

## Its origins between history and legend

According to a legend narrated by Diodorus, Liparus, son of the king Auson, after a strong argument with his brothers and as he owned ships and warriors, run away from Italy to settle in Lipari, where he founded a town which was called after his name.

The population was called Auson. As Liparus grew old, his daughter Ciane married Heolos who, as the ancient Greek legends hand down, turned to be the hospitable king welcoming Ulysses in his island. Heolos had six sons and one of them XOUTHOS, settled in the area surrounding Lentini and founded the XOUTHIA village, so-called after his name.

## The seven huts

The most likely date for the village is between the 11th and the 9th century B.C. The huts on Metapiccola are, however, different from the ones dating back to the same age and discovered in Sicily. On the contrary, they present close similarities with the settlements discovered in Lipari ( Auson II culture) and with those on Colle Palatino in Rome.

The village must have ceased to exist when the Chalcidean colonies under the leadership of Theocles founded Leontinoi in 729 B.C. E. in the same place. The plan of a Greek temple and some remains of the walls of the houses are still visible.

## The hill and the village

### The hill

Metapiccola Hill belongs to the northern part of the Monti Iblei and it is situated between the hills of San Mauro and Meta Grande where Carlentini lies. The farm track leading up to the hill is immediately on the right side of the entrance to the Archaeological area of Leontinoi.

### The village

The top of the Metapiccola Hill is a large plateau. Here, in 1955, during the excavations conducted by professor Giovanni Rizza, seven rectangular huts, whose base is dug into the rock, came to light. Post holes were arranged along the edges and corners at regular intervals to support the wooden frame of the huts. Along the central axis, inside the huts, there were holes for one or more posts which supported the ridge-pole of the pent roof.

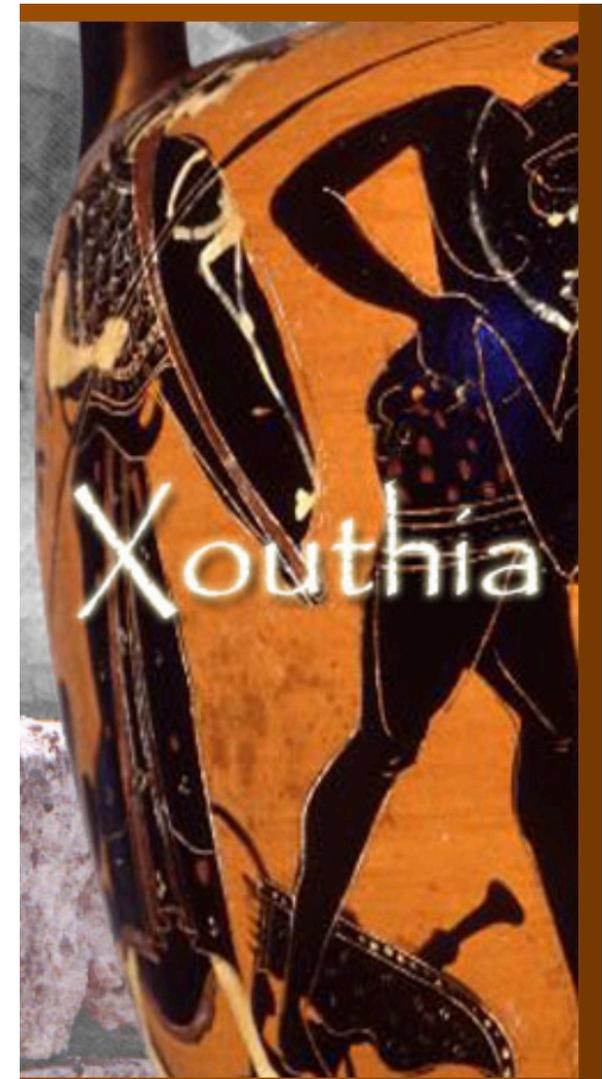
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# Xouthia

*The protohistoric village on Metapiccola Hill*



# Archaeological Finds and Legends



Corinthian Kothon , from a votive tablet in Metapiccola



Fragments of Neolithic pottery with engraved decoration, Campolato



Little Vase with painted decoration after Castelluccio style, Lentini



Polymorphous Vase , village of Metapiccola



Cooker, village of Metapiccola



Bronze Objects, from the necropolis of Cugno Carrubbe

## Ceres and Sicanus

According to some ancient writers, Sicanus, son of a Cyclopes, married Ceres who made the land produce corn.



## Proserpine and Pluto

Their beautiful daughter Proserpine was raped by Pluto, king of the underworld, somewhere in the Lestrigoni fields. Ceres and Proserpine maintain their cult as goddesses.



## Hercules

According to Diodoro Siculo the great Greek hero visited the Lestrigoni fields and was so impressed by the beauty of the place that he wanted to leave signs of his presence.

## Nemean Lion skin

Most of Leontini coins have a lion signifying strength. The name of the town was modified in Leontini after the Nemean Lion skin Hercules gave to Ceres as a present.



## Lestrigonies

As the ships approached the harbour, Ulysses sent three of his companions to investigate about the inhabitants of that land. They met a big woman who happened to be the king's daughter. From the square that woman started to call Antfades her father and king who came immediately, fetched one of the three men and devoured him. The other two managed to escape and get to the ship. Antfades run and shouted back to gather his people, the Lestrigones who carried huge stones to throw against Ulysses' ships.

## Cyclopes and Etna

Polyphemus, the one-eyed Cyclopes, imprisoned Ulysses and his companions into his cave to devour them. Ulysses made him blind by driving a burning ember into his eye after having offered him a very alcoholic wine, which made him drunk. He and his companions succeeded in getting out of the cave each hiding beneath a sheep. Once again the hero is able to defeat cannibal giants.

