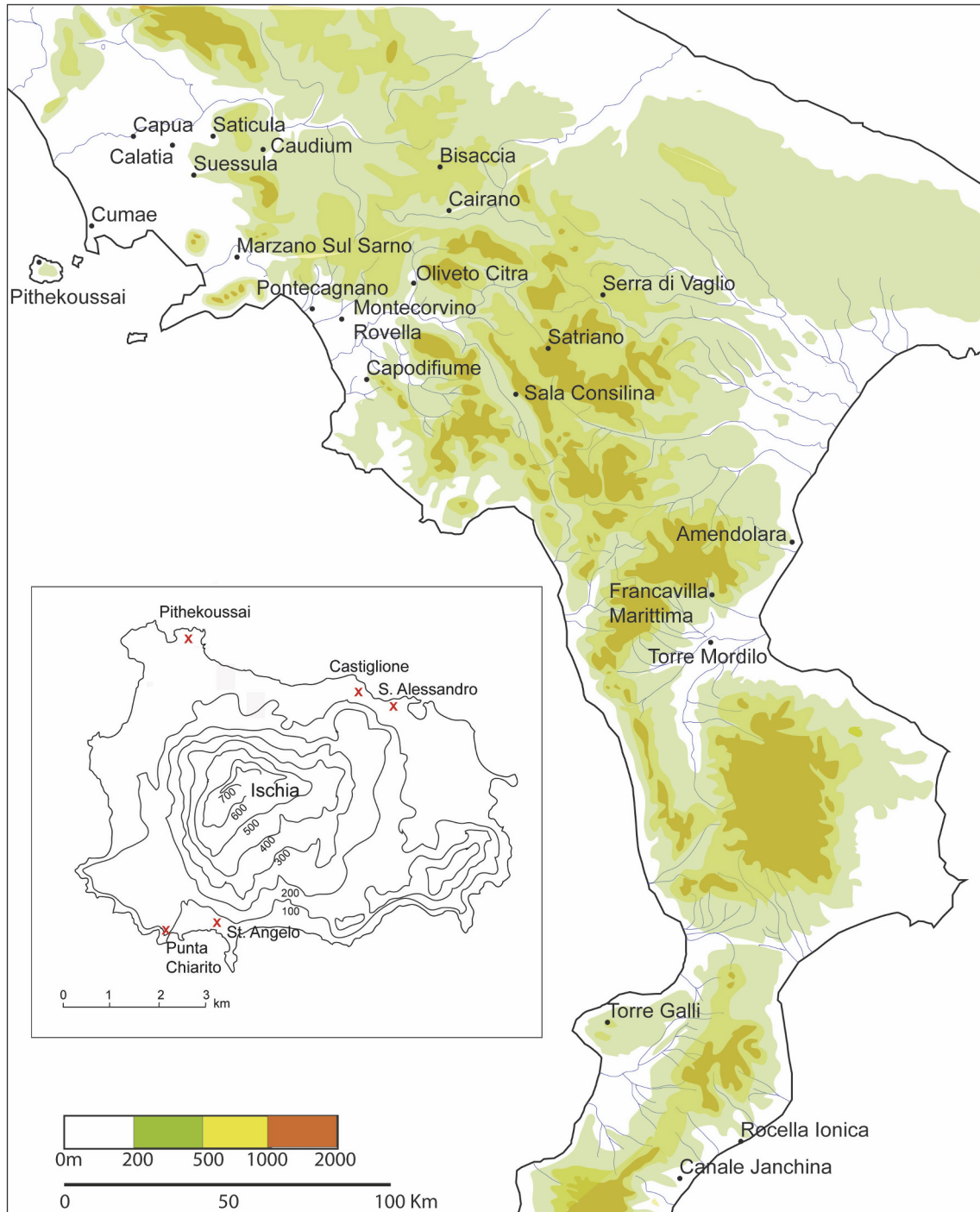


Fig. 1: Map of the Italic South.

The Indigenous Element

Although it is widely accepted that Pithekoussai was a mixed settlement¹³ consisting of Aegeans (mostly denominated as Euboeans), Orientals¹⁴ and natives, the impact of the latter was mostly overlooked in contrast to the encounters between Greek Colonists and Orientals, which were intensively and recently controversially debated.¹⁵ The discussions regarding processes of colonisation in previous research often stressed questions of the settlers' origins more than questions of the society they formed.¹⁶ Ethnicity was frequently equated with materiality and due to the finds of Italic style fibulae (fig. 4) or jewellery e.g. were interpreted as evidence for intermarriage between Greek men and Italic women.¹⁷ This particular understanding reveals a perspective in which the Italic element was marginalized and marked as passive and subordinated in opposite to the superior Greek/Euboean inhabitants.¹⁸ But Ischia was not at all a no-man's-land by the arrival of the new settlers from the second half of the 8th century BC onwards, as is verified by the indigenous settlement Castiglione¹⁹ and in this context, it is astonishing, that the numbers of studies focused on the interaction and exchange between the indigenous and new settlers increased only in restraint during the recent years of research²⁰.

Considering stylistic aspects of the Pithekoussan grave goods, it becomes evident that Italic design played a substantial role in the principle alignment of the Pithekoussan materiality (fig. 2). Thus, the appearances of metal objects like jewellery mostly seem to follow prototypes known from tombs of the mainland cemeteries – especially

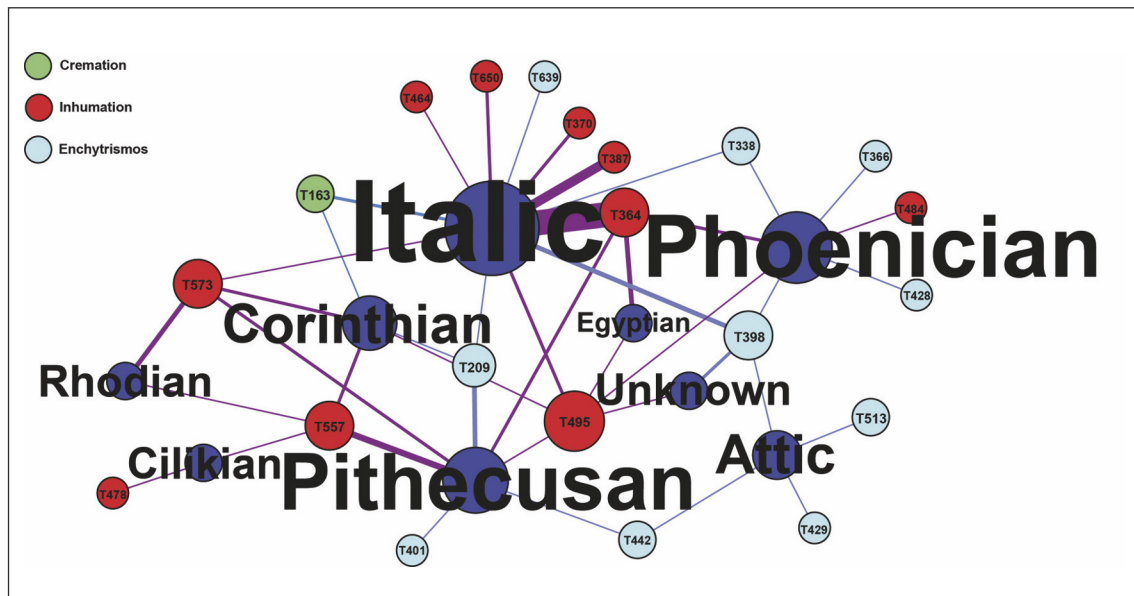


Fig. 2: Two-mode network of all grave goods of level 20 from the necropolis of San Montano.

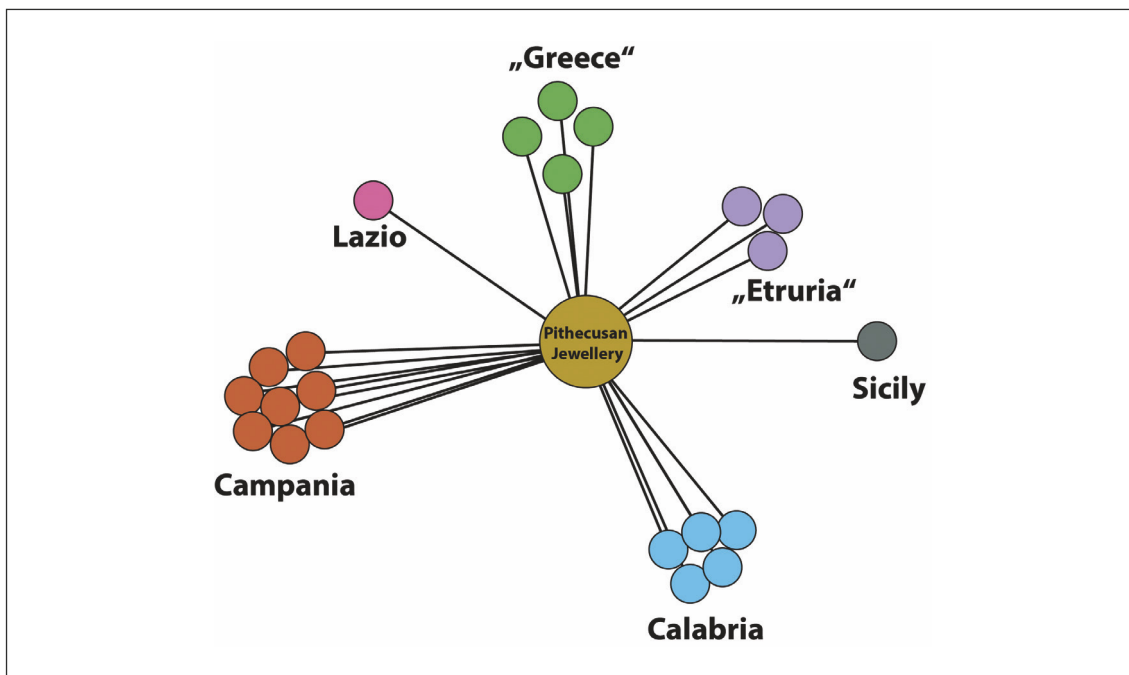


Fig. 3: Ego-Network of the Pitheculan jewellery.

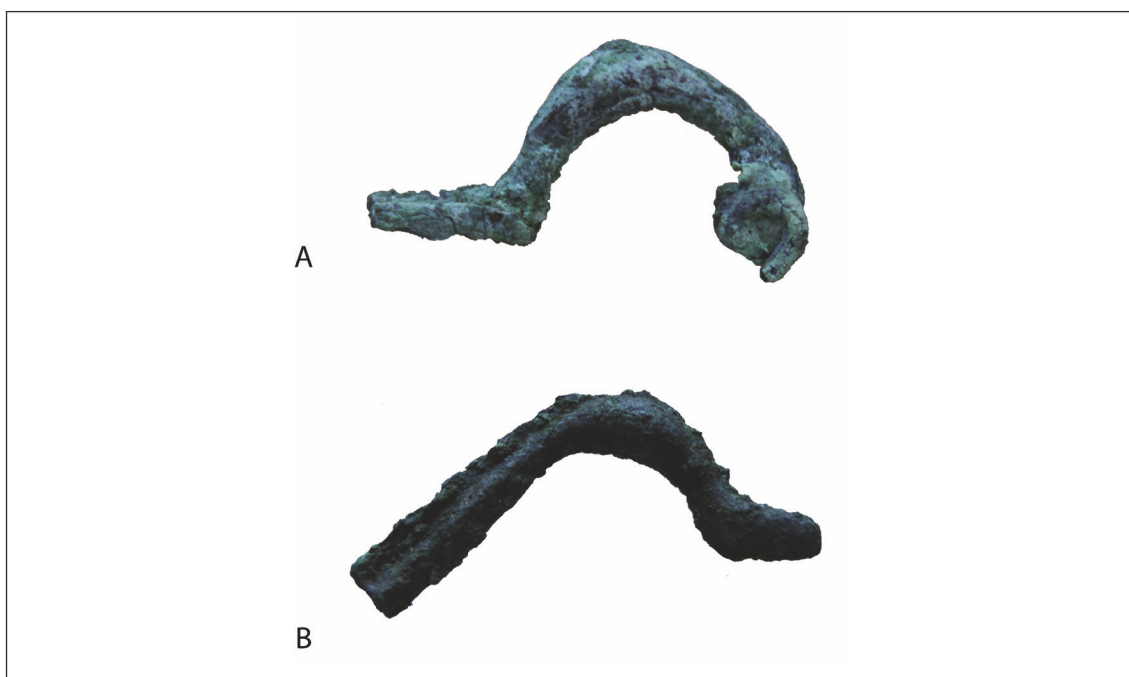


Fig. 4: Fibulae of the type 141. A: from tomb 389, Museo Archeologico di Pitheculae, Inv. 167643. – B: miscast from Mezzavia (Ischia), Museo Archeologico di Pitheculae, Inv. 238624.

from the Campanian and the southern located Calabrian cemeteries, whereas Greek or Etruscan metal objects obviously played a rather subordinated role (fig. 3).²¹ Therefore, it has to be underlined that within the present approach, terms like “indigenous”, “Italic” or “Greek” should be understood as descriptive units for materiality and not as denominations for social groups or even ethnicity.

Diffusion of Design: Networks as an Analytic Perspective

The Italic mainland was often depicted as a homogeneous entity without further differentiation between the particular regions. The mainland communities have been divided quite roughly in context of colonisation by criteria like their general burial customs of inhumation and cremation.²² The analysis of diffusion, transfer, and adaption of certain designs of objects will be an initial step to distinguish the various mainland communities. Thereby, the method of social network analysis shall offer the opportunity to link certain agents with each other (agency).²³ Within this setting, the term “design” is used to create distance between materiality, their producers, distributors or holders and stands in an ambivalent relation to the term of import or imitation, even if design can be transferred via imports or imitations. On an analytical level, design and provenance of objects form two different units. In this case, it does not matter whether an object is imported or locally imitated.

The term “network” should be understood as an analytic perspective and not as a real existing item.²⁴ Following this, the circulation of designs has to be distinguished from the motion of humans, which in turn leads to the conclusion that the network-graphs can neither be reviewed as a visualization of concrete trading routes nor as an indication for real existing contacts. This does not mean that the presence of an e.g. Corinthian-style kotyle indicates a contact between Pithekoussai and Corinth as geographical places. But in how far are these results prolific regarding the framework of interaction and social encounters? As an abstract perspective of analysis, the network reveals the potentiality of contacts between certain groups of agents due to the transfer of design. Instead of trading routes, the edges between the different nodes have to be seen as channels by which information is transmitted.

Throughout all the kinds of materiality of the Pithekoussan graves, the highest potential arises from the objects following Italic designs like jewellery, impasto ceramic and especially the fibulae. The large number of fibulae, in particular, offers an enormous diversity of designs and with a few exceptions,²⁵ can all be aligned with Fulvia Lo Schiavo’s catalogue of south Italic fibulae.²⁶ Due to the presence of certain types, which connects Pithekoussai and different south Italic sites, a very dense network becomes visible for the second half of the 8th century BC (fig. 5). In this network, two sites are connected if at least one identical type of fibula occurs in both sites. The more types they share, the stronger the ties are between them.²⁷

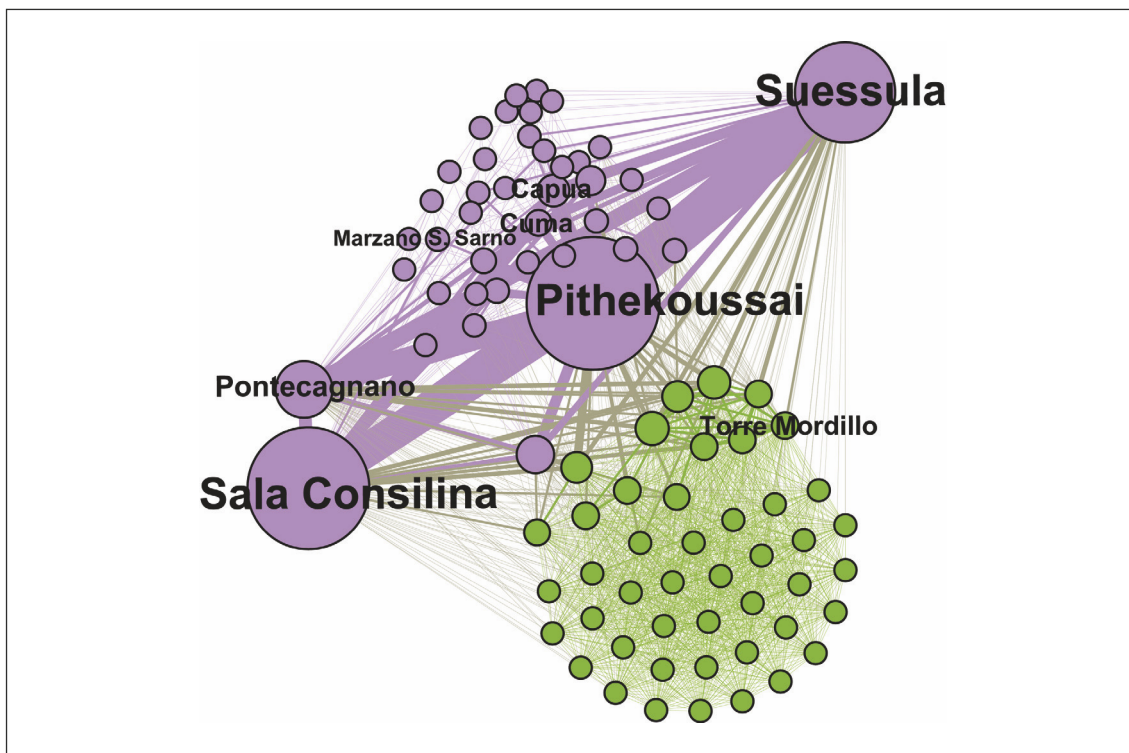


Fig. 5: Network of the diffusion of fibulae types of the second half of the 8th cent. B.C.

A Small Italic World

To understand the process of Pithekoussan interaction, its impact, and resulting opportunities for the settlers of Ischia, it is crucial to take a step back and review the Pre-Pithekoussan network (fig. 6). The Pre-Pithekoussan network is based on the diffusion of fibulae types used in the Italic South from the transition of the Bronze Age to the Iron Age until the second half of the 8th century BC.²⁸ This network visualizes already well-connected communities. Through the diffusion of the different types, agents not only bridged geographical but also social distance. With regard to the terminology of Social Network Science and in analogy to Irad Malkin's pioneering study, one might call these particular relationships "a Small Italic World".²⁹ Inside this small world, different agents played different roles – more exposed agents are connected with plenty of other agents while more peripheral agents are affiliated with just a small group of others. An important aspect of the present network is the high degree of decentralisation, which means that no single hub is traceable and therefore a high number of possibilities exist in how to move from one node to the other.³⁰ Although there are various possibilities, some of the agents play a major role inside the network, for example, Sala Consilina, Suessula or Marzano Sul Sarno. They obviously share types with most of the other agents in this network. Especially the sites of Campania seem to occupy exposed posi-

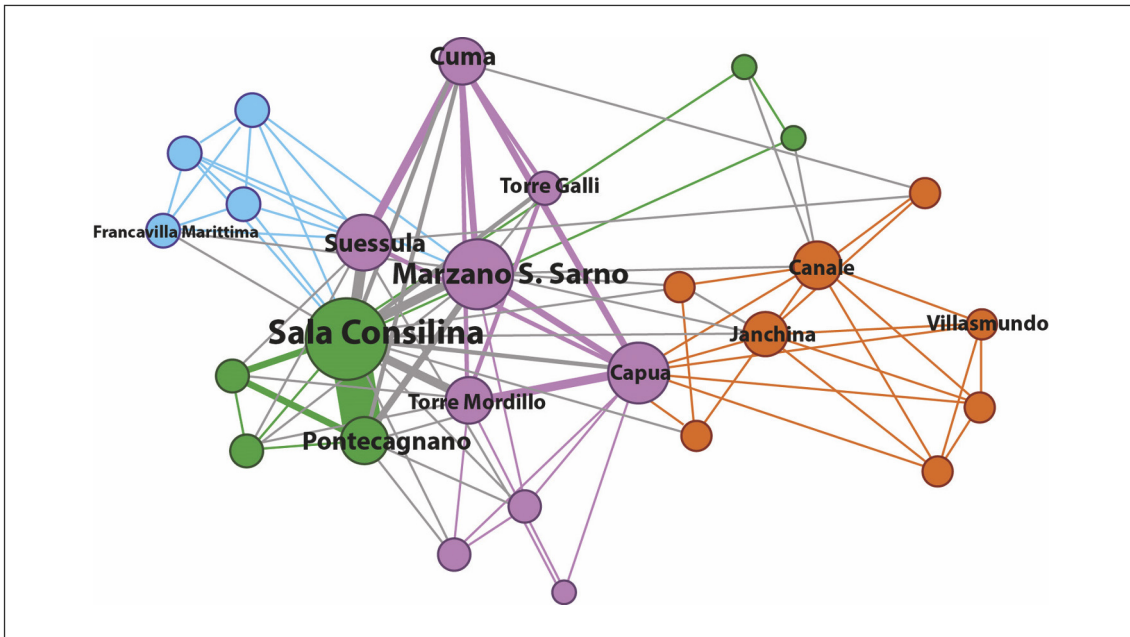


Fig. 6: Pre-Pithekkoussan network of the diffusion of fibulae types of the 9th until the second half of the 8th cent. B.C.

tions. This might lead to the conclusion that the communities in Campania played an important role as distributors of particular designs. Sala Consilina and Pontecagnano represent one of the main connections. In addition with Torre Mordillo, Klaus Kilian unites them in a unique *Kulturgruppe*, due to similarities concerning their materiality and burial customs.³¹ Now, by comparing the Pre-Pithekkoussan network with its counterpart, mirroring all fibulae types used from the second half of the 8th century BC onwards, general changes are notable. While decentralisation was one of the main characters of the previous network, the ties have now become more bundled in a few strong nodes: one of these central nodes is Pithekkoussai. Former prominent agents like e.g. Marzano S. Sarno lost their exposed position. One might say this is for statistical reasons. Due to the addition of an amount of more than a thousand Pithekkoussan fibulae, Pithekkoussai as an agent naturally plays a major role in that network. The distorted archaeological database, resulting from different states of publication or excavation, must always be taken into account during the use of social network analysis. But the decisive fact why Pithekkoussai claims an exposed position inside the network is represented by the appearance of many different designs, which connect Pithekkoussai to nearly every other agent. Thus, it is not only a matter of quantity but a matter of variety which substantiates Pithekkoussai's exposure. How important the now incurred hubs finally were, becomes visible by erasing Pithekkoussai, Sala Consilina, Pontecagnano, and Suessula, and all their related ties from the dataset (fig. 7). Besides the isolation of plenty of nodes, the process of centralisation following the Pre-Pithekkoussan stage was reversed. While

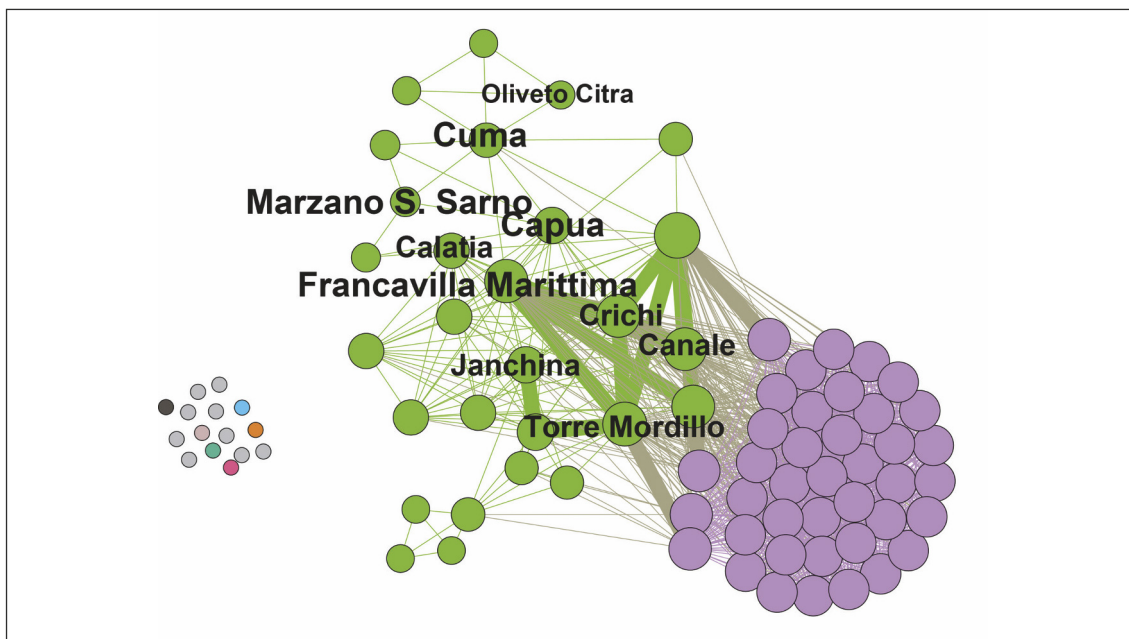


Fig. 7: Network of the diffusion of fibulae types of the second half of the 8th cent. B.C. Without Pithekoussai, Sala Consilina, Suessula and Pontecagnano.

Pithekoussai, Sala Consilina or Suessula have been dominating nodes, they have been replaced by a larger number of smaller nodes after removing them. Considering the geographical position of the sites, it seems that the Campanian agents became peripheral and the agents from Calabria (Francavilla Marittima, Janchina, Torre Mordillo) moved from the periphery to central positions. It can be deduced, that the erased nodes were integral links by mediating designs from south to north. Clearly spoken, Pithekoussai advanced to an elementary agent of the Small Italic World relatively fast. But how can this rapid success be explained without using the narrative of Hellenization?

The restrained development of a mainland demand of Eastern goods like Aegean ceramic or Eastern trinkets like scarabs or faïence objects during the first half of the 8th century BC increased with the foundation of Pithekoussai.³² Since then, Eastern style objects appeared quite frequently in the mainland tombs and it might be a suitable hypothesis that Pithekoussai was a supplier or interport for the exchange of those objects, which of course strengthened Pithekoussai's position. Concerning the style of the Pithekoussan grave goods, Eastern design played a constant but compared to the Italic design a weaker role. Referring to Mark Granovetter, those weak ties are the important ties to give an agent crucial advantages during interactions with others.³³ For the mainlanders, Pithekoussai was an accessible source for obtaining Eastern goods, Pithekoussai, in turn, used the mainland demand to rise up to an indispensable participant of the network. Pithekoussai was able to bridge social distance and to introduce new designs to a quite closed system of "a Small Italic World".

A Methodological Outlook

In the previous section, it was strongly emphasized that the present networks should be understood as analytic tools. The following gives an outlook on how to transfer from the analytic level to a level of reality. Therefore, the distinctive connection Pithekoussai, Sala Consilina, and Pontecagnano was extracted from the network and in this context, a focus will be placed on the edge-weight, a metric tool to measure the value of the edges. The higher the value of weight the more information flows through the edges.

In this network, the average edge-weight has the value 3.0, the edge between Sala Consilina and Pithekoussai is rated with 17.0, between Sala Consilina and Pontecagnano with 7.0 and between Pithekoussai and Pontecagnano with 12.0. All nodes are linked by edges with an above average weight, whereby the edge between the Sala Consilina and Pithekoussai represents the second strongest one of the entire network (fig. 5). Now, if one takes the connection between Sala Consilina and Pithekoussai as a real existing route, some topographical challenges are going to appear: By approaching Sala Consilina from seaside, a walk of 50 km has to be implemented, which in this case is mainly a problem of landscape, because the site is located in a valley surrounded by mountains with a height of about 1300 m (fig. 1). From Pithekoussai to a possible point of landing a distance of 100 km has to be accomplished by boat. Within this model it could be assumed that the route between Sala Consilina and Pithekoussai was not a very efficient one regarding aspects of the economy. A reflection of this is represented by a lack of Eastern Mediterranean goods which are detectable in most of the other sites in Campania, and especially Pithekoussan ceramic is absent in Sala Consilina.³⁴ This could surely rest on Klaus Kilian's suggestion, that the community of Sala Consilina isolated itself from the neighbouring ones during the 8th century BC.³⁵ Supplemented with the topographical consideration, the idea of direct contact between Sala Consilina and Pithekoussai should be discarded, even if the factor human should not be underestimated. In further consideration, it is notable, that a huge percentage of the fibulae types appearing in Sala Consilina and Pithekoussai are also detectable in Pontecagnano. Beside the metal-finds, a high number of vessels produced in Pithekoussai was unearthed in tombs of Pontecagnano.³⁶ Pontecagnano seems to be a perfect link between Sala Consilina and Pithekoussai.

To acquire a methodological key for the transfer of abstract edges to real routes, a preliminary ranking was created. The factor 0 would be a route not accomplishable in ancient times and the factor 10 would be one which was easily viable. In this preliminary ranking, the route Sala Consilina – Pithekoussai was rated with the factor 2; Pontecagnano – Pithekoussai with the factor 7 and Pontecagnano – Sala Consilina with the factor 8.³⁷ Afterwards, these factors have been multiplied with the relevant edge-weight (fig. 8), which induced crucial changes. The edge between Pontecagnano and Pithekoussai now displays the strongest one by far. Comparing the materiality and the topography, this connection seems now more plausible than the one between Sala Con-

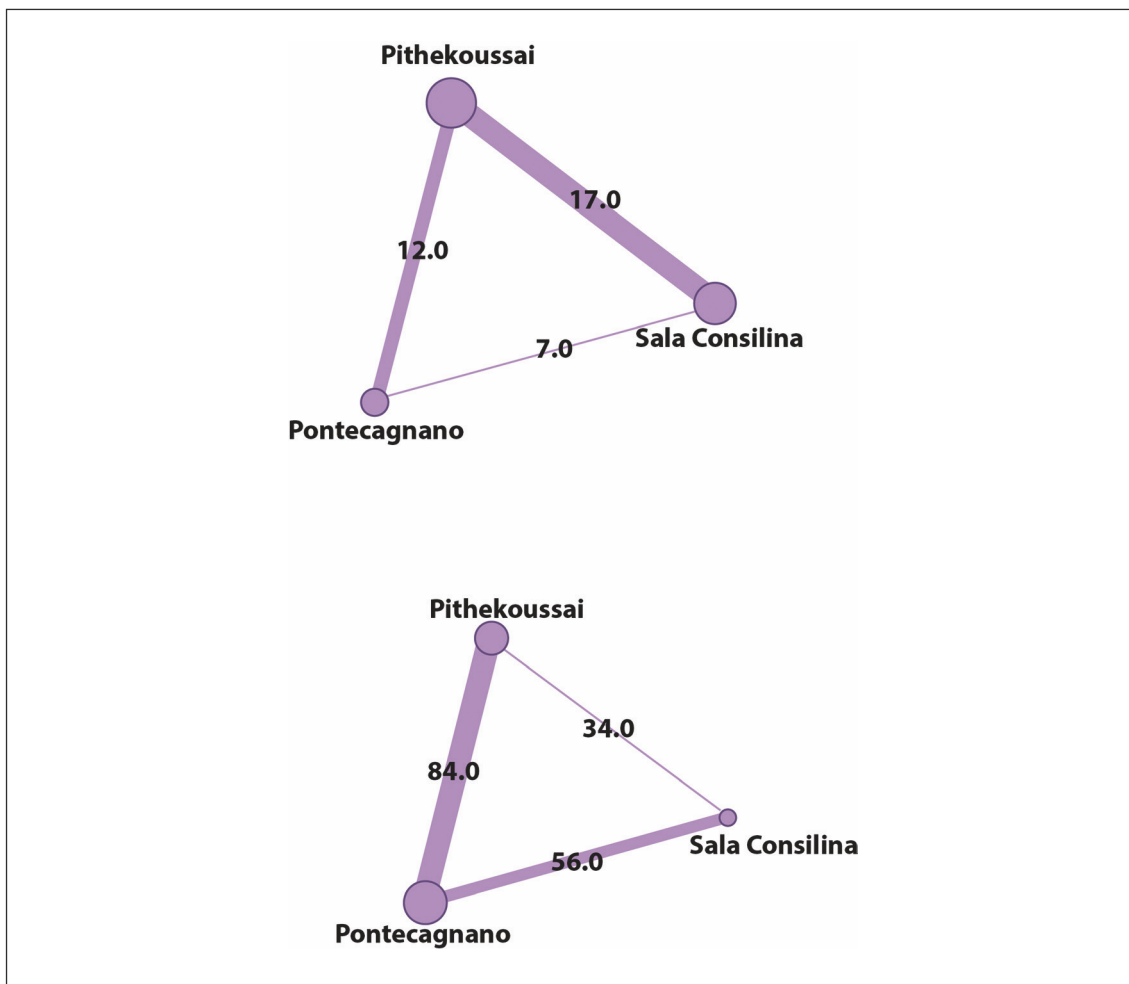


Fig. 8: Weighted edges between Pithekoussai, Sala Consilina and Pontecagnano (upper figure). Re-weighted edges between Pithekoussai, Sala Consilina and Pontecagnano (lower figure).

silina and Pithekoussai. This connection is also notable on a ritual level, as the Carpenter Tomb in Pithekoussai shows.³⁸ The addition of the tools known from the sector of woodworking finds close parallels to contemporary burials in Pontecagnano.³⁹ This short outlook of the calculation shall give an impression of how analytic tools facilitate the transfer from an abstract level to the ancient reality.

Conclusions

Even if the supplying and obtaining of design cannot be substantial for the survival of a community, the diffusion of design can give a glimpse about the potential of contacts between Pithekoussai and the communities on the mainland. While focussing on the embedding of Pithekoussai in Trans-Mediterranean relations, especially with the Aegean, the contacts to the mainland were reviewed as secondary. Yet these relations, in particular, have been crucial for the establishment of the new settlement. Irad Malkin noted that the migration in the 8th century BC was more about “touching and tapping” than about “grabbing and possessing”.⁴⁰ The concept of colonisation is strongly entangled with the idea of the aggressive process of taking of land, while the present study shows that the strategy of the Pithekoussan settlers was not compellingly aggressive, but an ably attempt to participate in established structures – structures which could also be used to obtain substantial commodities like food, textiles, or even natural resources. We cannot suggest that the foundation of Pithekoussai was driven by the collective decision of a particular group; thereby the heterogeneity of the Pithekoussan settlers should be stressed.

This heterogeneity of the Pithekoussan community was one of the key elements of Pithekoussai’s successful establishing. The weak ties to the East of the Mediterranean could be used to strengthen the ties between the island and the mainland. Especially Pontecagnano should be seen as a significant partner by becoming an important member of the Small Italic World. The innovative combination of network-analysis and topographical factors will also be examined with other objects in order to obtain a dense image of the interaction.

Notes

¹ Braudel 1972; Horden – Purcell 2000; Blake – Knapp 2005; Knapp 2007, 38; Malkin 2011.

² Knapp 2007, 38.

³ Knapp 2007, 38.

⁴ Malkin 2011.

⁵ Buchner – Ridgway 1993.

⁶ Cook 1962; Buchner 1979; Ridgway 1981; Greco 1994; D’Agostino 1994; D’Agostino 1999.

⁷ Ridgway – Buchner 1993; Ridgway 1992.

⁸ De Angelis 2010, 251.

⁹ Bruno D’Agostino denied this idea and emphasized the metallurgy on the island and the strength in the artisan know-how: D’Agostino 2006, 223 f.

¹⁰ Nippel 2003; Burger et al. 2016.

¹¹ For two different views on the controversy: Burkhardt 2013, 74–76; Donnellan 2016.

¹² Nizzo 2007. Valentino Nizzo's study shows very appropriately the involvement of various social groups by the settlement of Pithekoussai.

¹³ Kelley 2012, 246.

¹⁴ Buchner 1982, 277–309.

¹⁵ Buchner 1982; Docter 2000; Sossau 2015; Granser 2016.

¹⁶ Osborn 2016, 22.

¹⁷ Buchner 1979, 135; Coldstream 1993, 89–107; Hodos 1999, 61–78.

¹⁸ Kelley 2012, 245.

¹⁹ Buchner – Rittmann 1948, 41; Gialanella 1999, 237–257.

²⁰ Kelley 2012; Mermati 2012a; Guzzo 2014.

²¹ Macnamara 2006.

²² Cerchiai 1995, 9–18; Burkhardt 2013, 109f.

²³ Agency is used to describe the capacity of actions of a participant of social encounters: Emirbayer – Mische 1998, 962.

²⁴ Müller 2009, 753 f.

²⁵ Lo Schiavo 2006, 258 fig. 5.

²⁶ Lo Schiavo 2010.

²⁷ The thickness of the lines indicates the strength (weight) of the connection. The stronger the edge the thicker the line.

²⁸ Lo Schiavo 2010.

²⁹ Malkin 2011.

³⁰ This is also indicated by the different colors. Each of them represents a different subgroup or 'clique'.

³¹ Kilian 1970, 102.

³² Dehl-von Kaenel 1984, 86 f.

³³ Granovetter 1973, 1360–1380.

³⁴ Kilian 1964, 42–105.

³⁵ Kilian 1964, 126.

³⁶ Mermati 2012b, nos. 249–261.

³⁷ In the future research all relevant edges are going to be rated. Therefore, a GIS-based tool is going to be developed. The shown transfer has to be understood as an alternative model and not as a final solution.

³⁸ Buchner – Ridgway 1993, 657–660.

³⁹ E.g. T4461, T3286, T3093, T575, T3010: Kelley 2012, 249 f.

⁴⁰ Malkin 2002, 154.

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Fig. 1: E. Granser, based on Docter 2000, 138 fig. 1. – Fig. 2: E. Granser, based on Buchner – Ridgway 1993. – Fig. 3: E. Granser, based on Macnamara 2006. – Fig. 4: photos: E. Granser. – Fig. 5: E. Granser, based on Lo Schiavo 2010. – Fig. 6: E. Granser, based on Lo Schiavo 2010. – Fig. 7: E. Granser, based on Lo Schiavo 2010. – Fig. 8: E. Granser.

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