Landscape of Transhumances in Southern Tuscany

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Abstract

Transhumance has been practiced in the Mediterranean basin since prehistoric times; it is a means of economic exploitation and a factor in social organization. The trajectory of pastoralist activities in antiquity has long been a matter of debate that has affected researchers' methodological approaches. Pastoralism has always been considered a highly mobile practice. Models of pastoralism have usually assumed implicitly or explicitly that ancient herders are mostly invisible archaeologically because they had highly mobile lives. This has generated an epistemologically hiatus in terms of archaeological narratives between periods with written sources about agro-pastoral activities and those where these kinds of data are rare. In central Italy, as in others contexts, the micro-perspective on agro-pastoralist activities has been largely ignored along with the assumption of integrated land-use practices. This article will try to analyse, from the perspective of the Landscape Archaeology, and through the reconsideration of some new and old data, some agro-sylvo-pastoral practices in southern Tuscany during pre-Medieval times. I argue that several aspects of the landscape are the result of mainly preservative and not necessarily agrarian or market oriented practices. In other words, the perpetuation of certain land-use practices is due to attempts to preserve those natural resources that act as economic catalysts and economic and social hubs.

Keywords

Transhumance, Agro-sylvo-pastoral landscape, Mobility, Network of practices, Tuscany

1. Transhumance and agro-sylvo-pastoral practice in southern Tuscany: a neglected history?

Archaeological studies dealing with Etruscan and Roman ancient Mediterranean landscapes have traditionally focused on key economic factors such as the villa system, harbors, long-distance trade and settlement patterns. This is particularly evident for

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southern Tuscany, where the birth of the Etruscan *poleis* and the later transformations following the arrival of Rome into this territory has caught the attention of archaeologists. The villa-paradigm, together with the slave-based mode of production, has provided a coherent system to explain peculiar problems concerning the past. Questions about why people adopted specific agro-sylvo-pastoral strategies have been largely ignored.

This approach has two reasons, one methodological and one epistemological. On the one hand, it is due to the difficulty of archaeologically detecting in the landscape traces of practices such as transhumance, which imply high mobility; on the other hand, the political, economic and social background in which archaeologists elaborate questions about the past must be taken into account. After the failing of the great narratives, there is in the present context an epistemological tendency to move towards micro-histories and micro-contexts, while new archaeo-botanical and zoo-archaeological data sets from the Mediterranean offer an opportunity both to reconstruct land-use strategies and diachronic changes in the landscape, and to re-evaluate previous data in light of new questions. Several case studies of Etruria illustrate the fecundity of new approaches for reconstructing agro-sylvo-pastoral decision-making from archaeological data and for contextualizing diachronic changes in pastoralism and agriculture within their social and economic frameworks. I argue that several aspects of landscapes are the result of mainly preservative and not necessarily agrarian or market oriented practices. In other words, the perpetuation of certain land-use practices is due to attempts to preserve those natural resources that act as economic catalysts and economic and social hubs.

From this perspective, natural resources are points of activation for strategies centered on environmentally sustainable land-use practices, that can be properly understood through the reconstruction of the ancient environment, land use and soil composition, and the peculiar agro-sylvo-pastoral practices.

From an epistemological point of view, it is important to combine several sources from different disciplines in order to contextualize the 'classical' archaeological data and arrive at a 'global' history of a territory. In the case of pastoralism, great prominence has been given to long-distance transhumance, so-called 'horizontal', as well as to the 'vertical' one attested in Italy during the post medieval periods, particularly between the Apennines and Apulia (Corbier, 2007; Volpe, 2006), but neither local short transhumance nor farm based pasturage have gathered much interest. When facing Bronze Age periods, archaeologists tend to associate every site with a seasonal one implicated in transhumance systems, whereas in the historical period sites are usually linked with agrarian functions. Transhumance has been considered the principal way in which goods were circulated before the emergence of an integrated system of exchanges, not only for micro-areas but between communities installed at very long distances.

The present local case-studies divert from the traditional image of pastoralism and, instead, focus on the interaction between different agro-sylvo-pastoral activities considered strictly interconnected. From this point of view, transhumance is part of an integrated system of practices (fig. 1).

Fig. 1. *Routes of transhumance based on archaeological, historical and ethnographical data*.

2. Traces of pastoral mobility in pre-Medieval times: a possible history?

The context under investigation is characterized by a flat plain (the Maremma) and a quite high mountain (the Amiata - 2000 meters over the sea) with four main river basins (Bruna, Ombrone, Osa, Albegna). This micro-context is compensated by a temporally extensive perspective and by a global approach in terms of methodologies. The local and topographic scale enables us to compare different forms of evidence (archival, ethnographic and archaeological).

The regressive perspective applied to this context suggests possible historical continuities. We are quite sure that the practice of transhumance had been the main activity from the late middle Ages to the mid- 19th century. The comparison between the cadastre of 1830 made by Giovanni Inghirami under the reign of the Dukes of Lorena and that of 1929 by fascist regime shows us a great variation in land for pasture and fallow. In 1830 in the Maremma plain approximately 70% of lands were for pastures; in 1929 they were reduced to 8% (Greppi, 2009, pp. 119-120). During this span of time, the

percentage of agrarian land remained mostly unchanged while woods acquired great importance (fig. 2). The ethnographic data tell us that the practice of winter pasturing in the Maremma plain continued after the Second World War until the agrarian reform made by the new Italian central State, when stability definitively replaced mobility as the main form of landscape occupation.

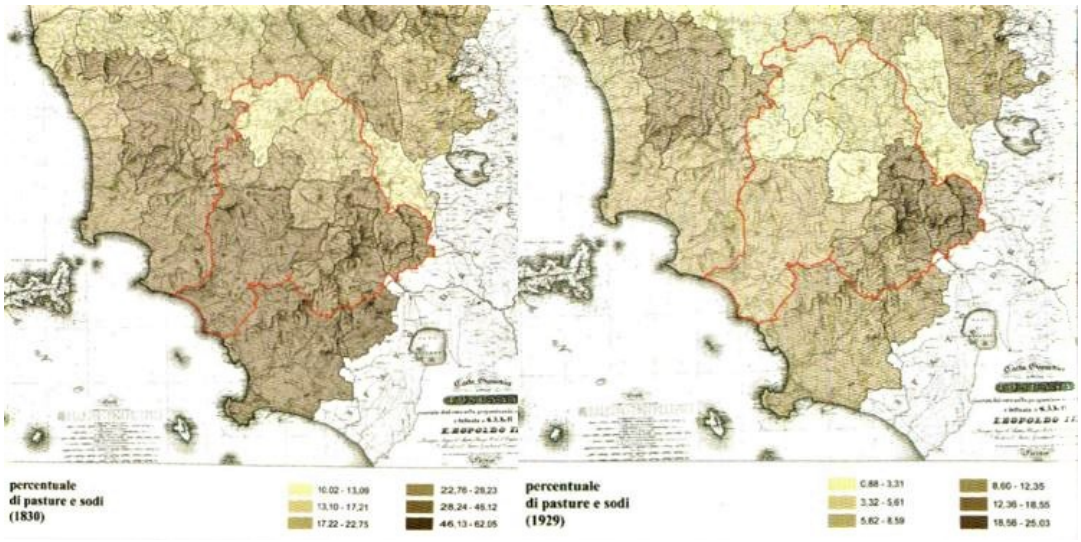

Fig. 2. *Landuse changes in Modern Tuscany (modified after Greppi, 2009)*.

The significant presence of transhumance is suggested also by toponymy. During a survey of toponyms made by Pieri for south Tuscany (Pieri, 1969), numbers of them were collected that, according to this author, derived from *glaciem* (ice), given their closeness to the sea and to the altitude. They include: Diaccino and Diaccia at Castiglione della Pescaia, Poggio Ghiaccialone near Magliano, Ghiaccialetti, Diaccialone and Diacciobello in the territory of Orbetello, Ghiaccio Forte and many others. The explanation of Pieri, who derives *diaccio* from *glaciem* (Pieri 1969), is not convincing. *Diaccio* derives from the vulgar latin *jacjum*, derived from *jacere* (to lay) differentiated with *di-* (Devoto 1968, under *diaccio*). The names of these places, perhaps Medieval in origin, do not seem to have anything to do with ice (*ghiaccio*), which is a rare phenomenon there; rather, *diaccio* derives from *addiaccio* (composed of *ad* and the vulgar Latin *jacjum*), meaning a shelter for shepherds and flocks (see Firmati, 2002).

Many other toponyms have left traces on the landscape, suggesting how deeply rooted this phenomenon was. Places called *bandita-banditella* (pastures rented to a community), *grancia-grancie* (pastures rented to individuals) or *dogana-doganella* (customs for counting sheep) are among dozens in this area.

Within fifty years after the turn of the 15th century, three customs institutions were established in Italy in order to manage the large-scale transhumance with the same modality as the other great Mediterranean customs: the *Mesta* of Spain (Martin, Russo, 1998); the *Dogana del Patrimonio* (literally: estate customs), which was founded in 1402 by the Church to control the practice of winter pasturing in Latium near Rome; the *Dogana dei Paschi* (literally: pastures customs) by the city of Siena in 1412 for the *Maremma* plain (Cristoferi, 2017); the *Dogana della Mena delle Pecore di Puglia* (literally: sheep leading customs of Puglia) in 1443, which was established by Alfonso I

of Aragon. These concomitant phenomena were connected to the growth of territorial states that occurred between the late Middle Age and the first Modern era (Dani, 2003, pp. 182-197). This was put into practice by a forced reduction of common land use and by forms of organizations run by corporate institutions or individuals (Rao, 2008). The control by a central entity of common areas for economic productions helped to strengthen a legitimated state sovereignty based on social, cultural, economic and mainly fiscal power. From a long-run perspective, the foundation of these customs in Italy was not a marginal factor in the building of the modern State.

The customs established innovative spaces organization rooted in a more ancient tradition (Dani, 2009, pp. 2-3). This continuity and the key role of transhumance have been neglected in previous archaeological research for this area (Pizziolo *et al*. 2017; Vanni, Cristoferi, 2018). This is due to a long tradition of studies that saw this area only through the bias of agrarian supply: firstly, to explain the spread of Etruscan civilization, and, secondly, the roman economic growth, with lands as the basis for producing surplus for markets using both slaves and free labor. Another factor is the lack of visibility of pastoral sites and routes, virtually impossible to identify in the archaeological record (Barker, 1989). Documental and archival sources in our case are scarce. The assumption of the present work is that transhumance and pastoral activities have been left behind as background noise. Livestock and land were usually valued separately, but that does not mean that they were not economically connected.

3. The environment as the key element for understanding mobility in the past

Considering the landscape as an artifact, the evolution of coastal lines, lagoons, vegetation and river basins is one of the keys to understanding the economic strategies of a given community. The area under consideration has been affected by a long evolution which has generated the present plain between the coastal line, a great lagoon and a lake (*Lacus Prilius*), and the main river basin, that of Ombrone. Any well-dated pollen sequence can be used to compare it with the main Mediterranean delta evolution, but analogies could be found especially with the well-known *Maccarese/Ponte Galeria* pollen sequence for the Tiber Delta (Bellotti et al., 2004). Around 3000-4000 BC, the river jointed the sea, and the lagoon began to evolve into an unstable entity. In the 5th millennium BC, the instability seems to decrease: at this moment, a permanent salt lagoon probably favored the presence of pasture and *incultum*. Around 1000 BC, open-field vegetation prevailed, mainly composed of oaks. For the *Maremma* plain, we can suppose that the last transition into a salt lagoon took place around 2750 BC (Biserni, Van Geel, 2005; Citter, Arnoldus-Huyzendveld, 2011). A more precise knowledge of the extent of the lagoon and the lake is not a mere exercise of *animated landscape*, but it is essential in order to understand the history of population and of the practices (fig. 3).

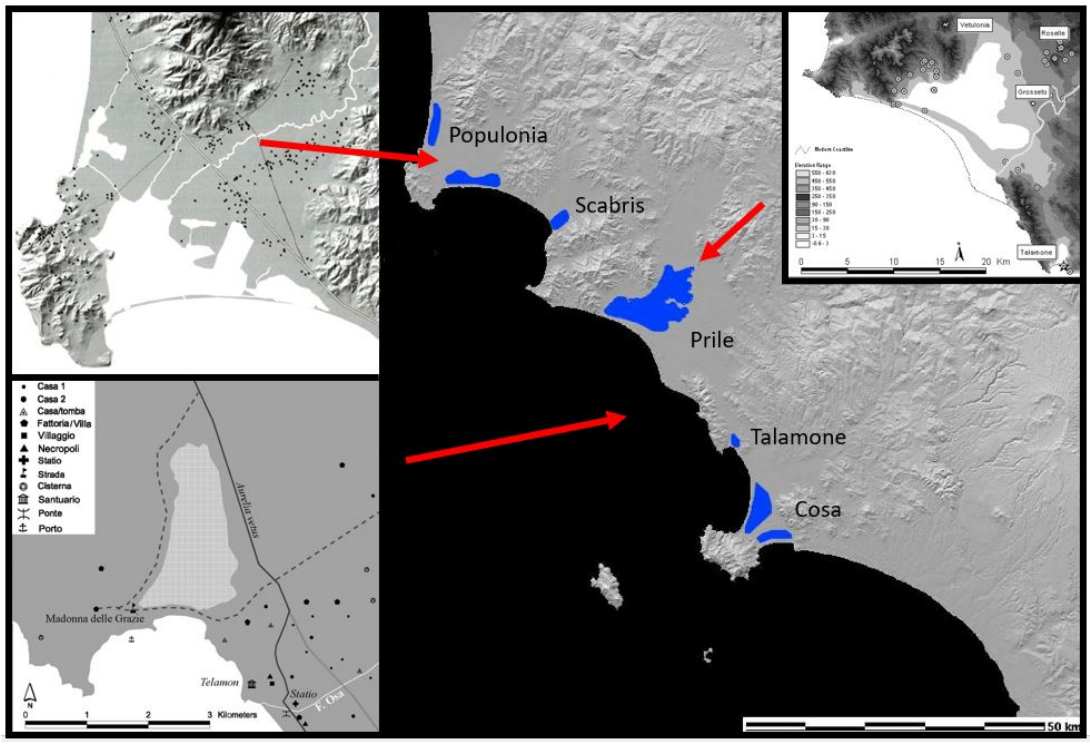

Fig. 3. *Main humid zones and lagoons in roman southern Tuscany*.

The environmental picture that we derive from the extent of the lagoon and the lake is that of a certain degree of instability between humid and non-humid zones for this area. After Sallares (2002; 2006), we know that the main Italian humid zones were affected by diseases, especially malaria. The malaria was spread widely by mosquitoes (*Anopheles* family), particularly between June and October, connected to ineffective drainages of stagnant water where they could reproduce.

The history of modern *Maremma* is mainly the history of this long battle against it. For ancient times, we are not sure about the spread of *malaria* in Italy; nevertheless, we have some indirect data from paleopathology. In the ancient city of Cosa, facing the sea, a great percentage (around 52%) of individuals buried in the Forum II Cemetery and dated around 1010-1265 AD (Fentress, 2003, pp. 99-107) were affected by porotic hyperostosis and talassemy, typical of *malaria*. Similar pathologies have been observed in individuals buried in the *villa* of Settefinestre, around the 2nd and the 3rd centuries AD during a reoccupation phase (Mallegni, Fornaciari, 1985). In this particular context, strontium and zinc analysis show a good and rich diet especially based on meat and dairy products. Finally, recent studies on the distribution of polyvisceral votives on terracottas belonging to the roman republican period have suggested a prodigious presence of *malaria* in the area (Fabbri, 2009, 2018, pp. 91-95). Notoriously, *malaria* affected internal organs; thus, the presence of these peculiar objects may be related to this disease. It is quite certain that in roman times during the building of the *Aurelia* road in the 2nd century BC, great soil upheavals occurred, and drainage seems to have been the prominent concern in Maremma (Leveau, 1997; Traina, 1988). During the medieval period, this drainage was minimal, and the lagoon turned into a swamp (Wickham, 2001). The rhythm of the *malaria* cycle corresponds curiously with the rhythm of summer-winter/plain-mountain transhumance.

Following ethno-botanic and phyto-geographic studies, vegetation evolution may be indicative of pastoral activities. Some kinds of plants are the relic and result of peculiar human practices. On Amiata Mountain, we register increasingly widespread beech and chestnut compared to the previous fir population during the Lombard period (5th-6th century AD), due to the pastoral use of common land characterized by the infield/outfield system (Cherubini, 1981). The presence of a peculiar population of alder in the *Trasubbie* valley, along a route of transhumance, is the result of this practice. Alder is a nitrogen fixer cultivated to encourage pastures during the 16th century AD. Furthermore, animals are seed-machines equipped with a high degree of mobility. Some plants are literally transported due to the attachment potential of species to animal coats. Dispersal, especially long-distance dispersal, has been consistently identified as an important process determining many aspects in the life history of plant species (Romermann *et al*., 2005). Based on the theory of island biogeography and metapopulation dynamics, fragmentation is expected to result in reduced local population sizes and thereby increased extinction risk of local populations and decreasing colonization due to isolation (Farris et al., 2010). It is therefore important to focus on dispersal processes of plants living in fragmented landscapes to understand mobility. From this point of view, the presence of a typical Apennine species along a route of transhumance as the *calluna vulgaris* could mean movement of flocks and people (Angiolini *et al*., 2005), (fig. 4). A relic population of lichens typical of humid zones observed on the *Monte Labbro* close to Amiata tells us about the practice of summer pasturing from prehistory (Paoli, Loppi, 2001), and the presence of a mountain willow species found in the plain along the river Ombrone is probably due to animals' mobility.

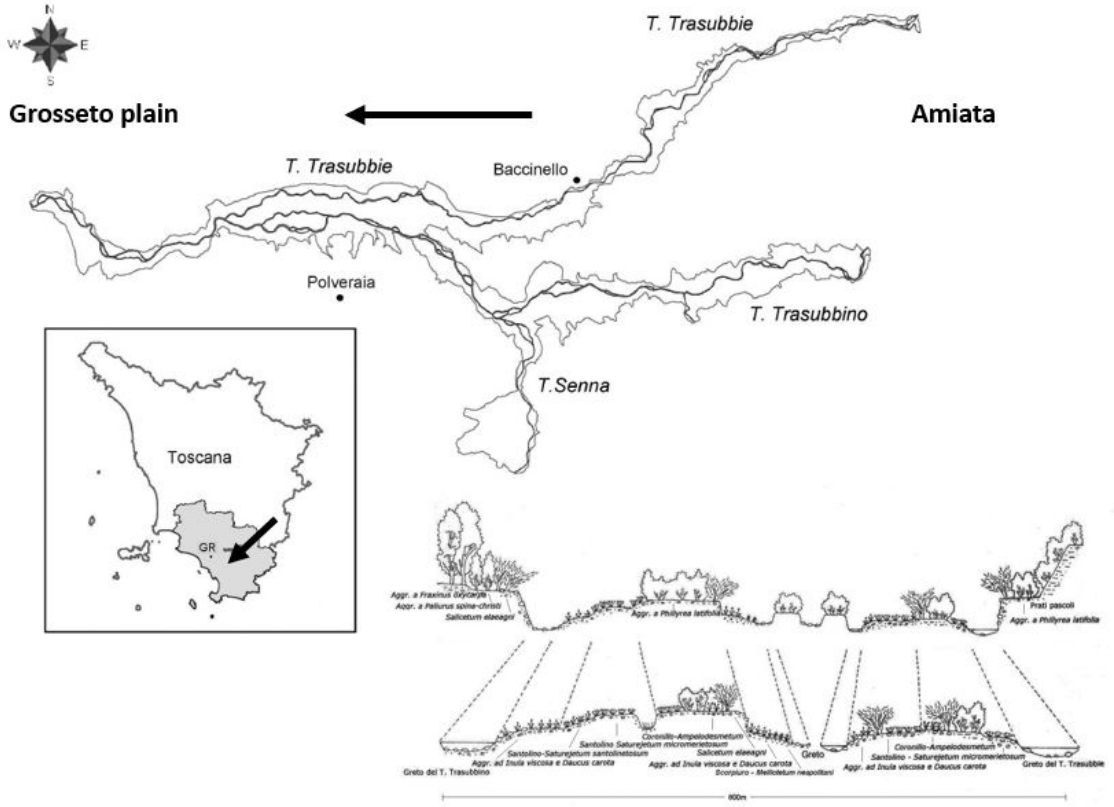

Fig. 4. *Trasubbie river basin section and path (modified after Angiolini* et al*., 2005)*.

4. Site function and agro-sylvo-pastoral practices

Rural sites with plentiful evidence of pottery and permanent structures (cut blocks, roof-tile, etc.) have generally been ruled out as locations where one would expect to find shepherds. Low artifact density connected with the absence of roof-tiles or permanent structures as well as characteristic artifact remains from cheese-making or textile-dyeing, usually have been associated with pastoralist activities (Barker, Grant, 1991, pp. 34-71). Loom-weights, spools, commonly called *rocchetti*, shears, and spindle whorls, inform us on weaving and spinning activities for pre-roman and roman times. Appearing mostly in three types of archaeological contexts - funerary, votive and settlement (Lipnik, 2012, p. 122) - these objects suggest a relatively dispersed configuration, probably connected with the type of the prevailing habitat. In one case, we registered a quantitative anomaly for these tools. The Etruscan settlement of Poggio Civitate in the inland of Tuscany, occupied from the late 8th to the middle of the 6th century BC, has returned 69 loom-weights and 789 spools (Gleba, 2009, p. 79). A study of numbers, morphology and distributions of these implements suggest that Murlo was a significant center of textile production organized on a scale significantly larger than that needed for domestic consumption (Gleba, 2000, p. 106). This implies a great quantity of sheep and animal shelters. Compared with spinning and weaving tool finds, any presence of archaeo-zoological remains or buildings suggests that in Murlo there was a significant amount of animals. The location of the site may be an important clue to its function and may help us to identify pastoral-mixed sites. It is likely that Murlo was a center of control along a route of transhumance between the Apennines and the Maremma Plateau (fig. 5). The fact that it was probably a federated Etruscan center may confirm this role (Edlund-Berry, 1992). The fortified Etruscan settlement of Ghiaccio Forte in the south, with an extensive open area, perhaps for keeping animals (Firmati, 2002), must be interpreted as a minor center of control with the same purposes. This picture is completed by a series of little farmsteads installed along hill slopes as the result of animal husbandry practice, like the Etruscan farm at Podere Tartuchino in the Albegna Valley (Perkins, Attolini, 1992). In the Bronze Age hilltop village of Talamonaccio upon the sea, lots of milk-boilers and loom-weights have been found, which are connected to routes of transhumance towards the East Appennines. In this site, a temple dedicated to Hercules (notoriously a deity of shepherds) would be built during the Etruscan and Roman periods. In this area, along another route of transhumance (overlapped with a main transport route), the Etruscan-roman city of *Doganella-Heba* seems to have had the same function (Perkins, Walkers, 1990), that is the control of the passage between the two rivers Osa and Albegna.

Fig. 5. *The political/economical corridor between Apennines and Maremma with Murlo as central place*.

For the roman period, we are able of recognize a series of pastoral sites in the area. In the Osa valley, not far from the coastal settlement of Talamonaccio, a series of remains has been identified, mostly postholes for huts (Ciampoltrini, Rendini, 1989; 2000; Rendini, 2002). The presence of non-permanent structures does not necessarily testify a shepherd's occupation; however, the prolonged activities registered in these sites between the 1st century BC and the 6th century AD, together with lost techniques and the contraction of the surface distribution of ceramics, suggest their seasonal use. These sites (Casa Brancazzi, Q10, Casa Andreoni) were situated along a main route of passage from the coast to the inland, in a position of control facing the ford (*guado*) of the river Osa. From Medieval documents we know that this place was surely frequented by shepherds coming from the Garfagnana Appennines. Crossing the river Albegna southward, a village of *pastores* (shepherds) facing the lagoon of Orbetello was identified (Casa Brancazzi) at the end of this corridor by the number of loom-weights and huts (Ciampoltrini, 1984, p. 159, fig. 6). At the roman sites of Fosso Castione and Poggio alle Sorche, not far from the Albegna river, we have these same features: syncopated and seasonal occupations together with remains and the infertility of the soil (Marianelli, 2003, p. 47; Rendini, 2002, p. 30). From this area (Poggi Alti) comes one of the rare inscriptions dated to the 4th-3rd century BC and dedicated to Hercules by two slaves, probably employed as shepherd by a senatorial family to manage flocks (Eck, Pack, 1981). Cases of *shifting* populations relate a different logic of the habitat. In one case, at Casa Andreoni along the roman road *Aurelia*, a village frequented from the 1st to the second half of the 6th century was abandoned. A dispersed occupation characterized by off-site ceramics and huts reappeared slightly shifted, close to a mineral spring. Due to the infertility of the soil, it is probable that this re-occupation is due to the presence of the spring connected to new forms of land use: pastoral activities or subsistence economy. In the inland of Cinigiano, towards the north and close to Amiata Mountain, once again

along a passage from the Appennines to the plain, clear seasonal occupations have been identified connected to two republican/early imperial and late antique structures (Ghisleni et al., 2011; Vaccaro et al., 2013). Archaeo-botanical data together with faunal remains suggest that pasturelands were an important part of the agrarian lands, encompassing the two sites of San Martino and Case Nuove identified in the surroundings of Cinigiano (Rattighieri et al. 2013; Bowes et al. 2017). Coastal path analysis run in the area has revealed how all these sites were placed along routes of transhumance still frequented during the 18th century AD (Vaccaro et al., 2013, p. 167-168).

Fig. 6. *Roman republican seasonal sites*.

Confronted with the well-known south Etruria (Patterson et al., 2004) and the slave-oriented landscape of *Ager Cosanus* (Carandini, Cambi, 2002), the *Maremma* plain is characterized by economic features that endure the passing of time. We see a maximum development of rural settlements between the 2nd century BC and 1st century AD (217 sites) with few great *villas* (10 on the coast; 1 in the inland). Demography and land capability must be taken into account regarding common land use, especially during the Gracchan reform of lands. In the 4th-mid 5th century AD, there is a further drop in the number of rural sites and *villa* settlements; in the 5th to mid-6th century, we register continued occupation of some villages, an increase in small dispersed sites with reoccupation of abandoned roman sites, and widespread seasonal settlements like Grosseto-San Martino along the River Ombrone, as well as agro-sylvo-pastoral oriented cave occupations like Spaccasasso and Scoglietto (Vaccaro, 2007).

5. Conclusions

Radical change in settlement patterns occurred during the Greco-Gothic War and Lombard conquest. Long-lived villages on hilltops were founded that developed into

castles (*castelli*) during the 10th and 11th centuries. The distribution of these sites was due to economic reasons: exploitation of salt plains and forest, control of main routes of transhumance, and agro-sylvo-pastoral integrated systems. New actors then exercised growing pressure on common land use: the aristocracy of Lucca (Lombards) in the person of the Bishop Iacopo, the laic power of *Aldobrandeschi* family of Sovana (Ildebrando II *comes*), the city of Chiusi from the inland and the Church of Rome from the south. All these power entities were involved in settlement distribution and transhumance control. During the 13th century AD, new settlements were founded in order to control sheep movements for fiscal purpose: from the East (Paganico, Cinigiano, Roccalbegna and Manciano), from the North (Montemassi) and from the South (Pereta and Capalbio), this latter a zone of conflict with the Church of Rome. When the Republic of Siena began to exercise a decisive influence in the area, the control of salt production sites was a strategic objective (Farinelli, 2009, pp. 55-57), directly connected with transhumance (Vanni, Cambi, 2015). From the 12th to 15th century, the archaeo-zoological remains pertinent to ovicaprid *taxa* seem to increase exponentially (Ginatempo, 1987, pp. 17-18; Salvadori, 2003) in key sites along routes of transhumance: in the Medieval site of Scarlino, controlling the North route from Garfagnana Apennines, and in the site of Grosseto, placed in the plain, the sheep osteological remains represent approximately the 2/3 of total (fig. 7). A similar increase has been recorded during the Bronze Age/Iron Age transition and has been interpreted as one of the accumulations of capital which fueled the birth of the major Etruscan urban centers (De Grossi Mazzorin, 2004). Immediately, the settlement strategy of Siena was oriented to agrarian purposes by reducing the common land practices run by local communities and by promoting dispersed villages for wheat cultivation. This agrarian reconversion of the area would be completed only after the Second World War.

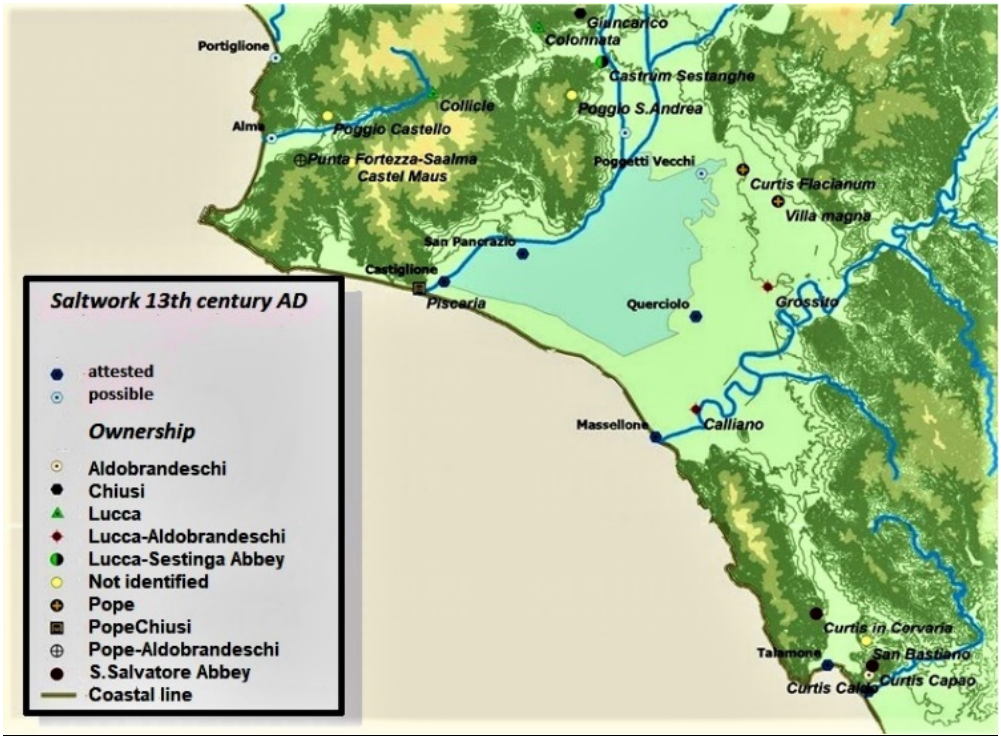

Fig. 7. *Medieval salt works*.

As noted by E. Vaccaro, this area seems to represent a sort of interface characterized by different strategies that become evident when we consider micro-regional peculiarities (Vaccaro, 2008). In general, the continuity of these forms of production is the proof of the vitality of the socio-economic patterns and of the strategies that were elaborated. When the large imperial estates were created (*latifundia*), probably managed as *saltus*, a term that implies several sylvo-pastoral activities, the economic mode of production was not so different from that which pushed the senatorial families to move into this region (fig. 8).

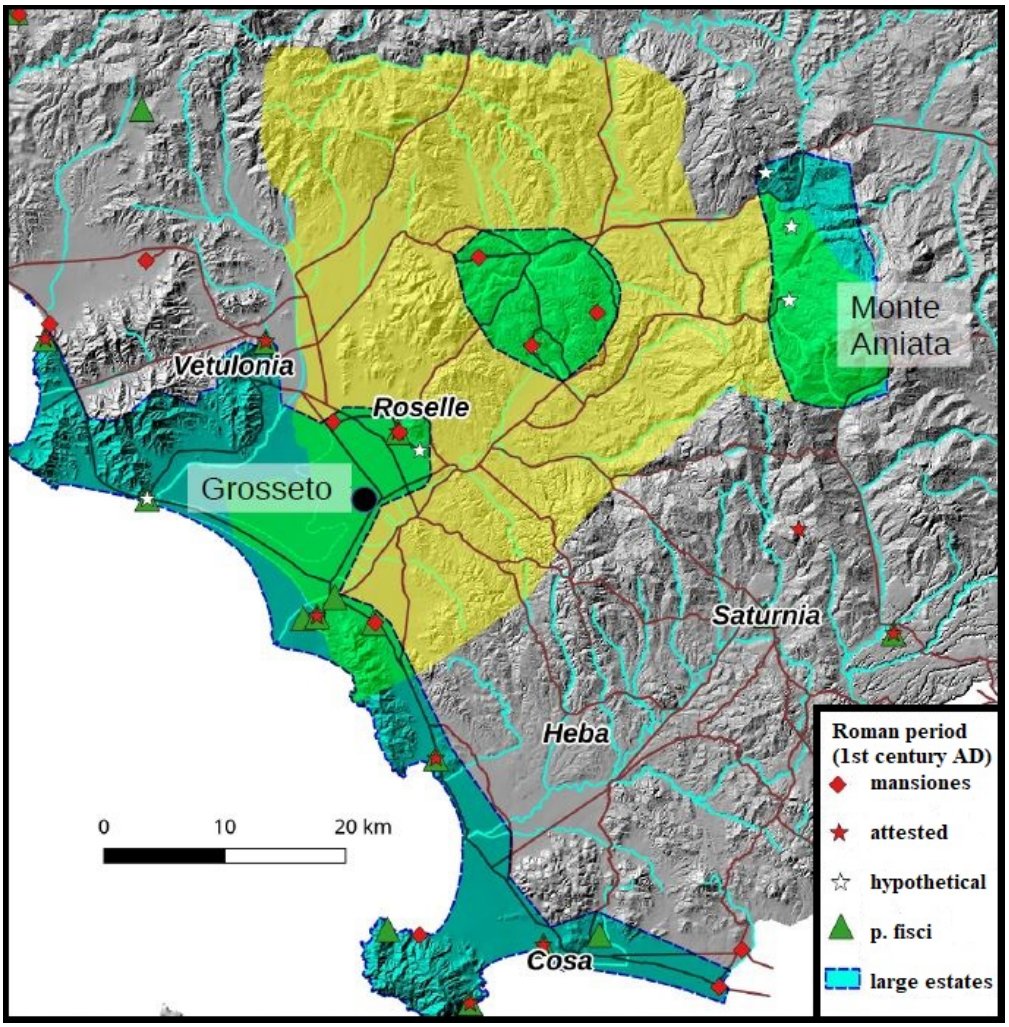

Fig. 8. *Roman imperial estates*.

Rural settlement patterns need re-evaluation. Small sites, often found at considerable distances from urban centers, have been interpreted as positive proof of the existence of a class of free peasant farmers, but, on the basis of the above-mentioned sources and literature, they seem rather to indicate pastoral mixed sites. These isolated sites should be analyzed in terms of their relationships not only to the surrounding landscape, but to the wider economic structure as well. Shifting population phenomena registered between 6th and 8th century AD suggest a topographical continuity in land use embedded in mobility. Demography, risk and land capability must be taken into account. This continuity is not

only agrarian oriented, if we consider the potentiality of soil to agrarian scopes. The available evidence links high demographic population levels with agrarian activities and low population with pastoral ones. Poly-functional sites founded around the 8th-9th century AD that survive until the present day were mainly created to control pastures. From the 13th century, these sites seem to have held a key role in the increasing role of the transhumance and in the control of salt resources. Animal management strategies almost certainly involved a complex repertoire, which included the exploitation of both infield and outfield parts of the landscape. The management of many flocks and herds is likely to have been based firmly on agricultural estates for at least a significant portion of the year.

The occurrence of malaria was decisive for strategies regarding choices of settlement and the development of a pastoral lifestyle. The choice of transhumance was therefore an adaptation to malaria, that is probably one reason for its immense success. This also implies a connection between *humid zones and mobility*, not only because winter pasturing was abundant in this kind of environment, but because permanent mobility was well adapted to this environment. In such landscape, the concept of 'corridor' becomes significant: *corridor of memories* to preserve the historical heritage; corridor as marker between different political zones; *floristic corridor* as key to understanding the evolution of the ecological landscape; *corridors of mobility* as interface between different economic systems. In order to understand this part of Southern Tuscany, we need to avoid classical binary oppositions, such as ancient literary record *vs* material record; anthropological present (dynamic) *vs.* archaeological evidence (static); transhumance *vs.* fixed-based agro-pastoralism; mountains *vs.* plains. The often mentioned opposition of cultivation and animal husbandry must be treated with great caution. We have to consider the relation between agriculture and animal husbandry not only in terms of complementarity, but even in terms of reciprocal necessity. The same perspective must be used for other activities such as forest exploitation. Ethnographical studies on hut typologies show the same techniques utilized by the charcoal workers of the Apennines and the Amiata Mountain and by shepherds during the 18th-19th century AD. Some villages were occupied continuously by charcoal workers and shepherds without interruptions (Detti, 1998, p. 12-15). Mobility and seasonality seem to be the key concepts for such population (Murrieta, 2007). Ethno-archaeological studies in combination with a landscape approach have the greatest potential for promoting a holistic understanding of pastoral economies in material, socio-economic and political terms.

Summing up, continuity acquires intelligibility if we are capable of perceiving ruptures and discontinuities. Two generalized and overlapping images must be challenged: pastoralism as a way of life and an immutable economic system from the Neolithic to the 19th century on the one hand, and, on the other, the overwhelming role of peasant-cultivator-settled villages and households (Moreno, Raggio, 1990). The multiplicity of strategies for understanding a multi-stratified landscape as the historical product of the interaction between humans and nature helps us to overcome the political-institutional versus physical environment explanation for transhumance. Continuity does not concern practice in itself, but the network of natural resources and human choices (fig. 9).

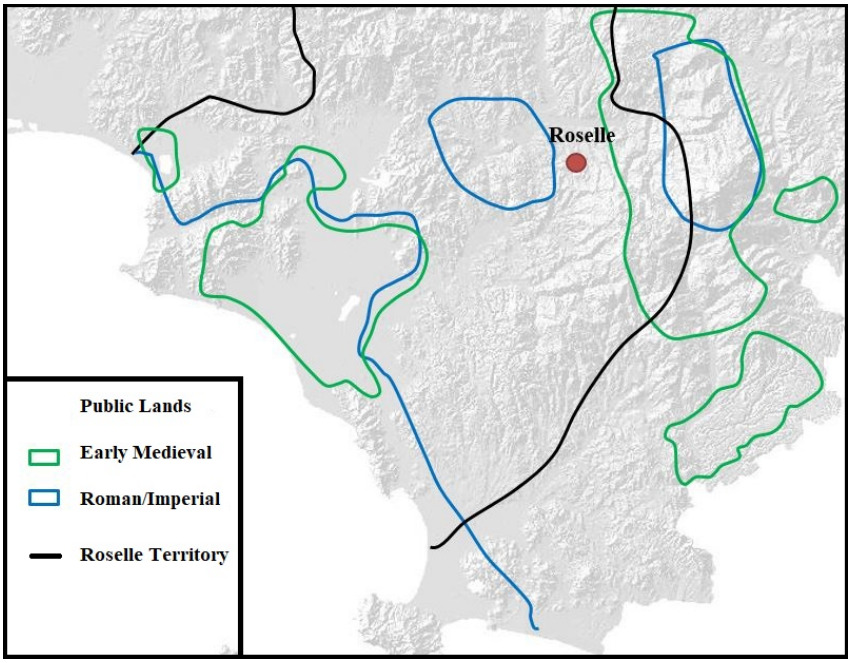

Fig. 10. *Roman and Lombard land ownership compared*.

In this respect, southern Tuscany represents an ideal context for practicing good archaeological methods. Although it is quite complicated to perceive the entire chronological evolution of what concerns transhumance and other agro-sylvo-pastoral practices related to subsistence economy, and, consequently, to have a clear periodization of those phenomena, it is nevertheless possible to see archaeological and historical 'close-ups' alternated with 'long-shots' in chronological and topographical terms within ancient landscapes. In this way, we could fill some historical and archaeological gaps and illuminate some processes that normally are left behind and neglected because of their intrinsic invisibility.

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