



BRIEF
Guide

entella

SALAPARUTA

POGGIOREALE

GIBELLINA

ALCAMO - A29

CAMPOREALE

MONTAGNOLA (Roccamena)

SP 27

SP 20

SAN CIPIRELLO

SAN GIUSEPPE JATO

SP 34

SP 20

ALTOFONTE

PALERMO



PALERMO - AGRIGENTO

SS 121

v.le Regione Siciliana NO



HOW TO GET THERE

FROM PALERMO [Km 80 ca.]

From north-western viale della Regione Siciliana take the SS 624, Palermo-Sciacca. Exit at Salaparuta, at km 59,5, and follow the direction to Contessa Entellina. At about 8km, on the left, you come across a path that leads to the archaeological site of Rocca d'Entella. After about 12km you reach Contessa Entellina, where it is possible to visit the "Giuseppe Nenci" Antiquarium.



Antiquarium "Giuseppe Nenci"

via I. Maggio, 1

90030 Contessa Entellina

information > tel [+39] 0918355556

Thirty years have gone by since the beginning of systematic archaeological research on Rocca d'Entella, seat of the ancient city of Entella. Together with Erice and Segesta, Entella is one of the three cities founded and inhabited by the Elymian people. The memory of the historical sources and of the archaeological evidence, which in these years has become richer and richer, make the Rocca d'Entella one of the most important ancient sites of central-western Sicily.

The settlement is on a vast and isolated rocky hill, 545m high asl, covering an area of about 60 hectares and surrounded by high rocky crags, from where one could control the vast territory of the upper and middle valley of the Belice River.

The excavations have allowed to identify a first living phase on Rocca d'Entella since the Prehistoric Age (from the Neolithic to the Late Bronze Age); however, it is with the Elymian foundation of Entella, remembered in the historical sources, that the most important and prosperous period of the city starts, setting up a leading centre for the population of this part of the island.

The last living phase on the Rocca has been dated to the Norman Age, when Entella was, with the nearby town Iato, one of the last Muslim outposts before being conquered by Frederick II's troops.

Since the beginning, the research on the Rocca of Entella was given by the Soprintendenza of Palermo to the Scuola Normale di Pisa and initially conducted by Giuseppe Nenci then by Carmine Ampolo; the beginning of systematic archaeological excavations had been urged also by the "discovery", in the 1970s, of the famous "Decrees of Entella": a real historical and epigraphic dossier of great importance for the knowledge of the Sicilian Hellenistic cities.

Since 1995, Contessa Entellina houses, in rooms belonging to the Council, the Antiquarium of Entella, dedicated since the year 2000 to Giuseppe Nenci, whose exhibition plan was conceived by the same archaeologists who had worked on the field. The small museum has a small but thorough itinerary which, through didactic panels, gives an account of the studies conducted, displaying an important collection of the main archaeological finds found on the Rocca.

Stefano Vassallo
Dirigente Responsabile
dell'Unità Operativa Archeologica

Maria Elena Volpes
Soprintendente dei Beni Culturali
ed Ambientali di Palermo



Rocca d'Entella, from North

soprintendenza beni culturali ed ambientali
sezione per i beni archeologici palermo

- > **Maria Cecilia Parra**
- > **Francesca Spatafora**

entella

BRIEF
Guide



assessorato dei beni culturali e
dell'identità siciliana

2 Spatafora, Francesca <1953->

Entella: brief guide / Francesca Spatafora, Maria Cecilia Parra. - Palermo: Regione siciliana, Assessorato dei beni culturali e dell'identità siciliana, Dipartimento dei beni culturali e dell'identità siciliana, 2015.

ISBN 978-88-6164-359-8

1. Entella - Guide.

I. Parra, Maria Cecilia.

937.8234 CDD-22

SBN Pal0284623

CIP - Biblioteca centrale della Regione siciliana "Alberto Bombace"

Rocca d'Entella (*fig.1*) rises isolated dominating the territory, reaching on the south side 545m asl, while on the north side it declines with slopes more or less steep towards the river Belice, nowadays barred by a dam, the so-called Garcia Dam (*figs.2-3*).

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It is known that in antiquity the Belice was one of the most important rivers of





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the island; it originates from the confluence of two branches: the Right one has its sources on the southern side of Palermo's Mountains, near Piana degli Albanesi, while the sources of the Left one are located near Rocca Busambra, the most significant mountain in western Sicily.

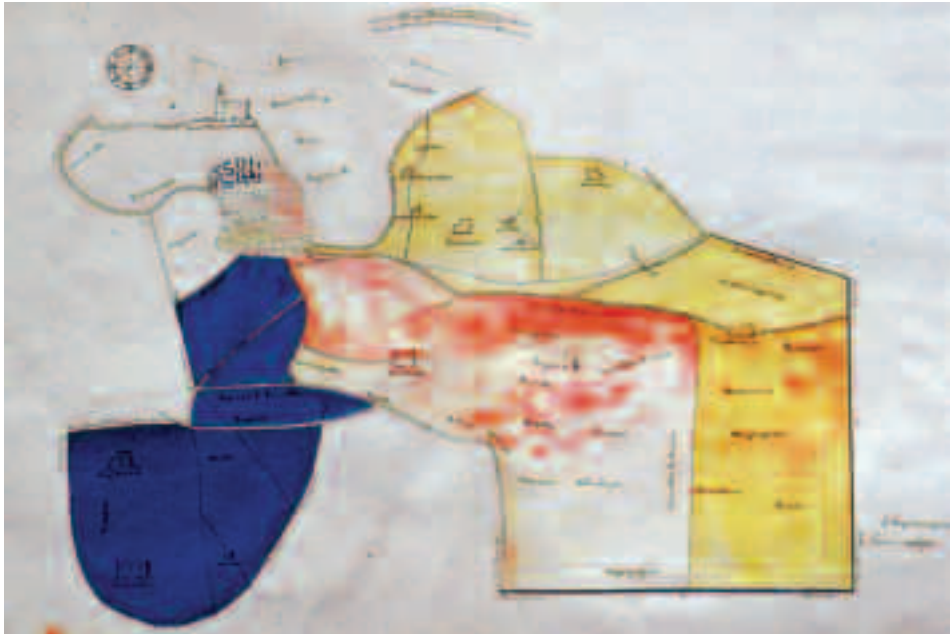
Its main branch has a NE/SW orientation and, after the confluence of the two branches, it curbs to the SE and flows into the southern sea near Selinus.

It is not certain whether the river was partly navigable or not in antiquity; howe-



ver, its peculiar environmental conditions, besides the morphological and hydro-geological characteristics of the basin and of its vast valley, with its gentle slopes and vast cultivable land, must have played an important role regarding the complex anthropization processes of the area.

The whole valley had been densely inhabited since the earliest Prehistoric Ages: from the point of view of settlement patterns, the overall territorial structure of the site has been completely rebuilt thanks to the intensive field surveys



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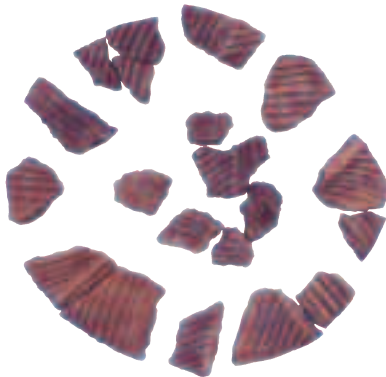
carried out throughout the whole territory of Contessa Entellina. In addition to that, further systematic field surveying in some sample areas of the territory has been fundamental for a wider view of the whole Belice area: one of the most interesting was conducted in the upper valley of the Right Belice allowing to come up with reliable hypotheses, regarding the history of the settlement and human activity in that area starting from the Paleolith up to the 14th century (*fig.4*).

More field surveying but less intensive, some regular excavations and several

occasional findings have significantly increased our knowledge of the Belice area, contributing fruitfully to a wider and complete comprehension of the phenomena linked to the population of the area throughout the centuries.

Going back to the Entellina area, the territory seems populated, even though with less evidence, since the Neolithic Age and then, continuously, up to the Late Bronze Age. The period with a higher concentration of people is that between the Late Eneolithic and the Early Bronze Age (*figs. 5-6*): this phase has also been recorded on the Rocca di Entella and it can be associated with the coming of a peculiar cultural facies, that is the Bell Beaker Folk that, coming from the Iberian peninsula, spread to many parts of Europe creating a phenomenon whose historical-cultural impact is still nowadays seen in an extremely problematic way.

Since the Iron Age, but above all for the Archaic Age, the history of the area has been profoundly conditioned by Thucydides' famous passage (Thuc. VI, 2)



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where he talks about the complex ethnic composition of the people that lived in the western part of the island during the historic age: next to the Phoenicians, Sikans and Greeks the Athenian historian places the Elymians, Trojans who had escaped the Achaeans and had landed in Sicily, where they settled on the borders with the Sikans and, joining them, founded Erice and Segesta (*fig. 7*).

Thucydides' version is set against Hellanicus' story, who identified the Elymians as a people of peninsular origins, coming down to Sicily just before the Sikels' migration: around these two written sources and on the following historiographic tradition there have been several and authoritative interpretations and investigations, all of which set to establish more clearly the outlines, from an ethnic point of view, of the Elymian people or, at least, to define more evidently the territory of pertinence.

However, the written and historical evidence is not totally supported by the

results of the archaeological research: the features of the material culture that connote the settlements of the area considered “Elymian”, west of the Belice river, including the Elymian Entella, do not differ from the coeval productions from the other parts of the island and neither do they differentiate for evident peculiarities, even if the language has yet to be thoroughly investigated, attested mainly in Segesta, a non Hellenic language but written in Greek letters.

Compared to the territorial organization of the Archaic and Classical Ages (7th-5th centuries BC), which saw the emergence of large urban settlements, between the 4th and the 3rd centuries BC there was a population growth recorded through a thick network of towns, even small, spread out in the territory and in some way linked to Entella, all placed along the main roads.

After a period of crisis, which coincided with the events of the First Punic War, there was a population recovery in the 2nd century BC, coinciding with the Romanization of the territory. Between the Early and the Middle Imperial Ages (1st century BC and 3rd century AD) the settlements, always several, were mainly located along the river valleys, set both in the valley floors and along the hillsides that delimit them. As the city on Rocca d’Entella was declining there was a growth in the rural population even if some settlements were abandoned in the 2nd century AD.

During the Late Antiquity Age (4th – 7th centuries AD) the whole territory around Entella seems to have been still densely inhabited: on some sites there is evidence of living continuity from the previous periods, while other settlements were founded *ex novo* privileging the areas close to the rivers or springs. However, many of these settlements came to an end during the 5th century AD.

The urban settlements of the territory during the Byzantine Age is quite difficult to understand and even more complicated are the changes that followed the Arab conquest in the mid. 9th century AD.

As a matter of fact, for over a century the whole island went through a crucial

10 period which coincided with the accomplishment of the Islamic presence. The settlements in Entella's territory were spread out in a homogenous pattern and they all seemed to depend, in one way or another, on the reborn town on the Rocca.

The end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th century AD coincided with a significant repopulation of the territory, while a slight contraction is noted in the 12th century. Nevertheless, the crisis of Entella and of the whole territory became irreversible in the 13th century when the fortresses of the Belice Valley became strongholds of the Muslim resistance: a period that ended with the total destruction of Entella and the abandonment of the whole territory.



THE SITE AND ITS HISTORY

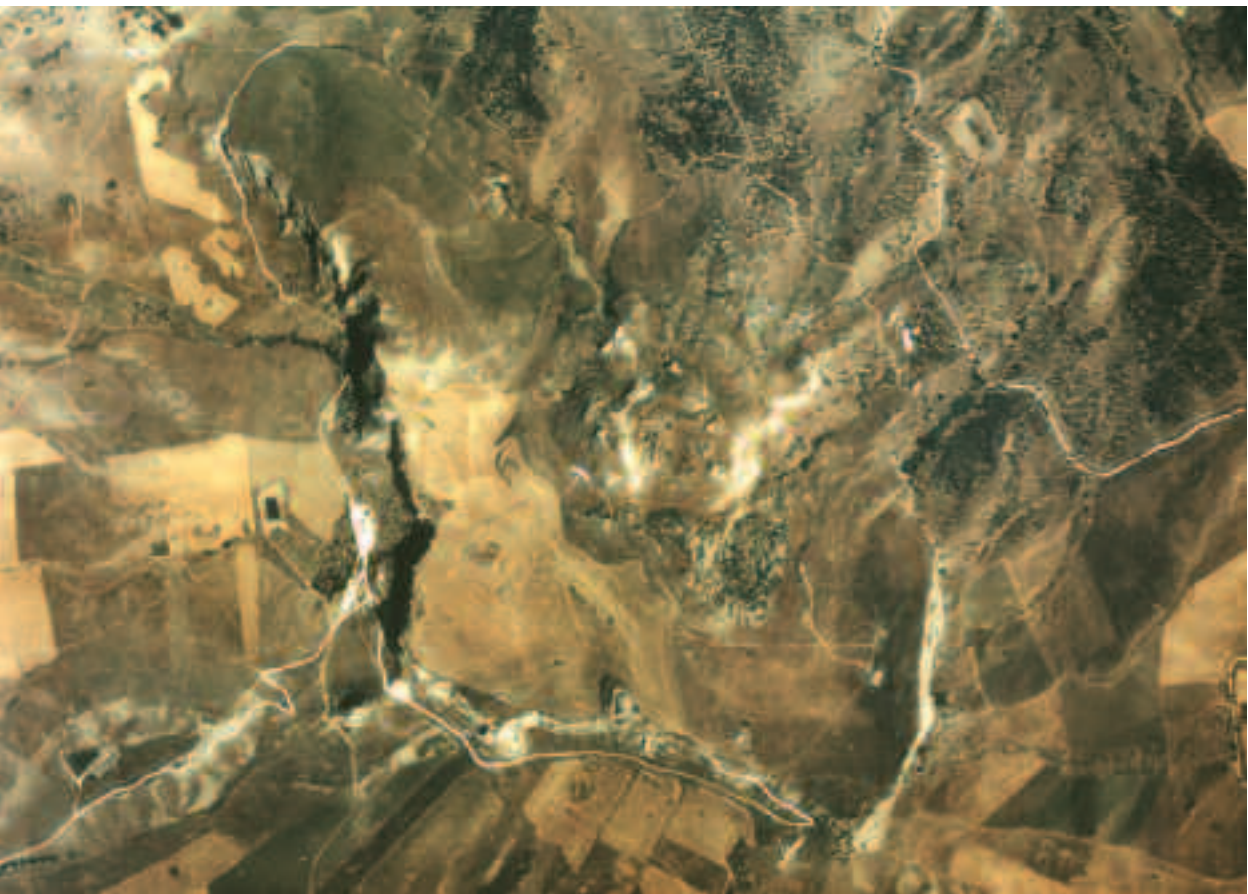
Rocca d'Entella is one of the most imposing mountains of the Left Belice river valley (*fig.8*); it is a vast chalky mountain extending for over 60 hectares located on the northern border of the territory of Contessa Entellina (*fig.9*). It has almost a quadrangular shape (*fig.10*) and it has steep slopes on the south, east and west sides. A vast tableland apt for settling, typifies the top.

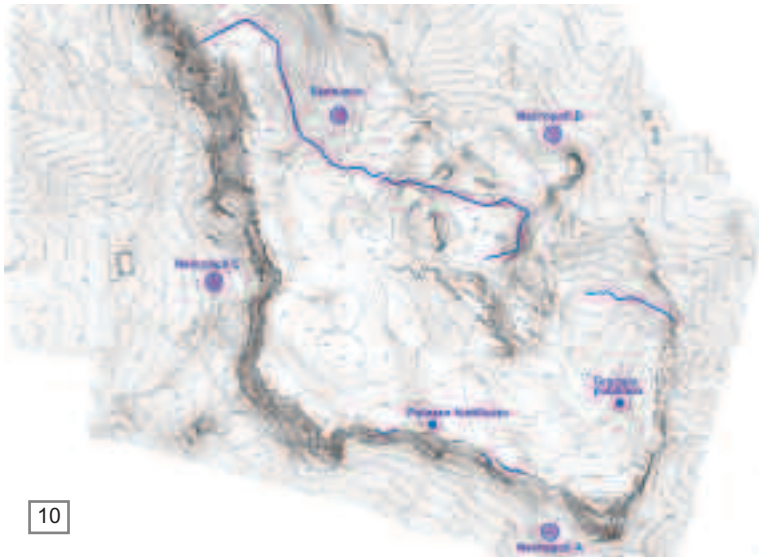
Ancient literary tradition does not give any precise and unambiguous news regarding the foundation of the town and its first years of life. The sources, especially Diodorus Siculus, talk about the events that involved Entella between the 5th and the 4th centuries BC, when the town was involved in the wars between the Greeks and the Punics. Above all Diodorus talks about what happened in 404 BC when some Campanian mercenaries seized the town. In 345 AD Entella was sieged by the Carthaginians and, some years later, freed by the Greek commander Timoleon, who near the river Crimissus (very likely the Belice river), inflicted the Punics a burning defeat.

The strategic role of the town, set on the border with the territory under Punic influence, is underlined above all by the historical sources concerning the events of the 4th century BC.

Mentioned once again during the First Punic War, for which Sicily entered the Roman sphere, Entella is then remembered by Cicero for the robbery it suffered by Verres.

We know from Pliny that in the 1st century AD, Entella was among the *civitates stipendiariae*, that is, it was obliged to pay tribute to Rome. However, from the 2nd century AD Entella started declining, almost abandoned in





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favour of the countryside, during the Middle and Late Empire. It is only following the Islamic conquest of Sicily, after the landing in Mazara del Vallo in 827 AD, that the site of ancient Entella was once again densely inhabited: it is attested by structures and a considerable amount of plain and glazed pottery collected during the archaeological investigations. However, with the Norman conquest of Sicily, the town underwent a serious demographic crisis to the point that it was almost uninhabited. It became part of the Battellaro Fief, and then given by William II to the Abbey of Monreale, as it is mentioned on a parchment (*Jarida* or *platea*) written in 1178 where all the land assigned to the Church of Monreale is enlisted. The population was mainly Muslim, but by the end of the Norman dynasty

14 they started being persecuted by the central power, now in the hands of the Swabian rulers.

The Muslims sought shelter inland on the most inaccessible hills setting up an autonomous state led by *Mohammad ibn 'Abbad* and organizing a number of rebellions against the Emperor Frederick II which ended, only in 1246, with the total abandonment of all the towns, among which was Entella, with the deportation of the people of Islamic religion and of the depopulation of the countryside.

HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH

It was Tommaso Fazello (1498-1570) who correctly identified Entella with the ruins visible on the Rocca: but then it was for a long time located in Castelvetro. Among the 18th-19th century travellers, only Jean-Pierre Houël (1735–1813) visited the site, which was described in detail and drawn only in 1858 by François Sabatier (*fig.11*) in a letter sent to Michele Amari. A degree thesis written in 1941 is precious evidence of a site still intact, which Alfons Wotschitzky visited in 1951 starting an excavation and outlining a plan.

Systematic research on the Rocca





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d'Entella, entrusted initially to Giuseppe Nenci and his team (Scuola Normale Superiore of Pisa), started in 1984, following the “discovery” in the 1970s of the famous Decrees. Found by illegal diggers and immediately placed on the antique market, they are known to the scientific community thanks, above all, to documentary evidence: to this day, a total of eight authentic decrees are known and, after complex events even judicial, only three, besides a fake one, are in the hands of the Sicilian Institutions (*figs. 12-13-14*).

They are official documents of the Entellan community (only one is from another town, Nakone), written in Greek-Doric dialect of Sicily and are inscribed on bronze tablets destined to be exposed in public buildings explicitly indicated: the *bouleuterion* - the Council house, where the *buleutis* (councilors) met - and the temple of *Hestia*; valuable evidence of buildings that the archaeological research has not found yet. Debated for its chronology – pre or post Roman conquest of Sicily (end 4th – beginning 3rd century BC) according to some scholars; more likely post 263 BC, that is the beginning of the First Punic War, according to others – the decrees are a true source of historical-institutional information: from the relationships between Entella and other towns – some well known or even of unknown location – such as Segesta, Enna, Assoro, Gela, Erbita, Petra, Makella



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(recently identified with the settlement on Montagnola of Marineo), Schera and Cutattara; to the information about institutions, about the calendar, about the people's assembly; and still, news about tragic natural disasters which hit the town such as a serious famine.

Thus, it was this precious epigraphic dossier – with a lively historical-epigraphic study about these exceptional documents – that urged the start of field investigation in the mid. 1980s: a large scale research which is still ongoing but limited

because of modern judicial restrictions and by the geomorphic changes of the Rocca.

Opening brief surveys and limited excavations were immediately followed by regular planned excavations. The fortifications, the southern necropolis, the public area of the eastern valley and the medieval castle (with its pre-existing ancient structures) have been the focus of the research which – together with smaller explorations aimed at understanding specific urbanistic and monumental problems – have allowed to outline a good description of Entella's urban features from the Late Archaic Age to the Early Imperial Age; more “patchy” – even if widespread in different areas of the Rocca – is the knowledge of the medieval settlement. (*fig. 15*)

Entella is nowadays known within the whole setting of settlements of its territory, investigated in all its living phases through systematic topographic research conducted by the same team of the Scuola Normale of Pisa.

THE ANCIENT SETTLEMENT

Besides the little evidence of human presence dating back to the Eneolithic Age and to the Bronze Age, traces of urban building are spotted in Entella by the construction of walls and public buildings. The urban area delimited by the fortifications seems wider – about 63 hectares: only parts of it was used for dwellings, while an area free from urban activity must have assured hospitality in case of need.

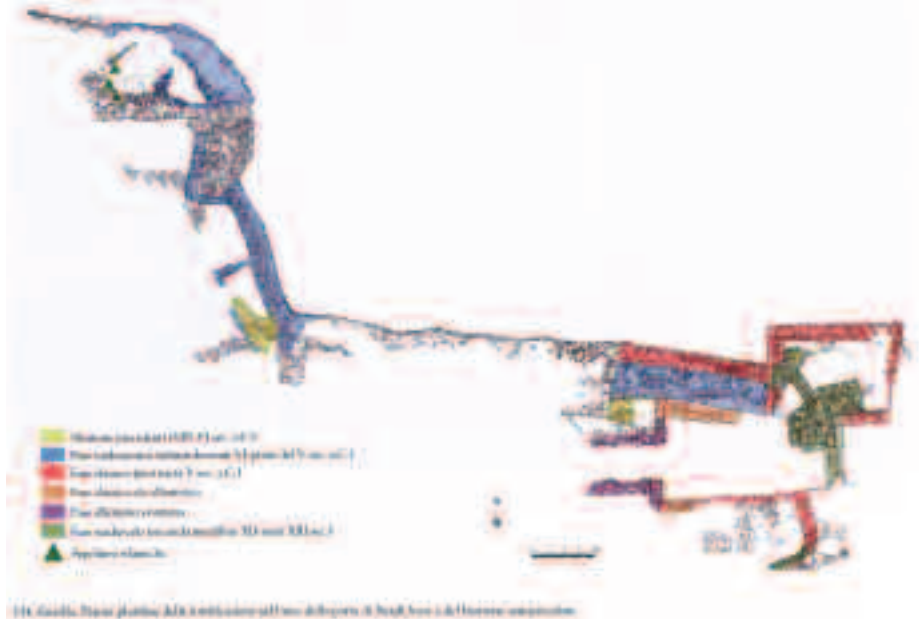
The first fortification dates back to the Late Archaic Age (second half of the 6th century BC): the original layout was kept, even though with restorations and re-buildings, up to the Roman Age and then to the Middle Ages.

Of the city walls is known the whole circuit along the northern side, which inte-



grated the natural defences of the site, the only one less steep and articulated into two valleys (*figs. 16-17*), protected by towers and defensive bastions. Here were two entrances to the top plain, suitable for carts: the road that reaches the north-western valley is well preserved; it runs through one of the city gates of the second half of the 5th century BC, doubled in the second half of the 4th century BC by introducing an intermediate courtyard, then it was gradually abandoned starting from the last decades of the 2nd century BC, up to its complete obliteration during the 1st century AD, concomitant with the decline of the town.

The top of the Rocca was also reachable through pathways not suitable for carts: for example, on the western and south-eastern sides, are well preserved pathways cut into the bedrock – the “scala of Sataliviti” (Sataliviti staircase) and the “scala of the Regina” (The Queen’s staircase) – probably once defended by fortifications now lost. These paths connected the town directly to the suburban



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areas set for artisan, cultic and, in particular, funerary activities.

As a matter of fact, the necropolises of Entella are located in the North (Necropolis B), in the South (Necropolis A) and in the West (Necropolis C), very likely close to access roads to the town, maybe next to the city gates. The only one investigated in a systematic way is the southern one, while the other two have been located only by field surveys.

The northern necropolis, located in the Petraro district, had, among other things, a grave marker with Greek inscriptions written in Selinuntine letters; on its boundary, an artificial rock cut chamber tomb testifies its use since the proto-historic period.

In the western necropolis, located in the Colletti district, field surveys have confirmed the presence of several rock-cut trench graves and a series of Greek pottery dated between the 6th and the 3rd centuries BC.



Necropolis A (*fig.18*), extensively investigated, is known above all for its Hellenistic and Medieval phases (Muslim necropolis), but it is certain that it had been active since the Archaic-Classical Age, as witnessed by some grave goods desecrated by tomb raiders and therefore decontextualized, besides a rock-cut chamber tomb discovered in the 1970s, where an indigenous amphora with impressed and incised decoration was found dated to the 7th century BC (*fig.19*).

Dozens of rock-cut trench graves have been brought to light dated between the



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4th and the 2nd century BC, all of which were inhumations except three that were cremations: the typology varies, from simple trench graves or rock-cut trench graves, with no coating and no covering, to those with coating on the sides and covered with roof tiles (*fig. 20*), to roof tile burials; or rather to the rarest hypogeum chamber tombs made with stone slabs that covered the walls and that made the covering. The most monumental one (*fig. 21*), dated to the Proto-Hellenistic Age (4th-3rd centuries BC), not only had rich grave goods clearly for a woman – made up, among other items, of an Alabastron of alabaster (*fig. 22*), a mirror (*fig. 23*), red figured vases (*figs. 24-25-26*) – but also a Greek inscription incised on a covering slab of the name of the deceased, *Tachima*.

Grave goods from the burials of Necropolis A were simple and very much standardized: figured pottery was rare but plenty of plain and black glazed pottery, attested by a vast range of shapes. Around sixty *Alabastra* of alabaster were found in the burials dated to the Proto-Hellenistic phase, often more than one



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sample deposited per burial: these were items widely spread above all in central-southern Sicily inhabited by people from Rhodes, which was the main distribution centre. But the connection between Rhodes and Entella, is to be sought in Gela, one of the cities mentioned in the decrees. *Larnakes* burials, terracotta sarcophagus, are also attested in Entella's necropolises, which were extensively used in Gela. A gold pendant of the Late Hellenistic Age is the only evidence of a goldsmithing product.

The presence of Campanian mercenaries stationed in Entella, attested by Diodorus in the final years of the 5th century BC and then by the decrees and coins, has also been confirmed by exceptional findings in the same necropolis. Two burials, one male (*fig.27*) and one female (*fig.28*) had, in fact, skeletal remains of two bodies buried next to each other with distinctive features of their ethnic origins and social role dated to the first half of the 4th century BC. The adult male (25-30 years old) was wearing at his waist a bronze belt, clearly of Italic production, like a high ranking Campanian warrior – probably a horseman – he was also wearing a ring decorated with a figure holding a shield and had an iron spearhead and a strigile, a symbol of adhesion to the Greek athletic ideals; and one of the three iron *fibulae* (*fig.29*), that were used on the woman's clothes (40-50



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years old), was clearly a Campanian type both for its shape and for the decoration of the body with a cylindrical coral grain.

The southern necropolis was set in an area that had been previously used for activities different from the funerary one. As a matter of fact, for the Late Archaic Age in some areas, there is evidence both of gypsum quarrying and of pottery activities, as two ovens found suggest.

Going back to the town, on the northern side of the Rocca, from a city gate – the north-eastern one – you could reach the eastern valley, heart of the ancient town and the seat of communal spaces with public, sacred and civic buildings. In this area a monumental structure has been brought to light which developed between the 6th and the 3rd centuries BC: several buildings – placed on declining terraces - progressively monumentalized the site.

The earliest structures are to the North on the second terrace, all of which related to cult activities: a *sacellum* with *oikos* (*fig.30*), beginning of the 5th century BC, contained by an *analemma* monumental wall (*fig.31*) with two rooms and an inside altar; further North are other rooms partly excavated in the bedrock placed around a central space, surely with a sacred function; one of them had evident traces of a high quality polychromatic wall coating. Ruins of a circular hut coeval to the *sacellum* with *oikos* have been brought to light further South, expression of the coexistence of local and Greek architectonic models.

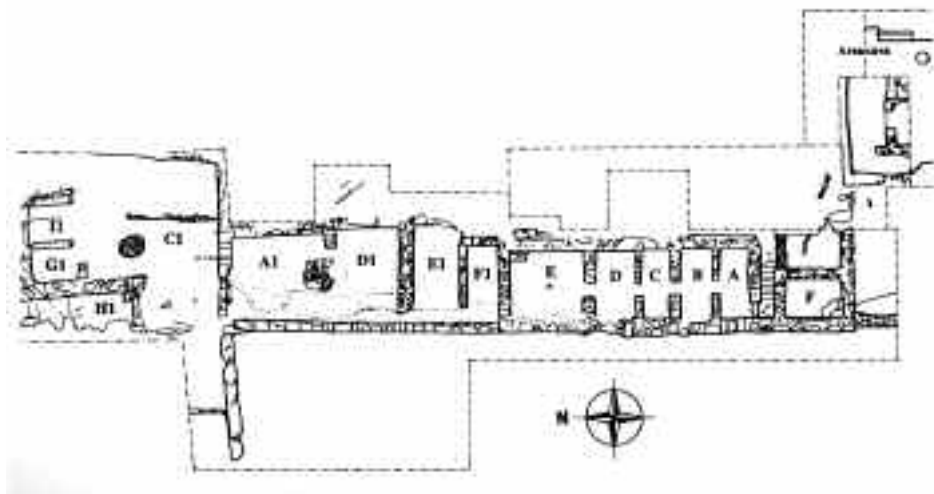
In the last quarter of the 4th century BC a monumental structure was built on three terraces in part behind the *oikos*, in part on two lower terraces. The main building was a storehouse for foodstuffs 35m long (*figs.32-33*), with nine rooms and with the entrance from the upper terrace. In some rooms there was evidence of “domestic” use, allowing to make out the typical features of a *sitonion* – a public granary with offices attached – or rather a *prytaneion*, with a possible connection with the sacred building of *Hestia* mentioned in the decrees.

Significant is the cultic ritual – very much spread in the Greek world and attested also in Magna Graecia and Sicily from the Archaic Age to the Hellenistic Age –

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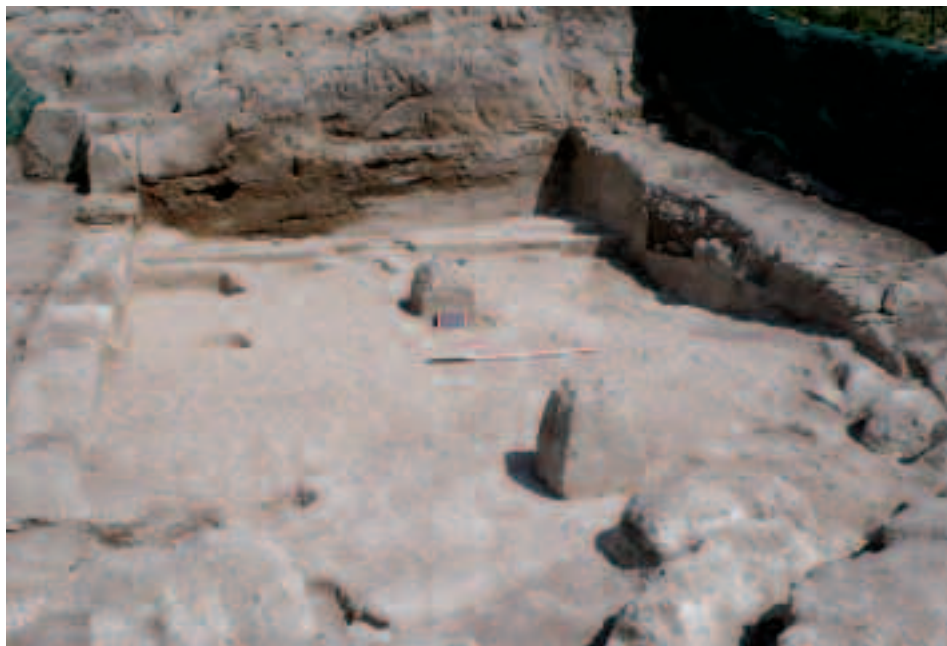
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30 with which the construction of the building was “marked”: in the north-western corner of the foundation sidewalls of the storehouse/granary were deposited terracotta figurines of offerers with a piglet or with a torch (*figs.35-36*) and two small female busts, of different dates (5th and 4th centuries BC), together with terracotta lamps, small cups and plain bowls, and a black glazed *skyphos* intentionally cut, all dated to the second half of the mid 4th century BC. Paleo-botanical analyses have revealed in some vases the presence of caryopses of cereals, farro or millet, together with traces of Holm oak charcoal burnt for the sacrifices. Another storehouse, of which only one large room is known with two aisles divided by central pillars (*fig.37*), occupied the middle terrace. Instead, on the lower terrace there were further cultic activities: as a matter of fact a small *sacellum* (or maybe an enclosure) has been brought to light, connected with several votive depositions of pottery (*fig.38*). Around the mid. 3rd century BC the structure was nearly all destroyed in a trau-



matic way by a fire and then abandoned; the area was not inhabited until the Middle Ages.

Examining the structure in its entirety, what stands out is that to its original sacred function was added, during the Hellenistic phase, that of storing food-stuffs. This aspect finds several comparisons: it is another urban sanctuary of the chthonic deities of ancient Sicily, linked to public buildings not used for the cult, according to a scheme of coexistence *Thesmophoria*/granary-storehouses attested even elsewhere – for example in Morgantina and in Monte Adranone.

Several features of this structure, both topographic and monumental, suggest that a vast open area – probably the *Agora* – opened up in front of these terraced buildings. On the opposite side, there must have been other monumental structures, which have strong similarities both in construction and chronologically, even if still little investigated.

It is likely that parts of the structure for sacred use were a kind of inner-city wall





copy of the suburban *Thesmophorion* (figs.39-40), discovered on the northern side of the Rocca in the Petraro district, half way down a steep terraced slope immediately outside the north-western city gate, used for a very long time.

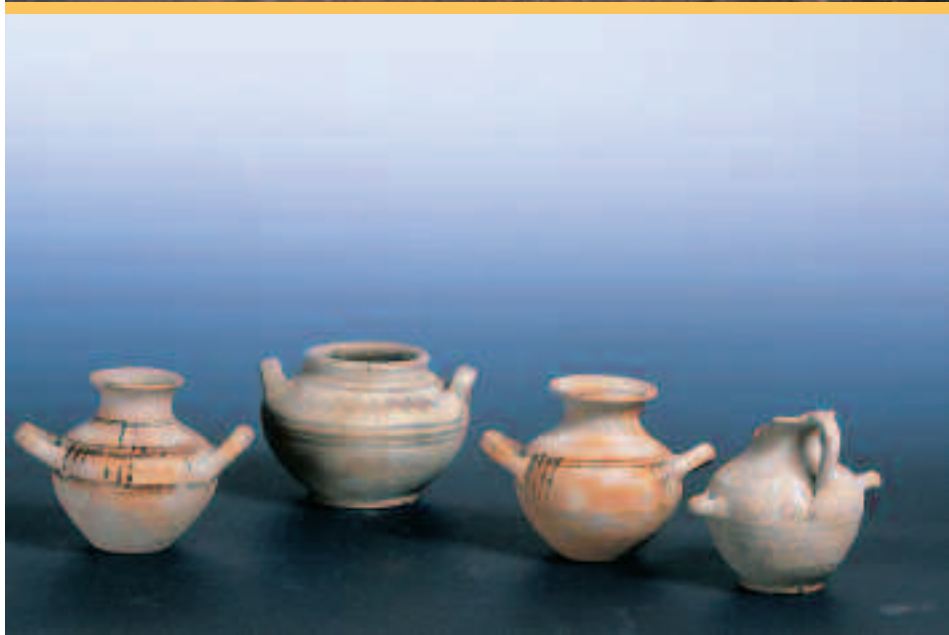
It is not known whether the sanctuary had been dedicated, right from the beginning, to *Demeter*; but surely chthonic features of the cult have been attested starting from the first years of life of the sacred area, characterized first of all by the building of a small *sacellum* with a square plan of which remain traces of its walls, then by votive offerings (fig.41) deposited within the clefts of the bedrock which, rising in several parts, characterizes the landscape in a rural way.

Between the 5th and 4th century BC, most of the offerings were above all votive terracotta figurines of the goddesses and offerers of different kinds and shapes: female statuettes sitting on a throne, busts and masks with high polos, female figurines holding a piglet or a torch (figs.43-44) or, more

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seldom, with other attributes. It is about coroplastics linked to the cult of *Demeter* and *Persephone* – widely spread and recorded in Sikeliot and Magno Greek areas – which, in the case of Entella, take on a documentary significance particularly meaningful both for its finding place and for the quantity of the evidence, over a thousand figurines among intact and broken ones.

Tools used for the celebrations of the nocturnal rituals seem to have been plenty and varied: *pignatte* (hand made terracotta pots) with inside rim found near the hearths, table ware, especially bowls and dishes, and terracotta oil lamps (*fig.42*). There were also miniature vases, above all *kotiliskoi* and *krateriskoi*, which recall the tradition of banqueting and of libation and the single spout terracotta oil lamps and multi-spouts on a high stem which, as it looks in many cases due to the lack of use, seem to have lost their function in favour of a symbolic use, in remembrance of the complex nocturnal and light rituals.

Very little is known about the ancient town. Several excavations carried out along the eastern valley slopes have resulted in ephemeral traces of walls, but quite a





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lot of material regarding the settlement. Much more consistent evidence was found on the top plain, which in the Archaic / Classical Ages and in the first half of the Hellenistic Age had seen forms of urbanization, which continued in late Hellenistic and Proto-Imperial Ages.

The reliefs that articulate the plain to the NW and South, as well as the depression dividing it into two valleys, went through forms of occupation for a long period of time since the Archaic Age. On Cozzo Petraro are visible the foundation walls of a rectangular building, probably for sacred use, in a dominant position, compared to the fortifications, to the suburban Thesmophorion and to the Belice riverbed. In the southern area, the fortified medieval palace cancelled, through excavations and reuses, most of the previous occupation forms: howe-



ver, we are sure that the area had been inhabited since the Archaic and Classical Age, with monumental buildings. And below the palace, to the West, the excavations have brought to light a Proto-Hellenistic public building arranged on more levels: the building technique is the same as the Hellenistic granary and, just like this one, it was destroyed by a big fire; some of its parts had also the same function as storage rooms. Finally, in the depression area, an Early Hellenistic Age building has both the articulation on terraces and the building technique of the structure of the eastern valley and of the building under the fortified palace.

The evidence of the settlement dated between the 2nd century BC and the 1st century AD are quite ephemeral and delimited. Under the fortified palace, in the Late Hellenistic Age, the ruins of the building with storerooms had been occupied by rooms of high level: the ruins suggest architectonic-decorative forms typical of a house with a peristyle, inhabited up to the beginning of the Imperial Age. And slightly over to the East, buildings of unclear function were in use in this later phase of Entella's life, still tributary to Rome in the 1st century AD – as witnessed by Pliny – but by now decreased to the upper parts of the Rocca.

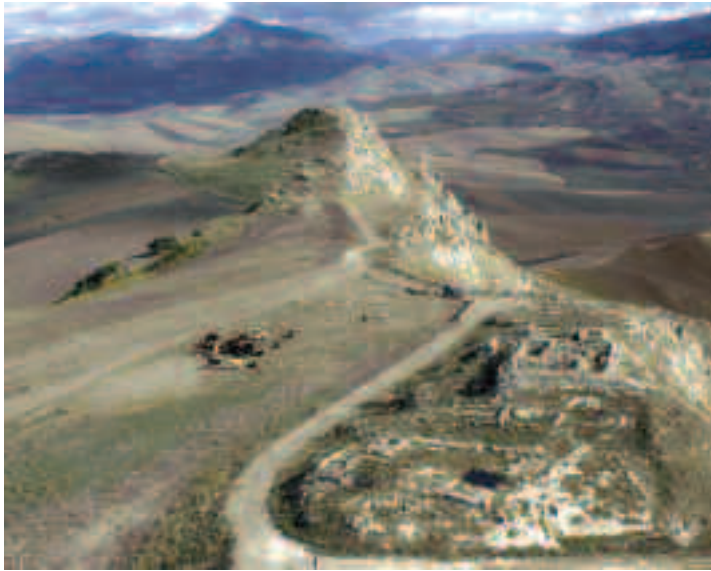
THE MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT

Related to the last living phase of the town is an imposing fortified palace (*fig.45*) brought to light on the southern side of the plateau, dated between the end of the 12th and the mid. 13th century AD, preceded by an 11th century settlement (houses within a fortification wall). With a plan, more or less square, and corner tower, the access to the palace was by a sloping ramp; the rooms, among which a *hammam* (steam bath) (*fig.46*), opened over two courtyards.



- 38 At a short distance, to the SE, on the highest peak of the Rocca – the so-called “Pizzo della Regina” (The Queen’s Peak) at 557m asl – are the ruins of the medieval Castle (*fig.47*) of which is still visible the cistern with a barrel vault (*fig.48*). The ruins of this Castle, whose toponym suggests the presence in Entella of *Kaid Mohammad ibn ‘Abbad*’s daughter, were already known in the mid 19th century and described by François Sabatier in a letter to Michele Amari. Besides small portions of the settlement, a large number of





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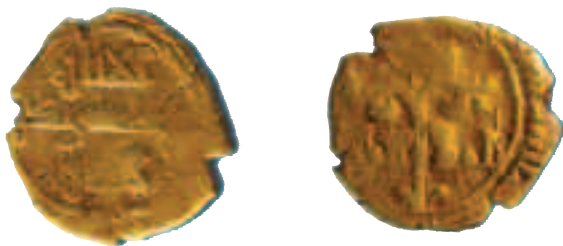
objects (figs.49-50-51-52) witness the vitality and prosperity of the medieval settlement before its definitive destruction.

Finally, Islamic burials have been found in different parts of the Rocca, inside and outside the city walls. Several were buried within the area of the so-called Necropolis A, along the south-eastern slopes, on top of the Hellenistic Age burials (4th-1st centuries BC). Another group of burials of the same kind occupied, on the opposite northern side, the area where since the Late Archaic Age the *Thesmophorion*



had been. Other Islamic burials have also been found within the area of the north-western city gate.

The typology of the burials and the ritual are typical of the Islamic world: they are narrow trench graves where the deceased, with no grave goods, was buried laying on its right side facing South, towards the Mecca.



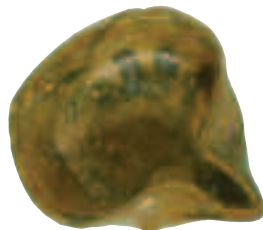
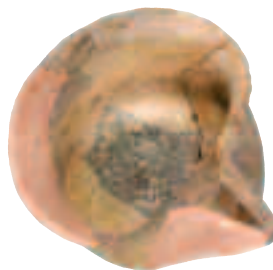
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51



52



Since 1995, Contessa Entellina houses, in rooms belonging to the Council, the Antiquarium of Entella, dedicated since the year 2000 to Giuseppe Nenci. The exhibition plan was conceived by the same archaeologists who had worked on the field; the small museum gives a complete archaeological-historical image of the ancient and medieval town through the archaeological finds and documents. Some updating of the research is from 2007.

The exhibition plan is divided into topic sections, where the archaeological material and didactic panels follow the Visitor constantly (*figs.53-54*).



54

After placing the site within the Mediterranean geographical and historical context, the first of them is dedicated to the decrees, shown by single panels and by casts of two of those recovered. A specific panel shows the latest analyses of the signs of superimposition found on the tablets, conducted on photos taken before the restoration, from which it was proved that the eight decrees known had been found all together.

Following a “documentary history” of the site – ancient and medieval literary sources, written evidence from scholars and travellers of the 19th and 20th centuries, history of the archaeological research - one can apprecia-



te the general framework of the geological, geo-morphological and urbanistic outlines of the settlement, highlighted by its defensive system. You then “enter” the town, walking along “the pottery ramp”: a chronological and typological selection of finds showing the local productions and imported ones, from prehistory to the 4th century BC.

Afterwards, some of the contexts: in particular the Hellenistic granary and the southern Necropolis A, with a wide selection of the grave goods (*figs.55,58*) – as well as objects from illegal excavations – including the burials of the two indivi-



56

duals of Campanian ethnicity (two new specific panels deal with the topic regarding the presence of Italic mercenaries in Sicily and the Campanian burials in Entella). Next is a section dedicated to the Medieval phase and to other aspects of everyday life; there is also a selection of finds from the suburban *Thesmophorion* of the Petraro district (*fig.56*) (shown on another panel). In the final room, occupied at the centre by pithoi and amphorae from the Hellenistic granary/storehouse (*fig.57*), is exhibited epigraphic and numismatic material.



57

58



AA.VV., *Alla ricerca di Entella*, Pisa 1993.

47

AA.VV., *Entella I*, Pisa 1995.

AA.VV., *Antiquarium di Entella: Guida del Museo*, Contessa Entellina 1997.

AA.VV., *Da un'antica città di Sicilia. I decreti di Entella e Nakone*, Pisa 2001.

AA.VV., *Rocca d'Entella*, in *Bibliografia Topografica della Colonizzazione Greca*, XVI, 2001, 235-276.

AA.VV., *Per una carta storico-archeologica del Comune di Contessa Entellina: dati archeologici preliminari (1998-2002)*, in *Guerra e pace in Sicilia e nel Mediterraneo antico (VIII-III sec.a.C.)*, II, Pisa 2006, 561-593.

Agora: in ancient Greece it was the main square of the *polis* (city).

Alabastron: small ointment container.

Analemma: bearing wall.

Kotiliskos: miniaturistic Corinthian two-handled cup.

Krateriskos: miniaturistic two-handled vase.

Oikos: small sacred building with no porch.

Pithos: large terracotta container for foodstuffs.

Polos: cylindrical headgear for goddesses.

Prytaneion: Greek building where the fire sacred to *Hestia* was kept.

Skyphos: small truncated shaped drinking cup.

Thesmophorion: sanctuary dedicated to *Demeter Thesmoforia* (law-bringer).



Edited by Soprintendenza Beni Culturali ed Ambientali di Palermo

Il Soprintendente
Maria Elena Volpes

Dirigente dell'Unità Operativa Beni Archeologici
Stefano Vassallo

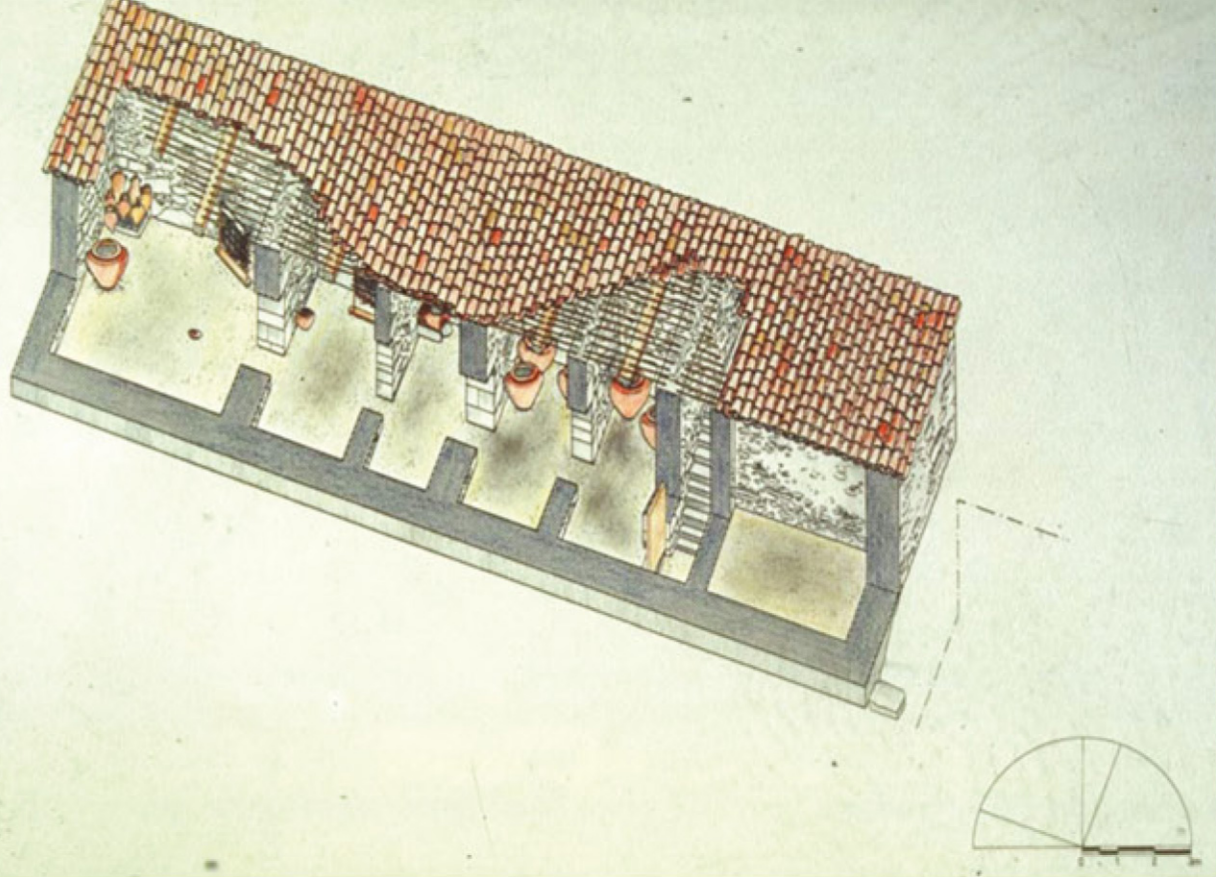
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Riccardo Sapia

Translation
Andrea Masi

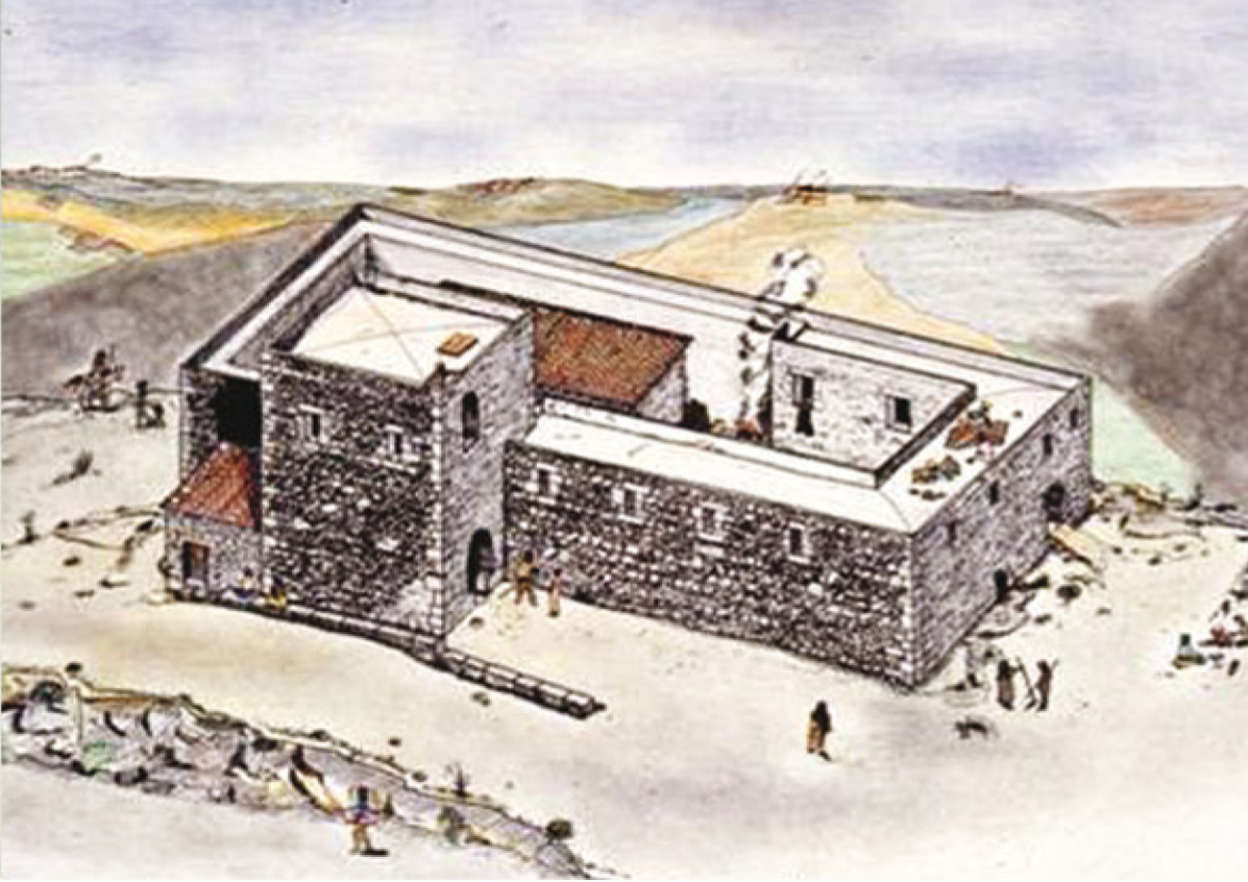
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREAS IN PALERMO PROVINCE



palermo himera iato solunto makella ustica colle madore maranfusa m.gna dei cavalli **entella**



Axonometric reconstruction of the granary/storehouse



Hypothetical reconstruction of the fortified palace in the second half of the 12th cen



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