

Carving out a territory: Rhegion, Locri and the households and communities of the classical countryside

Abstract

This paper investigates how people enacted multiple, alternative constructions of 'territory', using as a case study two neighbouring and often antagonistic ancient Greek city-states of southern Italy, Rhegion and Locri Epizephyrii focusing primarily on the fifth-fourth centuries BCE. We ask how the everyday practices of the inhabitants dwelling in these rural hinterlands shaped their landscapes. Did their lived experience of the landscape map on to the boundaries and models of 'territory' presented in the urban-focused written sources? We suggest that though the written sources provide a useful overall context, it is more difficult to connect particular incidents directly with specific archaeological or landscape features. Applying Roman, or modern, concepts of boundaries and borders in this period may be anachronistic. Sovereignty of the urban centres, and even of the most powerful regional rulers, over the lands in the border zone between classical Rhegion and Locri largely appears constrained and patchy.

Introduction

We should not assume that in the ancient world, before the Romans, the concepts of bounded territory associated with the sovereignty of the modern nation-state provided the predominant model for mapping political structures onto space and landscapes. I have argued elsewhere (Foxhall 2014; introduction, this volume) that in antiquity the spatial organisation of polities and states was not simply a top-down, centre-to-periphery process, where power was spread evenly across continuous spaces to control landscapes. Rather, 'territory', in the sense of the use and control of a more-or-less defined space by a coherent group was more complex, developed and negotiated at several different levels, and sovereignty could in consequence be patchy. In a range of cases it can be demonstrated that was a strong bottom-up element, in which 'territories' were generated through the everyday practices of households in aggregate, and communities, living in, moving through and exploiting local landscapes. These necessarily accommodated and responded to higher level political and military imperatives generated by polities and states, though in some cases it is clear that these 'central' initiatives were also negotiated with local communities and through relationships with key individuals or elite groups who were embedded in the local-level networks and processes (Osborne 2013; Foxhall 2014).

This paper investigates multiple, alternative constructions of 'territory' in the sense outlined above in the ancient Greek world, using as a case study two neighbouring and often antagonistic city-states of southern Italy, Rhegion (modern Reggio Calabria) and Locri Epizephyrii. [fig 1] The 'classic' classical city-state (*polis*) as envisaged in written sources (e.g. Aristotle, *Politics* 1326b-1327a [7.5.1-2]), consisted from at least the sixth century BCE, and earlier in some cases, of an urban centre (*asty*) with its rural hinterland (*chora*), although there were many exceptions to and variations on this pattern. The cities of southern Italy were settled by Greek incomers starting in the eighth century BCE, but with further in-migration and settlement continuing down to the fifth century in some cases. These Greek urban centres and major sites in their immediate vicinity have been well investigated by the Soprintendenza Archeologica della Calabria (Costamagna and Sabbione 1990; Agostino and Milanese Macrì 2014; Sabbione 1981). Generally they had substantially larger rural hinterlands (*chorai*) than many of the city-states of mainland and island Greece. In both Sicily and southern Italy, indigenous Italic communities lived alongside and engaged with Greek communities, though with their own, different conceptions of 'territory' and practices for inhabiting their landscapes. Indeed, the populations of some cities and communities were plainly mixed. Other well-investigated sites on the northern side of the Aspromonte include the indigenous settlements of Oppido Mamertina (Costamagna and Visonà 1999), Castellace (Sica 2011), and Palazzo (Sica 2009; Agostino 2009; Agostino and Sica 2009), and the Greek city of Metauro and other important sites in

its vicinity, notably Serro di Tavola (Costamagna 1986; 1990; 2000). Sites towards the east have been investigated by Visonà (2010; 2016).

A key difficulty for understanding how communities inhabited these landscapes is that archaeological evidence and written sources present very different perspectives on the ideals, concepts and practices of occupying territory. For the most part, current understandings of the 'territories' of these cities, and the broader political contexts in which they operated, have been primarily derived from written sources. Interpretations of the archaeological evidence have sometimes been fitted to these written sources in precise and particularistic terms. However, archaeological research carried out by Italian (Cordiano 1995; 2014; Cordiano and Accardo 2004; Cordiano et al. 2006), Anglo-American team (Foxhall et al 2007; Robb et al BMAP Preliminary Reports) and Italian-American teams (Costamagna and Visonà 1999; Visonà 2010) in the rural hinterlands of ancient Rhegion and Locri has revealed a complex mix of rural settlement far from the urban centres, which offers the opportunity to investigate the inhabitants of these rural hinterlands in their own terms, setting the material cultural and landscape evidence alongside the perspectives of the written sources, rather than trying to fit the interpretation of the archaeological evidence directly to the texts.

This paper will ask how the everyday practices of the inhabitants dwelling in these rural hinterlands shaped their landscapes and how communities and households negotiated them? How did they conceptualise their relationships to the urban centre and to what extent did it shape their engagement with their local, rural surroundings? Did their lived experience of the landscape map on to the boundaries and models of 'territory' presented in the written sources? Or, were other factors more important for the decisions households and communities made from the bottom up, 'on the ground'?

The southernmost part of the 'toe' of Italy was the borderland between the cities of ancient Rhegion and Locri, a rugged and varied landscape between the two ancient urban centres, about 50 km or more from both. In this area, the coast slopes steeply towards the mountainous interior of the Aspromonte massif. Numerous river valleys flowing north to south, some but not all of them now seasonal, cut across the landscape forming deep valleys. At lower altitudes the climate is 'typically' Mediterranean with hot, dry summers and warm wet winters. Here, background vegetation is now largely maquis and garrigue. However, moving inland, the climate grows rapidly cooler. The upland plateaux at the southern edge of the Aspromonte mountains, the 'Campi di Bova' over 1000 m asl in altitude but situated only 20 km inland by road from the sea, has pleasantly cool summers with cold, snowy winters, and exhibits not only oak and chestnut forest but also many tree and plant species characteristic of temperate zones, including birch, ash, hawthorne and profuse bracken. The seaside towns on the coast developed fairly recently, for the most part in the nineteenth-twentieth century, while in medieval and early modern times the main settlements were hilltop towns such as Bova (c. 800 m asl), Palizzi and Amendolea situated part way between the coast and the mountains. The landscape was, and is, exploited for agriculture at all altitudes, and there are numerous hospitable plateaux at a range of altitudes from ca. 100 m asl to at least 1200 m asl., some very small while others are much larger. The history of this region of southern Italy in all periods from the Neolithic onward is inextricably linked with both the history of Sicily, as well as with the regions of northern Calabria and Basilicata north of the Aspromonte.

The following two sections will present the archaeological evidence for the fifth-fourth century BCE occupation of this rural 'borderland' area at lower altitudes, relatively close to the coast. The next section will then consider the textual evidence which has been deployed to interpret these archaeological landscapes. The very different patterns of occupation of upland sites, much of it earlier and later, in and around the Aspromonte mountains will then be interrogated.

Archaeological and landscape evidence: the Umbro plateau

The Bova Marina Archaeological Project (BMAP) has carried out intensive multi-period archaeological survey and targeted prehistoric and excavation in the area around Bova Marina, Bova Superiore and further north into the Campi di Bova and the Aspromonte (BMAP Preliminary Reports). Survey indicates that there is constant, if for the most part thinly scattered and mostly small-scale, Greek settlement in the period from the late sixth through the fourth centuries BCE continuing into the Hellenistic and Roman periods. There is no secure evidence of Iron Age or earlier archaic settlement, despite a considerable Neolithic and Bronze Age presence.

Most Greek rural sites detected in survey are small in size and broadly domestic and/or agricultural in character. However, there is one larger settlement site, Mazza (at least 8 ha, BMAP Preliminary Report 1999: 19), located on a relatively flat hilltop and the gentle slopes below to the south. The site overlooks the sea, situated at about 100 m asl, but is unfortified. Evidence from intensive survey across the site suggests it was occupied from the later sixth century BCE until late antiquity, and ceramic finds are largely consistent with domestic assemblages. The highest part of the site is largely eroded out, and test excavations carried out in partnership with the Soprintendenza were inconclusive.

The Umbro plateau is located at about 4 km inland and is situated at about 300 m asl in an area where the geologically an area of limestone and sandstone meets a schist ridge, resulting in a line of springs along schist cliffs. This small plateau is not visible from the coast, but from the surrounding hills there are good views of the sea, and of the Mazza village to the east. Several small Greek sites have been detected in survey in this area, and one structure, the Umbro Greek site, was excavated (BMAP Preliminary Reports 2000-2006).

The Umbro Greek site (identified by local amateur archaeologists Sebastiano Stranges and Luigi Sacca) is a classical period 'farmhouse' site situated on a small hill [fig 2]. Part of a small building was excavated on the west side of the hill; a substantial part was damaged by the installation of an electrical pylon. This means that we cannot determine the full size of the building nor how many rooms it had. Typically of small Greek rural houses, this one was constructed of mudbrick on a stone socle with a tiled roof. The find of a chimney tile indicated that it had an area for cooking. Two carefully placed level stones near a drain on the north side suggest the placement of a barrel or other vessel for collecting run-off water from the roof. The walls on which the mud brick rested were built of limestone and sandstone with two roughly worked faces with a gap in between filled with rubble. The floors were constructed of packed clay mixed with small schist chips.

The site was occupied from the mid fifth century BCE at the earliest to the early in last quarter of the fourth century BCE, no more than about 150 years in total, in two distinct phases. Black gloss sherds in the wall infill suggest that there might have been earlier occupation on the site or very nearby, but if so no other trace of it remains. There was also one fragmentary wall and many unstratified artefacts on the top of the hill which could have belonged to another, contemporary structure: there appears to be no difference in date between the artefacts from the main structure and those from the top of the hill. If there was a second structure on the top of the hill, and this is far from certain, it is possible that a substantial part of it could have fallen off the precipitous eastern side of the hill as a result of seismic activity, which may even have removed part of the hill itself. It also seems possible that seismic activity played a role in the final destruction of the main building on the western side of the hill, judging from the way in which the stones of the walls had collapsed.

The earliest phase of the house on the western side of the hill appears to be purely domestic. Black gloss finewares, plain and coarse wares (including a mortar), cooking pots and storage vessels form the ceramic assemblage. There are two loom weights (one pyramidal, one disc [*oscillum*]). The assemblage is clearly paralleled by similar contemporary but probably larger farmhouses elsewhere in southern Italy (e.g., Metaponto 'farmhouse' sites in survey, Carter and Prieto 2011 and Fattoria Fabrizio, Lanza Catti and Swift 2014) and in Greece (e.g., the Vari house, Jones et al 1973), although unlike these examples no figured or stamped wares were found. In this regard, the Umbro Greek

house perhaps shared more in common with the more modest assemblages of the Methana 'farmhouse' sites (Mee and Forbes 1998; Foxhall 2004) or the Pyrgouthi rural house (Hjohlman et al 2005) in the Peloponnese. One iron knife blade, two small bronze Rhegian coins, and one bronze arrowhead were the only metal items recovered. The arrowhead was found immediately outside the eastern corner of the house at what was probably the ancient ground level.

At the end of the first phase, and it is impossible to determine precisely how long this lasted, the house was clearly unoccupied sufficiently long that the tiled roof collapsed. In the second phase, a new floor was laid directly over the fallen tiles (at least the broken ones, since any complete tiles were probably salvaged and reused). The building then appears to have been divided into small stalls, possibly for keeping animals, and some of the larger storage vessels from the first phase were reused. [fig. 3] So, although it remained an agricultural building, it probably no longer served as a permanent residence. At the end of the second phase any remaining complete roof tiles were probably removed and mudbrick walls seem to have slowly deteriorated. Eventually the stone walls also collapsed, possibly as part of a single event.

The lifecycle of this house conforms to a pattern that is well known in various times and places in the Mediterranean (Forbes 2007: 232-5; BMAP Preliminary Report 2007: 15), where for any number of reasons a family house remains unoccupied as a primary residence when the children inherit it because it is not possible to divide it (partible inheritance systems were predominant in ancient Greece), and in consequence it is left vacant and ultimately its use changes from residential to agricultural. Of course it is impossible to be certain if that is the scenario in this case, but it is one possibility. Critically, however, although its function changed, the building remained in use over the whole period of its occupation, suggesting that the surrounding land associated with it continued to be cultivated.

We cannot, of course, be certain which particular plots of land were exploited by the inhabitants of this house, but in the context of the other small Greek sites revealed by survey it seems likely that all of them grew crops on the relatively flat plateau and the gentle hills surrounding it, and kept animals here and in any adjacent uncultivated areas, including those at higher and lower altitudes. This location would also have provided access to forest products and resources at much higher altitudes, including game, timber and resin as well as wooded areas highly suitable for keeping pigs. It is clear why the Umbro plateau served as a focus of agrarian settlement and activity from the Neolithic period to the present.

What is less clear is the political, social and economic status of the inhabitants and their relationship to the village settlement of Mazza or the urban centres. This was a well-equipped but relatively modest dwelling, and it does not appear likely that wealthy elites lived there. The two coins suggest economic links with larger centres and the wider region. But, since only Rhegion produced small-denomination bronze coinage in this period and Locri did not, the coins do not exclude the possibility that the residents of this house may have engaged at different times or in different ways with more than one larger centre. Nor is it possible to determine whether the occupants were citizens of a polis (if they were, Rhegion seems more likely as it is closer), part of some kind of independent, officially recognised non-citizen group living at the edges of the rural hinterland of the polis, or enthralled dependents or slaves serving absentee urban elites. We know of examples of all of these kinds of political relationships in the classical Greek world. What does seem clear, however, is that the focus of their everyday lives was not the urban centres, nor even the relatively nearby village several hours walk away; rather it was the rich and varied vertical landscape in which they lived.

Very little of what was in the house needed a trip to the city to get it, though the presence of 'small-change' coins does suggest the occasional journey to a market somewhere. There were no obvious or certain imports. Amphorae were all local, though we cannot be certain where exactly they were made. All building materials including roof tiles could have been produced locally, and it is

impossible to be certain where the ceramics or metal items were produced or from where they were distributed: not all need have been acquired from the same sources. The lack of evidence for the consumption of urban-produced goods such as furniture (from which nails and fittings sometimes survive), decorated pottery (there is no stamped ware), or environmental remains of non-local foodstuffs underpins the suggestion that the inhabitants were not closely or regularly engaged with the urban centres.

So, the quotidian perspective of the residents of the Umbro plateau which shaped their sense of the 'territory' in which they lived was almost certainly focused primarily on the diverse use and movement through the landscape that came about from interacting with its variations. In effect, the 'borderlands' of the political polis were actually the centre of attention for its residents. The Umbro plateau may have operated like a small village, even though it was not a nucleated settlement. By conceptualising this rural base as central to their lives, engagement with village and urban centres must have been a secondary consideration. Most of the time, preferences for engaging with these larger settlements could have been founded more on opportunistic and pragmatic factors, than perceived loyalty or political affiliation.

Archaeological and landscape evidence: the Palizzi area

Giuseppe Cordiano and his colleagues have carried out important topographical and historical research on the territory of ancient Locri and Rhegion in combination with archaeological survey in the area of Palizzi to the east of Bova Marina (Cordiano 1995, 2014; Cordiano and Accardo 2004; Cordiano et al 2006). They have identified 85 sites of all types from all periods (Cordiano and Accardo 2004: tav. 2a). Eleven were interpreted as 'farms' or small agrarian sites falling within the late sixth – fourth centuries BCE (some of these are phases of multi-period sites), while ten sites within the same time range were interpreted as military posts. [fig. 4] Not all of these sites cover the entire period. Most of these sites appear to be similar in character to those identified as small rural Greek sites in the Bova Marina survey. The sites identified as 'military posts', appear to have more or less the same kinds of sherd scatters as the other rural sites (Cordiano and Accardo 2004: 74) but their designation as 'military' is based on their small size, the presumed 'unsuitability' of the locations for agriculture and their apparent strategic position (Cordiano and Accardo 2004: 72-7; Cordiano 2006). Although walls that are not closely datable are visible on a couple of these sites (Cordiano 2006: tav. 2b, 3), at present the evidence for fortifications is limited, and there is no secure evidence for towers or other kinds of military installations. This is striking in light of the relatively common occurrence of towers as a feature of farmhouses in mainland and island Greece, where their function has been much discussed (Morris and Papadopoulos 2005). They have also identified a nucleated settlement about 10 ha in size on a hilltop (145 m asl) near the coast at Serra Mandi, which develops in the later fourth and third centuries BCE, identifying this with ancient Hipporum/Hyporon, an Italic settlement known from written sources. (Cordiano and Accardo 2004: 92-9).

For Cordiano and his colleagues, the identification of a line of 'military posts' is one element in support of their key arguments concerning the border between Locrian and Rhegian territory. Their detailed reading and interpretation of the ancient accounts combined with proposed links to modern place names have led them to suggest that the River Halyx said by Strabo (6.1.9) to be the boundary, was the present-day Palizzi River (Cordiano 2004: 67-72 and passim). However, the relevance of these texts to our understanding of the borderlands, as well as that of their inhabitants, may not be entirely straightforward.

Ancient texts, historical context, archaeological inference

The textual sources are invaluable for understanding the broad historical and political context of the relationships between Greek city-states in southern Italy and Sicily, as well as their relationships with other groups. They also occasionally provide a few tantalising details about the rural landscapes

around and between Rhegion and Locri, which archaeologists have regularly used to interpret their finds. Unfortunately, these are not always as helpful as they might appear at face value.

There are many methodological problems with both the use of the texts themselves and with the approaches that have been taken to link them to archaeological and landscape data. Many of the literary texts were written much later (first – second centuries CE) than the events of the sixth through fourth centuries BCE that they purport to describe. While Roman writers such as Strabo and Diodorus Siculus often draw upon earlier authors, some of whom are lost to us, we cannot count on their precise reliability. Also, the Roman texts, and most Greek texts of the sixth – fourth centuries, along with some of the contemporary inscriptions, frame the history of Greek city-states as one of military conflicts, conquests and alliances which define the relationships of these communities to their landscapes and to each other, largely from the perspective of the urban centres. While this was unquestionably one very important element in conceptualisations of ‘territory’, it is a ‘top-down’ perspective largely emanating from elite Greek and Roman men based primarily in the urban centres. Plainly, it does not represent the whole picture. Potentially these sources mask the complexity of ‘ethnic’, status and other kinds of diversity in these communities, which may underpin different kinds of relations to landscapes and ‘territories’. However, despite the difficulties, these written sources are far from useless. Rather, they provide illuminating and essential contextual information about the broader political volatility and turbulence afflicting the region, albeit from very particular viewpoints, of which we must remain acutely aware.

Animosity between Rhegion and Locri is first directly documented by an inscription on a helmet and greave taken from the Locrians and dedicated to Zeus at Olympia by the Rhegians dating to c. 475 BCE, though this date is not certain (*SEG* 24 304 = *Olympia* VIII Ber. 1967, 102/3, c. im. ph. pl. 48, l. [Διὶ Περὶνοι Λοκρον]; Jeffrey 1989: 455). Other contemporary inscriptions at Olympia document the involvement of Locri and its allies Hipponion and Medma in a conflict with Kroton (inscribed on a shield, Jeffrey 1989 286) and a victory of Messene, on Sicily, over Locri (inscribed on a greave and helmet, Jeffery 1989: 454). These inscriptions usefully give a sense of the complex range of political and military alliances and conflicts between the rulers of these south Italian and Sicilian city-states which formed the wider context in which the inhabitants of the rural hinterlands of these cities, including Locri and Rhegion, lived their lives. Despite the uncertain dating, these documents present the closest (and the earliest) thing we have to first-hand evidence, though the perspective remains that of the urban elite.

During the fifth and fourth centuries BCE Syracuse, under a succession of powerful sole rulers (‘tyrants’) interspersed with periods of democratic rule, was the major power in Sicily. Throughout the period Syracuse engaged in a series of conflicts with the Punic cities of Sicily and their Carthaginian homeland as well as with other Greek cities and indigenous communities in both Sicily and southern Italy. Both Rhegion and Locri became embroiled in these conflicts, normally on opposite sides; Locri sided with Syracuse, while Rhegion allied itself with the cities at odds with Syracuse. After a long siege, Rhegion came under the control of Syracuse in 387 BCE (Diod. Sic. 14.111-112), then ruled by Dionysios I, and remained subject to it until the mid-fourth century. The non-Greek peoples of Sicily and the mainland were also brought into these conflicts, and sometime allied themselves with specific Greek cities, as in the pact between Dionysios I and the Leucanians who lived in the mountainous areas of what is now Calabria and Basilicata (Diod Sic. 14.91.1, 100.5, 101-102). Both Rhegion and Locri continued to engage in these complex conflicts and alliances throughout the later fourth century.

Occasionally ancient writers provide specific details of events occurring in the countryside between Rhegion and Locri. Thucydides, writing in the late fifth century BCE, gives details of Athenian naval activity around Sicily in 427/6 – 426/5 BCE in support of Leontini and some of the indigenous communities against Syracuse, and Rhegion against Locri (Th. 3.86). (These are also documented by inscribed treaties between Athens and Leontinoi and Athens and Rhegion.) In the course of this account, he specifically mentions the state of animosity between the two cities (Th. 4.1).

According to Thucydides' account the Athenians captured and held an 'outpost/fort', at the Halyx River (Th. 3.99, 105, 115), and some months later defeated a Locrian force at the Kaïkinos River (Th. 3.103). However, nowhere does Thucydides indicate that at that time either of these rivers was the boundary between the two cities. Thucydides uses two different terms for this 'outpost': *peripolion* and *phrourion*. Neither is very specific, so it is impossible to identify them with any particular kind of archaeological feature, nor can we assume that such sites were permanently manned for military purposes. Elsewhere in Thucydides these terms simply imply locations in the countryside away from major settlements (e.g., Th. 6.45; 7.48.5).

Diodorus Siculus, writing in the first century BCE but drawing extensively on earlier writers, some of whose works no longer survive, provides the fullest account of the history of Sicily and southern Italy in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. Because he was writing many centuries after the events he describes is difficult to be certain of its reliability and it certainly should not be read at face value. More critically, Diodorus, like his near contemporary Strabo (first century BCE/CE), both frame their historical accounts of earlier times in a Roman imperialist intellectual framework, which inevitably filters the information and perspectives we receive. Clearly, there were some things they did not fully understand about a period that for them was ancient history.

At various points in the narrative, Diodorus provides descriptions and details of the rural hinterlands of Rhegion and Locri. He relates that in 390 BCE Dionysios I landed near Locri and devastated the countryside, burning it and cutting down trees, on his route to Rhegion, 'passing through the interior' (διὰ τῆς μεσογείου), whatever precisely that might mean (Diod Sic.14.100.2). He includes accounts of the Syracusan attack on Rhegion via Kaulonia and the subsequent siege and ultimate fall of Rhegion (Diod Sic. 14. 106, 107, 108, 111). However, after the rule of Dionysios I, Diodorus' history makes little mention of the countryside around Rhegion or action in the border zone between Locri and Rhegion.

Strabo's mythological, historical and geographical account of the cities of the strait provides occasional details about the territorial organisation of the region, which archaeologists have sometimes attempted to apply to the archaeological evidence. So for example, Strabo (6.1.6), referring to the distant past of the region, states that 'the city of the Rhegians was very strong and had extensive surrounding territories/dependencies (*perioikides*)'. Although this statement is intriguing, it is difficult to make too much of it, or apply it usefully for interpreting archaeological landscapes. In Greek, the term '*perioikides*' can be used for a range of different kinds of settlements and territories: its meaning is far from self-evident. And, in any case, Strabo is providing information about a time long before his own, where his understanding of what exactly these '*perioikides*' had been was less than perfect. Insolera (2014) has interpreted the term as if it refers to settlements like those of the Lakonian perioikic towns of ancient Sparta: dependent communities whose inhabitants were free but politically inferior in status to Spartan citizens. She has suggested that settlements like the Mazza village site, and Lazzaro (closer to the urban centre of Rhegion) could have been '*perioikides*'. While this is an attractive hypothesis, unfortunately the textual evidence is not sufficiently robust to support it.

It is also Strabo (6.1.9) who states, in his description of Locri, that the Halyx River was the boundary between the rural hinterlands of Locri and Rhegion. In connection with this statement he offers a picturesque story about the local cicadas: those on the Locrian side of the river sang, while those on Rhegian side were silent. He supplies several related stories and possible explanations ranging from the mythological to the scientific. Interestingly, Diodorus Siculus (4.22.5) relates a similar story about cicadas in the borderlands of Locri and Rhegion, silenced because Herakles complained to the gods that they were too noisy. And all of these stories may relate back to an 'enigmatic saying' attributed to the sixth-century BCE poet Stesichoros, cited (though perhaps not directly quoted) by Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1394b-1395a [2.21]), writing in the fourth century BCE. In speaking to the Locrians Stesichoros is supposed to have said 'You should not be excessively arrogant (*hybristai*) lest the cicadas sing from the ground'. Many interpretations of this saying and the related stories have been

suggested (Cordiano 1995: 81-3, 2004:33-40), but what they may most clearly indicate is that this tale, in its many forms, had become something of a literary trope. It may possibly be embedded in a literary tradition about the emblematic hatred between Rhegion and Locri, which even appears to surface in Thucydides (4.1: the motive attributed to Locri for attacking Rhegion is simple 'hatred' [*echthros*]). This should ring warning bells about the historicity of some details of these written accounts, and inspire caution in attempting to use them directly to interpret archaeological landscapes.

Landscapes of conflict?

The texts present the later archaic and classical period in the region as a time of political turbulence and conflict, with the city-states of Locri and Rhegion in a state of constant antagonism. However it is difficult to match this picture with the archaeological evidence.

Had the countryside between the two cities been as constantly war torn and consistently under threat as the texts suggest, we might expect to see a heavily fortified border area. This is not evident from the sites in the lower elevations nearest to the coast. None of the small rural sites revealed by survey shows any evidence of fortification or a tower (even though towers are common features of 'farmhouse' sites in other parts of the Greek world in this period). There is nothing in the assemblages, landscape or any architectural features which suggest any kind of permanent military presence.

The one excavated example of a small rural site, the Umbro Greek site, shows no evidence of violent destruction, burning, looting or abandonment as a result of warfare, even though it was occupied right through the period of Dionysios I's activities in the area and beyond. The short break in occupation between phases and the change of use could have any number of possible motivations or explanations, none of which we can ascertain from the archaeological evidence alone. Nor is there anything in the range of artefacts which might suggest anything other than a domestic assemblage (one arrowhead hardly makes a battle). There is nothing to suggest that the inhabitants of the Umbro plateau did anything other than get on with their everyday lives with little regard for the political turmoil and, most of the time, military action

This scenario contrasts radically with another site excavated by BMAP, San Salvatore, located further inland and much higher at 1260m asl on the south side of the Aspromonte (BMAP Preliminary Reports 2005-2007). [fig. 5] This was a rectangular fortified settlement located on the top of a flat hill overlooking the Campi di Bova and one of main roads through the mountains. On the only easily accessible side, the south, there was a tower with a staircase leading to it, though this may not have been the only tower. There were rooms along the interior walls with tiled roofs but the area in the centre appears to have been free of structures. Immediately to the south of the main structure, the slope had been levelled and supported with a terrace wall, and another building constructed on it. The main phase of the site was constructed in the last quarter of the sixth century BCE, on the evidence of a Greek-type foundation deposit under the floor of the structure just south of the main building. However, there are traces of an earlier phase of the site, underneath the existing structure.

The site came to a dramatic end sometime before the middle of the fifth century BCE. There is a clear destruction level including burned and sometimes vitrified mud brick, charcoal and burned structural timbers, along with substantial finds of weapons: arrowheads (including one shot into the lintel of the tower staircase door), a spear, a javelin point and a piece of scale armour as well as hundreds of small ballistic stones. [fig. 6] After the attack and fire that destroyed it, the site was never reoccupied. However, a similar, later site very close by was identified in survey at Palazzo (not the same as the site of Palazzo near Oppido Mamertina) (BMAP Preliminary Reports 2012: 6-7). On nearby Monte Grosso there is a sherd scatter, but there is no evidence of walls or other features, so the nature of the occupation is not clear (BMAP Preliminary Reports 2006: 10-12).

San Salvatore is not unique in the mountainous zone of the Aspromonte. The site of Serro di Tavola excavated by Costamagna (1986; 1990; 2000; Cordiano 2004: 20-3) is a similar rectangular fortified settlement (49 x 44m) between Rhegion and Metauros on the northern side of the Aspromonte. Like San Salvatore, it appears to be located strategically in relations to both routes through the mountains and good agricultural land. The earlier phase, about which less is known dates to the second half of the sixth century BCE and the more fully preserved later phase dates to the beginning of the fifth century. The site appears to have been abandoned, with no indication of violent destruction, in the middle of the fifth century BCE. Small amounts of indigenous pottery are present as well as Greek wares.

The site of Monte Palazzi, Grotteria, located to the northwest of Locri, 15.5 km inland from the coast at around 1222m asl (Visonà 2010) seems to be another similar site. Only a portion of the perimeter wall has been excavated, so the size and plan of the structure remains uncertain, though the excavator suggests it was rectangular. Although a tower is postulated, there is as yet no clear evidence for one. The ceramic and numismatic evidence suggests it was occupied from the late sixth-third centuries BCE, and there are examples of Greek graffiti and some examples of broken arrowheads and other weapons.

Investigations of the immediate landscape context of Monte Palazzi revealed no secure traces of occupation (Visonà 2016: 2-3). However, southwest of Monte Palazzi, directly inland to the west of Locri, Visonà (2016) identified three small, multi-period sites in the vicinity of the Passo del Mercante in surface survey, all very close together. Although Visonà focuses on their potential as military sites, there is evidence for a walled site only at contrada Bregatorio (Visonà 2016: 10-11), and at present it is unclear what other activities might have taken place at these sites, or how their use might have changed over time.

The defensive role of San Salvatore and its neighbouring sites, Serro di Tavola and Monte Palazzi seems indisputable, and it seems credible that these housed a permanent 'military' presence of some kind, although we cannot be certain about precisely what kind of communities (or households) lived in these sites. Even from the surface remains, San Salvatore, Serro di Tavola and Monte Palazzi look completely different from the small sherd scatters that have been identified as 'military posts' at lower altitudes closer to the coast, as well as from 'village' sites such as Mazza or Serra Mandi. However, the nature and strength of that 'military' presence may have changed significantly over time, and the community that lived there may not have been purely 'military'. Even if it was sponsored by one of the major urban centres, the mixed nature of San Salvatore ceramic assemblage raises questions about who the inhabitants were. Ceramic finds include wheelmade Greek wares (finewares, plain wares and coarse wares) as well as handmade 'indigenous' pottery. A beehive sherd suggest that the site may have served as a base for a range of other activities, including agriculture. San Salvatore appears to have been built by and inhabited primarily by Greeks, and there are Greek graffiti on the site. However, sites that are clearly indigenous in character are situated not far distant in the Aspromonte, including Oppida Mamertina (Costamagna and Visonà 1999) and Palazzo (Agostino and Sica 2009).

San Salvatore and Serro di Tavola are significantly earlier than the small rural sites discovered on the Umbro plateau and elsewhere in the borderlands of Rhegion and Locri at lower altitudes. Their lifespan predates most of the conflicts on the coast documented in the written texts. The violent end of San Salvatore was almost certainly later than the conflicts documented by the inscribed armour dedicated at Olympia. Although we can fit the history of this site into the wider picture of political turmoil and conflict in the region over the period presented in the written sources, it is impossible to link it convincingly to any of the details of particular incidents or campaigns which these texts relate. However, what the occupation of these sites may indicate is that, perhaps for many reasons, living in and moving through the uplands and drawing upon its many varied resources was a unstable and insecure existence, with many threats and risks, the nature of which may have changed over time.

Whether this was because the Aspromonte massif was itself a very complex 'border zone' is not clear.

Borders and territories

The range of evidence available cannot be neatly fitted into a single narrative. Rather, its complexities and contradictions suggest that we see several different constructions of territory operating simultaneously, and sometimes in the same space. For the rural inhabitants near the coast, whatever their political or social status was in relation to the urban centres of Rhegion and Locri, the troubles of the wider region seem to have been largely remote from their everyday lives. The ways in which they inhabited and exploited the landscape suggests that their attention was largely directed towards making a living from the land to which they had access, regardless of its border status. Their focus is on the local countryside, not the distant cities. Hostility towards their neighbours is not evident. The decisions they took in terms of the construction of their houses, the uses of their fields, the procurement of goods and materials all suggest that defence was not a major consideration. There is also nothing in their habits of using landscapes, domestic spaces or material culture that suggests an indigenous presence by the mid fifth century BCE.

If in classical times Leucanians or other non-Greek groups or individuals came to live among the Greeks in the countrysides of Locri and Rhegion closer to the coast, they are archaeologically invisible. It is during the classical period that these Italic peoples (Leucanians, Brettians, etc.) self-consciously take on the names assigned to them in the classical texts, perhaps partly in reaction to their engagements, positive and negative, with Greek city-states. In earlier periods it is not clear that these societies identified themselves as coherent 'ethnic' groups (Skinner 2012: 182-89). The main focus of activity for indigenous societies from the Iron Age onward appears to have been at higher elevations and in the Aspromonte mountains.

By Roman times, the idea of a fixed border between the territories of two cities is well established, and it is interesting that Strabo is the first to specify a particular river as the boundary line between the territories of Rhegion and Locri. Although, of course, there are earlier examples of fixed boundaries, in many cases where the outermost edges of the rural territory were far from any urban centre and thinly inhabited, boundaries could be more fluid and shifting, and it might in many cases be more accurate to think of them as border zones rather than boundaries. The behaviour of the classical period occupants of the Bova Marina-Palizzi region could suggest that this was the case here. Even if occasional military action took place in late archaic and classical times, it was not on a sufficiently large scale to leave any substantial trace in the archaeological record.

In contrast, even though the inhabitants of San Salvatore seem to have been exploiting the local landscape, defence was a major consideration, and a permanent military presence seems likely. What is less clear is who the enemy was. Given the shifting alliances and the volatile relationships between different Greek city-states, as well as the complex relationships with non-Greek groups in this period, it may well be that 'the enemy' was constantly changing. In a sense; one might consider this not so much a 'border zone', as a zone of permanent conflict, where different groups simultaneously played out different concepts and configurations of territory in overlapping spaces and landscapes.

Finally, there is the view of urban-based elites: those who made the alliances, negotiated the treaties, wrote and read the texts. It is here that we might best locate the legendary 'hatred' between Rhegion and Locri which came to be established as a literary tradition. It is the rulers and elite families at the centre of the city and the state who compete with each other on a regional scale, not those who tilled the soil whose centre was the far distant edge of the polis.

Conclusion

The ancient 'territory' of Locri, Rhegion and its border lands has been constructed by various groups operating on the basis of different premises from divergent perspectives. This has resulted in a range

of alternative practices for 'acting out' territories in the landscape, sometimes performed simultaneously and in the same spaces, sometimes intersecting, and sometimes archaeologically or historically discernible. The implication is that we cannot understand the territories of Rhegion and Locri, their rural hinterlands, and the mountainous interior simply as areas delimited by lines. Rather we have multiple complex, interlinked understandings and practices of landscape which cannot be neatly mapped as a single narrative.

The interpretation presented here suggests that during the fifth-fourth centuries BCE and earlier, the sovereignty of the urban centres, and even of the most powerful regional rulers, over the lands in the border zone between Rhegion and Locri largely appears constrained and patchy. While there were undoubtedly short episodes when the area became a focus of conflict, on the evidence of the archaeological data, the ways in which the inhabitants occupied this putative border zone shows no signs of constant fear or permanent hostility. They do not appear to have been deeply engaged in the political and military struggles which were focused on the major urban centres. Indeed it is not even clear from the texts what their political status, obligations or loyalty to the city-states was.

Applying Roman, or modern, concepts of boundaries and borders in this case appear to be anachronistic. The border status of the area paradoxically may have provided it with both its own local identity and coherency, while at the same time its 'in-betweenness' may have made it a place that was fluid and volatile in the larger scheme of things.

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List of Illustrations

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Fig. 6: San Salvatore: tower and weapons