



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET
INSTITUTIONEN FÖR ARKEOLOGI OCH ANTIKENS KULTUR

Abstract

Doctoral Dissertation. Christian Mühlenbock. *Fragments from a Mountain Society. Tradition, innovation and interaction at Archaic Monte Polizzo, Sicily.* ISSN: 0282-6860, ISBN: 978-91-85245-37-2.

This PhD thesis aims at investigating identity and interaction during the Archaic Age at the settlement of Monte Polizzo, Western Sicily. The study is based on archaeological material from the Scandinavian excavations at Monte Polizzo. It is one of the most fundamental, in-depth investigations of an indigenous sixth-century Sicilian society from the Archaic Age. Previous research has mostly explored various ways to define indigenous societies. Most historians and archaeologists have favoured interpretation grounded in the first historical document about the indigenous groups in the area. The document was written by the Greek historian Thucydides, 2400 years ago. The indigenous settlements in Western Sicily have accordingly been attributed to the Elymians. This dissertation aims at a more nuanced picture. The results from the Scandinavian excavations have been interpreted in relation to place rather than to static notions of culture. Inhabitants at the settlement exploited local, as well as foreign elements in order to create strong material expressions. This is evident in the ceramic tradition, in the architecture, as well as in the use of space. Materialities were fundamental in defining identities. Theoretical models from anthropological, historical and sociological research have been used to highlight the relationship between material expressions and human action. The imported artefacts at the settlement show that the society at Monte Polizzo was part of Mediterranean trading networks. This is particularly evident in a desire for wine drinking equipment. The wine drinking feast was important as an arena for interaction between groups inside as well as outside the settlement of Monte Polizzo. Other features and objects at the site were clear references back in time. This shows that many inhabitants at Monte Polizzo shared a historical consciousness. The society was deeply rooted in time and space. This thesis has demonstrated that micro studies are beneficial in order to reach a much more multi-dimensional understanding of large scale processes. The Archaic society at Monte Polizzo was clearly a product of the dynamics between tradition, innovation and interaction.

Key words: Monte Polizzo, Sicily, Colonization, Elymians, Archaic Age, Iconic order, Identity, Interaction, Pottery, Architecture, Human Practice, Post-colonial theory, Traditionalism, Wine, Feasting.

Fragments from a Mountain Society

*Tradition, innovation and interaction at Archaic Monte
Polizzo, Sicily*

By

Christian Mühlenbock

Akademisk avhandling som för avläggande av filosofie doktorsavhandling i arkeologi vid institutionen för arkeologi och antikens kultur, Göteborgs universitet, offentligen försvaras av FK Christian Mühlenbock i sal T 302, Arkeologen, Olof Wijksgatan 6, lördagen den 22 November 2008, kl.13:00, efter godkännande av humanistiska fakultetsnämnden som även utsett betygsnämnd, opponent och ordförande vid disputationen.

Dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy submitted by FK Christian Mühlenbock, November 22 2008, 13:00 in room T 302 Arkeologen, Olof Wijksgatan 6, Department of Archaeology and Ancient history, Göteborg University, Sweden.

Opponent

Dr. Tamar Hodos, Department of Anthropology and Archaeology,
University of Bristol

Betygsnämnd. Evaluation board

Professor Robin Osborne, Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge
Professor emeritus Göran Aijmer, Göteborgs universitet.
Docent Ingela Wiman, Institutionen för arkeologi och antikens kultur,
Göteborgs Universitet

Ordförande. Chairman

Docent Per Cornell