



The Temples of Selinunte



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ABSTRACT

Selinunte is a pearl of Sicily, where you can admire the sea and archaeological excavations. Here is, in fact, one of the largest archaeological parks in Europe.

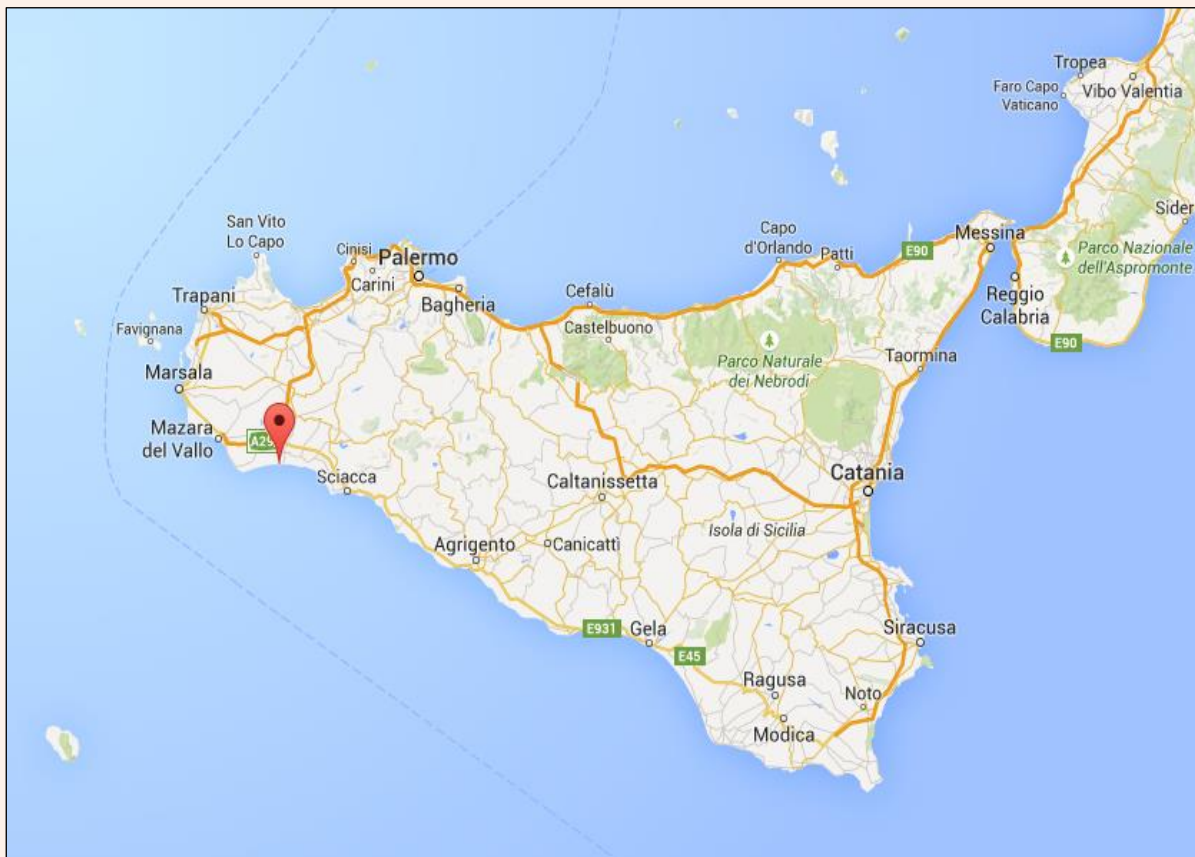
Originally the site was a Greek colony that had a great importance role in the history of ancient Greece.



The name of the city derives from the name of the river Selinas flowing towards the west of the ancient city, in turn derived from the wild “appio”, a characteristic herb that was born in this terroir.

The stone needed to build the columns was extracted from the nearby Cusa quarries. The found pieces attest the shredding procedure to obtain column drums.

The ruins of the city are in the municipality of Castelvetrano, in the south of the province of Trapani. In the archaeological site, on the acropolis, are temples as well as other secondary buildings, while other temples are located on a hill not far away.



Geographical map



Many temples are ruined because of earthquakes during medieval times; however, some reconstruction interventions have allowed the temple of Hera to be almost completely rebuilt.

On the hill we find the temples G, F and E.

Temple E or Hera Temple is the oldest temple. It was built around the middle of the 6th century BC on the foundations of ancient buildings. It is the best preserved temple of Selinunte, although its present appearance is due to a restoration technique with which the original pieces are restored and put together element by element



Temple G, one of the largest in antiquity, **dedicated to Zeus**, was made up of 25 columns. Today it is completely in ruins, it has been realized several times and underwent a continuous process of modification, after which the “eastern” façade has a more archaic aspect than the “western” one, realized during the classical age. One of the columns standing alone on the ruins and called “the old lady’s bobbin” has been rebuilt.

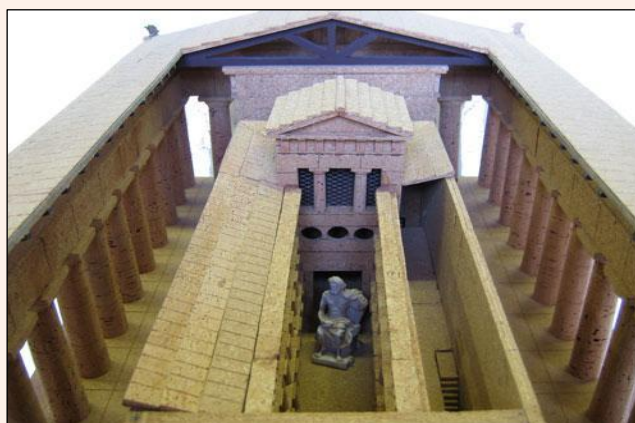


before



now

Inside, between the columns, there is a room divided into 3 naves. At the bottom of the central nave was a cult statue, which is today at the Regional Archaeological Museum of Palermo.



North of temple E is **temple F**, similar to **temples E and G**, and it is the smallest on the eastern hill. Today the temple is completely destroyed and its ruins are on the eastern hill, between the reconstructed temple E, and the ruins of temple G. From this building still remains the stylobate, the foot of the columns, and crepidoma, the three-level base of the temple. Although they were thus destroyed, archaeologists tried to understand how many columns constituted the “peristasi”, six columns were on the short sides and 14 on the long sides, those at the corner included. The columns were grooved and had capitals in Doric style with a more crushed profile than the other temples.



On the Acropolis are the temples: D-C-A-O.

Temple D (built around 560 BC) is in chronological order the second temple of Selinunte. The abnormal arrangement of the altar indicates that another temple was to be below the present one. The remains of another temple have been found east of it. Only recently has it been cleaned, but not yet studied and deep dug.



Temple C in Selinunte is a Greek temple of Doric order. This was one of the oldest temples of Selinunte, built inside the Acropolis, probably shortly after the middle of the sixth century BC. After a 12-year long restoration, in 2011 the scaffolding has been removed and the colonnade made visible again.



Temple A and O

From Temple A and O have remained a few ruins including the foot. Only the intense study of the ruins and its elements allows the affirmation that temple A, built around the middle of the 5th century BC, was the most harmonious and perfect classical temple of Selinunte. A special feature is the two spiral staircases placed in front of the temple wall that led to the upper floor, telling the story of its architecture.

Temple A has a mosaic pavement representing the Phoenician goddess Tanit, while Temple O was dedicated to Poseidon



The sculptures found in the excavations of Selinunte are preserved mainly in the National Archaeological Museum of Palermo, with the exception of the most famous piece, the Ephebe of Selinunte, which is today exhibited at the Civic Museum of Castelvetro.

The Ephebe of Selinunte is a statue dating from the Greek colonization. It is about 85 cm high and was made of bronze in the fifth century BC

