



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

On colonial grounds: a comparative study of colonialism and rural settlement in first millennium BC west central Sardinia

Dommelen, P.A.R. van

Citation

Dommelen, P. A. R. van. (1998, April 23). *On colonial grounds:: a comparative study of colonialism and rural settlement in first millennium BC west central Sardinia*. *Archaeological Studies Leiden University*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/13156>

Version: Corrected Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/13156>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDIES LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

Archaeological Studies Leiden University are published by the Faculty of Archaeology,
Leiden University, The Netherlands.

Editors: M. van Kolfschoten, L.B. van der Meer

ISBN: 90-76368-02-3

© Copyright 1998, Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University, The Netherlands

All correspondence should be addressed to:
M. Wanders
ASLU, Faculty of Archaeology
P.O. Box 9515
NL 2300 RA Leiden

Archaeological Studies Leiden University

On colonial grounds

A comparative study of colonialism and rural settlement
in first millennium BC west central Sardinia

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van Doctor
aan de Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden,
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus Dr. W.A. Wagenaar,
hoogleraar in de faculteit der Sociale Wetenschappen,
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op donderdag 23 april 1998
te klokke 15.15 uur

door

Peter Alexander René van Dommelen

geboren te Terneuzen in 1966



Faculty of Archaeology, University of Leiden, 1998

Promotiecommissie

promotor: Prof.dr. H.A.A.P. Geertman

referent: Prof.dr. M.J. Rowlands

overige leden: Dr. M.B.A.B. Annis
Prof.dr. L.P. Louwe Kooijmans
Prof.dr. F.J.A.M. Meijer
Dr. P. van de Velde
Prof.dr. W.J.H. Willems

‘A noi, studiosi della storia dei Sardi, questo periodo di guerra, che pure riscuote tutta la nostra ammirazione, non dà affatto sorpresa, perchè la storia tutta della gente è una catena di ardimenti, di tenacia, di virtù militare. Per tre secoli i Sardi dei nuraghi contendono la loro isola contro i Fenici-Punici; per tre secoli tengono testa contro le formidabili agguerrite legioni romane. Al tramonto di Roma, lo attesta l’iscrizione greco-bizantina di Porto Torres, sotto la guida di un duce di Bisanzio, gettano in mare i Longobardi assalitori; contro gli Arabi invasori si presentano come una razza di Rumi, salda, sempre vigile in armi e pronta alla difesa; e lampi di ardimento fiammeggiano in età aragonese e spagnuola, anche quando le catene del dominio straniero e della schiavitù feudale avvincono più strettamente questa gente dalle nobili tradizioni guerriere.’

From: Antonio Taramelli, Il passato che torna, *Il Sud*

For Ayla

preface

I first formulated the basic ideas for this study on ancient Mediterranean colonialism whilst a postgraduate British Council Fellow in the Department of Anthropology of UCL in 1991. These thoughts took a more precise shape when later that year Maria Beatrice Annis, Piet van de Velde and I set up the *Riu Mannu* project in the Department of Archaeology of Leiden University which provided the framework for my research. These dual roots continued to define my work when I was awarded a research assistant position by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) in 1993, because it allowed me not only to pursue my theoretical interests but also to concentrate on the archaeological record of west central Sardinia. With the involvement of Prof. Herman Geertman and Prof. Michael Rowlands both specific questions in Mediterranean archaeology and theoretical anthropological issues have continued to inspire and frame my research in equal measure. To my mind, it is precisely this entanglement of perspectives which has helped me to gain an insight in the colonial situations of first millennium BC Sardinia.

As a result, this study is as much an investigation into colonialism as a sociological category as it explores a specific historical situation of a given region. Even if the dual structure as outlined in chapter one might at first sight suggest otherwise, both aspects are integral to the study as a whole: chapter two cannot be reduced to a free-floating theoretical discussion any more than the three detailed chapters on Sardinia (4-6) can be understood without reference to this earlier one. It is on the contrary precisely thanks to the theoretical perspective that I became aware of the relevance of comparing Phoenician colonization, Punic domination and Romanization, despite the disparate conventional terminology. The conclusions in chapter seven accordingly draw on *all* preceding chapters, since it is precisely the comparison of the three colonial situations which have been examined in the light of the theoretical considerations which has allowed me to identify recurrent and structural aspects of the colonial situations. Chapter seven can thus be seen to embody the two-fold but yet integrated nature of this study.

Basically, the approach that I have adopted can be ranked among the so-called 'postcolonial' perspectives which have emerged in the social sciences over the last two decades. In

conjunction with other current ideas about society, human agency and material culture, I have highlighted the archaeologically relevant features of these perspectives in an attempt to sketch the contours of a postcolonial archaeology of colonialism. Given the widespread imperialist tendencies in earlier work, it only seems appropriate that archaeology should again follow suit in the present post-modern era. Having already presented the most salient points of a postcolonial perspective in archaeology elsewhere (van Dommelen 1997a), I regard the detailed elaboration of these notions in three different but related situations and the ensuing comparative analysis as the principal contributions of the present study. These have in the end led me to consider the role of historical contingency and structure in colonial situations and to assert the centrality of identity in colonial situations. As the relevance of these insights for modern-day Sardinia shows, there clearly is scope for a postcolonial archaeology which goes well beyond the narrow limits of strictly archaeological case-studies.

In practical terms, it has been in the context of the *Riu Mannu* project that I have benefited from the support and assistance of many persons, starting with Dr. Vincenzo Santoni, *Soprintendente* of the Archaeological Service of Cagliari and Oristano provinces: thanks to his favourable intercession the *Riu Mannu* project obtained a five-year ministerial fieldwork permit. I also gratefully acknowledge the access granted to the departmental archives for study in May and June 1995. I am furthermore indebted to Dr. Carlo Tronchetti, director of the National Museum in Cagliari, and to Dr. Lucia Siddi of the Cagliari exports office who issued the temporary export permit for part of the *Riu Mannu* finds: enabling our team to examine the finds in the laboratories of the Leiden Institute of Pottery Technology has been of crucial significance for understanding at least some of the subtleties of the archaeological record. Just as my ideas about the archaeology of west central Sardinia have been greatly advanced by Dr. Ubaldo Badas of the Communal Museum of Villanovaforru and his illuminating field excursions, so my views of the physical environment of the region have extensively benefited from the numerous and pleasant discussions with Dr. Rita Melis (dept. of Earth Sciences, Cagliari University) and Dr. Luigi Maccioni (geologist, Cagliari).

As regards the study area of west central Sardinia, I am much indebted to Gino Artudi and Sandro Perra who have freely shared their outstanding and intimate knowledge of the territory of Terralba during numerous sessions of looking at new finds and pleasant fieldtrips to yet another new site. They have also generously provided me with copies of their published and unpublished accounts. A similar recognition must go to Tarcisio Agus, now mayor of Guspini, and in his wake to the *Gruppo Archeologico 'Neapolis'*, as he has provided me with many pointers to ancient settlement in the territory of Guspini and in the adjacent Iglesiente mountains. Given the significance of the survey results of the *Riu Mannu* project for this study, I also wish to acknowledge the generous permission of numerous *pastori* and *contadini sardi* to enter their lands and vineyards: without it, the *Riu Mannu* fieldwork would simply not have been possible. Equally indispensable have been the 25 students and graduates, mainly from Leiden, who have participated in one or more of the *Riu Mannu* fieldwork campaigns, since they have not only meticulously collected the finds but also made each of the campaigns a memorable period. I particularly wish to thank Heleen Knikman-Stoetman, Benoît Mater and Antoine Mientjes whose efforts for the *Riu Mannu* project in Leiden and Sardinia have helped me forward in various matters.

I also acknowledge the fruitful and pleasant collaboration with Maria Beatrice Annis and Piet van de Velde in the *Riu*

Mannu project: both the many hours spent peering at the sherds in the laboratory in Leiden and the long but wonderful days of hiking through marshes and over hills in Sardinia have made a lasting impression. I remain indebted to Maria Beatrice Annis for persistently drawing my attention to the contemporary context of Sardinia.

The support and influence of my friends and fellow editors of *Archaeological Dialogues* are hard to overestimate: many ideas were either first heard of or first floated in the editorial meetings and discussions with Jos Bazelmans, Jan Kolen, Jan Slofstra and David Van Reybrouck. I particularly wish to acknowledge the critical remarks of the latter and of Alexander Verpoorte on a first draft of my theoretical perspective. I am also indebted to Marc van Dommelen who meticulously read through the entire text: he not only saved me from many errors but his comments on my English and his alternative phrasings have contributed much to enhancing the readability and clarity of the text.

Most of all, however, I remain indebted to my wife, Ayla Çevik, who has not only read and commented on numerous drafts of all chapters but has also endured my long periods of absence in Sardinia. I also thankfully acknowledge her help in the field during a two-week survey of sites in the Marmilla. It is therefore to her that I dedicate this study, in grateful recognition of her support and forbearance.

Glasgow, January 1998

contents

Preface 7

1	Introduction: Sardinia and the sea 11
1.1	An island on a crossroads? 11
1.2	Colonialism and Sardinia 13
2	Conceptualizing Colonialism. Mediterranean archaeology and the study of colonialism 15
2.1	Studying colonialism 15
2.1.1	The notion of colonialism 15
2.1.2	Partial texts 17
2.2	Colonialism and archaeology in the Mediterranean 17
2.2.1	Colonialist representations of ancient colonialism 18
2.2.2	Dualist conceptions of ancient colonialism 20
2.2.3	European identity and colonialism in Mediterranean archaeology 22
2.3	Matters of domination, hegemony and resistance 24
2.3.1	Postcolonial perspectives 25
2.3.2	Subaltern resistance and everyday social life 26
2.3.3	In the footsteps of Antonio Gramsci 28
2.3.4	Conceptualizing colonial society 29
2.3.5	Local practice and colonial hegemony 31
2.4	Towards a postcolonial archaeology of ancient colonialism 32
2.4.1	Decolonizing Mediterranean archaeology 33
2.4.2	Contours of a postcolonial archaeology 33
3	Figures in the Landscape. Landscape and archaeology in west central Sardinia 37
3.1	Landscape and archaeology in Sardinia 37
3.2	The physical landscapes of west central Sardinia 39
3.2.1	Structural geology 42
3.2.2	The shaping of west central Sardinia 43
3.2.3	The landscapes of the Arborèa, Campidano and Marmilla 45
3.3	A brief history of Sardinian archaeology 52
3.3.1	From antiquarianism to scientific archaeology 53
3.3.2	The professionalization of Sardinian archaeology 54
3.3.3	Postwar developments 55
3.4	The archaeological record in west central Sardinia 56
3.4.1	A survey of archaeological findings in west central Sardinia 58
3.4.2	The <i>Riu Mannu</i> field survey project 60
3.4.3	Matching stray finds and systematic collections 63
3.5	Figuring out landscape and archaeology in west central Sardinia 65
4	Exploring Colonialism. Phoenician presence in Iron Age Nuragic Sardinia 69
4.1	Phoenician colonialism and Nuragic Sardinia 69

4.2	Colonial networks and indigenous developments	71
4.2.1	Phoenician expansion and colonialism	71
4.2.2	Indigenous society in Iron Age Sardinia	76
4.2.3	Colonial settlement in Iron Age Sardinia	80
4.3	Exploring west central Sardinia	85
4.3.1	The archaeological evidence of the study area	87
4.3.2	The wider contexts of the Sinis, central Campidano and upper Flumini Mannu valley	96
4.3.3	Towards an assessment of the archaeological record of Iron Age west central Sardinia	101
4.4	Divided lands in Iron Age west central Sardinia	103
4.4.1	Colonial towns and indigenous landscapes	104
4.4.2	Precolonial encounters	107
4.5	Exchange and identity in Iron Age west central Sardinia	109
5	Between City and Country. Carthaginian colonialism and Punic settlement in west central Sardinia	115
5.1	From Phoenician to Carthaginian colonialism	115
5.2	Carthaginian colonialism in the western Mediterranean	117
5.2.1	Greeks, Carthaginians and Etruscans in the western Mediterranean	118
5.2.2	Carthaginian colonialism	120
5.2.3	The Carthaginian conquest of Sardinia	122
5.2.4	Carthaginian domination in Sardinia	125
5.3	Punic settlement in west central Sardinia	129
5.3.1	The archaeological evidence of the study area	130
5.3.2	The wider contexts of the Sinis, central Campidano and upper Flumini Mannu valley	142
5.3.3	Towards an assessment of the archaeological record of Punic west central Sardinia	144
5.4	Society and landscape in Punic west central Sardinia	146
5.4.1	Settlement and landscape	146
5.4.2	Colonial society and local identities	151
5.5	Carthaginian colonialism between city and country in west central Sardinia	156
6	Punic Persistence. Romanization and local resistance in west central Sardinia	161
6.1	Carthage and Rome	161
6.2	The western Mediterranean between Carthaginian and Roman colonialism	163
6.2.1	Battles and treaties in the western Mediterranean	164
6.2.2	Roman expansion and romanization	167
6.2.3	Sardinia during the Punic Wars	168
6.2.4	Roman rule and Punic culture in Sardinia	172
6.3	Rural settlement in west central Sardinia under the Roman Republic	177
6.3.1	The archaeological evidence of the study area	179
6.3.2	The wider contexts of the Sinis, central Campidano and upper Flumini Mannu valley	188
6.3.3	Towards an assessment of the archaeological record of west central Sardinia under the Roman Republic	193
6.4	Persistent identities between colonial rule and local resistance	195
6.4.1	Cultural continuity and silent resistance	196
6.4.2	Cultural resistance and local identities	201
6.5	Punic tradition between romanization and local identities	205
7	Colonial Comparisons. Concluding remarks	211
7.1	History, structure and material culture	211
7.2	On colonial categories and cultural concerns	212
7.3	Hybridization, local identities and resistance	214

References 217

Appendix: site gazetteer 235

Samenvatting (Dutch summary) 289