Current Etruscology in Sweden

Martin Söderlind

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.umass.edu/etruscan_studies

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://scholarworks.umass.edu/etruscan_studies/vol9/iss1/20

This Report from the Field is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in Etruscan Studies by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact scholarworks@library.umass.edu.
The subject of this report is ongoing research projects within the field of Etruscology, carried out by archaeologists in Sweden. It is not mainly an attempt to present a history of research, although previous scholarly work will occasionally be discussed as a background to the present situation. Instead, the focus will be on work that may still be unknown to the scholarly public, such as those in print or in progress.

In Sweden, Classical archaeology forms a part within a wider discipline, called Classical Archaeology and Ancient History, concerned with all kinds of sources related to Antiquity, literary, epigraphical as well as archaeological. This is a result of the modern Classical archaeology originating as an auxiliary discipline to Classical philology. The discipline has a very wide chronological frame, covering the ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations down to the fall of Rome. Geographically, apart from the Mediterranean centres of the Classical world, it comprises the Near East as well as Roman N. Africa and N. Europe. The subject is being taught at all four major Swedish universities, located in Lund, Uppsala, Stockholm and Gothenburg. At the three former seats, it is represented as departments of larger institutions of general archaeology whereas in Gothenburg, it is housed at the Classical institution together with Classical philology. As will be shown below, Swedish Etruscology is mainly but not exclusively archaeological.

**ETRURIA AND ROME. LIFE PATTERNS AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN CENTRAL ITALY, 4TH-1ST CENTURIES BC**

Swedish Etruscological research (e.g., at San Giovenale and Acquarossa) has traditionally focussed on the Archaic Period, when the Etruscan cities were organised in a federation of independent states. The Late Etruscan period, characterised by words such as
“decline” and “Romanisation,” has traditionally been considered to be a second-rate area of research. Recently, however, new methods and perspectives have begun to change this situation. A major exhibition at Orbetello in 1985 became a manifestation of the vast amount of knowledge that could be gained from a single Etruscan city and its territory (Vulci) during the Late Etruscan period (Carandini).

The scrupulous district-based analysis that the Vulci study represents can be considered as a step towards larger, more all encompassing goals, such as ascertaining relationships in a whole region in late Etruria. A Swedish group, based at Lund University under the direction of Eva Rystedt, and supported by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation has chosen to study southern Etruria (between the Tiber and Fiora rivers). Questions are studied through a broad spectrum of materials: pottery (D. Fuglesang), bronze utensils (Ö. Wikander), sarcophagi and cinerary urns (M. Nielsen) and gems (U. Hansson). The individual material studies will reflect on wider issues, such as city and countryside, home and grave, public and private spheres and upper and lower social orders.

The focus of the analysis is the study of the production and consumption of specific objects during a period of political change. The theoretical point of departure is that the production and consumption of our chosen material groups are good barometers of change and continuity in life patterns and expressions of identity. The aim is to gain insight as to what happened in the relationship between a cultural infrastructure and political superstructure when an area, that for centuries was politically independent and endowed with distinctive cultural features, was forced into a position of political dependency. The investigation is being performed in the following three stages:

1. Each archaeological material with its specific area of use is investigated from the perspectives of production (producer) and consumption (consumer). The study is performed through a systematic use of common parameters, prepared by the project members.

2. Conclusions drawn from each material category are presented and compared with each other.

3. Discerned patterns are considered to be reflections of chosen lifestyles and expressions of identity. They are then interpreted in relation to the political and social processes of change. Here literary sources will also be taken into account. These patterns are expected to reveal aspects of the interaction of various Central Italic culture strata with respect to production and consumption. The group strives to go beyond concepts such as assimilation and Romanisation, terms often used in studies of late Etruria, in order to get closer to the mechanisms hidden behind these notions. Since this study includes several centuries there are good possibilities of discerning a process.

This project is planned to conclude in 2004. The results will be published as a monograph in the publication series of the Swedish Institute in Rome.
D. FUGLESAANG & Ö. WIKANDER, THE DANIELSSON COLLECTIONS

In 1885, the preparations for the scholarly publication of the Etruscan inscriptions, Corpus Inscriptionum Etruscarum (CIE), were initiated. In 1901, after the death of the initiator, Karl Pauli, the chief responsibility was taken over by Olof August Danielsson, professor of ancient Greek at Uppsala University 1891-1917. At his death, his collections, including diaries, drafts and squeezes of inscriptions, were kept by the University library at Uppsala, although, strictly speaking, they were the property of the Berlin Academy.

As the work on the CIE was resumed after World War II, the new (Italian) publishers assumed that all the material collected by Pauli and Danielsson had been lost during the war. When a supplementary volume (covering inscriptions from south Etruria) was published in 1970, it therefore became almost exclusively based on research made after the war. As regards the many inscriptions that had been lost during the first half of the 20th century, this publication presents only the erroneous readings that had been published during the 19th century.

By coincidence, the authors of the book learned about the Danielsson collections at Uppsala in 1981. Ever since they have been devoted not only to bring the material in order but also to write a supplement to the CIE S. Etruria volume, based on the study by Pauli, Danielsson and their colleagues. Mostly, the work has been carried out sporadically but (thanks to a small contribution from the Swedish research council) more systematically between 1988-1990.

Now, the book is finally in press, it can be stated that the results have surpassed every expectation. Of the 717 numbers (5607-6324) in the CIE volume, no less than 211 are found in the Danielsson collections, not to mention 15 previously completely unknown inscriptions. In approximately half of these cases, the material gives important contributions to the reading, the erroneous ones from the 19th century sometimes being replaced by completely new ones. In the remaining cases, the Danielsson collections contribute with smaller adjustments or confirm emendations already made.

Apart from the strictly philological significance of the material, another aspect, related to the history of research, has been emphasized in the book. Using diaries and letters, a picture could be given of the difficulties Danielsson and his colleagues had to confront.

These were mostly in practical matters but also related to the scientific disputes, scholarly as well as personal, that in different ways had an effect on their work.


Together with the excavations at San Giovenale, the Acquarossa project represents the largest and most important archaeological effort carried out by the Swedish Institute in Rome. Both are in many ways connected. However, more important, San Giovenale became the model for Acquarossa regarding the purpose and scholarly method of investigation. The aim of the San Giovenale project, to explore an Etruscan acropolis and its surroundings, had shown to be so successful that a second site with similar conditions was deliberately searched for.

In 1966 excavations began under the direction of Carl Eric Östenberg, who had
already been working on the Bronze Age acropolis Luni sul Mignone, near San Giovenale. It was very soon established that Acquarossa, like San Giovenale, offered something so unusual as a real Etruscan town, with private houses and public buildings, streets, courts and squares. For reasons unknown, the site had apparently been abandoned some time after the middle of the 6th century BC and had never been reoccupied thereafter. In other words, the remains were largely undisturbed: house foundations of local tuff, floor levels containing pottery sherds, bones and forgotten storage vessels, all superimposed by thick layers of tiles from collapsed roofs. Soon it was realised that the inhabitants had apparently had the opportunity to take away their valuables. Almost no metal finds were made, but large amounts of simple objects of daily use, such as bobbins, loom weights, cooking stands and storage vessels.

Already at an early point it became clear that Acquarossa would yield finds that was largely unknown in previous Etruscan archaeology, which had been completely focussed on graves. The houses, their technical construction, their roofs with rich ornaments and the insights into the organization of every day life, offered completely new perspectives. In order to make public these results as soon as possible, professor Östberg decided to distribute thematic groups of finds as subjects for doctoral dissertations to students participating in the excavation, instead of letting the responsibility for the publications compete with the writings of dissertations on various other subjects. The method encountered heavy critique, in Sweden as well as in other countries, but now, several decades later, it must be admitted that it was effective. Eight thick volumes covering a variety of different groups of finds were produced (by E. Rystedt, Ch. Scheffer, M. Strandberg Olofsson, Ch. Wikander and Ö. Wikander), a basic work which has proved indispensable for work with traditional publications of excavation zones.

For the moment, none of the scholars involved in the Acquarossa publication is in a position to devote more than limited periods of time to this task. Still, after one or two decades of work, many zone publications are finally approaching their completion. Hopefully, the two already existing volumes are soon to be followed by others.

CH. AND Ö. WIKANDER, SELVA SECCA: A LATE ETRUSCAN TERRACOTTA WORKSHOP

Selvasecca is the name of a hill approximately six km west of Blera in S Etruria. In the sixties, parts of the top of the hill were excavated by the two Swedish archaeologists Arvid Andrén and Eric Berggren. The finds formed a part of an Etruscan villa rustica, housing a terracotta workshop. Associated with the latter was a water basin, probably intended for the levigation of the clays and several moulds with corresponding casts that were found within it.

Apparently, terracotta roof decorations, such as sima revetment plaques with floral ornaments and antefixes in the form of bearded silen heads had been produced at the site, together with tiles and imbrices. The style of the terracottas is early Hellenistic, corresponding very closely with the so called ‘Group II’ of the Belvedere temple at Orvieto or the original decoration of the Jupiter Temple at Cosa, dated between 240-220
BC. However, a much wider time frame for the use of these types should probably con-
sidered, since some of the decorations on the Jupiter temple were removed and reused
partly in the decoration of the Capitolium at Cosa, erected about 150 BC.

Although the finds strongly suggested a temple or some other kind of sacred
building in the vicinity, for which the decorations could have been aimed, no such con-
struction was found. As an attempt to explain the location of the workshop, Andrén
drew attention to several favourable circumstances. The site appeared to have had sev-
eral suitable clay deposits. Furthermore, as the name may reveal, the surroundings had (and
still have) plenty of forests that could provide firing material for the kiln. In other words,
rational considerations appear to have determined the location.

Nevertheless, the fact that the workshop lay far from any known town or city,
several important questions concerning the organization and distribution of the Late
Etruscan terracotta manufacture arose. The distribution especially, proved more inter-
esting since the types have been recognized at various temples; apart from the two already
mentioned, also at Talamone, the Campo di Marte-Piastrella at Tuscania, and the Ara
della Regina at Tarquinia.

The aim of an ongoing research project is to discern the distribution of the types
present at Selvasecca using as a point of departure the results of analyses by means of
scanning electron microscopy (SEM) and neutron activation (NA) on samples of raw
clays and terracottas from the different locations. The former results were presented at a
conference in Milan in 2000 (LTA, 85-89). The latter have been carried out by Professor
Sandro Meloni at the Ceramic Laboratory at the University of Pavia. A more extensive
presentation of the results so far will be presented in the publication of the De
ciae Fictiles III, a conference on ancient roof terracottas held at the American Academy in
Rome, 7-8 of November 2002.

Returning to the workshop at Selvasecca, its location, or rather dislocation, strongly
suggests that the readymade products were distributed to other locations for use by
means of product circulation. Nor can there be any doubts that the craftsmen, who appar-
ently were half time farmers, were sedentary. However, Andrén has already found it unlikely
that the sculptured archetypes were made at Selvasecca, even more so since they are, as
already mentioned, represented by casts at several large temples in southern Etruria. More
likely, they were created at some important Etruscan centre for art and artistry, such as for
instance Tarquinia. Therefore, when looking at the entire distributive process from the cre-
ation of the archetype to the consumption of the readymade artefacts, product circulation
would appear to have comprised only the final part in the process. The fact that both
moulds and corresponding casts were found at the same location provides an important
opportunity to search for evidence suggesting whether the moulds were made somewhere
else (mould circulation or craft circulation) or at the same location as the casts.

Taking a brief look at the results of the analyses, the ones obtained from the other
locations would seem to emphasize the dislocation of the villa rustica, suggesting workshops
in close association to the temples. It appears that roof terracottas were locally produced at
Orvieto and Tarquinia. We have every reason to believe that the finds from Tarquinia were
locally produced as well, not the least because a mould antefix from Selvasecca appears to
have been produced there. As to the terracottas from Tuscania, we have no technical results to support a local production there as well. However, considering the large contemporary terracotta production there, comprising not only sarcophagi but large quantities of figural and anatomical terracottas as well, a local production of architectural terracottas would seem probable. As to the situation at the remaining sites (excluding Selvasecca), Talamone and Cosa, we have no analyses to support either kind of suggestion.

The fact that one mould antefix could have been made at Tarquiniawould prove Andrén right in assuming that this town housed the workshop where the primary production, including the making of the archetypes, took place. No doubt, we would seem to have a clear case of mould circulation, the Tarquinian mould being used for the production of antefixes at Selvasecca. In my recent study concerning votive terracottas from Tessennano, analyses by means of petrographic microscopy, suggested mould circulations in the late third and early second centuries, probably emanating from Tarquinia, and directed towards local productions at Vulci and Tuscania and possibly at other inland locations as well. In other words, the Selvaseccan antefix mould would fit well into a pattern that has been discerned in contemporary terracottas, using a different kind of scientific method.

However, turning to the bulk of the moulds from Selvasecca, a different picture could emerge. Two different kinds of scientific analyses, SEM as well as NA, suggest that most of the moulds as well as the casts were produced locally. The results therefore cannot be ignored. We may safely exclude the possibility that Selvasecca was the location of the primary production of archetypes used for important temples throughout the entirety of S. Etruria. If so, could the local craftsmen have used the handmade archetypes for making the moulds? Were these valuable and probably fragile objects transported from the location of the primary production to the villa? Why, in that case, were antefix moulds transported but not the moulds with the floral motifs destined for the simae?

Before accepting transportation of archetypes, alternative interpretations should be exhausted. Could secondary moulds have been made from already existing casts of the first generation? I believe that this would have been problematic, unless an entire decorative system was made by secondary moulds. An easy way to discern whether this could have been the case would be to measure the dimensions of the moulds and compare them with those on corresponding casts. This will be the next necessary step in this investigation. A second step, if the funds can be raised, would be to study the moulds and casts from Selvasecca by means of petrographic microscopy.

M. SÖDERLIND. VOTIVE TERRACOTTAS FROM TESSENNANO

Approximately 1.5 km E of Canino, within the borders of Comune di Tessennano a votive deposit was excavated in 1956 by Italian archaeologists in località Felcetone. The finds were mostly in terracotta (heads, statues and various anatomical votives, notably male and female genitals, feet and hands). Today, a large part of the material is housed at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale at Tuscania and was published a few years ago (Costantini). The remaining part of the preserved finds are housed at the Museum of Mediterranean and
Near Eastern Antiquities at Stockholm and are only partly published (LEV).

Together with a complete publication of these finds, a catalogue of anatomical votives in Italy is currently being prepared. Although it comprises nearly 250 sites, it is probably not complete, old finds having disappeared without any documentation and new finds continuously being made which have still not been presented to the scholarly public. The information regarding many finds are frequently far from satisfying, ‘anatomical votives’ or “parts of the human body” (especially in early reports) being the only reference made without any further description of their content. However, there is good reason to believe that the information that actually has been available to collect is in several respects representative. Based on the catalogue, the most frequent kind of anatomicals are discussed separately, with regard to their diffusion and function. One chapter is devoted to the chronology, the results of which are not only relevant for the finds from Tessennano but have a general significance as well. In another chapter, the function as well as the social and historical significance of the votives taken as a whole are considered (DVA). Various suggestions as to why these kinds of offerings ceased to be given sometime in the early first century BC are presented. The final results of this investigation will be presented in a forthcoming monograph.

M. SÖDERLIND, SURVEY AT TESSENNANO

During the autumn 2002, a five weeks long survey campaign of the territory of Comune di Tessennano was carried out by a team of four archaeologists (M. Söderlind, M. Wheatcroft, N. Colombo and A. Johansson). This area has not previously been investigated by means of a systematic survey. The aim of the field project was originally to explore the areas surrounding the votive deposit at Tessennano, mentioned above. However, during the work, the focus turned towards a complete documentation of archaeological remains within the territory of Comune di Tessennano.

At the site of the old excavation, pottery (black glaze and coarse ware) was found. A single Etrusco-Corinthian sherd suggested activity already in the pre-Roman period. Among the finds from the immediate surroundings was a large stone slab measuring 1.02 by 0.64 by 0.14 meters with a relief showing a mirror and a jug with a shape reminiscent of an oinochoe (fig.1). According to the proprietor, this slab, together with other similar ones.
(although none with relief) had been found during the ploughing of a sloping field a few hundred meters to the east of the deposit, near the Fosso Arroncino, immediately to the S of the modern road leading from Canino towards Tessennano. One such slab was found near the fossa and probably originated from the same part of the field. Possibly, these slabs are remains of tombs.

S E of the deposit, at the summit of the aforementioned sloping field, large amounts of tiles of at least three different fabrics were found together with pottery fragments (black glaze and coarse ware). The finds formed a spread of c. 400 square meters with a concentration at the summit of the field of c. 40 square meters. Within the spread, however outside the concentration, a few medieval sherds were found as well.

Similar concentrations, comprising tiles, pottery (black glaze, terra sigillata and coarse ware), were regularly found in the areas that were surveyed west and SE of the votive deposit. In several cases, these sites probably represent villae rusticae of the roman Republican and Imperial period. However, in some cases, the small proportions of the finds could suggest that they derive from tombs of the capuccina type. Finds made during the excavation of the votive deposit suggested the existence at the spot of a Roman villa post dating the finds from the deposit. Another villa, at La Riserva, was excavated by the Soprintendenza per L’Etruria meridionale in 1999. This villa is dated to the Republican period. Among the finds were structures in opus signinum, a kiln and tombs of the capuccina type from the surroundings. Remains of such a tomb were found during the survey in the autumn 2002 in the same area. At località Piscine, at the south border of Tessennano, another villa of opus signinum is known, with some preserved fragments of wall paintings. Summing up, it seems clear that the territory was densely populated by villas in the countryside in the Republican and imperial period, not only after but during the period when the finds from the deposit were in use as well. In this respect, the results correspond to patterns discerned not only in the Fiora and Albegna valleys but in the territory of Tuscania as well.

In the Etruscan period, the territory of modern Tessennano probably formed a part of Vulci. Surveys of other parts of the Ager Vulcentis, between and around the rivers of Fiora and Albegna, have shown various indications suggesting that large parts of the land belonging to this city was colonized in various periods after the Roman conquest in 280
BC. As to the SE parts, near the river Arrone, which generally has been assumed to have represented the eastern limit of the Vulcentean territory, the situation is somewhat less clear. Although traces of centuriation (the system by which conquered territories were divided into plots for the colonists) have not been found as yet, such traces are known from other parts in the surroundings. They have been found near the Fosso Strozzavolpe, some 5-6 km to the NW of the deposit at Tessennano, in the fertile plain below Monte Canino c. 4 km to the west of the deposit, to the south of Canino in the areas around Musignano c. 4.5 km to the south of the deposit and around Cellere some 5.5 km to the NE.

Often, votive terracottas of the kind that were found in the deposit, including heads, statues and anatomical votives, have been associated with Roman colonists, although such finds can hardly be considered as certain evidence of colonization. Still, the density of similar deposits in the area is striking. Within the adjacent territory of the modern Comune di Arlena di Castro, a previous survey yielded two such deposits whereas near the centre of modern Canino, another deposit at Madonna del Tufo represents another example. During the Tessennano survey, remains of still another previously unknown deposit were found in a ploughed field at La Tomba (fig. 2). The fragments formed parts of statues, hands and a part of male genitals, all of types already represented among the finds from Felcetone, suggesting a common manufacture. Further to the south, still another votive deposit, near the villa at località Piscine, is said to have been emptied by clandestini. A single find of a terracotta arm from Macchione, to the N of the modern centre of Tessennano, could suggest still another deposit. No less than five or six other votive deposits are thus suggested within a radius of a few kilometres from the excavated one at località Felcetone. These data could be compared with the comparatively scarce information concerning similar finds deriving from the adjacent territory of Tuscania, a region that, in spite of scrupulous area surveys, has yielded no indication of colonization. This contrast in the archaeological pattern could possibly be related to a difference in the
Roman policy towards Vulci and Tuscania respectively.

From the pre Roman period, the finds made during the survey belonged to various categories. On the south slopes of the valley immediately to the SE of modern Tessennano, were found a few fragments of hand made pottery, suggesting a prehistoric site. Probably, this site should be located above the slopes on the plateau (fig. 3). Across the slope, towards the bottom of a valley, ran a road deeply cut into the tufo bed. Its age has not been established as yet (fig. 4). Along the modern road running in a N-S direction, at La Tomba, remains of Etruscan graves were found under the road. Apart from skeletal and metal remains, some sherds of grey bucchero were found as well.

Circa one hundred meters to the west of the Fosso della Cadutella, along a road running in a SE direction, near a crossing a few meters further to the west, where the road had been cut c. three meters down into the tufo bed, were found the remains of a cuniculus. At both sides of the road, openings of under ground rock cuttings were visible circa one meter above the road level. Although the lower limits of the channels were uncovered, the openings appear to have measured c. 0.60 by 0.44 m. To the north of the road, in an olive groove, following the alleged NW direction of the cuniculus, were found circular patterns in the vegetation, measuring circa three square meters. These could be indications of further subterranean constructions associated with the cuniculus but they could also be the remains of recent plantations.

Circa 1.5 km further to the east, on the east side of the Fosso Cappellaro, a similar cuniculus in association with a Roman villa is known from the Arlena di Castro survey. Near the cuniculus were found two wells at a distance of circa 100 m from each other. It seems that both cuniculi had approximately the same NE-SW orientation. Cuniculi could probably have had various purposes. Although the function of the present ones are not certain at the moment, one hypothesis is that they served to drain the valley plain between the two Fossi della Cadutella and Capellaro. A large number of chamber tombs were found, probably of an Etruscan origin, though in several cases reused the medieval period as well as in modern times.

Altogether, the campaign yielded fifty sites of various categories. Almost a third of the accessible territory of the Comune di Tessennano was investigated. Further campaigns are being planned, in order to cover the remaining areas of Tessennano.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

Deliciae Fictiles III. 2002. *Architectural Terracottas in Ancient Italy: New Discoveries and*
