



Projet Erasmus+ Namur - Marsala

" Patrimonia "



A la découverte du patrimoine historique, architectural et culturel

Mozia Island



Giorgia Angileri

Translated by Kristina Kudinova 



ISISS « Abele Damiani » - Marsala

ABSTRACT



Moza (ou même Mothia, Motya) était une ancienne ville phénicienne située sur l'île de San Pantaleo, dans la réserve naturelle Stagnone à Marsala. Elle est située en face des Salines historiques Ettore Infersa et il s'agit de l'un des sites archéologiques les plus importants au monde.

L'île est située en face de la côte ouest de la Sicile, entre la grande île et le continent.



History

Antique age

Mozia was probably a place of great interest for the people of the Phoenician navigators and merchants who visited the western Mediterranean from the end of the XII century BC. : The island was to represent a place of landing and a commercial base morphologically similar to the Phoenician city of Tiro. In the middle of the VIII century BC, with the beginning of the Greek colonization in Sicily, the historian Thucydides reports that the Phoenicians retreated to the western part of the island, specifically in the three cities of their founding: Motya, Solunto and Palermo. In 400 BC the tyrant Dionysius of Syracuse took and destroyed the city at the beginning of his military campaign to conquer the elite and Punic cities of Western Sicily. The following year, Mozia is taken over by Carthaginian but it begins to lose its importance because of the foundation of Lilibeo, the current Marsala, founded by the inhabitants of Mozia. After the famous Egadi Islands Battle between Romans and Carthaginians in 241 BC, all Sicily passed under Roman rule, with the exception of Syracuse and in this way Mozia was completely abandoned.

Medieval and modern age

In the eleventh century, the Normans donated the island to the abbey of “Santa Maria della Grotta” in Marsala and the basilian monks of Palermo settled there. They gave it the name of San Pantaleo, dedicating it to the holy founder of their religious order. In the second half of the 16th century, the island passed to the Jesuits with the monasteries of Palermo and Marsala. In 1792, it was given as a property to notary Rosario Alagna of Mozia, who received the title of Baron of Mothia. Under his patronage started the first archaeological excavations. In 1793, a group of sculptures reproducing two lions biting a bull was discovered and these archaeological discoveries are now preserved and exposed to Whitaker Museum of the island. In 1806, it passed into the hands of small landowners who mainly grew as a vineyard, a culture that is still active today.

Contemporary age

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Joseph Whitaker, archaeologist and heir of an English family settled in Sicily, interested in the production of wine on the island, bought it. Thanks to him, the first archaeological excavations began in 1906 and continued until 1929. Then we discovered the Phoenician-Punic Sanctuary of Cappiddazzu, which is part of the archaic necropolis, the “Casa dei Mosaici”, the area of “Tophet”, the areas of Gate North, Gate South and the Dugout. Joseph Whitaker also took care of the excavation work, the purchase of the island and the creation of the Museum.

From 2002 to 2012, excavations conducted by the University of La Sapienza in Rome have completely revolutionized knowledge about the old Mozia. (www.lasapienzamozia.it)

<https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mozia>

Wine production on the island

The first installation of a modern vineyard on the island of Mozia dates back to the first decades of the 19th century, when the Marsala region became an object of interest for the part of the English who wanted to produce a wine in competition with the famous Port. In 1902, the island property passed to Mr. J. Whitaker, a member of an English family, who successfully dedicated to the Marsala wine trade. The cultivation of vines has been preserved and other profitable productions have been introduced, such as olive and agave. As noted in the Whitaker Archives, for the wine production, sharecroppers have been used to transport their share of the harvest to the continent using cars on an ancient submerged Phoenician road, made up of limestone basalt plates.

Over time, winemaking on the island has completely ceased and the two buildings of the cellar have been adapted to store various tools.

In 1999, using a surviving vineyard in the part of the island called Cappiddazzu, it was thought of reviving the production of Grillo grapes from this vineyard to make a passito wine. The winemaking took place in a cellar on the continent, because during the restoration of the Mozia buildings, checking the foundations of the old cellar, two Roman insulas of the ancient city and materials, dating from the early 7th and mid-1990s. IV century have been updated.

The area around the cellar has therefore been transformed into a museum and only one of the three cement silos has been preserved to testify to the wine use of these rooms for about 40 years.



Since 1999, wine production has been seen as typical to Mozia Island to complete its archaeological vocation. In 2002, a very small part of the grapes harvested was vinified on the island to obtain a good table wine, while the rest of the production was partly sold and partly entrusted to a winery for the production of a Passito.

In Mozia, the harvest takes place at dawn and the grapes are gently placed in crates then loaded on the shoulder and immediately transferred to the continent by sea, before the sun starts to heat up. Air-conditioned trucks collect the grapes in order to preserve their organoleptic integrity and finally they are left in a fresh place until 5 a.m. before moving to a gentle pressing and the different steps of winemaking.

<http://www.famedisud.it/storia-del-grillo-sullisola-di-mozia-il-vino-dei-fenici-profuma-di-mare/>