



ISLAND ISOLATION AND CULTURAL INTERACTION IN THE EBA NORTHERN AEGEAN: A CASE STUDY FROM POLIOCHNI (LEMNOS)

MASSIMO CULTRARO

*Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche
 Istituto per i Beni Archaeologici
 Via A. Di Sangiuliano 262
 I-95124 Catania, Italy*

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e-mail: massimo.cultraro@tin.it

ABSTRACT

The results of recent excavations at Poliochni, on the island of Lemnos, carried out by the Italian Archaeological School at Athens in 1993-1998, provide an opportunity to move beyond current interpretative paradigms about the concepts of insularity. Western Anatolia, the coastal region of Eastern Macedonia and Cyclades represent three significant directional axes which mark the patterns of exchange, interaction and, occasionally, isolation of insular communities.

This paper discusses the insular colonization procedures on the island of Lemnos in comparison with those in other parts of the Northern Aegean at the end of the Fourth Millennium B.C., in order to understand the centrality and the marginality of the inter-island and island-mainland relations. During the Black Period the archaeological records suggests movement of peoples coming from Western Anatolia and a point of interest is the absence of relationships between Cyclades and the Northern Aegean. In the next Blue Period the emergence of a wide fortified settlement suggests the transformation of the village into a well-planned settlement.

KEYWORDS: Lemnos, Poliochni, Bronze Age, Insularity, Proto-Urbanism, Settlement changes

RETHINKING SOME INSULAR STEREOTYPES

The Early Bronze Age of Northern Aegean is distinctive for its marked variation of complexity over time and space. Most studies on

EBA material culture envision a gradual, relatively peaceful process of cultural and economic development, interrupted periodically by stimulus diffusion, either from Anatolia or Mainland Greece (Bernabò Brea 1964; Hood 1981). In this wider picture, it has long been

recognised that the ebb and flow of socio-cultural development on the Bronze Age Northern Aegean are linked inextricably to external forces, and conditioned by scholarly preconceptions that the island's geographical isolation, at least on certain levels, can correspond to an isolation in terms of cultural processes. This interpretation is heavily conditioned by a functionalist model: all islands are characterised by having a distinctive, limited ecosystem, together with a biogeographical isolation influencing local cultural differences (Mac Arthur and Wilson 1967). In fact, the island's identity depends on the island's size, its distance from the mainland, and the frequency, intensity and duration of external relationships (Cherry 1981; Keegan and Diamond 1987). Alternatively, we could interpret conceptual linkages between insularity and cultural differences in terms of the use of island location as a "symbolic boundary" in the cognitive geography of the islanders and their imaginary construction of the world (Rainbird 1999). Islands constitute a true micro-world, where the insular isolation is viewed as a boundary of biosocial particularities, with all the advantages and disadvantages which this implies (Evans 1973; Patton 1996, 27-39). Hence the integration of subsistence and production factors is discussed not in terms of external influences, but as a result of expanding socio-economic efforts that underline the emergence of distinctive new productive strategies. The point of the reconstruction, in any case, is to establish a context within which possible determinants or constraints on island ecosystem and inhabitants may be evaluated. Indeed, to attempt at investigating island archaeology, as C. Broodbank has pointed out (2000, 6-35), needs to strike a balance between the physical frameworks of land and sea, and the assertions of a wholly culturally relative construction of space. If carefully handled, a global overview on another island biogeographical parallels, for example Cy-

clades in EBA, could be, in Cherry's words (1990, 146), a 'useful exploratory strategy'.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the many trajectories of politico-economic change from EBA I to EBA II in Northern Aegean, focusing on archaeological data from Poliochni on Lemnos, which shows the processes of transformation processes from an isolated, village-based culture into an international, urban oriented, complex society. How and which external contacts play roles in this scenario? Can we use the traditional patterns of "isolation" and "interaction" to describe cultural changes?

AN OVERVIEW OF THE EARLY NORTHERN AEGEAN ISLANDS

The Northern Aegean islands during the EBA are an ideal theatre for approaching island archaeology in general, and in particular, for exploring the perspective outlined above. There are several reasons to explain such a choice. One factor is the quantity of archaeological data available, especially in the case of Poliochni, on the island of Lemnos, where archaeological excavations have a long tradition and possess an eminent checked pedigree. The EBA settlement at Poliochni is one of the most intensively researched and archaeologically data-rich insular clusters in the Aegean prehistory. Lemnos forms the central part of a wider insular system that shows long-range interconnections with mainland areas, Eastern Macedonia and the north-western coast of Anatolia (Fig. 1). Other significant observations include the fact that the Northern Aegean islands fringe the Aegean-Thracian coasts, leading to high degree of inter-visibility in optimal weather conditions with mainland areas, as well as with each other. According to Mac Arthur and Wilson (1967, 144), island isolation is dependent on visibility from the mainland or the degree of accessibility through a series of small islands known as 'stepping stones'. In the case of the Northern

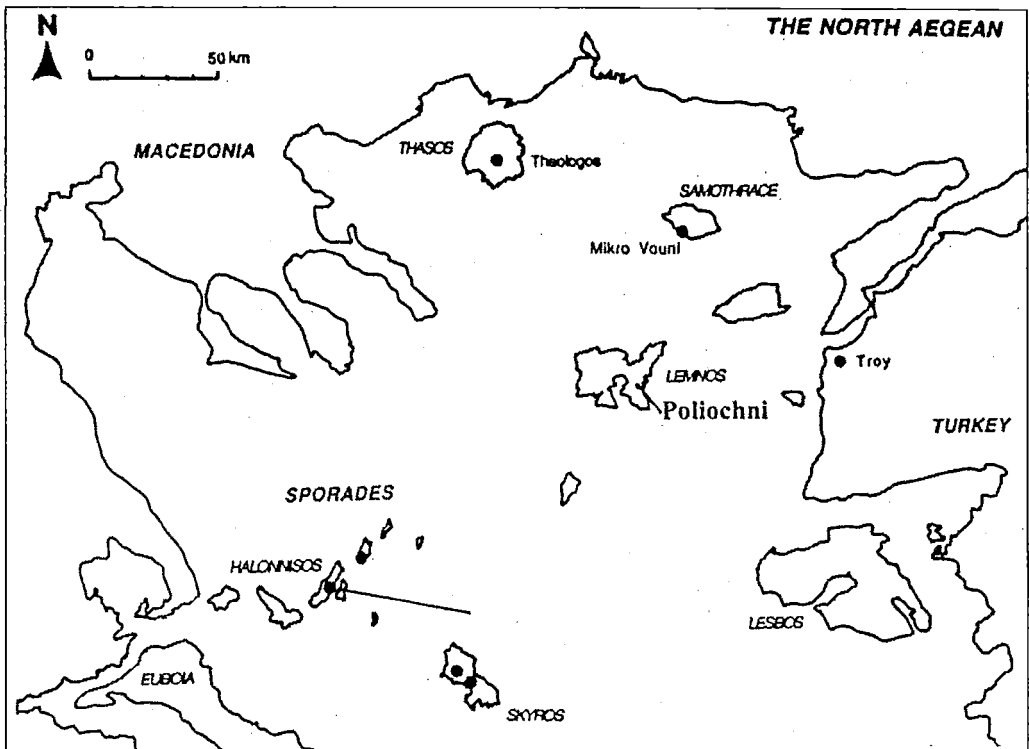


Fig. 1: Northern Aegean with settlements mentioned in the text

Aegean insular district, the particular location attenuates the juxtaposition between islands and peninsulas, producing plausible corridors of movements along so many potential axes and enmeshing these 'almost islands' in complex multi-directional links. D. Papageorgiou (1997) provides an expert description and interpretation of seafaring conditions in the northern Aegean (Fig. 2): the main currents and prevailing northerly winds, originating from the Straits of the Dardanelles are prominent among the former, suggesting also that most maritime activity took place between May and September (Zodiatis 1993). The limited duration of the sailing season implies the need for a degree of time-and-labour-allocation to balance the demands of the agricultural calendar with seafaring activities. A possible response to this situation has been postulated recently by C. Broodbank (2000, 95-

96), who suggests an interesting scenario for EBA Cyclades, where seafaring and agricultural productivity were practised as gender- or age-specific activities.

THE BLACK PERIOD: THE FIRST COLONIZATION

An investigation of a well-documented settlement should offer more than an explanation of island archaeology. A closer look at Poliochni, on Lemnos, proves particularly rewarding and defines an informative initial analytical focus (Fig. 5). For the sake of brevity, I will focus on the analysis of the first phases of EBA which - according to the Poliochni's stratigraphic sequence - are conventionally termed as the Black and Blue Periods (Fig. 6). Let's start to describe briefly the archaeological record for each period which provides the framework for discussion the interaction pat-

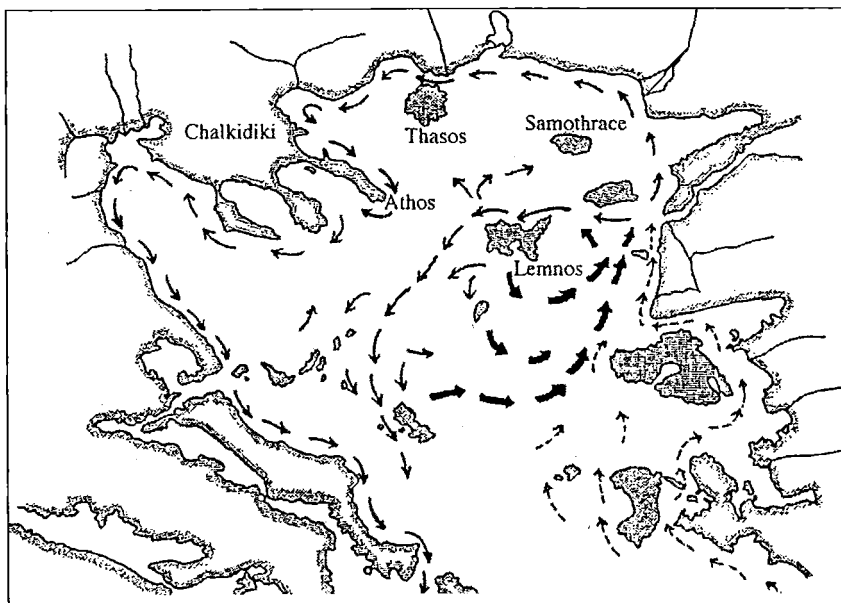


Fig. 2: Northern Aegean Sea currents in winter (adapted from Papageorgiou 1997)

terns between island and external areas.

The Black period corresponds to the earliest settlement on the hill of Poliochni (Bemabò Brea 1964, 537-547). The extent and density of the village are not clear, but recent discoveries have confirmed that in this period the village occupied the middle section of the plateau (Tinè 1997, 51-53). In Poliochni's Black Period the dominant style of architecture is the oval or curvilinear plan, with dry-stone foundations probably meant to support mud-brick superstructures (Bemabò Brea 1964, 45-72; 73-114). A substantial number of indeterminate remains of curvilinear walls is insufficient for reconstructing the complete ground plan of the houses, which appear to be either wholly apsidal or wholly oval in plan (Fig. 3b). The same mixture of oval and apsidal houses was found in the village recently explored on the peninsula of Myrina (Dova 1997) (Fig. 3c), where it is possible to examine the transformation of the oval/apsidal house model, built in the Black Period (phases I-III) into the megaron type which suggests an Anatolian origin (phase IV).

Turning back to Poliochni, the depth of the stratigraphy, which includes several building phases (Bemabò Brea 1964, 29; 86-96), the diachronic changes in the pottery and lithics indicate a fairly long life-span of the settlement during this chronological horizon.

Most of the ceramic evidence of the Black Period comes from floor fills and accumulations of debris. Virtually on complete vessels were found on living surfaces, but the recent exploration of rich deposits produced a reconstruction of a large pottery assemblage. The table shows a selected group of pottery from Poliochni Black Period levels and from the above mentioned village at Myrina (Fig. 3a). Many shapes, such as carinated bowls and pedestal vases, has similarities to Kum Tepe IB2-3 in Western Anatolia, which represent the complex cultural framework preceding Troy I (Sperling 1976) (Fig. 6). Much of the pottery assemblage, and in particular the white painted decorated class (Tine 1997, 48, shape H), derives from the Late Chalcolithic pottery tradition used in Northern Aegean (Emborio, Chios Level VII-VI) and southern

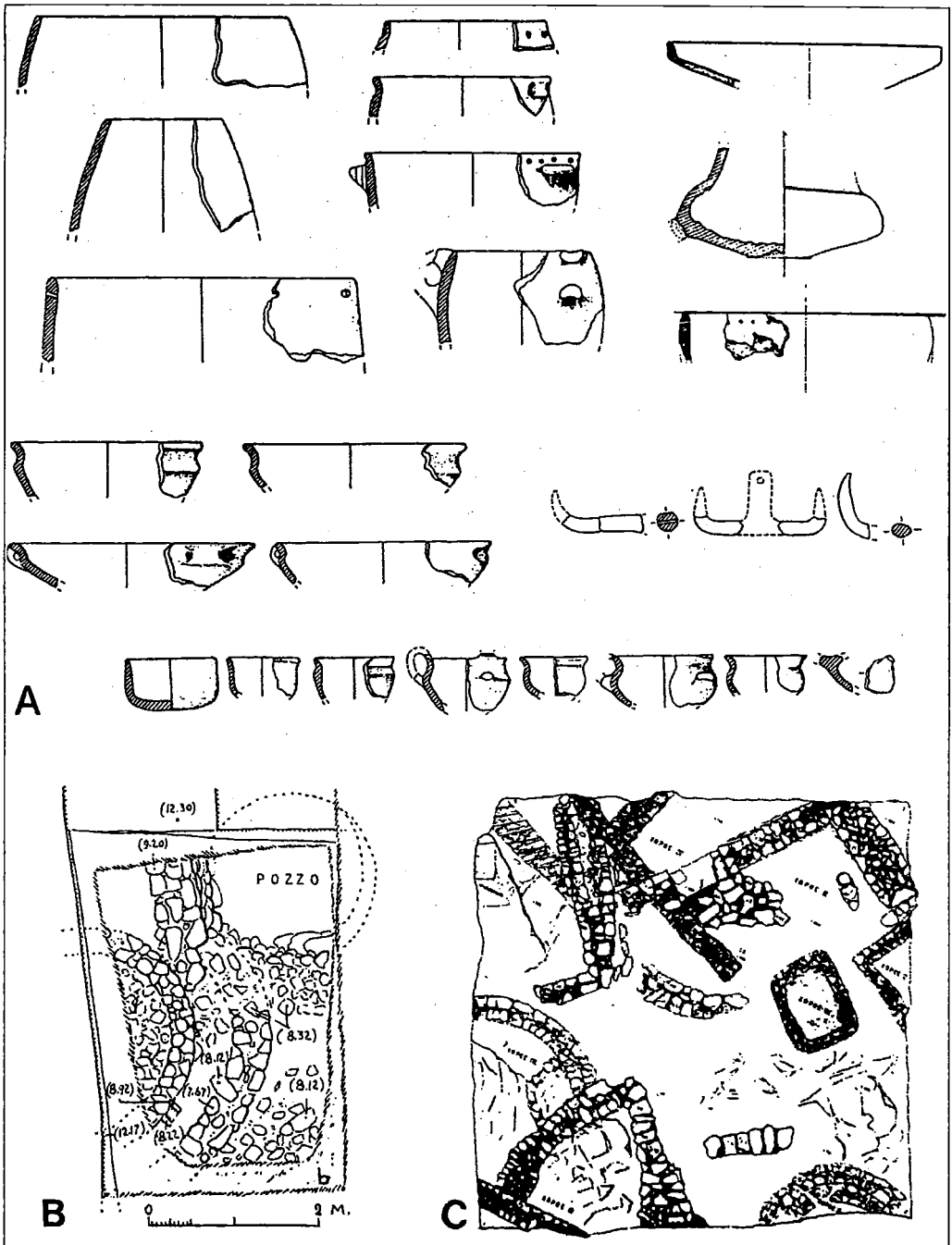


Fig. 3: Black Period: A. Pottery assemblage from Poliochni and Myrina; B. Plan of the huts under Megaron 605; C. Plan of the settlement at Myrina; (a. from Tiné 1997 and Dova 1997; b. from Bernabò Brea 1964; c. from Dova 1997)

Anatolia (Beycesultan, Late Chalcolithic 1-2), suggesting a good chronological synchronism to date the Black Period to the second half of the in Millennium B.C. (Hood 1981, 326, fig. 153; Lloyd and Mellaart 1962, pl. 2: 4-6) Another important factor is the absence of metallurgical activity, while the smelting of copper occurred sporadically during the Middle and Late Neolithic in Thassos and Eastern Macedonia (Malamidou 1997, 337-338).

THE BLUE PERIOD: EVIDENCE FOR A LARGE SETTLEMENT

The Blue Period at Poliochni represents a radical change in the nature of occupation, in architectural and in material culture evidence from those of the preceding period (Fig. 4). The traditional subdivision of the Blue Period

into two phases has been recently re-examined on the basis of new data which reveals four different levels (Traverso 1997). The first phase corresponds to a new settlement with houses of apsidal plan, which was evidently destroyed by conflagration. Although the pottery production presents some differences from ones of the Black Period, the general picture reveals close affinities with the previous period. The key factor which indicates the gap between those two phases is an impressive burnt level covering the apsidal houses (Traverso 1997, 60). In the succeeding phase a massive fortified wall system was built along the west side, while the median size of settlement was three times greater than the preceding period (Bemabò Brea 1964, 117-174).

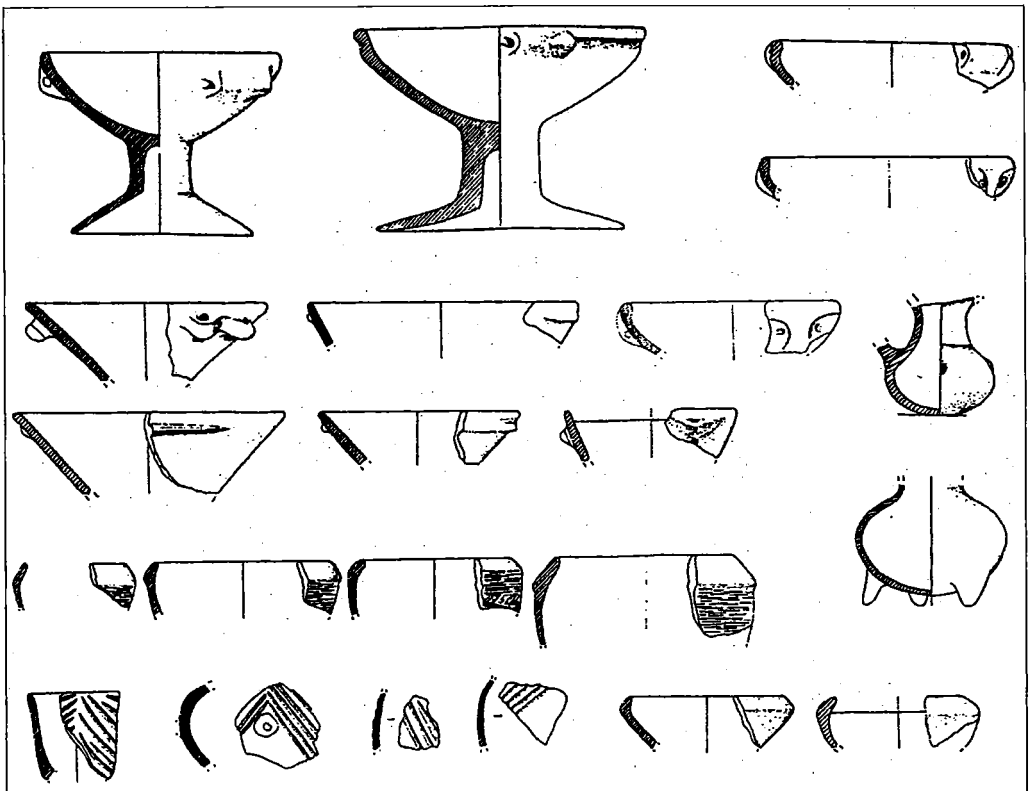


Fig. 4: Blue Period: Pottery assemblage from Poliochni (from Traverso 1997)

Fig. 5: Plan of Poliochni with principal buildings mentioned in the text (from Belli 1990)

	POLIOCHNI	TROY - KUMTEPE	ESKİŞEHİR - KUTAHYA	AFYON PLAIN	BEYCESULTAN	KARATAŞ-SEMAŪK
2000 BC		IV	BAŪEHIŞAR KÖLLÖBA		VII-VI	
EB 3	Yellow	III	KÖLLÖBA AE 10 (PIT) ↓ EARLY ANARKÖY YAZILIRAYA CEMETERY	KAKLIK MEVKII GRAVES 24, 26	VIII	VI
		h			IX	
		g			X	
		e-f			XII-XI	
EB 2	Red	II	SEYİTÖMER (BURNT LEVEL)	KAKLIK MEVKII GRAVES 10, 21-23	XIII a	V:3
		d			XIII b-c	
		c			XIV	V:1
		b			XV	
EB 1B	Green	a	DEMİRCİHÖYÜK	KARAOĞLAN MEVKII AND KAKLIK MEVKII GRAVES 1-8	XVI	IV
		j			XVII	I-III
		h-i			XVIII	
		g			XIX	
EB 1A	Blue	f	KUMTEPE I ^B	KAKLIK MEVKII	X	hiatus 7
		e			XI	hiatus
		d			XII	
		c			XIII	
3000 BC	Black	b	KUMTEPE I ^B	KAKLIK MEVKII	XIV	
		a			XV	
			KUŞTEPE YUKARIŞÖĞÜTÖNÜ II KIRCA TASLIK KÖLLÖBA			

Fig. 5: Plan of Poliochni with principal buildings mentioned in the text (from Belli 1990)

Traces of occupation have been found over most of the promontory, comprising of an area of slightly less than one hectare. This area was densely occupied, to judge from repeated re-building, best witnessed in the south-western area (Traverso 1997, 60-61). The houses show a rectangular plan, or megaron type (Bemabò Brea 1964, 84-86, fig. 43), and the alignment of the residences along certain main streets

within the town supports the idea of an intensive town planning with a regular street grid and, probably, a high degree of axiality (Belli 1990, 325) (Fig. 5).

This interpretation is confirmed by other two striking architectural features: the fortification and two impressive 'public' buildings (Fig. 5). In terms of urban organisation and planning, the construction of an impressive

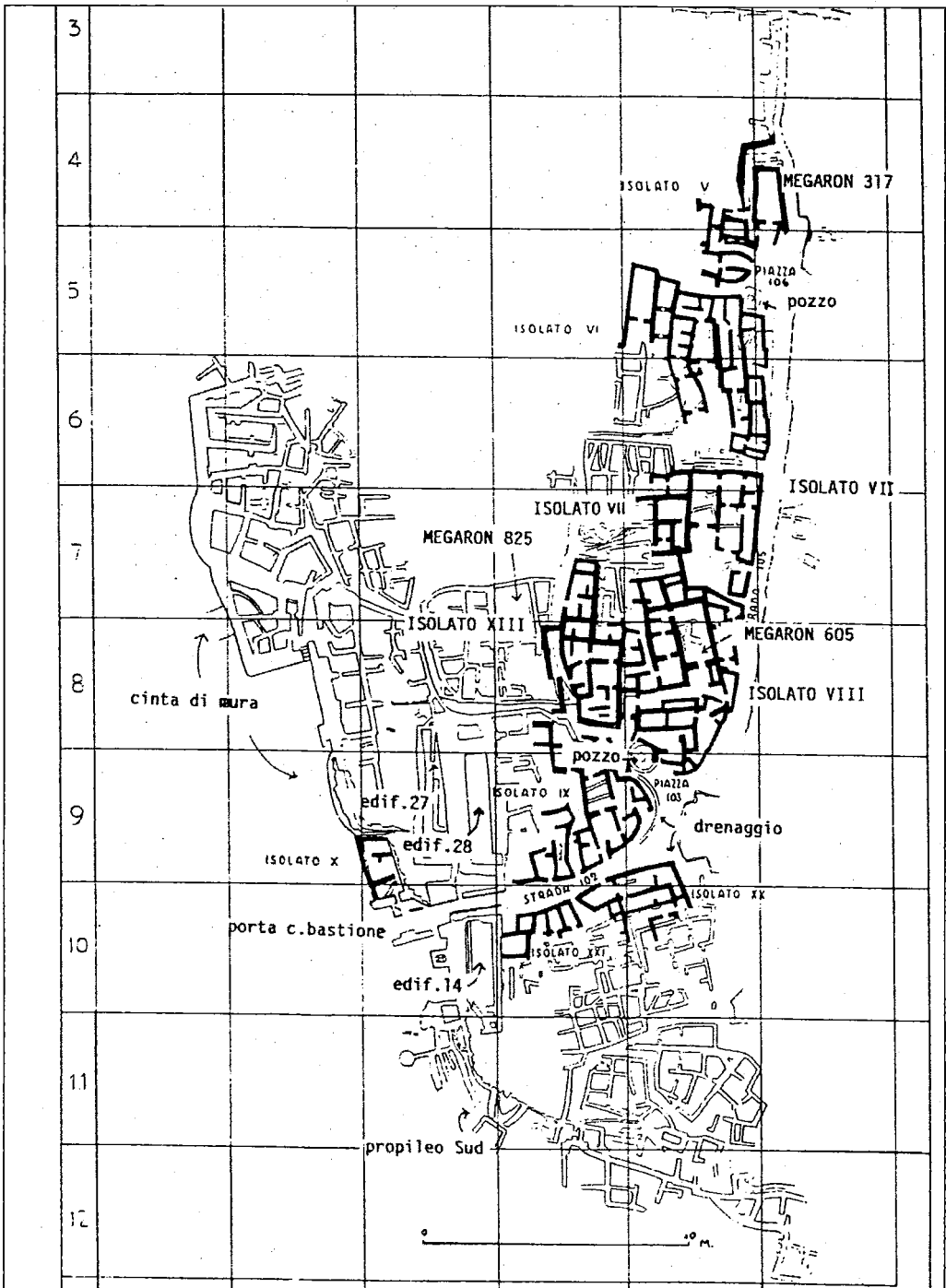


Fig. 6: Northern Aegean and Western Anatolia sequences in Bronze Age (from Efe-Ilasli 1997)

fortified system, evident along the southern part of the village (Bemabò Brea 1964, 140-146), is an important factor for two main reasons. Firstly, a fortification obviously implies investment of time and collective labour, and also carries symbolic messages and military efficiency. Second, walled enclosures impose some constraints on urban planning, for instance, the existence of a pre-ordained orientation of buildings in their proximity, and the importance that gateways and streets assume in the access system. Indeed, in the area closest to the main gateway of the fortification two impressive buildings are located, the "Granary" (Room 28) and the "Bouleuterion" (Room 14) (Fig. 5). Both buildings are large rectangular rooms, without inner partitions; only the "Bouleuterion" encompasses a double bench system along the main sides, suggesting an interpretation of the building as room for meeting or ritual activities (Bemabò Brea 1964, 177-180, fig. 106)

Taking an EBA population density range of 200-300 people per hectare (Whitelaw 1983, 332-333), there is little doubt that the Blue Period Poliochni was a large settlement, with a population probably in the range of 150-200 people. Unfortunately, there is no available information about the associated cemetery, but the impressive fortification and the presence of prestigious 'public' buildings mark out this community as exceptional. The changes are more apparent in the pottery assemblage: the category of white painted decoration disappears and the decorated vases now bear channeled motifs which are similar to the pottery found in the EBA of Eastern Macedonia and the Balkans (Bemabò Brea 1964, pl. 36-37) (Fig. 4). Important changes can be also observed both in the shapes and in the technology of manufacturing: although the pottery is a continuation and development of the forms of the Black Period (Fig. 3a), conical bowls and pedestal vases are more common, while the fabrics are now dark in colour (Traverso

1997, 62-73) Another important change is the introduction of metallurgy, which includes copper tools and jewellery referred to types from the Western Balkans area (Bemabò Brea 1964, 591-592, fig. 320, pl. 86e). Metallurgical finds are abundant, and the analyses indicate an exceptionally high degree of skill in the cupellation of lead to obtain silver (Cultraro 2000).

Finally, a remarkable aspect of material culture in the Blue Period is a small number of pottery not locally produced: although chemical analysis on clay is still absent, shapes and fabric suggest closest parallels to some pottery categories of EH I-II of Mainland Greece (Traverso 1997, 72-73, l. 21).

FROM THE VILLAGE TO THE SETTLEMENT -SIZED COMMUNITY

In order to understand cultural changes and biogeographic conditions, it is necessary to examine the main socio-political and economic factors which determined the cultural transformations in Lemnos during the transition Late Neolithic/EBA I.

Most notable in this case is the organisation of settlement (Fig. 7): a cursory examination of the evidence illustrates that the emergence of nucleated settlements throughout the Black Period was a successful adaptation to environmental constraints imposed by an island ecosystem. The small villages at Poliochni and Myrina represent the first pattern and process in the earliest colonization of the island of Lemnos. Both villages show similar features in expansion and location, at plateau edge of low elevation, dominating view, proximity to the sea and immediate access to the interior land (Dova 1997, 282-283). Both settlements occupied strategic positions in respect to communications, locations which were to become all the more important, reaching a brief peak at the end of the EBA 2, when the northern Aegean islands formed part of a

BLACK PERIOD	
Factors	Archaeological Indicators
<u>Settlement changes</u>	Population concentration in settlements
<u>Demographic</u>	Increase in population
<u>Economic</u>	
subsistence production	- herding of domesticated cattle, ovicaprids - ovicaprine meat and milk production - domesticated cereals
metallurgical activity	no evidence
<u>Socio-Political</u>	
Burial practices	no evidence
architectural differentiation	no evidence

Fig. 7: Black Period: Social differentiation and economic organisation

wider network of trade paths (Nakou 1995; Efe-Ilasli 1997).

Whatever the case, the dislocation of sites on the maritime routes apparently contrasts with the lack of foreign items among the material culture. The absence of evidence of over-seas contacts throughout the Black Period indicates that subsistence and social needs were met within the insular economic system, and it also suggests that social or environmental constraints set certain ceilings on socio-cultural development or discontinuity. However, an indirect connection between the north-east Aegean and the Cyclades could be proven by manufacturing in the Cyclades, by the late Final Neolithic, of the Grotta-Pelos culture rolled-rim bowl, a form other-wise restricted to the islands of the north Aegean and north-western Anatolia (Renfrew 1972, 167-169 fig. 10.6). The impression that the horizons of the Late Neolithic-EBA I islanders of the north Aegean were larger than their islands is

strengthened by the distribution, in the Cyclades and on Greek mainland, of prestige and ritual objects, namely figurines of Talalay's type C (1993, 66), and Final Neolithic marble pointed-based beakers (Devetzi 1997, 559, fig. 1; Broodbank 2000, 161, fig. 46). The low incidence of these finds does not argue for intensive and systematic interaction, but exactly how communities in the Final Neolithic Cyclades acquired and circulated such exotica is difficult to be drawn.

The report from refuse pits showed that the Black Period communities exploited marine resources to a considerable degree, according to the Poliochni evidence that has produced a range of molluscs and fish (Soarentino 1997). The promontories where the Poliochni Black Period and Myrina-Meteorological Hill were settled can be interpreted as look-out points for tuna. Among the Black Period Poliochni lithics, some tools might have been mounted as the heads of tuna or

other big fishes spears, and the much more common barbed and tanged projectile points could have been used as harpoons (unpublished material, Poliochni stores). Hunting also integrated the diet of the Lemnian communities, as the few bones of wild fauna from Soundings A and M at Poliochni suggest (Sorrentino 1997, tables IV-VI).

To summarise, one settlement strategy in the Black Period culture may have been to locate a favourable niche for farming and fishing, settle it at the village level, and separate specialist procurement groups seasonally to catch wild food for the community.

The destruction level in Blue Period I marks the transition from the Late Neolithic horizon to the first stage of EBA I (Fig. 8). In terms of settlement organisation, the layout of the town is dominated by a new concept in the structuring of space: the emergence of a fortified settlement (Fig. 5). In the EBA northern Aegean context, the creation of clearly bounded spaces, the control of access through gateways, and the centralisation of socio-economic activities, all represent new degrees of organisation and interaction at the local and regional levels (Branigan 2001). In terms of urban organisation, the presence of a fortification served mainly to establish new forms and levels of social control over the population. A second explanation is that the fortification was functional for the creation of boundaries and for the redrawing of social fields, between internal and external space, as well as rural hinterland and the settlement. Given such outlines, we can conclude that the fortification walls of the Poliochni Blue Period defined a new socio-economic and political landscape and they stood as visible symbols of the new social order. Advances in metallurgical technology are indicated chiefly by the development of a wide range of mould-cast, copper-based implements and tools. Chemical analysis suggests that of 70% of the Blue Period copper-based artefacts are consistent with a

Central Anatolia origin (Pemicka *et al.* 1990). The incipient exploitation of sulphide copper ores along the Taurus Mountains shows a wide network of interregional contacts, which also appears through the material evidence collected at Poliochni.

A range of material evidence indicates an intensification of the mixed-farming economy and the emergence of what A. Sherrat termed the secondary products revolution (1981): archaeological indicators are an increased use of bulk-storage containers and the proliferation of ceramic types associated with the production and consumption of milk products (Bemabò Brea 1964, 581-582, pl. 76-77). The palaeozoological assemblage strongly supports this interpretation and the data portray increased exploitation of ovicaprids and cattle (Sorrentino 1997). Supplementary evidence of the importance of cereal production and consumption exists in the form of a large number of ground stones querns, ponders and grinders (Bemabò Brea 1964, 608-610).

A significant factor of changes on subsistence strategies is the large amount of stone axes that could be connected to forest clearance in order to arrange more arable land (Bemabò Brea 1964, 606-607, pls. 183-186). The production of large storage clay vessels indicates an intensification of extensive agriculture and the massive building 28, the so-called "Granary" (Fig. 5), dated to the Late phase of the Blue Period, suggests different and more complex storage strategies (Bemabò Brea 1964, 187-200, figs. 11-121). This latter consideration needs some remarks, because the analysis of the archaeological evidence, if we compare the data from Poliochni and Myrina, suggests some changes in the long-term accumulations of staple food. In the case of the Black Period, the evidence for physical storage of crops largely comprises of storage jar finds and suggests an orientation on the individual house. No signs of communal storage facilities have been found, save for a possible small silo

at Myrina (Dova 1997, 290, fig. 3) (Fig. 3c). The next Blue Period shows clear changes in storage strategies and the prestigious building, the so-called "Granary", located along the main street, marks out the introduction of a communal system of food accumulation.

The palaeobotanical analyses on remains from insular Aegean confirm the increasing production of oil and wine during the EBA III (Hansen 1988), suggesting a possible diversification of the subsistence economy. It is interesting to speculate whether wine was a high-status liquid, or it reflects a significant transformation of the traditional agricultural package. The impression that in the Blue Period varied carbonations of physical storage and social storage can be envisaged, is also suggested by the simultaneous increase in drinking vessels, e.g. jugs (Fig. 4). The symbolic power of feasting and drinking activities, which is acquired through the management of communal consumption, is an important key to the explanation of the degree and the scale of transformations that involved the social structure of Poliochni. Unfortunately, the limited archaeological record does not help to reconstruct some features of social patterns: the large rectangular room 14 with inner benches, the so-called "Bouleuterion" (Fig. 5), could be believed to be a communal building for meeting or ritual activities. Indeed, the large quantity of miniature vases, which were found in the debris amassed along the external western wall of the building, can be interpreted as a part of the ritual equipment, probably collected there after the destruction of the room in the early Green Period (Bemabò Brea 1964, 586-587, pl. 83:u-x).

To conclude, although our information is very limited, the analyses of subsistence strategies and of urban system suggest a high level of socio-economic stratification of Lemnian communities.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The new picture emerging in the Northern Aegean during the transition between Late Neolithic and EBA I is that Lemnos shows considerable differences in terms of rate and date of urban organisation, which may be equally the result of different group identity and different interaction opportunities. The absence of early Neolithic occupation, well documented by recent archaeological explorations in the island (Avgerinou 1997), confirms that the Black Period culture was the first substantial, and significant episode of cultural impact on Lemnos, in terms of human presence and economic strategies. In particular, the scattered nature of the settlements distinguishes Lemnos from the other islands of the Northern Aegean (Lesbos, Thasos, Samothrace), where the first dense human occupation started in the Late Neolithic (Avgerinou 1996).

To explain both settlements, Poliochni and Myrina, in the Black Period, as the result of some population movements by the sea from Anatolia, or directly associated with Late Neolithic culture in Lesbos and Chios, seems rather probable. In Myrina and Poliochni (Dova 1997), domestic architecture, town planning, features of pottery assemblage, are much too similar in both sites to explain these affinities simply as result of inner interaction. If the pottery assemblage from the Poliochni Black Period (Fig. 3a) suggests most close affinities to the later Neolithic cultures in the Northern Aegean, one of the next Blue Period cannot be adequately paralleled elsewhere in the Western Anatolia and in Northern Aegean too. Although the introduction of channeled decoration is a significant innovation, the pottery assemblage likewise appears very much a local phenomenon where foreign features are totally absorbed in traditional cultural substrate. As noted above, Poliochni in the Blue Period reveals signs of increase in settle-

ment organisation, showing a certain re-orientation of social structure (Fig. 8). Changes in pottery technology may reflect a re-standardisation of the community priorities and possibly a re-evaluation of the materials in a wider network of exchange activities. The appearance of metallurgy may have played a certain role in this direction. However, although copper seems to be imported from Anatolia and a limited number of pottery items come from Mainland Greece (Traverso 1997, 72-73), the Blue Period clearly documents contact of some sort, but the quantities involved are minute, the trade or procurement mechanism unknown, and the impact of acquisition of such resources is evidently minimal. For instance, a silver pin from Room 28, dated to the Late Blue Period (Bernabò Brea 1964, 591-592, fig. 320, pl. 86:e), provides a significant example of the degree of complexity of Lemnian

metallurgy: the silver/lead mixture comes from Cycladic mines, probably Siphnos, but the shape and the style of the pin suggest closest parallels to the precious jewellery of EBA eastern Anatolia or Northern Syria (Cultraro 2000, 107, fig. 3d). The evidence of the metallurgy of the Blue Period shows affinities with the production of the Late Neolithic/EBA I Cyclades, where silver becomes prominent in the burial record as an element of social prestige (Nakou 1995).

In summary, during the Blue Period Northern Aegean interaction networks appear to move from an emphasis on medium and long-distance communication through the introduction of metallurgy and the acquisition of exotica, but the local culture does not reveal sufficient flexibility and locally shared currency to enable some structural changes in the main domain of the local cultural assem-

BLUE PERIOD	
Factors	Archaeological Indicators
<u>Settlement changes</u>	- settlement expansion - fortified system
<u>Demographic</u>	Increase in population
<u>Economic</u>	
subsistence production	- dependence on domesticated animals - forest clearance; extensive agriculture - growth of mixed agrarian economy - bulk-storage capacity (pithoi)
specialized production	- stone tools - specialized ceramics - woollen commodities
metallurgical activity	incipient exploitation of copper resources
<u>Socio-Political</u>	
Burial practices	no evidence
architectural differentiation	- communal buildings

Fig. 8: Blue Period: Social differentiation and economic organisation

blance. In other words, we are in the presence of a singular case: paradoxically, when local culture is oriented to a more complex society following an expanding proto-urban organisation, the cultural expression reveals clear features of conservatism and isolation. Moreover, it does mean that the significant acceleration in the rate of cultural change can not be correlated with an alleged gradual increase in contacts with other parts of the Aegean.

As a whole, we can conclude that Poliochni can be considered as a striking 'litmus

paper' of the main cultural transformations which involve Northern Aegean during the transition from Late Neolithic to EBI. The comparison between the Black and Blue Periods' does help to understand that certain deterministic explanations - in terms of island adaptation and geographical constraints - should be regarded with scepticism and be checked through the filter-corrector of intra-settlement factors, like architectural organisation, technology, and subsistence strategies.

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