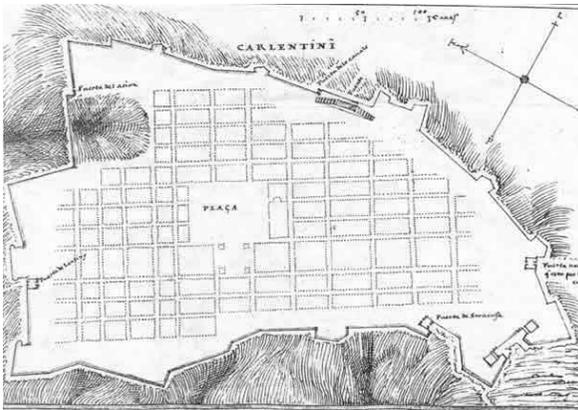


Carlentini

Carlentini (approx.18.000 inh.) on the hill Meta with the beautiful view of the Plain of Catania and the Volcano Etna , was founded in 1551 by the viceroy Giovanni de Vega as a Fortress-Town strengthened against the Turkish raids and was named Carlentini in honor of the Emperor Charles V. Destroyed by the earthquake of 1693, it was rebuilt on the same site with an interesting regular urban chessboard plan.



At page 68 and 69 of his *Travels in the two Sicilies* Vol. IV. published in London in 1780 **Henry Swinburne** writes: "About two miles from Lentini , we passed before Carlentini , a town of three thousand souls , built by Charles the Fifth , and almost ruined by an earthquake. The country behind is very pleasant , and resembles many tracks of forest land in the south of England ; the hills are of moderate elevation , separated by wild , woody dingles , with clear brooks tumbling down the rocks, overshadowed by large and lopped olive - trees.

From the elevation of the country , a variety of exquisite views may be enjoyed on every side, principally towards the north - east, where Ætna , Catania , ..."

Area of the Greek Town

A description

We have a description of the colony by the Greek historian Polybius dating back to the second century B. C. E. He writes about two entrance gates: the Southern Gate towards Syracuse and the Northern Gate towards Catania. The Agora, the central square, was probably located in the middle of the valley while the houses and the temples were built on the slopes and at the top of the hills. On your right you can see The Metapiccola Hill and on your left San Mauro Hill.

The Necropolis

Outside the Southern Gate you can see the remains of a necropolis that dates back between the 4th and the end of the 3rd century B.C. E. The excavations have brought to light monumental tombs called Epytimbia probably for powerful people and tombs for common people.

Content Curator Nuccia Silvana Pirruccello

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Leontinoi

The city has two gates, one on the southern extremity of this valley leading to Syracuse, the other at the northern leading on to the "Leontine plains," and the arable district. Close under the westernmost of the steep cliffs runs a river called Lissus ; parallel to which are built continuous rows of houses, in great numbers, close under the cliff, between which and the river runs the road I have mentioned. . .

Histories. Polybius. Evelyn S. Shuckburgh. translator. London, New York. Macmillan. 1889. Reprint Bloomington 1962.



Archaeological Finds, Necropolis and Defensive Walls



- Amphora with painted subgeometric decoration, S.Eligio necropolis
- Large bowl with subgeometric engraved decoration, S.Eligio Necropolis.
- Little Statue, S. Mauro
- Amphora fragment with black figures representing the birth of Athena, Votive Tablet, Metapiccola.
- Fragment of a bowl with black figures, quadriga race, Votive Tablet, Metapiccola.
- Corinthian pottery Votive Tablet Alaimo, Lentini.



- Little horse shaped vase, S.Mauro
- Set found in a tomb, S.Mauro Necropolis
- Crater Fragment with red figures and inscription
- Italiot Crater representing a theatrical scene
- Tile with lid, Caracausi

The first enclosure wall

The Greek settlement dates back to the 7th century B.C. E. as it is shown by the perimeter of the first enclosure wall.

Marks from the cave

A special attention is to be given to the wall showing epigraphs, marking the cave from which they were extracted.



The second enclosure wall

At first the Greeks probably mixed with the local population and later in the sixth century they built a second enclosure wall surrounding both the hills of San Mauro and Metapiccola.

A special fortification

This fortification was made up of two rows of big squared stones and crashed stones to fill the space between the two rows. It stretched to the Southern Gate and up to the Hill.



First excavations

In 1950, professor Giovanni Rizza from the University of Catania started the excavations. Three sets of enclosure walls dating back to the 7th 6th and 3rd century B.C. E. were brought to light along with the Southern Entrance Gate.

Outside the Gate you can see a necropolis that dates back between the fourth and the end of the third century B. C.E.

In the middle of the valley

The Greeks came in the area in 729 B.C. E. They were Chalcidians from Naxos the first Greek colony in Sicily. Theocles was their leader. They were attracted by the fertility of the plain they had been walking through and decided to settle in San Mauro Hill to dominate and control the Lestrigoni fields.

Leontinoi was the only Greek colony founded far from the seaside and this proves the importance given to its agricultural resources.