

DU CETIUS: A SICILIAN OIKISTA TYRANT?

DUCEZIO: UM TIRANO OIKISTA DA SICÍLIA?

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Abstract

This discussion forms part of a chapter from my Master's degree thesis, completed at the University of São Paulo (USP-Brazil) in 2013, entitled "The Urbanistic expansion of Syracuse in sixth and fifth centuries BC." This chapter treats the question of the various identities that emerged in the Greek foundation of Syracuse and the resistances against the tyrannical policies. Ducetius was a symbol of resistance that stood against the local Greek elites, as a symbol of non-acceptance of the population reallocations enforced by the tyrants (deinomênidas) since the beginning of the fifth century BC.

Keywords: Syracuse. Ducetius. Tyranny.

Resumo

Esta discussão faz parte de um capítulo da minha tese de mestrado, defendida na Universidade de São Paulo (USP-Brazil) em 2013, intitulada "A expansão urbanística de Siracusa nos séculos VI e V aC". Este capítulo trata da questão das várias identidades que surgiram na fundação grega de Siracusa e as resistências contra as políticas tirânicas. Ducetius foi um símbolo de resistência que se opôs às elites gregas locais, como um símbolo de não aceitação das realocações populacionais feitas pelos tiranos (deinomênidas) desde o começo do século V aC.

Palavras-chave: Siracusa. Ducézio. Tirania.

Introduction

Syracuse was a polis founded in the seventh century BC by Corinth, led by the oikist Arkias. From the beginning of the foundation until the fifth century BC there were profound political and social changes with repercussion in the organization of the political space. The Syracusan polis prospered in

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proportions not recorded elsewhere in the Archaic and Classical Greek world. Its monumental complex, its urban development, its expansion into the chora, and the founding of new colonies brought to Syracuse, from the Archaic period on, a prominence among the Greek foundations of the West.

In the beginning, the Greeks occupied the islet of Ortygia, building houses, temples, streets and ports but almost simultaneously they advanced towards the continent, constructing an urban complex that housed a growing population. It is verified that in the period between the 7th and 5th centuries BC, the territory of Syracuse was profoundly modified by a considerable demographic increase due to significant political and social changes.

The tyrants of the Deinomenid family - Gelon and Hieron were important figures regarding the economic, political and social growth of the Syracusan polis. The compulsory mobility of the Greek and non-Greek populations of the island, promoted by the expansionist projects of the tyrants, made Syracuse grow, demanded investments in infrastructure and resulted in the beautification of the city, with the purpose of reinforcing a visual discourse aimed at the legitimation and propaganda of the tyrannical governments.

In addition to the tyrants of the Deinomenid family, Diodorus Siculus tells us the story of Ducetius, an important and active figure in the 5th century BC politics in Sicily. His actions approached many of the actions of the Deinomenid tyrants: expansionist politics, land redistribution, foundations and re-foundations of cities, the use of religion as a tool to enlist followers and reassert bonds between the Sikels, the attempt to unify Sicily. Ducetius was named by Diodorus as dynastes, a title that etymologically rescues a tyrant status.

Ducetius and the Tyranny

Tyranny characterized the political landscape of Sicily since the early days of the colonies and was perpetuated until the Hellenistic age. Systematic policies of compulsory displacement of populations were implemented and, as a result, expanded the contingent of inhabitants, promoting a scale of changes in demographic and topographic terms. Diodorus Siculus (11.72; 76) brought elements to the knowledge of an original character who interacted in various

ways with the Greek polis of Sicily (WOODHEAD, 1972, p.84). According to the author, Ducetius would have created a confederation of Sikel populations-called Synteleia - that controlled a large portion of the countryside of Sicily, around the latter half of the fifth century B.C.

Ducetius led and consolidated his powers in synteleia, which would also have had a religious connotation (JACKMAN, 2006, p.35). Diodorus describes in details the saga of Ducetius and the improvements that took place at the important shrine of Palici, as well the founding of the city of Palike around this religious center, the sanctuary of Palici (Fig.1).



Fig.1 Map of distribution of the site. (MANISCALCO, 2008, p.14)

The political use of the cult of Palici by Ducetius (fifth century BC) in Palike

The political use of the cult of Palici by Ducetius was legitimized by the inclusion of the myth of Palici in the tragedy "The Women of Etna" by Aeschylus. The assignment of the myth incorporates an important aspect of resuming tyrannical actions, because Aeschylus wrote the workpiece in homage to the foundation of Etna by Hieron.

Ducetius made improvements in the structure of the archaic age and during the peak period of synteleia, the Palici Sanctuary was redesigned, gaining terraces and a building with a perfect orientation N-S/E (Maniscalco,

2008, p. 132). The upper terrace was occupied by the *hestiatérion* where the road led to the Acropolis of the town of Palike, with the Stoa B occupying the lower terrace. This extends the functional area of the sanctuary.

According to Diodorus in (Book XI, 76, 3) this succession of events shows the dissatisfaction of the relocated population. The displacements began with Gélon, but Diodorus emphasizes that Hiéron, in continuing this process, caused chaos by his abusive form of government. In this excerpt, there appears the figure of the leader Sikel Ducetius that emulated the Greek *oikistes* by also founding a new city: Palici (HORA, 2013, p.96).

ἴσχυον ἐκβαλεῖν ἐκ τῆς πόλεως διὰ τὴν ὀχυρότητα
2 τῶν τόπων. μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα παρατάξεως γενομένης
ἐπὶ τῆς χώρας, καὶ τῶν ἀγωνιζομένων παρ' ἀμφο-
τέροις ἐκθύμως κινδυνευόντων, πεσεῖν συνέβη οὐκ
ὀλίγους παρ' ἀμφοτέροις, νικῆσαι δὲ τοὺς Συρακο-
σίους. μετὰ δὲ τὴν μάχην οἱ Συρακόσιοι τοὺς μὲν
ἐπιλέκτους, ὄντας ἑξακοσίους, αἰτίους γενομένους
τῆς νίκης, ἔστεφάνωσαν ἀριστεία δόντες ἀργυρίου
μνᾶν ἑκάστῳ.

3 Ἄμα δὲ τούτοις πραττομένοις Δουκέτιος μὲν ὁ
τῶν Σικελῶν ἡγεμῶν, χαλεπῶς ἔχων τοῖς τὴν
Κατάνην οἰκοῦσι διὰ τὴν ἀφαίρεσιν τῆς τῶν Σικε-
λῶν χώρας, ἐστράτευσεν ἐπ' αὐτούς. ὁμοίως δὲ
καὶ τῶν Συρακοσίων στρατευσάντων ἐπὶ τὴν
Κατάνην, οὗτοι μὲν κοινῇ κατεκληρούχησαν τὴν
χώραν καὶ τοὺς¹ κατοικισθέντας² ὑφ' Ἰέρωνος τοῦ
δυναστού ἐπολέμου· ἀντιταχθέντων δὲ τῶν ἐν τῇ
Κατάνη καὶ λειφθέντων πλείοσι μάχαις, οὗτοι μὲν
ἐξέπεσον ἐκ τῆς Κατάνης, καὶ τὴν νῦν οὔσαν Αἴτην
ἐκτίησαντο, πρὸ τούτου καλουμένην Ἰνησσαν, οἱ δ'
ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐκ τῆς Κατάνης ὄντες ἐκομίσαντο πολλῶ
χρόνῳ τὴν πατρίδα.

4 Τούτων δὲ πραχθέντων οἱ κατὰ τὴν Ἰέρωνος
δυναστείαν ἐκπεπτωκότες ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων πόλεων
ἔχοντες τοὺς συναγωνιζομένους κατήλθον εἰς τὰς
πατρίδας καὶ τοὺς ἀδίκως τὰς ἀλλοτρίας πόλεις
ἀφηρεμένους ἐξέβαλον ἐκ τῶν πόλεων· τούτων δ'
ἦσαν Γελῶοι καὶ Ἀκραγαντίνοι καὶ Ἰμεραῖοι.
5 παραπλησίως δὲ τούτοις καὶ Ῥηγῖνοι μετὰ Ζαγ-

¹ τοὺς added by Dindorf.

² So Wesseling : κατοικισθέντες.

Translation into English (Book XI, 76)

In Sicily the Syracusans, in their war upon the mercenaries who had revolted, kept launching attack after attack upon both Achradinê and the Island, and they defeated the rebels in a sea-battle, but on land they were unable to expel them from the city because of the strength of these two places. Later, however, after an open battle had been fought on land, the soldiers engaged on both sides fighting spiritedly, finally, although both armies suffered not a few casualties, victory lay with the Syracusans. And after the battle the Syracusans honored with the prize of valour the elite troops, six hundred in number, who were responsible for the victory, giving them each a mina of silver. While these events were taking place, Ducetius, the leader of the siceli, harboring a grudge against the inhabitants of Catana because they had robbed the siceli of their land, led an army against them. And since the Syracusans had likewise sent an army against Catana, they and the siceli joined in portioning out the land in allotments among themselves and made war upon the settlers who had been sent by Hieron when he was ruler of Syracuse. The catanians opposed them with arms, but were defeated in Catana, and they took possession of what is now aetna, which was formerly called Inessa; and the original inhabitants of catana, after a long period, got back their native city. After these events the peoples who had been expelled from their own cities while Hieron was king, now that they had assistance in the struggle, returned to their fatherlands and expelled from their cities the men who had wrongfully seized for themselves the habitations of others; among these were inhabitants of Gela, Acragas, and Himera. In like manner Rhegians along with Zancians expelled the sons of Anaxilas, who were ruling over them, and liberated their fatherlands. Later on Geloans, who had been the original settlers of Camarina, portioned that land out in allotments. And practically all the cities, being eager to make an end of the wars,

came to a common decision, whereby they made terms with the mercenaries in their midst; they then received back the exiles and restored the cities to the original citizens, but the mercenaries who because of the former tyrannical were in possession of the cities belonging to others, they gave permission to take with them their own goods and to settle one and all in Messenia. In this manner, then, an had prevailed throughout the cities of Sicily, and the which aliens had introduced, with almost no exceptions portioned out their lands in allotments among all their citizens (DIODORUS SICULUS, The Loeb Classical Library. Trad. C.H. Oldfather, 1963).

The Palici, according to Maniscaldo (2008, p. 132) is a catalyst of *syntheleia* of the Sikels at the time that this was an important place of worship of the indigenous population since remote times and the heart of the Sikel territory in Sicily.



Fig. 2 Sanctuary of Palici – excavations 1995 (MANISCALCO, 2008, p. 17)

Hestiaterion in Palike

The *hestiaterion* is a Greek building. Ducetius brought these elements to

the shrine to be part of the cult. The identities that arise in question are eloquent from the point of view of assertion of power in Sicily. Ducetius incorporates tyrannical actions and Greek elements to claim a Sikel identity, which incorporated these people who assimilated, through a process of emulation and cultural hybridity. Fluid identities that arise in this situation can be seen, according to Stockhammer (2012, p.15) as a loan, inserted in the process of "negotiation", which can be analyzed in the context of different ethnic identities lattices, and for Burke, depending on the situation (Burke, 2009, p. 42-45).



Fig.3. Hestiaterion. (MANISCALCO, 2008, p.27)

Formation of identities and the assertion of power against the colonial elites

The communities that emerged constitute examples of assimilation and rejection of Greek and non-Greek traces, the rise of a third social order that is not the amalgamation of the two main orders - Hellenic and Sikels - but a new society.

Diodorus described in detail the saga of Ducetius that implemented improvements in the important sanctuary of the Palici and founded the city of

Palike in the environs of this religious center.

Later, after more conflicts in which the Sikel were defeated several times, Ducetius went alone to Syracuse and presented himself as a supplicant before the altar in the agora (WOODHEAD, 1972: 84). The assembly was decided by the punishment of Ducetius and he was exiled for five years in Corinth (DIODORUS SICULUS 11,92, 2-4). He returned in 466 and founded a town called Kale Atke, on the outskirts of Cefalu, as the oracle had instructed him to found, with a group of Greek settlers, a new city in the north of Sicily. In the year 440 Ducetius died. (JACKMAN, 2006, p.35)

Ducetius adopted many actions of *deinomenida* tyrants: expansionist politics, land redistribution, foundations and refoundations of cities, the use of religion as an instrument to engage followers and reaffirm links between groups.

According to Jackman (2006), the demographic movement in Sicily was very complex: some aspects such as the use of mass population reallocation brought problems such as the definition of identities. The demographic history of Sicily was complex, with different peoples forming new communities, originally coming from different places, establishing cultural contacts and formulating of new concepts of citizenship and identity.

Final Consideration

The success of Ducetius allowed the Sicilians to recover part of the territories that were taken to them by Hieron, increasing their prestige and fame, placing them at the head of a movement for the liberation of the Sicilian towns. With the death of Ducetius, the revolutionary movement underwent a process of abandonment, opening space for the Greek culture in the years that followed, that is, after the fifth century B.C Ducetius, while symbolizing resistance, took elements of actions of the Greek tyrants, turning into a Hellenized version of the tyrant-oikista among the local population.

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