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Ava Coates April 8, 2025

A Modern People in an Ancient Land: An Archaeological Ethnography of Mythmaking, Landscape, and Living Memory in Selinunte, Sicily

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Abstract

A Modern People in an Ancient Land:
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This thesis explores how modern people in the town situated next to the ancient Greek city of Selinunte interact with the legacy and lives of the ancient occupants of the same land. This study highlights that while scholarly interactions with the past through archaeology and historical documentation is valuable in the continuing exploration of the past, the past also communicates with the present through experience and interaction with the archaeological landscape between those who have lived there in the past and in the present. Chapter one provides a theoretical framework foregrounding landscape, heritage, and memory studies and how the three areas balance two perceptions of space and time: the Institutional perspective, which divides past and present in order to preserve and study the past, and the Experiential perspective, which perceives the past and present as a continuously flowing entity which constantly interacts through landscape. Chapter two provides a historical background of Selinunte and offers that the present echoes the past when traversing the landscape of the ancient city. Chapter three describes how the local residents of Selinunte interact with the ruins of the park in spontaneous ways, and how modern divisions between the past and the present temper that interaction. Chapter four describes how ecological, climatic, and environmental factors may aid in human communication across time. Chapter five introduces the role of the archaeologists in the town and in the park and explores how archaeologists may incorporate more experience-related interactions with the park among the local population. Chapter six introduces the cultural context of Selinunte and Sicily to discussions of the archaeological park and considers the ways in which area specific issues—the mafia, historical legacy, anti-Sicilian bias—temper the continued local interaction and communication with the ancient city of Selinunte. Finally, Chapter six concludes that through modern continuous interaction with the archaeological landscape and remnants of the past, residents in Selinunte can make waves across time and learn through experience rather than only through historical canon.

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To my family, who gifted me this love of history, of art, of knowledge, of stories, and especially my mom, who listened to my frustrations, fears, anxieties, and kept me going when I was in my most difficult moments.

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unlimited sea of books that I always wanted, and finally, I would also like to thank the Emory Anthropology Department, whose efforts for their students never cease.

Table of Contents

Glossary of Names

*signifies that name has been changed

Adela*: Adela is a German woman who works as a tour guide in the park and as a chef to the German excavation team during their excavation. She is wife to Giuseppe, a local Sicilian who is the owner of the workmen company in the park. She has lived in Selinunte for many years. She is in her 60s.

Agrigento: Agrigento is another ancient Greek city in Southwestern Sicily. Because of their similarities---both are in the same region, both are ancient Greek archaeological sites---Selinunte is often compared to Agrigento; in Selinunte, many believe that Selinunte is the better archaeology site but is managed worse, which in turn causes Agrigento to receive far more tourists throughout the year.

Antonio*: Antonio is the brother-in-law to Enzo, and by extension, to Elena. He is not a native Selinuntian, but he is Sicilian; he has spent a lot of time in Selinunte because his wife, Enzo's sister, is from there.

Castelvetrano: Castelvetrano is a town about 15 kilometers from Selinunte, Selinunte is often seen as an extension of this city. It is known for olive production and its distinct Mafia presence, particularly that of former famous Mafia boss, Matteo Messina Denaro.

Charlotte*: Charlotte is a native German who has lived in Selinunte for many years. She is married to a native Selinuntian and has an art shop with him where they make wood sculptures,

jewelry, and other pieces. Many town meetings occur in the yard of her shop, which is right next to the archaeological park. She is in her 60s or 70s.

Dante*: Dante is a native of Selinunte; he is a musician, and his family has been in the fishing business for many years. He currently works at a hotel in the summer and travels to work during some winters. He is in his 30s.

Elena*: Married to Enzo, Elena is a local Selinuntian in her 30s. Well-educated and worldly, she supplies a wealth of knowledge. I was introduced to her through my host Miriam; I also became friends with her two young children and met her husband through her.

Enzo*: Married to Elena, Enzo is also a local Selinuntian in his 30s. He has a PhD and teaches math at the local grade school in Castelvetrano.

Giuseppe*: Giuseppe is the owner of the workmen company which works with the archaeologists during the excavation season. He is husband to Adela, also an interlocutor, and their son works for his company. He is in his 70s.

Jochen*: Jochen is a local Selinuntian in his 30s. His mother is German and his father is Selinuntian; with his father, he operates one of the most popular restaurants in town, which happens to be on the beach next to the archaeological park.

Karen*: Karen is a British woman in her 70s who lives in Castelvetrano. She first moved to Selinunte as a nanny and met her husband, a native Selinuntian, as a young woman. She had several children in Selinunte and now has grandchildren as well. One of her children is also an interlocutor.

Leah*: Leah is an American National, married and divorced from a Sicilian. She lives in Castelvetrano and has young children. We met because her partner is Enzo's cousin.

Marco*: Marco is a concierge at the Casa di Latomie, the villa that produced olive oil from ancient trees. He informed me of the history of olive trees in the area and philosophized with me about olives. Marco is originally from Venezuela but lives in Castelvetrano now.

Maria*: Maria is a local Castelvetranese woman in her 40s. She is the daughter of a Sicilian man and another interlocutor, Karen. She worked in the ticket office in the park for several years.

Marinella di Selinunte: Also referred to just as 'Selinunte', it is the small town next to the Archaeological Park of Selinunte.

Miriam*: Miriam is a Kenyan National, married into Sicilian life and is currently divorced. She has a ten-year-old son. Miriam allowed me into her home as a houseguest during my research and connected me to the majority of interlocutors whom I interviewed.

Wendy*: Wendy is an interlocutor from the United States. She is a part-time resident of Selinunte but still spends most of her year in the United States. She is in her 30s or 40s.

I

Introduction

Setting the Stage

On one of my last nights in Marinella di Selinunte, I attended a play.

Under the golden spotlights set up by the Archaeological Park of Selinunte, Temple E, a temple dedicated to Hera, (or perhaps Aphrodite, or some other Greek goddess), looked like it was glowing. Set atop an incline in the land, it felt like the crowd of locals and tourists were parading toward sparkling Olympus. I arrived at the temples, shoulder to shoulder with dozens of others buzzing around me, to the grand stage of Temple E just as the sunset spread across the horizon. In front of the temple, which was usually bare except for onlookers, a stage had been built; a rocking chair pony sat adorned with the finest furs. And alone with the pony, a guitar stood propped up on a stand.

The Archaeological Park of Selinunte, proclaimed by numerous pamphlets, tour guides, locals and archaeologists alike as the “Largest Archaeological Park in Europe” was holding its first theatrical production of the summer. The Temple, in ancient times an integral part of the ancient city, had become the glistening backdrop for this production. 200 people had gathered to watch, and just as the natural lights on the horizon disappeared, a silhouette of a man inside the temple grew closer to the audience. He entered the stage and took up the guitar, beginning a lament of classical Italian and Sicilian Music, which would later effortlessly mix with Spanish guitar, pop songs, and even the Pink Panther theme song. Soon after, the actor of this one man

Fig 1. *This was taken during the showing of Ulisse Raconta Ulisse in front of Temple E. Photo by author.*

show appeared from the hollow of the temple. He sat upon the rocking pony and transforming it into a trusty steed. The play was a single hour, one-man show, entitled *Ulisse Raconta Ulisse,* detailing the life of Odysseus in the Trojan War with comedic and dramatic anecdotes. With my elementary Italian skills, I strained to follow the fast-paced monologue but managed to laugh when everyone else did at the overemphasized physical comedy. As night descended, only the spotlights casting the ruins into golden splendor remained. The crowd followed the actor with intense interest.

When it was over, the crowd filtered out, leaving behind the golden-light reflected temple and the theatre it held, perhaps not understanding that they continue a tradition from antiquity, from when the temple was standing and when Greeks lived in the land. This tradition is one of ritual, of gathering, of dramatics and belief and tradition woven with the new developments of ever changing culture. The actor, detailing Odysseus's saga with a dedicated fervor, told a story of Greek legend, and perhaps the same stories were told in this city in 600 BCE, when the temple was in its prime. The memory lasts even when the people do not.

There was a poetic quality to this experience, watching Greek Myth come alive on a stage erected on the steps of one of the grandest of the temples in Selinunte. The story of Odysseus

sprang from the darkness of the temple's corridors and retreated back into the darkness like a whisper of the city long deserted. The modern residents of Selinunte are not descendants of the Greeks that once inhabited the land. The modern town is only about 100 years old. But while their blood does not tie them, the legacy of an ancient civilization echoes across the land, and the Selinuntians listen.

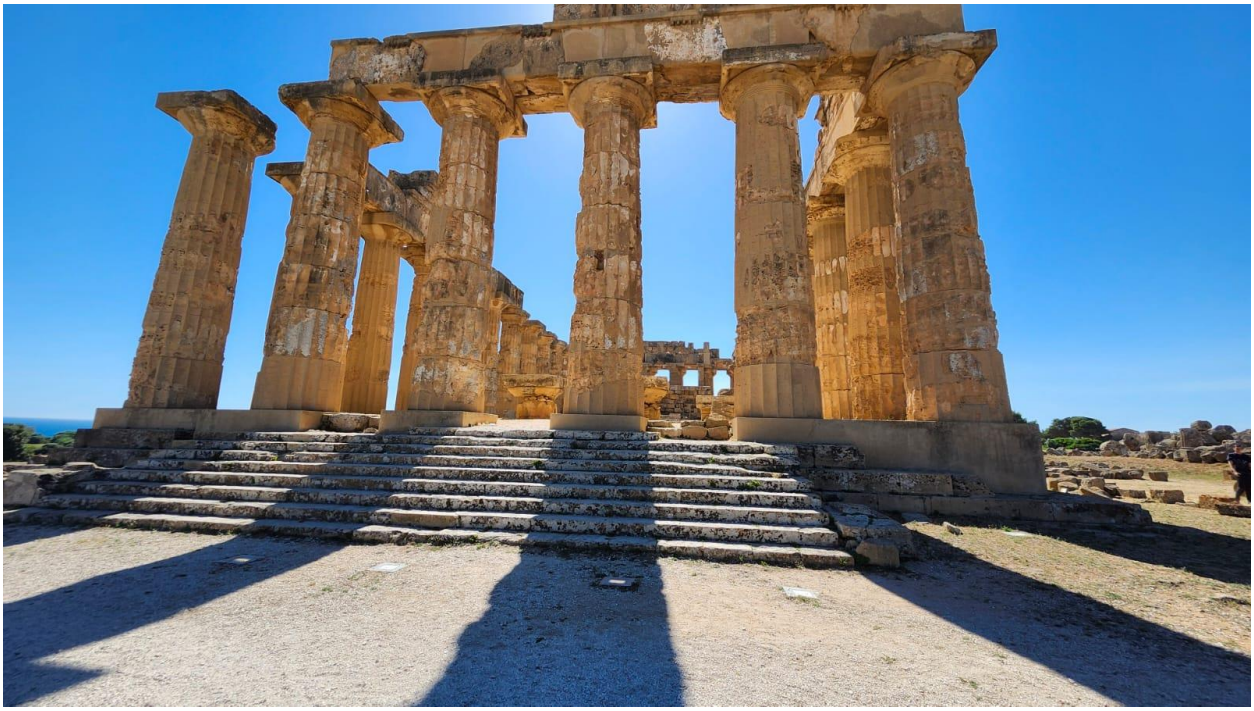

Fig. 2. *This is the reconstructed Temple E during the daytime. Photo taken by author.*

The modern residents of Marinella di Selinunte and the Ancient Selinuntians are neighbors—set apart by thousands of years, by culture, by lineage, but bridged together by two phenomena: living interaction with the space, which echoes within time and allows for modern discovery through experience, and historical discovery led by archaeological endeavors. The experience of the Selinuntians, one perhaps that breaches the bounds of time, is one integrally

connected and defined by archaeological processes. Both experienced and historical discovery offer connection, unconscious and unrealized, across time and space.

For the people in Marinella di Selinunte, a small town in Southwestern Sicily, memory is everything. The Memory of the Greeks, who built the sprawling city of Selinus which neighbors their village, reverberates through the town's core. Simon Harrison writes of memory in his research about human interaction with the land that "remembering and forgetting are always inextricably linked." Harrison says that "landscape becomes drawn not only into processes of social memory, but also…into those other, often less visible, processes of social forgetting to which remembering is bound" (Harrison 2004, 136).

This work will attempt to define the effects and boundaries of the archaeological influence on lives and memory, taking into account the ancient and modern relationship with landscape. I desire, in this endeavor, to reframe the ancient and modern experience of the people inhabiting this portion of land in Southwestern Sicily into one informed by those whose lives are intertwined into its landscape.

Archaeology aids in remembering, but also, equally, as Simon Harrison champions, in forgetting. Archaeological interest in Selinunte might rewrite the story of the land and its people into neat, ordered and linear paths, disallowing history of the land as the locals experience it in favor of the perspectives shaped by the hands and minds of academics and foreign archaeologists. When memory becomes institutionalized, at times it loses those human hands which once shaped it, and in turn, those memories are forgotten.

The modern residents of Selinunte also are integral cogs in remembering and forgetting of the ancient city. They remember in anecdotes, in museum cases, but also, they remember in walks through the park and in olive trees. With streets named after Greek gods, restaurants in the

shape of Temple E, and an economy significantly influenced by tourism, many residents of Selinunte define themselves with engagement to a remembered past. But though the ancient city is defined by the constant intent to preserve and protect the land from modern interaction, in this thesis I propose that preservation of the ancient city does not need to push out the modern to memorialize the ancient. Modern interaction is not always the enemy; it memorializes in different ways to history books and archaeological databases, but it remembers all the same.

Methods

My research took place across nine weeks in the summer of 2024. The first five were spent participating in the Institute of the Fine Arts-NYU's excavation on the Acropolis in the ancient city of Selinus, ruins that neighbor the town of Marinella di Selinunte. The following four weeks, in part defined by a local woman, Kenyan in nationality but a 12-year resident of Selinunte, taking me into her home, were spent conducting ethnographic interviews and observations within the town. In this thesis, I offer a synthesis of ancient texts, archaeological evaluations, ethnographic interviews, and participant observation to produce my data. I often weave together narrative ethnography with detailed analysis in order to demonstrate my theory. My network of interlocutors was first defined by Miriam's immediate circle, but by the end stretched far beyond, from hotel workers, park workmen, tour guides, art store owners, mothers, fathers, grandmothers, and elementary school teachers. My interview style was semi-structured; I asked baseline questions that did not change but changed each interview to fit the interlocutor's interests and life-experience, and I let the interlocutor guide much of the latter half of the interview.

Because of the limits of my research funding, local connections, and my own limited language skills, I was unable to conduct interviews in the local language, Italian, or the local

dialect, Sicilian. Interviews were conducted solely in English, which severely impacted and biased my work in Selinunte, a town with very few English speakers. My research will not be holistic; interlocutors trended toward Sicilians who have lived abroad, immigrants, children of immigrants, higher class individuals, and those married to immigrants. My ethnographic study is not a window looking into Selinunte, but rather a mirror.[1] Selinunte is largely inhabited by traditional, familial dynasties, Sicilians ingrained in a specific way of being for generations. Most in this town have never lived anywhere besides Sicily. This research looks at the experience of those not fully outside, but too not fully within, who have lived and breathed this complex web of the Sicilian way of life. Perhaps this experience may itself mirror the experience of the history of Selinus. Selinus was an ancient Greek city; it was a city of immigrants. My collaborators seem to be the newest wave of immigration, but the land has seen foreigners for thousands of years.

Archaeology as a Social Practice

Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos write about an anthropological practice focusing on the social processes of archaeology, detail a subdiscipline in anthropology coined archaeological ethnography, noting that "archaeology is a social practice in the present" (Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009, 65-87). They write that "in many ways ethnographic archaeology is a novel hybrid of two anthropological subfields yet simultaneously…it is an approach that draws on distinct concerns within ethnography and archaeology about the meanings of archaeology in the present" (Castañeda and Matthews 2008, 1). Lynn Meskell, whose body of work has been

[1] For discussions on the anthropological mirror, see Klyde Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man;* for a case study and discussion on positionality as narrative ethnographers; also see Lisa Tillman-Healy and Christine E Kiesinger, "Mirrors: Seeing each other And ourselves through Fieldwork."

extremely influential in this field, details the hybrid practice of archaeology and ethnography, noting that "Archaeological ethnography is a holistic anthropology that is improvisational and context dependent" (Meskell 2005, 83).

Ethnographic archaeology[2] has provided a framework for numerous case studies in regions across the world. Hamish Forbes writes about the Greek countryside in this context (Forbes 2007), as does Lekakis and Dragouni (2020) and Hamilakis (2007; 2013). Lynn Meskell often focuses on the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East (Meskell 1998), South Africa (Meskell 2005; Meskell 2012), Egypt (1998) and others. Often, discussions in archaeological ethnography focus on the positionality of the archaeologist, relationships with stakeholders, documentation of archaeological processes, transcultural exchange, and more broadly the relationship between archaeologists, archaeological sites, and the local community around the site (Castañeda and Matthews 2008). For the purpose of this work, I will touch on all of these but will be focusing on the relationship between the archaeological site and the local inhabitants, exploring topics such as heritage, landscape, memory, and relationship with the past.

Patty Jo Watson conducts an Archaeology Ethnography in Iran (1979). She discusses experiencing the past through the lens of the present; she writes that through basic sociological and ethnological processes, present observers of the ancient past are able to make inferences about life in the past (Watson 1979, 1). This work offers commentary on archaeology as a social practice, especially how the processes that are involved in understanding the past are intrinsically linked with our own frameworks for understanding the present.

However, ethnographic archaeology should not be confused with its related and similar-sounding discipline, ethnoarchaeology. Ethnoarchaeology is the study of living cultures from

[2] Though authors use many different terms, I find ethnographic archaeology, used in Castañeda and Mathew's edited volume, as well as in Lynn Meskel's paper (among others) to be the most accurate description of my work.

archaeological perspectives (Sengupta et. al. 2006, xix), therefore as a practice it is analogic. Various scholars have chastised the study of ethnoarchaeology, such as Gosselain in his provocative article that sums up the gripes often associated with ethnoarchaeology, entitled "To Hell with Ethnoarchaeology!" He writes that "it (ethnoarchaeology) carries implicitly an old evolutionary—and racist—ideology that divides the world between modern Western societies (inappropriate for ethnoarchaeological research) and premodern exotic societies (well fitted for ethnoarchaeological research)" (Gosselain 2016). He criticizes ethnoarchaeology for characterizing modern day societies that are the focus of such studies as living fossils. However, other scholars, as indicated by the response article aptly entitled "To Hell with Ethnoarchaeology…and Back!" believe the discipline to have evolved in the last quarter century into a subdiscipline respectful of all populations, valued for its contributions to material culture studies all over the world. They find Gosselain and those who follow his line of thinking as reductionist of the ethnoarchaeological scholarship (Lyons and David 2019, 99). I tend to agree with those who caution against analogical arguments; as Ian Hodder writes, "if things in societies in the present and past are similar in some aspects, this does not mean they are similar in others" (Hodder 2012, 12). This work will in general not cross into ethnoarchaeology, though I may compare ancient and modern populations in how they, as separate communities, interact with the same natural landscape.

Gabriel Moshenska defines public archaeology as the "practice and scholarship where archaeology meets the world" (Moshenska 2017, 3). It shares similarities with previous definitions, such as Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos's, of archaeological ethnography. Public archaeology may be seen as a more holistic interpretation of archaeology defined by knowledge in a broad range of fields including economics, community outreach, digital media, political

science, and any number of other disciplines as they regard archaeology as a socio-political process.[3]

Regardless of the terminology, archaeology as a social practice has an extensive and varied expanse of literature which touches on many different disciplines and fields and ranges all the regions of the world.

Landscape

In his article *Temporality of the Landscape,* Tim Ingold defines what he calls the "dwelling perspective", through which "landscape is constituted as an enduring record of—and testimony to—the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves" (1993, 152). Ingold's dwelling perspective draws on his 1992 chapter which, with several other voices from the same volume (such as Croll and Parkin 1992) rally against the perceived dichotomy of the human and natural worlds as separate entities and instead offer a more nuanced perspective where nature and culture are not detached but rather mutual entities (Ingold 1992).

In his book, *A Phenomenology of Landscape,* Christopher Tilley writes that there are two different categories for how literature conceptualizes space: "abstract space" which is defined as atemporal, objective, and scientific—in many cases, defined by its natural and human-less qualities, and a "human space" which is meaning-laden, temporal, and relational. Tilley subscribes to the latter, writing that "the meanings of space always involve a subjective dimension and cannot be understood apart from the symbolically constructed lifeworlds of social actors…what space is depends on who is experiencing it and how" (Tilley 1994, 8-11). He then

[3] For a more specific interpretation of the term, see Gabriel Moshenska's edited Volume, *Key Concepts in Public Archaeology (2017).*

applies this to landscape, where he says, “The landscape is an anonymous sculptural form always already fashioned by human agency, never completed, and constantly being added to…” (Tilley 1994, 23). By applying this framework to landscape, Tilley’s argument combines with Ingold’s to propose the concept of human space as having adopted the dwelling perspective. Even landscapes, which may mark themselves with the curve of a valley or a thousand-year tree trunk, which may work in units of kilometers or miles, are not without human intervention; they rely on dwellers to ascribe meaning and add to these units of numerical information. One may connect this with the common thought experiment, “if a tree falls in a forest and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound?” What is landscape, if not a space to be experienced? Do those scientific units of fact have meaning devoid of living experience?

These themes have been adapted into archaeological ethnographies similar to my own. In his archaeological ethnography of Rural Greek landscapes, Hamish Forbes finds this perspective split in two different ways across the lines of the anthropological subdisciplines. He writes that for years archaeologists have focused on “the site,” and anthropologists “the community,” while both failed to widen their attention to that which defines and surrounds both (Forbes 2007, 1-3). Forbes’s keenness in understanding the impact of landscape on living communities and their joint connection to archaeology parallels Ingold, whose dwelling perspective, he writes, should be adopted by both archaeologists and social anthropologists (Ingold 1993).

In their articles, both Ingold and Tilley suggest the landscape is conceptualized in two ways; the first is the dwelling perspective, through which landscape is meaning-laden and temporal. The second is more clinical; it separates modern human interaction from the processes of the landscape, and approaches the landscape as atemporal, objective, and scientific.

Heritage

Peter Howard writes that “Heritage is taken to include everything that people want to save (Howard 2003, 1). Heritage as an interdisciplinary study has long defied a stable definition (Harvey 2001, 2); However, literature which details topics of heritage tends to agree that at the most basic level, heritage deals with the past (Johnson and Thomas, 1995, 85).

The study and management of heritage in the last century has trended toward preservation and conservation of heritage. This is consonant with the contemporary approach to view “history as a commodity” and the desire to “time travel” in order to evoke nostalgia (Lowenthal 1985, 384-387). Along this line of thinking, heritage has also been characterized as solely a commercial and postmodern concept which began in the 1970s (Harvey 2001, 5). Conservation, however, evokes culturally specific values of histories as commodities, and of past as a completed action uninfluenced by current actions. This may contrast with a critical turn in the discipline; forefronted by heritage scholars through the years such as David Lowenthal (1985), Lynn Meskell (2002; 2011), and Laurajane Smith (2020), many have identified heritage not as only dealing with the past, but rather as an ongoing process “...of engagement, an act of communication and an act of making meaning in the present (Smith 2020, 1; see also Howard 2003, 186-210). In the literature, there are two critical trends in how scholars and those who deal with heritage think about it: on one end, there is the commodified heritage, heritage which, through the popular fascination with understanding and preserving the past, treats the past as an event that has ended. On the other end is heritage, which is highlighted as an ongoing process where modern cultural practices build on and constantly rearrange the past to derive meaning from it.

In, “Heritage in the Making: Rural Heritage and its Mnemeiosis at Naxos Island, Greece”, Lekakis and Dragouni apply the concept of heritage as an ongoing process where people interact with the archaeological landscape, what they call “heritage in the making” (2020). As Lekakis and Dragouni demonstrate, archaeology may accentuate the divide which defines heritage as either commodified and frozen in time or locally sourced and ongoing. The modern industry of archaeology and heritage has been obsessed in recent years with “preservation” of the past, notoriously lacking interest in current, living people (Zimmerman 2008, 183-204). As extractors of information, archaeologists may in turn run the risk of commodifying heritage and framing it within literature as frozen and stagnant as opposed to changing and ongoing.

History or Memory?

Theorizations of memory in this thesis are primarily rooted in Pierre Nora’s philosophical writings on memory and heritage sites. Nora dissects memory and history; in the first volume of his book *Realms of Memory* (*Les Lieux de Mémoire* in the original French), he writes:

> Memory is life, always embodied in living societies and as such in permanent evolution, subject to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of the distortions to which it is subject, vulnerable in various ways to the appropriation and manipulation, and capable of lying dormant for long periods only to be suddenly reawakened. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is always a phenomenon of the present, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past. Memory, being a phenomenon of emotion and magic, accommodates only those facts that suit it. It thrives on vague, telescoping reminiscences, on hazy general impressions or specific

> symbolic details…history, being an intellectual, non-religious activity, calls for analysis and critical discourse. Memory situates remembrance in a sacred context. History ferrets it out…At the heart of history is a criticism destructive of spontaneous memory. (Nora 1996, 3)

Nora separates living memory from "intellectual, non-religious" history. While living memory is in conversation with the past, which carries on the past into a perpetual present, historical memory attempts to reconstruct the past and forcefully divides it from the present, often at the expense of spontaneous memory-making. Clinical, scientific, and free of frivolity, history is seen as more objective. While it may deny its humanistic connections, history is composed of human interpretations, a fact that is becoming more recognized. However, while living memory does not pretend to portray objectivity, history may be predisposed to this habit (Harvey 2001, 7). David Harvey calls this history, which acts in contrast to living memory, "Institutionalized memory." Institutionalized, or "modern" memory belongs in the archives (7). Institutionalized memory is that which relies on historical record over the traditional, living memory of everyday people. It severs the present connection to the past, freezing the past into a dimension in space untouchable by human hands, when in fact it is through modern human hands that the past is shaped. However, living memory continues on in these spaces, ingrained in traditions and habits of everyday people (Nora 1996, 1-20; Johnson 1999, 170-178; Harvey 2001, 7).

Nora's three volume book set centers around *lieux de mémoire*, or places of memory, which exist only when society leaves behind the natural experience of living memory in favor of institutionalized memory. He writes that in societies of postmodernism, where the past has been torn from us, the *milieux de mémoire*—the social environments of memory—the traditional, everyday present interactions with the past, all but cease to exist. Now, society relies on

microcosms of memory—*lieux de mémoire*—to truly experience the collective memory which has been all but eradicated in favor of the more historical interpretations of the past.

Subsequent conversations with Nora's work, such as with Phillips and Reyes's 2011 edited volume, also combine memory with place, offering memorial spaces as a "memoryscape" (Phillips and Reyes 2011, 1-26). Memory is pliable, and it is through this pliability that modern interaction is bound and defined, especially as illustrated through physical landscape (Harrison 2004, 135-151).

Combining Landscape, Heritage, and Memory: The Theoretical Framework

It is human nature to interact with and make meaning of one's surroundings. Among landscape studies, scholars have identified two converse ways of understanding the landscape: landscapes as inhuman and scientific, or landscapes as records of human interaction—a world inscribed by Ingold's dwelling perspective. In heritage studies, heritage tilts between modern, commodified heritage, which treats history as a commodity and heritage as intent to travel through time to the unchangeable past, often with a deep need to preserve the past, and heritage as a process, which celebrates that heritage is not only centered around what occurred in the past, but it is also that which continues to interact with the past in the present. In Memory studies, Nora and others have identified historical memory, the memory of archives, as a forceful division of the past whose reconstructions are always incomplete, as opposed to living memory, memory as a continuing action in the present. Each of these bodies of literature mark a steep difference in ideologies. Through this perceived dichotomy explained in Landscape, Heritage, and Memory studies, we may find that scholars have keenly identified this dichotomy as two overall scholarly outlooks toward space and time: the institutionalized and the experienced.

Landscape	Heritage	Memory	=	Perspective
Scientific space	Commodified heritage	Historic Memory	=	Institutionalized perspective
Dweller Landscape	Heritage in the making	Living Memory	=	Experiential perspective

Fig. 3. This is a chart of the mentioned framework.

There is the institutionalized perspective: this is the popular perspective of the modern day, the perspective of objectivity, and the commodification of an object, finite past. This is the perspective of governments, nations, often of science and "objective" scholarship. This is the perspective of the past as a dimension which is uninfluenced by the ugly present. The institutionalized perspective is where human interaction is considered a contaminant to fact.

There is also the experiential perspective; this is the perspective of the individual, the perspective which understands that life is a process which interacts with the past in infinite ways. The experiential perspective does not forget the human touch, and instead codifies it; it understands that the past and the present act not as a line but as constantly overlapping interactions. The experiential perspective, relying on processual heritage, on the dwelling perspective, and on memory, understands that the past is undefinable, constantly changing, and reliant on narratives which are constructed by human hands. Neither the experiential nor the institutionalized perspectives are objective—and neither may be defined in black and white morality, though my language thus far, and my anthropological tendencies, may betray an inclination toward the experiential perspective. Preservation of historical spaces and objects—firmly within an institutionalized perspective—promotes learning, understanding of the past, and allows modern day people to humanize people from history. Historical archives, while they might stand in theoretical opposition to the *milieux de mémoire,* offer documentation about a

world so brimming with endless units of information that any semblance of the past could drown in it without stable records. But at the same time, the institutional perspective often forgets the human in favor of a perceived objective reality. The institutional perspective, true to its name, is what is preferred by modern institutions such as national governments, international governing bodies, and academia (as functioning in a postmodern society). Therefore, in this thesis I intend to favor the experiential perspective in order to illustrate that it has an equal and integral place in the world.

The archaeoscape, which I define thoroughly in chapter III but here will be defined as simply the landscape of the archaeological park, a memoryscape and a realm of memory, is a place which is heavily infused with meaning by both the institutional and experiential perspectives. In the archaeoscape, the institutional perspective and the experiential perspective are constantly at war. The past is so resonant in the land that the institutionalized perspective rushes to save it. But in the experiential perspective, too, people can feel the resonance of the past, but instead of intellectualizing it, they feel it.

Here we stumble upon a framework akin to *mythos* and *logos*, imagination versus reason, objective versus subjective. Philosopher Henry Corbin adds—as I will—an intermediary between the two perspectives. Corbin denotes a material world, a sensory world, and an intermediate world between them, which he calls the *mundus imaginalis*—the imaginal world. The imaginal world is "above the world of the senses and below the pure intelligible world" (Corbin 2000, 76). Corbin stresses that he uses *imaginal* in search for a way to ensure his audience does not think that the imaginal world is fictitious by using the word imaginary.

In an article discussing Corbin's framework, M. Alan Kazlev adds mythopoesis—mythmaking—into the worlds, noting that myths and mythmaking are representations of this

imaginal reality; they are the archetypal narratives which populate the imaginal (Kazlev 2021, 1-8). He writes:

> Just as science and technology enable us to understand, interact with, and manipulate the external material-physical world, so myths fill the same function regarding the imaginal, which is the inner world of meaning and purpose, just as essential as the external world. (Kazlev 2021, 9)

So just as within Corbin's-framework of the imaginal world, between the experiential perspective and the institutionalized perspective there is a space where mythopoesis occurs. As makers of meaning, humans may find the places where the experiential perspective peels away from the institutionalized perspective, places where the experiential perspective begins to overlay and skew perceptions of the institutional perspective, and humans may grasp this dissonance, these overlapping atmospheres, and create a truth that makes sense of both. This truth is myth.

Pierre Nora writes that "Memory, being a phenomenon of emotion and magic, accommodates those facts that suit it" (1996, 3). Memory is myth in much the same way that it is magic; myth, like memories, are a refraction of the world within the humanness of the experiential perspective. In this thesis, though I write about labors and theatrics beneath the metopes of ancient Greek myth, it would be easy to equate my mythopoesis to the fantastical stories of Zeus or Athena. Myth is a freighted word, and with it comes the weight of many years of anthropological theorizations; Levi-Strauss, famous among other endeavors for his structural study of myth, writes of relatively fictitious stories which have evolved to explain the unexplainable (Lévi-Strauss 1955); however, as Karakasidou and Tsibiridou write, "the word 'myth' has also become synonymous with any kind of 'master narrative'" (2006, 2). So when I say *myth* within this thesis, I do not intend to suggest something is fictitious. In fact, the opposite

is true. In the experiential perspective, it is the human aspect that comes into the forefront, and myth, being the space between the experiential and institutional perspectives, may be truer than any other processes within this web. In this thesis, myths are an adjunct part to the system that is the experiential perspective. They are those aspects of culture which swell up because of the dissonance between the experiential and the institutionalized. Mythopoesis is that dissonance personified; it is the sensory world making sense of the material, the institutional creating order within the experiential. Myths are not always completely true but are always universally applicable; through mythopoesis, people make sense of the disorder.

Take, for instance, a topic which I will expound on heavily in chapter VI: the mythopoesis around the Mafia. The Mafia is inarguably real, their effects dire, and their impact great. But it is the way that the Mafia is spoken about that tends to lean toward mythmaking. The Mafia is described as the personification of all that is corrupt in Sicily; to some, the Mafia is the cause of political and cultural strife which Sicily endures. To others, the Mafia is the effect of the strife. Even beyond Sicily, such as in Northern Italy or even the United States, Sicily is often characterized as irrefutably connected to the Mafia. The Mafia personifies some greater climate within Sicily, some effects which include political corruption, trash on the ground, ongoing arson, cultural selfishness, and any other less desirable aspects of society. The Mafia becomes a tool which people use to explain and illustrate the struggles they encounter because of the ongoing issue of their region. This is the way in which I use myth in this context.

The Institutional and the Experiential

The institutional and the experiential perspectives are at war in *lieux de mémoire,* places of memory. As the institutional perspective banishes the present from view in these places of

memory, the experiential perspective celebrates the interconnectedness of the past and the present. Both the institutional and experiential perspectives enact the remembering and forgetting in the landscape.

Within the institutionalized perspective, the past is remembered through preservation of antiquity, the reconstruction of the past, the thorough documentation of history, and the belief that the past should remain protected from the present. But because of this, the past is indeed also forgotten: archaeological excavations can destroy untouched strata of interaction, reconstructed temples can approximate reality and therefore may overwrite it, preservation of goods may remove remnants of the past from the landscape and put them in museums many kilometers away. The institutional perspective works to freeze the past, to time travel into a past devoid of modern human interaction, and therefore engages in the forgetting and erasing of the modern humans that still exist and interact with the land. The institutional perspective overwrites the past by reconstructing and approximating while still being influenced by the subjectivity of academic scholarship. As coming from a place of authority, the institutionalized perspective is listened to as objective and therefore may overwrite the parts of the past which fail to be perfectly deciphered.

Within the experiential perspective, remembering and forgetting are enacted in an opposite manner. Humans remember in the landscape through daily interactions which carry memories from past to future. Human remembering is continuous and spontaneous. They find their own ways to communicate with the past by beginning again where the ancients stopped; they celebrate in large groups, walk the paths of ancient storefronts and prune olive trees planted by ancient hands. In moments of simultaneous memory and erasure, the modern residents set fire to trees, echoing flames from thousands of years ago as the ashes settle into the soil. Their

actions may also overwrite the past; as children jump from broken pillar to broken pillar, playing hide-and-seek in what was once a sacred shrine, their new interactions change the purpose of the land from temple to playground. They engage in a repurposing and their own reconstruction of the land through their spontaneous interaction; where the institutional perspective reconstructs by rebuilding temples, the experiential perspective reconstructs through spontaneous interaction and memory making. Within the experiential perspective, memory is fluid, and as people dwell within this ancient landscape, the landscape begins to take on new purposes: backyard, playground, olive grove, festival hall, and whatever else is inscribed by the modern inhabitants. Within both perspectives, the experiential and the institutional, there is remembering *and* forgetting. Neither is perfect, but it is the balance between them which may allow for a holistic and respectful interpretation of the archaeoscape.

II

Historical Background

Ancient Sources on Selinus

This work is grounded in the ancient interaction with the land that is now the Archaeological Park of Selinunte. Located in the Southwestern coast of Sicily, the ancient Greek city of Selinus was founded around middle to late 7th century BCE—the dates differ whether one is using Diodorus Siculus' (13.9.4) or Thucydides' (6.4) account of Selinus's founding—and was invaded by the Carthaginians in late 5th century BCE (Marconi 2007, 62) but occupation continued until 250 BCE. Diodorus and Thucydides are the main ancient historical informants for the historical life cycle of Selinus, and as interlocutors, they have their own positionality and subjectivity.

Diodorus Siculus was a Greek Historian from Roman colonized Sicily during the first century BCE, the last century of the Roman Republic. He hailed from the central Sicilian town of Agyrium, now allied Agira, and later spent time in Egypt and Rome (Sacks 2014, 1-8). His most famous work, the *Bibliotecke*, is a vast historiography of the "universal history of mankind" (Sheridan 2001, 1), a history centered around the Greeks and their diasporas. His work synthesizes that of other historians, many whose works are long lost. In fact, many modern-day classicists and historians sometimes note that those lost historians "are seen as more worthy of study than Diodorus" (Sheridan 2001, 2)—that is, it is often believed Diodorus was merely echoing what others had long since established. However, Brian Sherian (2001) and Kenneth Sacks (2014) both champion the autonomy individuality of Diodorus's works as standalone historical documents separated from his predecessors.

Diodorus Siculus's identity was situated in a unique webwork of intersecting positionalities which influence his interpretation on Sicilian history. He was a Greek—a Sicilian—writing about Greek Sicily. He was writing for a Roman audience, who were members of the empire that now owned Sicily. Is he an insider or an outsider? He used mainly Roman sources to write his works, and he wrote for a Roman audience of people fascinated about a land that their empire now held. These intense political operations are echoed in the political networks of the Sicilian past, of conquerors, of those native to the land versus those who come upon it. Like my own writing, Diodorus Siculus might be seen as a mirror instead of a window into the lives of those who live on the land.

Thucydides differs greatly from Diodorus in terms of his positionality. Born around 455 BCE in Athens (Canfora 2006, 3), Thucydides is both closer in time to the floruit of Selinus than Diodorus and farther by geography. His work is thorough and scientific; his reputation as a writer of political history has granted him the title "father of political realism" (Orwin 2020, 8). He is widely praised, through his scientific approach, to be the closest that a man may be to a true historian; even Jean-Jacques Rousseau praises Thucydides for his approach. He writes about Thucydides, "Far from putting himself between the events and his readers, he hides himself. The reader no longer believes he reads; he believes he sees" (Rousseau 1899, 214). However, as the framework of this very thesis intends to illustrate, and as Clifford Orwin's book *The Humanity of Thucydides* makes plain, even the most objective of historians bring their human subjectivity into their historical interpretations, and in the case of Thucydides, their humanity.

Ancient Selinus

It was the Greek colony of Megara Hyblaea in Southeastern Sicily that founded the sub colony of Selinus. Megara Hyblaea, a colony itself of Megara in Greece, was created following the allotment of land by Sicel (Indigenous Sicilian) King Hyblon. The Megarians had been searching for land and found themselves in an already complex situation among lands being claimed by the Chalcidians and the Leontini. Due to the somewhat muddy circumstance the Megarians found themselves in, the deal with Hyblon was fortuitous for them. Thucydides mentions the land grant to the Megarians as something of a "betrayal" by Hyblon, (Thucydides 6.4) though the particulars, whether he was betraying his own people, some anti-Greek Sicel alliance, or even the Megarians themselves, is not known (Graham 2001, 159).

The archaeological evidence suggests that the expansion was motivated by population and economic growth in Megara Hyblaea. For example, French excavations in Megara Hyblaea revealed a great increase in housing in the period directly before the founding of Selinus, along with the construction of monumental buildings, four stoas and two temples within the city (Marconi 2007, 63). The causes of Megara Hyblaea's expansion to the Southwest coast, however, remain debated. Stallsmith (2019, 68) thinks that Megara Hyblaea created Selinus strategically: Selinus offered vast lands for expansion, while Syracuse constrained the Eastern side of the island. De Angelis suggests that the location is due to the presumed Gelan occupation of the central Western coast which forces the Megarians to settle Westward (De Angelis 2003, 123). Marconi offers a synthesis of these two theories, stating that "the chosen location was enough to the west of the area of expansion of Gela and also East and South enough of the area controlled by the Phoenicians and the Elymians" (63). Regardless of the particulars, deliberation

points to political tensions between the various ethnic groups on the island as a main contributor to the chosen location.

This theme of ethnic diversity and the political and cultural tensions between groups on the island, both indigenous and settler, continues throughout the entire history of Selinus and Sicily as a whole. Selinus straddled multiple identities in its physical location as well as the stories of its origin: a Phoenician settlement lay on one side, another Greek settlement on the other, and the land it occupied was inscribed with multiple indigenous interactions (Morris 2019; De Angelis 2003). Excavations at Selinunte detail a diverse history of the founding of Selinus, notably the presence of Etruscan and indigenous Sicanian pottery found dating back to the foundation of Selinus (Marconi et al. 2015, 330-332).

Written sources detail a possible peaceful political connection between Megarians and the Sicel leader, Hyblon, during the founding of Selinus, but, as seen in many other cases in Selinus and abroad, the written sources seem to contradict parts of the archaeological record (Marconi 2007, 69). For example, there is evidence of Selinuntians possibly destroying the nearby native settlement of Montagnoli (De Angelis 2003, 152).

The Archaeological Park of Selinunte

The Archaeological Park of Selinunte is the largest in Europe, at 270 Hectares or 2.7 million square meters (Costanzo 2020). Its land offered a vast spread of religious and domestic settlement throughout its inhabited period, and tourists, locals, and archaeologists continue to traverse the extensive landscape in modernity. The entrance to the park is nearest to Temple E and the Eastern side of the settlement, and the experience is defined, as mentioned in the introduction, by the revelation of the grandiose reconstructed temple which is revealed as soon as one passes through the ticket office.

The ancient city was split into three physical groupings by the Cottone and Modione rivers, defining three separate parts of Selinus: Malophoros, Meilichios, and the Gaggera Hill, the Acropolis with the Agora and Manuzza Hill, and the Eastern Hill with Temples E, F and G (Figure 4). These special divisions played a part in the cultural flow of the ancient city; with city life centered in between the Cottone and Modione rivers, areas such as the Western Gaggera hill were left isolated. Today, as the tourists and archaeologists traverse the ancient city, beginning at the ticket office, visiting the reconstructed Temple E and the ruins of Temples F and G, walking down the steep hill and across the dried land of what was once the Cottone River and the ancient port, up to the acropolis, farther, often by golf cart, to Malophoros—these landscape markers still play an integral role in experiencing the ancient city.

The urban center of Selinus housed about 10,000 residents at its peak. Monumental urban development occurred when a grid plan was laid out over the side in about 580-570 BCE, and extreme prosperity can be confirmed through extensive temple building in between 550 and 460 BCE (De Angelis 2003, 169-70). Through both its physical landscape and its man-made structures, the ancient site of Selinunte draws both its ancient inhabitants and modern visitors into an analogous experience of the land. When a modern visitor climbs through the Cottone valley, struggling to catch their breath as the incline becomes more severe, and arrives to the top of the acropolis to see the striking ruins of the acropolis, it might spur a similar emotional and physical reaction to that of a Greek docking in the Cottone river and dragging one's belongings up the steep incline to the main urban sanctuary. The natural flow of humans in the land, the human ordering, of natural disorder of landscape, and the human reaction to the same landmarks across thousands of years---this analogous experience allows visitors to become discoverers of a lost antiquity.

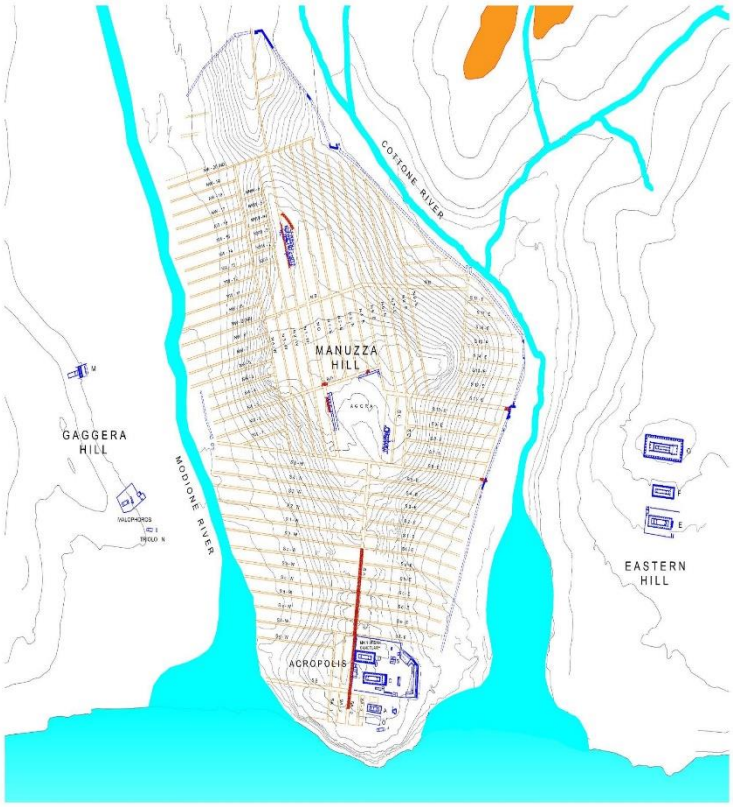

Fig. 4*. This is a map of the Ancient City of Selinus. © Institute of Fine Arts-NYU.*

According to Diodorus (13.54-13.57.2), after gathering a great mass of men and ships, Hannibal Mago, Carthaginian general, conquered and destroyed Selinus in the spring of 409 BCE. Out of about 23,600 inhabitants, only 2,600 managed to escape the razing of the vast city, which, according to Diodorus Siculus's account, was an extremely violent and destructive affair. Though his account was notably a dramatic and notably anti-Carthaginian recollection of a historical event (Diodorus was born about 300 years after the siege of Selinus), this account can be more broadly backed up by archaeological evidence of Selinunte, with some theorized exaggerations about the total population of Selinus at the time of destruction and level of destructions incurred by the Carthaginians (Marconi 2021).

After the siege, the Carthaginians occupied Selinus until about 250 BCE, when the city was razed and the population moved (Stallsmith 2019, 68). The ruins of the city, then, remained largely unoccupied, with sparse interaction with populations throughout the medieval period, of which can be seen in the park in modern times, such as drinking troughs for animals.

Though each year archaeologists collect more data about the ancient city of Selinus, the information is far from complete. Lack of funding and pure volume of landmass has made data

collection a slow endeavor. The fact remains that “the sources for Selinus’ archaic social and political history are patchy and uneven…future generations hold the key to revealing Selinus’s past” (De Angelis 2003, 69-70).

Malophoros and Meilichios: Bridging the Gap to the Future

Tucked away on the Western side of the settlement upon the Gaggera hill, past the Modione river and the main urban sanctuary and well on the way to the necropolis, are the sanctuaries to Demeter Malophoros and Zeus Meilichios. Gaggera hill and its sanctuaries have gained interest for its unusual religious and cult findings. Its stelai (White 1967, 342; Stallsmith 2019) the lex sacra (Jameson, Jordan, and Kotansky 1993), and extensive ritual findings have long been a subject of excitement and fascination among tourists, locals, archaeologists, and classicists alike. Beginning in the Archaic period and continuing on through the Punic phase, the cult activity of Malophoros enjoyed a long duration (White 1967). However, most of the visible built aspects of Malophoros that still exist today date to the Punic period, after the Carthaginians sacked the city (Morris 2019, 81).

It was the physical separation, as a settlement far from the main urban section of the city, as well as its positionality as a place along the route from the living (the urban area) and the dead (the necropolis) that Sarah Morris (2019, 81) theorizes might have allowed the more private, family centered religious practices within the area (81). This in turn opened the door for the presence of cultural ritual interaction of non-Greek origin, such as Phoenician and indigenous Sicilians, to creep into the Greek city, creating a multi-ethnic space unusual among these groups in Sicily; excavations have shown signs of a Punic or Phoenician presence from before the Carthaginians conquered Selinus in 409 BCE (Mertens 2010, 93-94) centered around the

Gaggera hill (Morris 2019) and excavations have found indigenous-influenced artifacts also centered on Gaggera Hill (see Stallsmith 2019, 62-104 and Morris 2019, 81-94).

Morris's article on the converging cultures in the Gaggera hill area paints a picture which may sound familiar to those versed in Sicilian history—a picture of ethnic convergence and assimilation. This fusion of cultures at Malophoros and Meilichios, demonstrated by the archaeological findings in the space, show that it is the physical separation that allowed for the unique continuation of Punic, Greek, and indigenous cultural practice during a time when the ancient city was in Greek hands. As the island of Sicily, detached from a mainland, physically

Fig 5. *This photo depicts the Gaggera hill, including the ruins of Malophoros (left) and Meilichios (right). Photo taken by author.*

isolated, was passed between the hands of major powers for thousands of years, became a melting pot, so too was this place tucked on the Western corner of the ancient city. More locally, in Selinunte, interviews with my interlocutors will show that Selinunte remains a melting pot for distinct cultures—my interlocutors come from all over the world, and each brings a unique view of the ancient city to this conversation of place and identity. To be Sicilian—to even speak Sicilian, or to see Sicilian architecture—is to understand that this is an island composed of many cultures.

I would also like to point to Morris's article as a prominent example of a more landscape centered view of the archaeological park of Selinunte. She uses the physical flow of the land to explain the cultural practices which took place there. There is evidence in the modern experience of this landscape which reiterates the isolation which Morris proposed. Donald White paints an evocative picture of what makes the experience of visiting Meilichios and Malaporos so singular in modern day:

> The remains of this important monument lie on the slope of a low sandy hill a short distance from the West bank of a little stream…The landscape consists of barren sand dunes; it is an isolated, lonely place, relieved only by the scrubby growth of beach grass and occasional patches of wildflowers. (White 1967, 336)

It is only by golf cart or a long hike that one may find themselves in this isolated part of the ancient city. Malophoros is so spoken about in the local town and among the archaeologists that the trip becomes a pilgrimage of sorts, necessary if one is to experience the full glory of Selinunte. Dozens of sun-exhausted tourists are carted to and from the remote location all day during the summer. Atop shifting soil, prickly vegetation, and without much shade, the more

excitable tourists roam the small sanctuaries as their companions huddle under the one nearby tree, waiting for the golf cart to return to fetch them. Gaggera hill is unlike any other place in the sanctuary—the cultural fusion, even to the uninitiated, is apparent through the unique, disjointed monuments—and people squat down to look at the stelai emerging lopsided out of the ground. Proclaimed by many as their favorite part of the park, the entire experience of Malophoros, from the long golf-cart ride (the tickets for which cost extra on top of the park entrance fee) to the isolation of the space, to the uniqueness of the artifacts and structures still standing there, every moment of the modern experience harkens back to the details of its original occupation. The modern experience, in this instance, mirrors the ancient; and it is through the landscape features, the isolation of this space, that allow for that communication across time.

Conclusion

As part of a long tradition of research into the Archaeological Park of Selinunte, one might expect this thesis to focus on increasing the intellectual record of material culture in the park, my eyes cast to the temples, the architecture, the text of the lex sacra or the features of a painted scene on pottery. But although intricate interpretation of the artistic and historical features of Selinunte are important endeavors, in this thesis my gaze slides from the stelai instead to the landscape and the modern people who surround the park. Instead of a purely art history or archaeological interpretation of the seminal artistic and historical record of the ancient city, I am instead interested in that which is relatively neglected by academic interest: the modern landscape which grows around this collection of history, the ways modern people interact with it, and the ways that the legacy of an ancient people echo through the landscape and into the surrounding people. I interpret the basic details of the ancient history of Selinunte to illustrate

within this thesis the ways that the modern population communicates, like through the ceaseless visits to the isolation of the Gaggera hill, with the ancient inhabitants. Though I am interested in the intricate life histories of past Selinuntians, my research will center its attention on present Selinuntians and how they interact with the past.

III

Community Interactions in the Archaeoscape:

Experiencing Heritage and the Dunes of Selinunte

"I realised that the search for the Knowledge has encouraged us to think of the House as if it were a sort of riddle to be unraveled, a text to be interpreted, and that if ever we discover the Knowledge, then it will be as if the value has been wrested from the House and all that remains will be mere scenery. The sight of the One-Hundred and Ninety-Second Western Hall in the Moonlight made me see how ridiculous that is. The House is valuable because it is the House. It is enough in and of Itself. It is not the means to an end."

From *Piranesi* by Susanna Clarke

Introduction

When I read *Piranesi* by Susanna Clarke for the first time, I was enamored by the ethnographic quality of the work. On the surface, this novel is a work of fiction; its multidimensional story defies modern interpretations of scientific reality. The story follows its titular fictional character, Piranesi, through his array of ethnographic journals, all of which detail his journey after being found in an alternate dimension that appears to be a labyrinth of forgotten realities of past civilizations, a graveyard for myths and statues of gods. The journals follow Piranesi as he slowly forgets the world he came from until the only thing that exists in his mind is his direct interactions with the labyrinth, as if he has lived only there for the entirety of his life. Piranesi is an anthropologist by trade, so his journals are ripe with keen observations about his lavish surroundings. As he slowly forgets what he knows to be true about the outside world, his reality is shaped solely by the halls of this new dimension. There is the landscape of the past—that is, the forgotten realities, endless hallways of ancient statues and classic architecture—and then there is Piranesi, an inhabitant of this Labyrinth of memories, an anthropologist who makes his own meaning, informed only by his immediate interaction with the landscape. In the truest

sense, Piranesi's experience of the labyrinth is one devoid of an institutionalized perspective; as the moon illuminated the inherent beauty of the labyrinth, Piranesi realizes that the house is not a means to an end or a riddle to be unraveled. It has no history, so there is no history to define it. His perspective is purely experienced, and meaning is made in this world, which is both devoid of history and made from the fabric of it, through his daily experiences.

Of course, in reality, those of us who find ourselves in labyrinths of past civilizations are not removed from the memory and context of our own lives. Those who live in these contexts—that is, those who live and work and exist next to or within the ruins of a past civilization—do not live in a vacuum. They accumulate history and function through the institutionalization of their heritage.

The scholarship on the ancient city of Selinus is extensive. As one of the most prominent Greek settlements in Sicily, Selinus survives as a treasure trove of information for ancient historians, archaeologists, classicists, and the world at large. But though the inhabitants may read, may interact with, may discover themselves the memory of the ancient Greek settlement, it is often their own interaction with the landscape of ruins—as inhabitants, not historians—that shape the continuing memory of the land. Selinuntians, the inhabitants of Marinella di Selinunte, a town situated next to the ancient Greek city of Selinus, may be construed to live in a labyrinth of memory.

One resident of the town remembers having her first date among the ruins of this city, hiding from her long line of chaperones and stealing kisses among fallen pillars[4].

[4] This refers to the same correspondent as shown in Fig. 6.

Fig. 6*. A Native of Ohio met her Sicilian husband via letters back and forth across the ocean. After some time getting to know one another, the correspondent flew to Selinunte with a wedding dress in her suitcase. This is one of their first dates. Photo courtesy of the correspondent pictured who wishes to remain unnamed.*

Another recalls strolling through the ancient city in a rare dusting of snow, pregnant with her first child. Others still remember the ancient city as a child's playground, weaving in and out of hidden pockets left by the rubble of the fallen temples, tiny arms snaking through the caverns left behind by destruction. Another remembers venturing to the ancient fountain with his grandfather to drink the water it supplied. These precious interactions unconsciously link the past and the present, offering a window into how the ancient and the modern interact. Even in this tiny town on the tip of the continent, scorched by fire, choked by drought, neglected by bureaucracy, rampaged by Mafia, even here there is daily memory— and erasure—of the ancient world.

While most landscapes offer subtle glimpses into how the past and present interact, ruins offer glaring examples of the landscape throughout time. In ruins, time is overlaid upon itself, offering layers that may be peeled back to reveal different levels of human and landscape, and offer commentary on the continued dwelling in landscape. Vines growing over ancient pillars, silhouettes of ancient temples falling in the background of modern restaurants—living interaction across time is varied and not always planned. However, the structures within the

park—in this chapter, namely the artificial dunes erected around the park to protect it from the outside world—alter this spontaneous interaction. Community members and external forces act to both attempt to preserve and protect the park, while at the same time, these protections halt the experiential perspective of locals in the park by prioritizing and making sacred the ancient at the expense of the modern. As I will demonstrate, within the local population, there are conflicting views on whether the institutionalized perspective—in this case, the dunes—have enacted positive or negative change within the park and the town.

What is the Archaeoscape?

To continue my argument, allow me a brief detour into the alluring world of scapes. In Arjun Appuradai's (1998) prominent writings on globalization, he introduced a theoretical framework to explore the relationships between five dimensions of global cultural flows, *scapes.* For example, an *ethnoscape* is the landscape of persons who constitute a shifting world of tourists, immigrants or other moving groups and individuals that constitute an essential feature of the global world, and which affect the politics of nations greatly (Appuradai 1998, 33). About this naming scheme, he writes:

> These terms with the common suffix *-scape* also indicate that these are not objectively given relations that look the same from every angle of vision but, rather, that they are deeply perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic, and political situatedness of different sorts of actors: nation-states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as subnational groupings and movements…and even intimate face-to-face groups, such as villages, neighborhoods, and families. (33)

Borrowing from Appuradai's naming scheme, I refer to this archaeological landscape—that is, landscape largely marked by physical remnants of past histories, interacting continuously with the modern world—as the "archaeoscape."

I borrow from Appuradai this naming scheme to illustrate the stratification and layered reality of archaeological landscapes. The archaeoscape is not merely the physical terrain of these past histories, but it is also all that is attached to the archaeoscape of Selinunte—legacy of the past inhabitants, cultural significance of this heritage, and memories of modern interaction. The memories and emotions that have been tied to and layered upon the physical land becomes part of the archaeoscape.

Many other anthropologists have used the suffix *-scape* to define their own terms. In 2011, Kendall Phillips and Mitchell Reyes's edited volume *Global memoryscapes: Contesting Remembrance in a Transnational Age* used this suffix to define *memoryscape*, a "complex and vibrant place upon which memories emerge, are contested, transform, encounter other memories, mutate, and multiply" (Phillips and Reyes 2011, 14). Their definition is enlivened by parallels to Nora's theorizations on *lieux de mèmoire*—realms of memory—places of memorium which by design secrete that experiential memory. The memoryscape which Phillips and Reyes define—in their case, focusing on the global reach of the memoryscape—alongside Nora's *lieux de mèmoire* together create the framework of an archaeoscape, which is in itself both a memoryscape and a realm of memory.

In the subsequent essays in the edited volume, authors take this concept of memoryscapes around the world to local realities. In Margaret Lindauer's essay, she recalls the day she visited the Mayrau mine in the Czech Republic, an open-air museum. She writes, "I began to consider how the mine-turned-into-museum was simultaneously imbued with remembering and

forgetting, instilling a sense of both celebrating and mourning." (Lindauer 2011, 94). She equates the open-air museum for this mine as a liminal space; it is a place "that seems stable but is always in the process of becoming something else" (94).

Like the Mayrau Mine, the archaeological park is conceptualized as a stagnant place, a museum to the ancient city, an untouched portal into the past. But as Lindauer writes, "Each museum visit is considered a biographic event, the significance of which (however small) shifts in time as subsequent life experiences become part of a nest of memories in which the museum visit is remembered" (Lindauer 2011, 95). And just as the mine becomes a nest of memories with each new interaction, so too does the archaeological park.

In this archaeoscape, memories mix with physical landscape, ruins and olive trees, dunes and valleys, and become a separate entity in the minds of both the external and local entities. It is a liminal space, not the destination, not a place of rest, a place that seems stable but is always becoming something else.[5] The archaeoscape is both unexplainably alien and irrefutably familiar, because it is both a window into a place out of time and a reflection of modern interaction.

The Archaeoscape in History

One of the most prominent perpetrators of discussions on the archaeoscape was Italian engraving artist Giovanni Battista Piranesi, the real-life historical figure for whom Susanna Clarke named her character Piranesi. Like his fictional counterpart, Giovanni Battista Piranesi flourished in his study of ancient ruins and revolutionized the scholarship of Roman antiquity in his works, namely his engraving book, *Le Antichita Romane* (1756). He illustrated different

[5] Here I reiterate Margaret Lindauer's quote from page 94 of her chapter, which I cite in the paragraph above.

views of Rome, produced alongside an increase in archaeological tourism. This increase was punctuated by the "Grand Tour" of Western European university educated men (and sometimes women) to places of ancient civilization in the 18th century. Notably, Piranesi's work often illustrated the contrast between modern 18th century Rome and its ancient counterpart; as historian Stephen Dyson writes in his book about the interaction between archaeology and urbanism in Rome, Piranesi's work often illustrated that "massive ruins, laced with luxuriant vegetation, loomed over the pathetic, dwarfish modern Romans who lived and worked in the shadows" (Dyson 2019, 16-18).

Fig 7. *The Arch of Titus (Veduta dell'Arco di Tito) by Giovanni Battista. Piranesi depicts the arch of Titus in Rome as seen in the landscape of the 18th century (Piranesi). Photo courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.*

Piranesi's work not only demonstrated this concept of ancient and modern intertwining in the archaeoscape but also popularized the concept across Europe. His prints were highly sought after by the aforementioned "Grand Tour" fellows, and his works were often brought back from tours to Rome in abundance, finding their way into British homes and libraries (Dyson 2019, 26). The story of the Grand Tour and the interest in ruins that arose from it are integral in any discussion on this topic of the archaeoscape. Sketches from the Grand Tour produced many depictions, like Piranesi's engravings, of the unique world of overlapping memory present in metropolitan archaeoscapes.

Fig. 8. *This painting is "A Capriccio of Roman Ruins," 1727/1729 by Marco Ricci. It depicts Roman ruins as seen interacting with the growing life of the 18th century (Ricci). Courtesy of the National Gallery of Art.*

The Grand Tour was a fixture of admiration of the antiquities, but it was also a chance to reevaluate the role of the ancient world in the cityscapes and modern civilizations which now overtake them. Though spurred by the commercial need to produce art for Grand tourists to take home to their British chateaus, the art from this period itself seems to distill what is so captivating about the interaction between the modern and ancient: that there is a visual, prominent reality of both remembering and forgetting within the ruins and in the brushes of the artists who depict them. There is a repurposing of the ancient ruins that makes the written history of the monument less important than the reality of it experienced and witnessed in modern day. As seen in Piranesi's "Arch of Titus" (figure 7) or in Ricci's "A Capriccio of Roman Ruins" (figure 8), the world grows in and around the archaeoscape, prioritizing daily experiences over freezing the past in time.

As these Grand Tour era art pieces illustrate, interaction with archaeoscapes engage in both remembering—in the ways that those who witness and interact with the ancient monuments memorialize and connect to the past through the living history that remains —and forgetting—in the ways that plants, animals and people repurpose the archaeoscape for their own practices, setting aside the memorial features of the land to make their own meaning. This is the experienced perspective at work.

Remembering and Forgetting in the Archaeoscape

In his book about continued interaction with the Roman landscape, Paul Jacobs writes that throughout the urban cityscape of Rome there is an echo of memory of the past in the landscape, made through the continued interaction with the land. These echoes—the memorial scars upon the land— are "depositories of memory" (Jacobs 2022, 2). Much of the literature on

landscape offers it as a depository of memory; With Ingold's (1993) dwelling perspective in mind, landscape becomes a mnemonic for past and present civilizations (Harrison 2004, 135).

Jacobs borrows the term "depositories of memory" from Martina Seifert, who writes in her essay about constructing memory in the Asia Minor landscape that "In the course of time, environments were created, shaped, changed, and destroyed by human impact…By this process, urban landscapes…become depositories of memory" (Seifert 2017, 4). Seifert theorizes that the built environment is particularly equipped to demonstrate the process of remembrance in landscape, and this may be especially important in understanding how archaeological features work as vehicles for memory.

But Jacobs also notes that these "depositories of memory" both attempt to reclaim the glorious past and sometimes to hide shameful parts of it (Jacobs 2022, 2). Jacob's claim that depositories of memory hide a less desirable past introduces a concept where memory is *forgotten* through interaction with the landscape. In these cases of hiding the past, memory is consciously and unconsciously overwritten in favor of more desirable truths. The depository of memory can be controlled by external forces.

Simon Harrison also demonstrates the ways that landscape is not only drawn by processes of social remembering, but also "into those other, often less visible, processes of social forgetting to which memory is bound" (2004, 136). The landscape is a repository, but it is also forgetful and selective. Social memory is not incorruptible by outside forces; social memory, which overwhelmingly controls how the greater public perceives landscape,[6] can be controlled and swayed by both intentional and unintentional forces.[7]

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[6] See Martina Seifert, "Constructing Memories," for an elaboration of social memory in constructed environments.
[7] See Susan E Alcock, "The Reconfiguration of Memory in the Eastern Roman Empire", pg 334-335 For a detailed discussion on ways that social memory can be reconstructed.

For the people who live in the landscape of Selinunte, defined in part by vast ruins of an ancient civilization, remembering and forgetting are tied tightly together. Interactions with the archaeoscape are not always consciously memorial; in fact, it is in these unconscious interactions, the mundaneness of everyday life that spreads into the ruins, that the landscape is defined. The landscape is scattered with monuments of the past, but still within it, and because of these monuments, time overwrites these memories into new ones— memories that find their way into the public consciousness without ever needing a descriptive plaque identifying their significance.

In an archaeological ethnography about rural Greece, Hamish Forbes witnesses a unique interaction between locals and their archaeoscape. He notes that the community "integrated a wide variety of aspects of the recent and more distant past into a range of present meaning which their landscapes have held for them" (Forbes 2007, 5). Like the Grand Tour art pieces, modern populations both integrate past memorial practices and infuse new meaning into the built landscape. Lekakis and Dragouni detail a similar phenomenon in their paper about the reality of continued social practice in a different rural Greek village. They coined the process of interaction between man-made and natural components of the landscape "heritage in the making," a term that lends itself well to the continued interaction of the past and the concept of the archaeoscape. Heritage is not frozen in time. It is continuous.

The next section of this chapter elaborates on the ways in which interactions with the archaeoscape aid in promoting an experiential perspective and experience in the local community through the ethnographic data gathered from my research with the community of Marinella di Selinunte, the town next to the ancient city of Selinus. Primarily, community practices that see the ancient city as a part of their town not separated from the modern cast the archaeoscape as a

terrain separated with additional purpose beyond the ancient memory. These interactions work to enable communicating with the ancient by imbuing personal meaning and memory into the archaeoscape, but may in part endanger the preservation of history. In contrast, community and external interaction with the park that accentuates the park's role as a memorial of the ancient—such as the erection of dunes which separates the park from the modern—aids in both memorializing the lives of the ancient and erasing modern community interaction and meaning making.

The Archaeoscape of Selinunte

Upon beginning my interviews with the people of Selinunte, I quickly found that the experiential perspective was best seen through the eyes and perceptions of children. In Selinunte, children did and still do have free rein throughout the town. The entire town is their playground, and the adults of Selinunte watch over each child and report to parents in case of misbehavior. Children played at the beach, they played soccer in the street, they gathered in the parking lot, they visited the restaurants and spoke to the employees. However, the boundary of the world as a playground does not end at the entrance to the park.

Jochen[8] is the co-owner of one of the most popular restaurants in Selinunte. The restaurant sits on the beach which borders the park; from the open-air restaurant, you can see the reconstructed temple on the acropolis. The archaeologists even call their slice of sand *the acropolis beach.* The tying together of the beach and restaurant with its neighboring ancient ruins already speak to the unique processes of social remembering and forgetting among

[8] Name is changed

archaeoscapes: the beach itself, set against the ruins of the acropolis, spur interest in the ancient city. But simultaneously, there is a process of social forgetting of the ancient ruins. The acropolis is at once being remembered while simultaneously being erased, becoming a background fixture for dinner parties and picnics by the sea.

The restaurant hosts bands at night during the summer, where one can listen to music and gaze at the illuminated ruins of the acropolis in the distance and feel the breath of salt from the sea. Jochen was born in Germany to a German mother and a Sicilian father, but soon moved to Selinunte as a baby, he says, because "it is impossible to keep Sicilian men away from Sicily."

On a hot day in July, we sat down for an interview at his restaurant. It was difficult to hear him over the loud sound of beach music and the chatter of restaurant goers as they ate *sardines* and *pasta alla norma.* Like every other time I saw him, he was wearing a swimsuit, flip flops and a silk patterned robe. Throughout the interview, wait staff continuously visited our table to ask Jochen questions about ongoing problems in the kitchen.

Jochen recalled his first interactions with the park, growing up in Selinunte. "My sister and my friend, we would go to the park together to play at least three or four times a week. We would play 'Hide and Seek' and those sorts of games in the ruins. We had some experiences where we got hurt, but nothing serious. It happens; you get hurt. We knew all the holes, everything—we were little kids then, and had a lot of creativity. We used to climb and jump."

I had climbed in and out of the mass of ruins next to Temple E, the temples F and G, in my own exploration of the ancient city, but this interaction was separate from my own practice, which highlighted the presence of the ruins as a monument to the ancient city. The use of the archaeoscape as a playground partially overwrites the utility of the ancient city as a museum of the ancient Greeks and instead deposits new interaction into the landscape that is not defined by

the past. Beginning with the generations older than Jochen, playing in the ruins, jumping in between pillars and snaking through the caverns in between, was just a part of childhood. Whether they realized it or not, the landscape's identity as fallen temples had been overwritten in part by memories of childhood play. To many in Selinunte, Temples F and G were a playground. This action of overwriting can be classified as a unique process of social forgetting, one that arises from childhood and continues to overwrite the social memory of the ancient Greek city, even as time goes on. The overwriting of the ancient ruins can also promote a distinctly experiential perspective of the park.

Another interviewee told me about his personal interactions with the park. His own interaction maps uniquely with Jochen's, as both illustrate that the park has been, at least in part, an extension of the town's public space. He said, "Me and my family would drive inside with the car when I was young. It used to be very open to the community. We used to go to walk. Not to see the temple, but just to walk. It was open to the community, just like the beach." Like with the ruins as a playground, here the interviewee describes the ancient city as an extension of their own public space, almost like a public beachfront.

However, for Jochen and most everyone else in Selinunte, interaction with the land was defined by two stages of the ancient city in modern conception: before the dunes were constructed, and after. Jochen sat in the in-between times, when the dunes were constructed but their purpose hadn't fully taken effect.

The dunes in Selinunte are large mounds of land that were constructed around the park in the 1970s and 1980s as a way to separate it from the town and compel everyone to pay for entry. Everyone had something different to say about the dunes and I quickly learned that there were two perspectives regarding the dunes in Selinunte: there are those that think that the dunes ruined

the park for the locals (an institutional perspective), and those that think that the dunes were a positive or necessary addition for interaction with the space (an experiential perspective.)

Jochen never knew the park without the dunes. “By the time I was a child,” he told me, “You already had to climb in because the dunes were already there.” For Jochen, the dunes were necessary to keep the sanctity of the ancient city. “They are protecting it (the park) from the outer mess of concrete. The city remains in the original image, without buildings.” Jochen told me that the dunes were the result of a long battle between the park and people who were building taller and taller to see the ruins, and even some who wanted to build in the park itself. “Tusa (the director at the time) made sure that people couldn’t build inside, otherwise there would be hotels inside by now. But now when you are in, you are in. It's sad that when you drive into Selinunte you don't see the temple. But it's better to go into the park and see the temples.”

It was often the younger populations—those who had not experienced the park before the dunes—that found themselves finding more positives about the dunes. After all, the dunes didn’t stop Jochen from entering free of charge. Another Selinuntian, the musician Dante, after telling me he goes into the park to find inspiration for his songs, offered to take me to play Sicilican music with his guitar in the park. When I reminded him that the park was closed at that hour, as it was approaching nine or ten in the evening, he said, “not for me. For me the park is always open.” He was born there; he refused to pay for his own backyard. Instead, he hiked through the forest and scaled the dunes, just as Jochen did as a child.

There are more still who think the dunes were a necessary addition. Another Selinuntian, an American immigrant, had heard recollections from before the dunes and wasn't impressed. “I hear stories from the 70s and 80s, everyone would ride around on their motorcycles in there,” she told me. “They didn’t grow up with the idea that this is an amazing thing that they have. It was

just another place—it was sometimes just a road, a shortcut to drive to the neighboring town Triscina."

In this case, a non-native Selinuntian found the modern interaction with the park, and their meaning-making of the land which occurred separate from the ancient Greek city, was disrespectful to the ancient city. In her eyes, treating the park as a road not only puts the ruins in jeopardy, but the act itself transforms the park into a road. In her view, the actions before the dunes, where community members interacted with the park not solely as a monument to the ancient city, but as an extension of their own town, devalued the park itself.

The dunes as a mechanism for restoring sacredness to the city was a common theme among the pro-dune crowd. A German immigrant, Charlotte[9], who owns an art shop that borders the park's entrance, informed me that "those that don't like the dunes, they don't realize what it means for today. Now, we have the park. It's separated. And when you go in, you see only the temples and the acropolis, and the sea, and you can feel Greek." The dunes separate the community from the park, enforcing certain interactions that propagate memories of the ancient Greek city and defer interaction with the landscape as an extension of their own town. "The dunes are good protection," she told me. "People are very angry that they can't see the temples anymore, but it's 20 euros for a year-long pass. They can come if they want."

In a similar way, this non-native Selinuntian also finds the local interaction of the park before the dunes to be detrimental to the objective purpose of the park. For Charlotte, with the dunes, the park is enclosed from the outside world, therefore interaction within the park is solely for the purpose of memorializing and appreciating the features of the park that represent the

[9] Name changed

ancient Greek city. The dunes make it so the processes of social forgetting and rewriting of memory are monitored and regulated.

This process of regulating memorial practices within archaeological sites is part of a greater discussion in Cultural Heritage studies and has been a topic of discussion recently in regards to other archaeoscapes in Sicily. For instance, the work of a research project funded by the Italian Ministry of Education, eWAS—An Early Warning System for Cultural Heritage—illustrates how other areas in Sicily are tackling this conversation of regulating and protecting outside interaction with archaeological sites. One of eWAS's projects includes the design of "cover in composite material" to block the clutter of the modern urban city-scape from the archaeological site of Megara Hyblaea, which is an ancient Greek city in Eastern Sicily Stallsmith (2019, 68). Megara Hyblaea is the city whose people later founded the ancient city of Selinus which borders the town of Selinunte.

Calvagna et al. have proposed that eWAS's work in Megara Hyblaea was meant to transform the nearby modern cityscape into a backdrop that would not impede upon the memoryscape of the ancient site. They characterize archaeology as the "physical materialization *(sic)* of memory" (Calvagna et al. 2022, 230) and that "the memory contained in the ruins expresses the existence of 'a pure, undated time, absent from this world of images, simulacra, and reconstructions of ours'" (230). If archaeology is a physical materialization of memory, and ruins express pure, undated time, eWAS's work in creating architectural structures to block out the outside cityscape intend to enhance the memorial features of the land as they relate to the ancient city, and intend to extinguish any visual reminder of the outside which might rewrite the memory of the ancient city.

It seems that the dunes that were erected in the 1970s and 1980s for the archaeological park of Selinunte were intended for the same purpose as the architectural intervention at Megara Hyblaea. My interviewee Charlotte brings up another case study, that of Agrigento, an archaeological park about an hour drive from Selinunte. Because they are geographically close, the two parks are often compared with one another, and though Agrigento gets more pull from the tourism circuit, Charlotte believes Selinunte is superior. Charlotte told me, sitting in her art shop, which borders the park and is situated right next to the dunes, that Agrigento has failed to do what Selinunte has accomplished with their dunes. “It (Selinunte) is much more beautiful for me than Agrigento because you will see the skyline of the modern buildings by Agrigento…There is a paved street right next to the temples. People are running on the street. Here you are free, you go to the temples, see the land.”

In Charlotte's perception, and many others in Selinunte, the preservation of the city as it was when the Greeks constructed it is essential for the park. It is a sacred space, a monument to the past, and modern interaction with the city should be limited to admiration of the city as it was. The dunes are a divide between the ancient and the modern, a wall which keeps in the memory of the ancient city and keeps out the pollutants of modern society. Of course, the city is not frozen in time. There are medieval constructions in the city, troughs for animals, a recently discovered baptismal font, even a cafe next to the acropolis, perched on the edge of the hill next to the sea, which sells gelato. But for the pro-dune group, further preservation of the city is what is important.

Many of the same people who spoke positively of the dunes also expressed a desire for further reconstruction of the temples in Selinunte. Temple E, the first temple that people see upon entrance to the park, is the only completely reconstructed temple at the site. Temples F and

G, which lie in ruined expanse and offer a play space for the youth of Selinunte, are right next to Temple E, but are barely reconstructed. Upon asking what she would want to change about the park, one of my interviewees said, “I want to see more temples being rebuilt. It gives a bigger impact. I’m not an expert but I’m always thinking, why aren't they raising the reconstructed temples? If they can reconstruct them, people could see it as it was when it was a great city. You walk in, see this enormous, gorgeous temple, then you see all this rubble.”

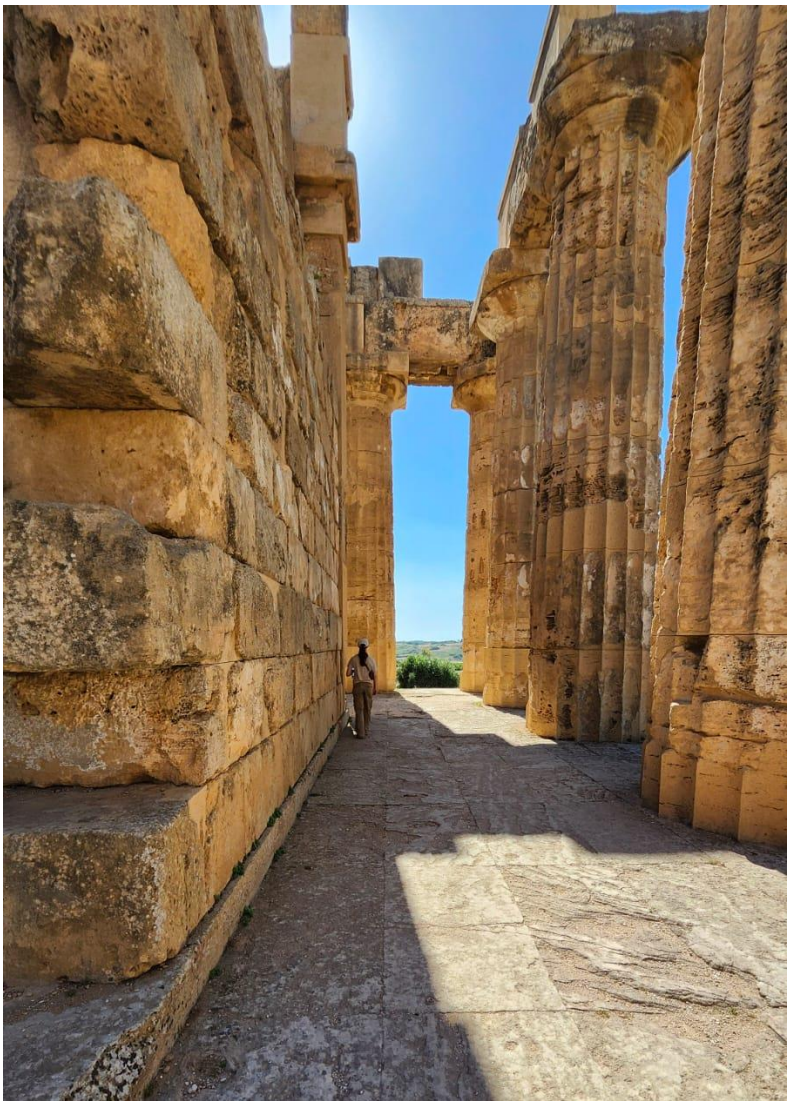

Fig. 9. *A woman walks along the halls inside of the reconstructed temple. Photo taken by author.*

For many, illustrating the impact of the park lies in being able to envision life as it was during the time the ancient Greeks inhabited it. Though this reconstruction was a modern act that physically alters the organic archaeoscape, it is categorized in the minds of many as an act of protecting, and perhaps memorializing, the ancient city. It is about connecting with the ancient Greeks, seeing life as it was—and that means reconstructing the city as it was before. Like through the work of eWAS, reconstruction works to reverse the impact of time on the archaeoscape, instead offering a preservation of the ancient city as it was, not as it currently

stands. The act of constructing could be understood as an act of forgetting the archaeoscape by fundamentally altering it. However, for those who want to preserve the ancient city, reconstructing is an act of memorializing the ancient civilization. Upon asking what her favorite part of the park was, another of my interviewees, Elena,[10] said "Of course, the temple at the beginning (Temple E) because it is the most rebuilt. I also really like the city street on the acropolis. The houses and storefronts. You can really imagine going back to the past and seeing daily life."

However, many, especially those who dislike the dunes, see the park as part of their own daily life, not just as a shrine to the memories of the past inhabitants. Charlotte, the art shop owner, recalls the anti-dune sentiment that many in the town carry. "Many don't like it because they were used to just driving straight through the park. Without the dunes, people would come in with their cars inside all the way to the temple."

One of my interviewees, Enzo,[11] remembers life before the dunes: "the park was much more integrated with the landscape because there were no dunes. It was a totally crazy choice, to build a wall, to make distance between the community and the archaeology site. People say they hate the dunes—it's because they saw it before."

Something clicked in my own mind when Enzo said those words. My own interaction with the dunes had been of an abstract nature. Theoretically, I understood that the landscape around the park had been raised, and that before, the Selinuntians could go in and out with little trouble. But my own eyes did not see where the natural landscape ended and the dunes began. The dunes are not obvious walls that block the temples from view. To me, as an outsider who had not seen the park before the dunes, I could not envision the park without them. But this

[10] Name changed
[11] Name changed

issue, invisible to my own eye, was a point of major contention in Selinunte. These invisible walls encasing the city hold all the blame in the eyes of those who preferred the park before.

However, community interaction with the park has far from halted. Another American immigrant told me how she remembered her first time seeing the park. “I hadn’t met anyone here, I went on my own. It was a weekend, a sunny day. I was blown away. I've been to the Acropolis in Athens, but seeing Selinunte, and how expansive the grounds are, and the fact that here you can get close—In Greece, you can't get that close—I was speechless. The first thing I saw was the main temple. It was incredible.” Wendy, the American interviewee, spoke to me about being able to envision life as it was. Experiences like Wendy’s highlight the sensory aspects of experiencing the archaeological park as a Greek city instead of as an extension of the town. Wendy’s positive interaction, seeing the park in its ancient image, illustrate that the dunes in part solve the problem of community rewriting the memory of the ancient city, but the reality holds that they also stifle community interaction with the park as a whole.

Among most of my interviewees, there was an acknowledgement of complacency among the people of Selinunte, that because this ancient Greek city is in their own backyard, they fail to acknowledge the rarity of it. The government situation doesn’t help. Though many acknowledge that the current park director, a local man, is improving the park for the better, many told me about the horrors of the past management. For a long time, management seemed to be making the park worse, not better.

Jochen, the co-owner of the restaurant on the acropolis beach, remembers fighting against directors he found corrupt. “The director we had six or seven years ago, he was also in charge of Agrigento,” Jochen told me during our interview. “My theory is he saw competition between Agrigento and Selinunte and he chose Agrigento. It was corruption—He really impacted the

park. The lights, for example." There are lights in the park that turn on in the evenings and illuminate the temples and the ruins. One of the most beautiful aspects of eating at Jochen's restaurant at night is turning to see the lights cast onto the acropolis and seeing the pillars of the temples illuminated in gold against the night sky. He told me that in the past, they kept them turned off. He often took it upon himself to demand the lights be turned on, but to no avail. "I went on a small break to Berlin and worked in clubs, I learned how to build stages, and I learned about these huge lights. When I got back to Selinunte I said, okay, instead of complaining I will just do it myself. I buy this lamp and I put it on the ground. I angled it to the acropolis. And I turned it on. I start turning on the ruins from out here. One week later, they turned the lights back on. I put the lamp away, I only used it for one week. I still have it, I'm ready if they ever turn the lights off again."

Conclusion

Within the community of Marinella di Selinunte, the town which neighbors the archaeological park of Selinunte, there is a tension between the institutional and experiential perspectives. The interpretations and opinions within the community regarding this tension are complex. The dunes work to encase the archaeological park, almost as if it is an exhibit in a museum. The majority of cultural heritage professionals, and many community members, agree that archaeological sites should be preserved with the memory of the ancient civilizations in mind. However, in the context of the local community, attempting to remove the modern from the archaeoscape is an act that affects lives and hinders communication between the ancient and the modern.

Though the act of removing the modern—in this case, by erecting the dunes—works to preserve the memory of ancient civilization connected to the ruins, it also, simultaneously, works to sever the intimate connection and personal remembering that the community holds with the ancient ruins. The archaeoscape is not only a museum of the ancient. It is a playground, a music room, a restaurant backdrop, the location of a first date, a highway, a picnic location, a natural park, and each interaction with the archaeoscape creates another layer of memory written atop the preceding one. The often-unintentional overwriting of institutional memory may work to erase the sacred preservation of the ancient that many institutions and people prioritize, but it also may outline a different connection to the ancient. While the experiential perspective, spontaneous interaction and the rewriting of meaning within the archaeoscape, does not prioritize connection with the past by means of turning the park into an open-air museum, it instead prioritizes connection to the past through daily interaction with it, allowing unconscious communication through the landscape.

IV

Fire on Manuzza Hill:
Connections through Landscape and Ecology Across Time

> And so, while the city was being taken, there was to be observed among the Greeks lamentation and weeping, and among the barbarians there was cheering and commingled outcries…The Selinuntians gathered into the market-place and all who reached it died fighting there; and the barbarians, scattering throughout the entire city, plundered whatever of value was to be found in the dwellings, while of the inhabitants they found in them some they burned together with their homes and when others struggled into the streets, without distinction of sex or age but whether infant children or women or old men, they put them to the sword, showing no sign of compassion…By nightfall the city had been sacked, and of the dwellings some had been burned and others razed to the ground, while the whole area was filled with blood and corpses. (Diodorus Siculus, 13.56-57)

Introduction

As the riveting account of the destruction of Selinus by Diodorus Siculus illustrates, the sacking of the ancient city in 409 BCE was a bloody and fiery affair. However, the Carthaginian conquest is not only memorialized in the texts of ancient historians like Diodorus. Like the Selinuntians themselves, the Carthaginians left evidence of their conquest behind in the soil and the landscape, to be rediscovered by archaeologists thousands of years in the future. The soil, the landscape, even the ecology in the park of Selinunte, reveals a complex narrative echoing past human and natural interaction with the land.

In the previous chapter, I established that the archaeological park is not frozen in time. Human interaction with the archaeoscape invokes constant change, erasure, and memorializing of the ancient city in unexpected and sometimes unwanted ways. In this chapter I look to evidence in Selinunte to understand the ways in which human hands and climate have worked together to change and reshape the landscape of the archaeological park, from its inception as an ancient city to modern day. I first consider the fire-human relationship and its effect on Selinunte, then more broadly the effects of climate change on cultural heritage sites such as the

one in Selinunte and finally review the ecological-human relationship within the park, especially the place that human affected ecology might have on the park's landscape. Utilizing ethnographic interviews, I work to understand where this information lives in the minds of the local Selinuntians. The purpose of this research is to understand how the landscape has changed directly through human interaction or through change in climate, but it is also to understand the ways in which the ancient and the modern might still communicate—unconsciously *and* consciously— across time through their interaction with the ecology and shape of the land. The landscape, I argue, is one of the most integral ways that the experiential perspective connects the past and the present. And fire, which demolishes the landscape, may work to erase this connection across time but also may echo past landscape interaction with flames.

Fire in the Mediterranean

In the summer of 2016, at 11pm in the evening, several fires simultaneously sparked on the Manuzza hill in the archaeological park of Selinunte. A small house, long used by the German archaeology team that excavated in Selinunte, stood precariously close to the blaze, teetering on the peak of the hill, overlooking the Cottone Valley. The team was forced to evacuate, and though the dig house was never burnt down by the flames, the archaeologists mentioned that the flames were on their very doorstep.

Many summers later, I was standing in the Cottone Valley, watching the German team excavate what was once the ancient port area, and I was told about the fire. Like all the fires that begin in Selinunte, there were many rumors about where the spark originated; as I spoke to more people about the severe issue of summer fires in Sicily, I was told again and again that the fires were a human, not climate, issue. The fire on Manuzza hill in 2016, which began near midnight on a quiet, stormless night, in several different places simultaneously, was unlikely to have been

a natural phenomenon. According to the news coverage, the question on who or what started the fires was never solved. The German excavation team, however, had heard a particularly interesting story about the origins of the fires: there had been a grove of olive trees on Manuzza Hill, and two different families had been vying for the rights to harvest the olives from the park. When one family won out, the other took it upon themselves to set their rivals' winnings ablaze. Due to the dry, sunbaked, and thirsty flora in the area, and the strong winds, the efforts to fight the fire went on late into the night and eventually charred the side of Manuzza Hill. Once again, 2000 years after the Carthaginian conquest, Manuzza hill was set ablaze by human hands. Two years later, in 2018, it burned again.

Perhaps it is human nature to start fires we cannot stop; perhaps it is a legacy of the land, beginning thousands of years in the past, as demonstrated by the fire on Manuzza hill during the sacking of Selinunte. According to Marconi in his article comparing the historical recounting of the destruction of Selinunte with the archaeological evidence, the proof is not only in the words of Diodorus but in the stratigraphy of the ground. Excavations in the industrial quarter from a German team directed by M. Bentz revealed a potter's workshop, where tools were left behind in haste, which were then covered by a collapsed roof. Due to evidence of carbon fragments and ash, the roof can be confirmed to have burnt down on top of the hastily left potter's tools (Marconi 2021, 93).

It is in the soil; while the causes might have been far removed from one another, a future excavation could perhaps reveal two distinct strata of ash separated by thousands of years. There is repetition in the land, a pattern of civilization married by an overlapping of space and action. Two different sets of people, separated by thousands of years, both set fire to civilization on the very same hill.

Since arriving in Selinunte, I had been haunted by the constancy of the fires. The morning air was mixed with the dry, charred smell of burning vegetation, and the sound of the fire planes raining down seawater onto constant flames became background noise droning behind daily life. From my positionality, I immediately considered the rainless days, hot summers, and dry vegetation as the cause of the fires. Perhaps naively, I had expected this current of thinking to flow into my local collaborators as well. But when I brought up the fires, my collaborators stressed that the fires begin each time directly because of human hands. While some dismissed the proposal that increasing heat was part of the cause, others accepted that the climate was changing in Sicily, but what everyone had in common was that they all cited human agency as the start of the local fires.

When I asked Elena[12], a native to the area, if the climate has changed since she was a child, she said she does feel hotter, but she was also getting older, so she is unsure if it is a personal sensation. She was the first to inform me of the general consensus of the locals on the fire: that they are started by various stupid and malicious people.

Her husband, Enzo[13], is a native to the Marinella di Selinunte area as well. When asked if it seems hotter than it was when he was a child, he smiled and shook his head. “It makes the news more than in the past, maybe,” he told me. When asked about the fires, he continued: “I don't know that it's more than in the past, but what people say here is that the fires are not because of climate change, but because of lunatics and criminals.”

An American immigrant to Castelvetrano, the closest major town to Selinunte, named Leah,[14] was the first to tell me of the commonality of the fires set by the Mafia and the mafioso

[12] Name changed
[13] Name changed
[14] Name changed

mindset. She told me a story: “I remember there was a guy near Partanna who had opened up a pharmacy, and the Mafia asked him for pizzo. If you’ve never heard of pizzo, it's what people in the Mafia ask of local businesses, protection money. In Castelvetrano it's never asked for because of the fact that the Mafia boss is from here. But that guy who opened up the pharmacy wasn’t from Castelvetrano originally, so he had to pay his monthly cut. Every day I would walk by that pharmacy on one of the main streets to the city center. One morning it was completely burnt down. Apparently, the guy said no, and they set his store on fire.”

Leah also spoke about setting fires because of vendettas.[15] “You have a disagreement with your neighbor, and you know that they have this one piece of property somewhere—and if you are really crazy, people set fire to it. Or light people's olive trees on fire, I've seen that here.” Considering what I had heard about the rivalry with the olive trees on Manuzza hill, I was inclined to believe her.

The most recent devastating fire in the area occurred not 6 kilometers from the Archaeological Park at the La Pineta Nature Reserve, a wildlife reserve with a popular beach. I had watched it burn down myself, from my view excavating on the acropolis on a hot June morning. Wendy recalled the event: “Seeing the place before, they have so many animals, and seeing it after was heartbreaking. When the fire happened, we learned that the closest fire station was not that close at all. We watched it burn and burn for a long time before the seaplane came, so that was so sad.” Similar to myself, perhaps because of our shared nationality, Leah did not theorize that the fire started because of malic or human error, but rather, attributed the fire to objects beyond anyone’s control.

[15] A vendetta is a long and violent disagreement between people or families, common in Mafia and those affected by the Mafia.

As my interviews continued with local residents, the list of people that my interviewees said start the fires grew: stupid people burning trash or weeds, shepherds who needed the land cleared for their sheep to graze, people who just want to sow chaos, Mafia, vendetta, and most shockingly, firefighters and local rescue workers. Nearly every person I interviewed mentioned that fires are known to be set by the very people who are supposed to be fighting them.

When I mentioned this to my collaborator Jochen, he explained the full range of what can start a Sicilian fire: “It doesn’t rain anymore. The heat, we always had. But now it's twelve months of the year, and it barely rains. Now the ground crumbles and the sea takes the land with it. However, the fires are not directly connected with the lack of rain, because in nature fire only starts with lightning or lava. But *we* have cigarettes. And we have that old guy who goes to clean the debris in the summer and he thinks there is no wind, so he starts a fire. There are many interests. The airplanes get 40,000 euros or something every time they go to stop a fire. With the shepherds, there is not enough pasture for the sheep and cows to roam anymore so people burn the brush; we call that *Mafia di pascale*. Also, vendetta. Imagine you have one mountain that goes to a family. The government then allows another family to use half the mountain. The first family gets jealous and burns the side of the other family. Also, the *guardale forestale* (the forest rangers), they light the fires themselves.”

The residents of Selinunte are not alone in their suspicions. In addition to heavy news coverage of arson in Sicily, research has revealed the part that humans play in igniting Sicilian fires. According to a survey on risk of fire in Sicily, Sicily has become the region with the highest number of fires in all of Italy, and the main cause of the wildfires are humans (Marquez Torres et al. 2023, 2938). Research has also stated that Sicily vegetation is (shockingly) not particularly prone to fire, and that the high frequency of fire is most likely largely due to

anthropogenic causes (Sadori, Masi, and Ricotta 2015, 1). This trend is not new for the Mediterranean region; in a paper about the frequency of fire compared to rainfall in the Lago dell'Accesa area in Tuscany, Vanniere et al. stress the need for balance in understanding of the historical relationship between humans and fire in the Mediterranean. In the early Holocene, fire frequency followed a similar pattern to lake-level trends at Lago dell'Accesa. However, as human impact of the landscape increased in the area, rainfall and fire frequency patterns diverged dramatically, with the implication that the increase in fires was largely made with intent to clear fields for agricultural use (Vanniere et al. 2008).

However, Sicily's fires are not removed from the reality of a changing climate. According to a study on rainfall in Sicily, the most notable recent shift in precipitation is the increasing homogeneity of the seasons, and the increase of extreme weather events in Autumn, followed by more dry Winters and Springs. According to the study, while Sicily historically has enjoyed three dry months during the Summer followed by nine wet months, the trends show that the dry months are increasing, and now the trends are more likely to define nine dry months and only three wet months, concentrated during Autumn. The study notes that this shift and increase in consecutive dry months could have severe implications with a lack of water for plants, animals, and humans alike (Pecorino. 2024). Another study notes that, according to climate change projections, fires will definitely increase in frequency and intensity in the coming years (Marquez Torres et al. 2023, 2,942). This information might not match perfectly with the information from the interviews, but the trends are the same: the seasons are becoming less pronounced and there is less rain. So though human hands are historically and contemporarily a main cause of the ongoing fire crisis in Sicily, the increased dry season most likely plays a large

part as well. Many authors[16] discuss which land features have been changed through human versus climatic forces. In the case of Selinunte, it is evident that through both direct human interaction and through larger climatic forces, the Archaeological Park of Selinunte and its landscape is in threat of harmful degradation from external—and preventable—forces.

Selinunte and its changing landscape is integrally connected with topics of Climate change. On the world stage, leading cultural heritage management bodies, such as UNESCO, the European Commission, and smaller organizations have for decades been considering the issue of how to deal with increasing environmental threat to the preservation of cultural heritage sites.[17] Worldwide, the most cited concerns for the climatic impact on cultural heritage include degradation and harm due to rising sea levels, desertification, drought, erosion, and wildfires (Lafrenz Samuels and Ellen Platts 2022, 412), several of which plainly impact the Archaeological Park of Selinunte.

In a recent article, Kathryn Lafrenz Samuels and Platts stress the potential importance that narratives of climate threats to cultural heritage might bring towards awareness of the climate crisis. They write that "world heritage has also been picked up by climate scientists and activists as a flashpoint for taking action on global climate change, given the impacts that climate change will have on well-known heritage sites beloved to many" (Lafrenz Samuels and Platts 2022, 3).

A fundamental roadblock in Selinunte for having conversations about fires in any relation to climate seems to be that the Selinuntians generally do not tie fires to the climate, even to the desertification or increasing dry months throughout the year—many acknowledge that both exist,

[16] For examples, see Marighani et al., 2017; Vannière et al., 2008.

[17] See Sabbioni et al. (2008) for a full report on the reaction of several world actors in cultural heritage management to climate change from the previous decade. For a recent review of UNESCO's climate change initiatives, see Lafrenz Samuels and Platts (2022).

but there is not a direct link between them comparable to the link in my mind or in the minds of many when considering wildfires in Colorado of California in the United States. While my local lens—an institutional perspective, informed by my experience as a young American in university—caused me to speak about the causes of fires spreading, such as lack of rain and the dryness of the kindling, the local lens of Selinuntians—framed by the local reality of government corruption, mafioso mindset—caused many to focus on the spark instead of the spread. While there is conclusive evidence that arson and disregard for open flames, such as burning of garbage or the tossing of cigarettes, do have a great impact on the fires in Selinunte, I still found it puzzling that Selinuntians almost *never* considered lack of rain, the increasing dry seasons, or the lack of heat in conversations about fire. Eyes were ever only cast to the ignition, and not the spread, whereas in the United States, conversation almost always trends toward spread—our differing contexts caused us to focus on different facets of the overall issue in a way that reinforced our own experiences.

Because of this reality, conversation about the changing climate is greatly stemmed. When a fire ignites in the archaeological park and takes many hours to extinguish, it is not the dry ecology, but rather, vendetta and human bitterness. When a fire doesn't have a conclusive cause, it is because of stupidity and lack of knowledge. And while it is evident that the increased frequency of preventable fires plays into this mythos, I found that discussion of climate playing a role in the fires was almost completely absent, regardless of the fact that sometimes rainfall does not reach one centimeter per month in the Summer. The mythos of the Mafia, of greed, of corruption—perhaps, more controllable factors, and traits that Selinuntians attribute to their government and often, their neighbors—overshadows all else in the story of wildfires in Selinunte.

Because of this, it is rare that conversation about climate converges with discussion of the management of the archaeological park and the protection of the local cultural heritage. However, there are those in town who work to combat the fires, environmental challenges, and desertification in Sicily.

My collaborator Charlotte, the art store owner mentioned in chapter III, does her own part to aid the continued thriving of the ecology in Selinunte. A summer arts festival, which she helps to organize, was also going to host Stefano Mancuso, an Italian environmentalist. The festival, which is housed next to the iconic Temple E in the park, includes a yearly discussion about the environment. Though the yearly festival was cancelled last minute when I was in town, this is an example of those in Selinunte like Charlotte and others who host the festival who are taking steps toward helping the increasing extreme conditions.

Charlotte is one of the locals who believes the environment is changing rapidly in Selinunte. One afternoon, I sat in her art shop, in a folding lawn chair settled next to the small couch in the middle of the shop. Wood carved statues, patterned purses, and colorful beaded jewelry surrounded us; she and her husband make most art in the store, such as the wooden statues and the jewelry, but other local artists contribute other pieces. The shop was open to the public, and throughout our discussion a couple customers came in and out, glancing at our lawn chair setup curiously. Despite the incredible heat, the shop was fairly chilly; She was German, she said, and was not so used to the heat even after living here for so many years. She blasted the air conditioning colder than any other building in all of Selinunte.

On this hot day, I asked her if she thought the climate was changing, and what we can do about it. “In forty years,” she began, “Sicily will be a desert. We have to fight against this future—we have to do something. For us (she and her husband), we plant trees. That's all we can

do.” She walked over to her window, a proud look on her face, and pointed out to the field next to her shop. “We planted these two, then these little ones over here, two, three, four, five little ones. And we give them water every day. Did you see our sunflowers?” I told her I had not, and she laughed. “Well, you are blind. They are more than two meters!”

Human-Ecology Interaction

Side by side with my increasing wariness about the local fires, I couldn’t help but direct my interest to the ecological features of the area; variable, colorful and upon first glance, altogether thriving, the ecology that did survive the fires offered a vibrant background to the ancient ruins. Among sun-scorched, sandy soil, rainless days, and fires all around, there was vegetation that still survived.

The following excerpt, ethnographic in nature, was found in a published presentation during a symposium in the Archaeological Park of Selinunte about the authors’ book on Selinuntian ecology, titled *The Garlands of the Gods: Wild Flowers from the Greek Ruins of Sicily*:

> Here I had sat, dumbfounded, on a bit of column, staring at ruined temples floating on a sea of many-colored blossoms. I was later to learn that the ancient Greeks thought it useless to hunt with dogs in the Sicilian Spring, when the scent of the wildflowers would overpower that of the prey, but at this first encounter, it was I myself who was overwhelmed. (Simeti and Pettee 2019, 30)

This description aptly illustrates my own awe of the Selinuntian flora: in this land whose summers lack rain, many of the ecological species still find a way to grow. And as Simeti and

Pettee so eloquently describe, this land has been home to some of the most vibrant of flowers for thousands of years, though many seen today are newer additions to the land.

A high number of the ecological species, a total of 29 taxa, are not indigenous to the land (Scafidi and Raimondo 2019, 375), a fact well matched with the high activity of foreign communities interacting and living on the land of Selinunte across time. Another observation by Simeti and Pettee in their lecture about Selinunte Ecology offers a more ethnographic and narrative lens into this ecological reality:

> It has become trite to refer to Sicily as a palimpsest, yet it is nonetheless an accurate metaphor, not only for the art and architecture but, I discovered, for the island's botany as well: each invasion, each conquering people have brought new fruits and flowers that have taken roots in Sicily's fertile soil. The prickly pear, staple in time of famine and iconic in the eyes of many Sicilian graphic designers, was introduced from the new world in the sixteenth century, while the omnipresent and exuberant yellow sorrel, *Oxalis pes-caprae*, has only flourished here for two hundred years, a brief moment in the millennia of Sicilian history. (Simeti and Pettee 2019, 30)

As stated above, many of the plants within the park are not indigenous to the Sicilian landscape. Like the ancient Greeks, these plants learn to thrive in unfamiliar landscapes, and in time even shape the landscape with their alien forms and shapes. The increased diversity is proof that peoples have come and gone from the land, changing it in minute ways with each interaction.

Fig 10. *A sour fig bush overtakes ruins of a storefront on the acropolis. Photo taken by author.*

An article on ecology across time in the Mediterranean by Marighani et al. might offer insight into the cause of the increased plant diversity in the area: “In the Mediterranean, humans greatly influenced the actual patterns of landscape complexity, each culture was built on a previous culture and, therefore, each new land-use started from old land use, in an already human-shaped landscape” (Marighani et al. 2017, 6). The words by Marighani et al. and Simeti and Pettee of a layering of human action set across time harkens back to term by Martina Seifert and borrowed by Paul Jacobs, the “depositories of memory” that scar and mark the landscape. Though in the cases of Seifert and Jacobs the landscape that they are referring to is urban, this concept does well when applied to the ecological and topographical landscape as well; each new plant introduced, fire started or topography reformed places a fingerprint onto the landscape. A ecological survey of Selinunte by Scafidi and Raimondo confirmed that the area is one of the most biodiverse on the Southern coast of Sicily (Scafidi and Raimondo 2019, 375) And though

combined these features are categorized as “natural”, it is largely human hands that have shaped them, and as Marighani et al. proposes, each culture offers a new, distinct layer of paint onto the canvas that is the landscape and ecology of Selinunte.

The Olive Tree: A Window Through Time?

As noted by Schicchi et al. in their paper about the importance of olive trees in Sicilian heritage, the olive tree, as one of the first cultivated plants in Sicily, are anthropogenic features in the landscape; their prominence, combined with their capabilities of living over a thousand years, and may also be an important tool in understanding how ancient and modern communities interact with one another through ecology and landscape across millennia.

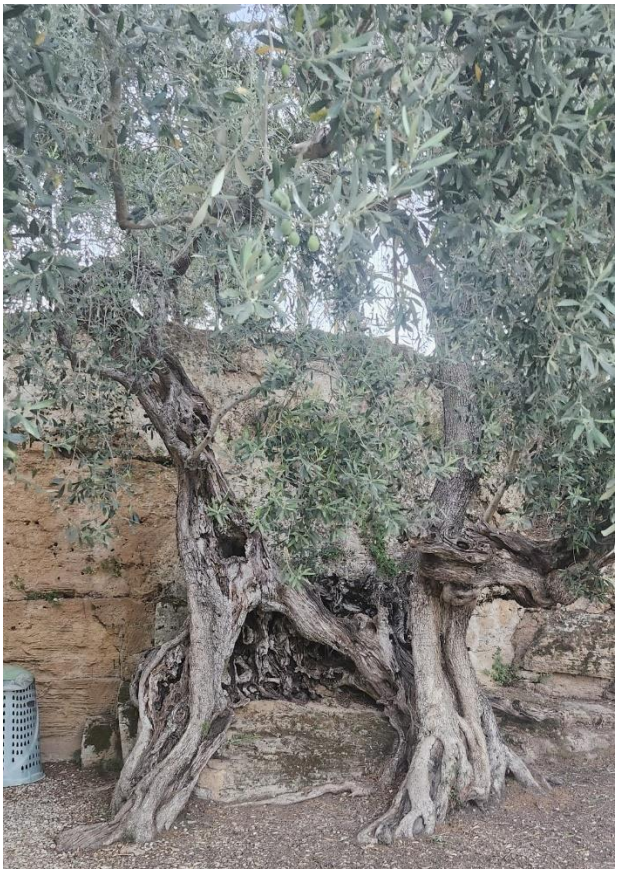

Fig. 11. *This photo was taken in the Case di Latomie, and is an olive tree which is said to be about 1,200 years old. Photo taken by author.*

In present day the land is still blossoming with olive trees, both in the ancient city and around. Since their introduction to the island, they have continued to be important cultural and economic landmarks, as demonstrated by the rivalry and eventual arson upon the Manuzza hill olive grove. Olive trees grow in abundance in the park, a testament to both the continuous human presence replanting and harvesting from the groves, and the fertility of the soil in the park.

An olive distributor in the area, Olio Centonze, has the rights to harvest many of the olive trees in the park, and do so under the assumption that they are protector and restorer of the biocultural heritage of the olive trees. They call the trees "living monuments."[18] and their olive tree heritage protection "Project Selinunte." In a way, the harvesters become something akin to an archaeologist, the distributor a museum; as they nurture the living monuments and harvest their fruit, they continue the same tradition that defined much of the agriculture of the ancient city. They call this process "archaeo-oliviculture".

During my stay in Selinunte I had occasion to go to the location of the olive distributor Centonze Olives, located in the Centonze family villa called Case di Latomie. It is about seven kilometers from the ancient city. At the bar, I became acquainted with one of the concierges, Marco[19], a Venezuelan immigrant who enthusiastically told me of the history of the estate in professional detail.

The latomie—quarries, in English, which the villa was built next to—were used beginning in 800 BCE by the Greeks to extract limestone for the construction of the ancient city. Alongside the quarry, the first olive trees were planted, and the villa, which commercially houses tourists throughout the year and holds olive oil tastings and historical lessons, was built next to the latomie. One particular olive tree, growing up against the ruins of the quarry, intermingled with the stone, is about 1,200 years old (fig. 11). Marco told me that he thinks that olive trees offer a very poetic lesson to those who pay attention. Although olive trees begin fruit production about seven years after planting, the yields are not stable for about 50-70 years. Therefore, he said, the olive tree is about generational sacrifice; the generation that plants the tree probably will

[18] To read about Project Selinunte, see their website: "Project Selinunte – Olio Centonze."
[19] Name changed

never see stable yields from it. It is an investment in a future generation at the labor and expense of their ancestors.

I came to understand the olive tree as a window through time. They were planted originally by the ancient Greeks in the area and then the subsequent residing populations not for immediate personal gain, but, looking into the future, an investment for their children and grandchildren. By extension, as onlookers thousands of years later, we also enjoy the trees and the fruit that they produce. The olive tree is one of the most resonant manifestations of the concept discussed in this chapter of human action leaving evidence in the landscape, and in fact of the past and future interacting and communicating with one another through landscape and ecological intervention. The olive tree is an emblem of living memory.

All interaction with the landscape is communication through time. In some cases, as illustrated in Diodorus Siculus's recounting of the sacking of Selinus, and then discovered in excavations on Manuzza hill, these interactions may leave scars upon the land memorializing unfortunate events which echo through time. The same can be said of the modern fires in the archaeological park: though signals in the form of charred olive pits may not portray the whole story of the family rivalry and eventual vendetta, there is still evidence, layered beneath the soil in ashes. Conversely, the work of The Selinunte Project and their archaeo-oliviculture preserves the biocultural heritage of past generations, communicating in their own way both with those who planted and harvested the olive trees in the past and with those who may enjoy them in the future.

Modern Selinuntians like Charlotte may be sending messages through time in a similar manner of those who had planted olive trees in the past: each tree she plants leaves evidence of her intent upon the landscape, and unless fire comes to detail a different message, her intent may

continue to grow and affect the landscape for many years. As she attempts to combat the desertification of Sicily, and as she does her part to promote the protection of the archaeological park from desertification, she is communicating with future Sicilians and affecting their lives through her own interaction with the landscape. Those who interact with the landscape, who enact living memory of the landscape by dwelling in the land and communicating with past generations, promote an experiential perspective of the past. Every domestic or alien seed planted, tree watered, two meter sunflower harvested and even every fire started begins a correspondence in the landscape, and has the potential to communicate an intention or narrative to future inhabitants of the land. After all, what is an olive tree but a hand, cradling fruit, reaching forward through time?

V

No Time for the Living:

The Place of the Archaeologists in the Local Context

Introduction

"I saw your archaeologist friends in town today."[20]

I was sitting with Miriam one evening, eating pizza on an outside patio near the ocean. This was during my excavation season, before I had officially moved into her home. I looked up, curious; since beginning to grow my social network within Selinunte, I had noticed that many people barely saw the archaeologists in town. Working six days a week, 11 hours a day, most of our time in town was spent sleeping in our beds, grouped together in rented homes close to the park. But when the archaeologists were around, people noticed them.

"How did you know they were archaeologists?" I asked. Though the local community was only about 1,000 strong, summer brought new, often foreign faces onto the streets and cafes of Selinunte.

"You can just tell," she said.

I laughed at this, considering my own interaction with Selinunte. Every day, a bus picked those without a packed lunch up from the archaeology lab in the center of the park and brought us the five-minute drive to the only grocery store in town, where we lined up to order panini at the store's deli or at the panini food truck next to the store. After four hours digging, the majority

[20] All ethnographic data in this chapter pertaining to archaeological and excavation processes in Selinunte was not formally collected and is constituted solely by autoethnographic methods. I do not speak for any group of archaeologists within the park and can only write about my personal experience as a novice archaeologist. Any discussion with interlocutors, such as Miriam, was formally collected.

of us were sunburnt, exhausted, and covered in dirt. Each of us wore long pants, a necessity for excavation even in the scorching heat, and heavy work boots. On days we were rushing, I often didn't have time to rinse my face with water, and I would order my panino coated eyelashes to steel-toed boots in dirt. During excavation season, that was the majority of my interaction with the town: always tired, always covered in dirt, ordering quickly and filing back onto the bus. Other than the midday panino run, archaeologists were generally seen at one of two local cafes, and were often the only ones working on laptops. Even the archaeologists from Northern Italy stuck out; not tourists, not locals, but something else.

Reflecting on this positionality, I wondered if maybe archaeologists did not belong to the town at all, but belonged instead to the park. I wondered if we were categorized in the same way, to those who observe us in Selinunte, as the pillars and the artifacts. The archaeologists descend in crowds to the grocery store, coated in dirt, take too long to order, devour their food like they had never eaten before, and vanish back into the ancient city just as quickly as they came. How does the local population conceptualize, if at all, this presence in their town? Does this conceptualization aid or hinder the local relationship with the park? Do the archaeologists—as part of the institutionalized perspective of preservation and historical memory, and as coming from a position of authority—in turn cause Selinunte to turn farther from the perspective of experienced memory and heritage in the making? Or can their positionality as dwellers of the landscape in their own right promote an experiential perspective?

Archaeology is a subjective and imperfect science. Uncertainty is the sinew of the past, and as discoverers of the past, archaeologists live in uncertainty. As subjective and interpretive scholars, their own identities and life-stories mix into the soil. They bring something of

themselves to their discoveries, and as archaeological evidence is collected and distributed, little pieces of the archaeologists are preserved in museum cases.

However, archaeologists are not seen as subjective human interpreters of the past. As part of the institution of science and discovery, and as people who are characterized as extensions to their workplace, as "ghosts of the archaeoscape," archaeologists are conceptualized as objective messengers. Whether conscious or not, archaeologists live as a buffer between the modern town and the ancient city. As ghostly creatures, the touch of the archaeologist is left unwitnessed; this in turn tempers the town's view of the ancient city without conscious understanding that it is human hands which shape the past. By removing the human aspect of archaeological discovery, archaeology may become solely a purveyor of the institutional perspective. The institutional perspective prevails, disallowing heritage as a process, daily memory, the dwelling perspective, and all that which comes with an experiential perspective. This chapter describes this intriguing positionality and offers ways that the Archaeological Park of Selinunte could promote the experiential perspective instead of only the institutional, allowing the local population to be a part in the process of their heritage. I attempt to reintroduce the human touch at the Archaeological Park of Selinunte.

Eyes looking Forward: Linear Relationships between the Ancients, Archaeologists, and the Locals

There are four main groups which are relevant to the archaeoscape: the ancient population, the archaeologists, the locals, and the tourists. There exists relative transience between these groups. For example, the local workmen in the park often aid the archaeologists and in certain cases become archaeologists themselves. The archaeologists may become tourists at the conclusion of their dig season. A tourist may marry into the town and become a local.

The archaeologists have the most direct relationship with the ancient population, as direct witnesses and discoverers of their lives. As archaeologists, it is often the five grueling weeks of dig season which define their place in the academic world. Tirelessly fixated on the past, they could be said to have their field of vision trained solely on the ancient population, unable to see the locals in their periphery. Like Plato's allegory of the cave, chained by their unforgiving, fast paced dig-season, archaeologists can only see the ancient city, unable to see that living people are moving behind them.

The locals, too, have their line of vision. I was often told of the dismay that many locals felt about their education about the park; namely, that they wished they had been taught more in school about the history of Selinunte. Because of the institutional divide between the locals and the park, the pipeline of information about the ancient city usually goes from the archaeologists to the local park director, who then relays information to the public through local meetings or through the news. I attended one of these local meetings in July, in the backyard of Charlotte's art shop, among some of the trees she and her husband had planted. The director of the park and several other local officials announced some of the bigger findings from the dig season. The history of the park unravels in little moments, across time, for the people of Selinunte. Their view of the ancient population, whether unknowingly or not, is itself shaped by the archaeologists' own findings—their eyes are trained firmly on the ancient, but don't often realize that they gaze through the bodies of the archaeologists, translucent as ghosts, to see the temples. Though locals have their own modern interactions with the park, the stories of the ancient city do not often come in osmosis from their surroundings. It comes from the voices of authority.

Finally, the tourists have their own field of vision. Though they can see all three moving parts (the ancients, the archaeologists, and the locals) from their detached view of the Selinuntian

ecosystem, their vision is clouded by the thick fog of the outside. The archaeologists may be mistaken as fixtures of the ancient city. The locals may be misconstrued as the archaeologists. Local restaurants may be mistaken for temples.

During my field season, mornings were spent excavating and afternoons were for lab work, mostly including, for a novice archaeologist like myself, washing the pottery that had been excavated recently. In the mornings, like features of the city, tourists take pictures of us in our trenches, photographed mid-labor like Greek marble statues of warriors mid-battle. On the long afternoons, we sat outside the lab in the center of the park, scrubbing terracotta and tiles with toothbrushes. Still, as if a fixture in the archaeoscape, tourists would come by and take photographs. Sometimes they would ask what we were doing, but often, the photos would be taken without a word exchanged. To many of the tourists, we were part of a hands-on exhibition, a close up onto the mechanisms for the production of the archaeological park.

The positionality of these four groups illustrates how the institutional perspective creates a linear and detached one way connection between the ancient and the modern. Imagine each actor standing straight in a line, the ancient population in front, followed by the archaeologists facing the ancients, then the locals facing the archaeologists. The tourists are also in this line, but placed much farther behind, in a position where they can see the silhouettes of all three but nothing clearly. The ancient population can only be clearly seen by the archaeologists. The local population, looking through the ghostly bodies of the archaeologists, believe they are gazing upon the ancients but instead, their vision is being tempered by the archaeologists' interpretation. Vision clouded by their lack of contextual information, the tourists often only see a fuzzy, distorted reality. In this world, detached from experience and instead set upon by the burden of the institution, no one sees the full picture. I propose that in order to fully welcome an

experiential perspective, the archaeology park needs to facilitate conversation between these groups. Instead of a straight line, the relationships between these groups should instead be shifted into a circle.

Ghosts of the Archaeoscape

In order to suggest ways that the local population may become more connected with the ancient population, facilitating living memory and the experiential perspective, I will first explain the ghostly nature of the archaeologists, and how this causes disconnect between the ancient and the modern. By ghostly, I mean that archaeologists, as largely concerned with dead, as dwellers of an ancient city, translators of an ancient past, and as people whose time constraints force them to spend most of their time away from the modern town, become allied to the dead; they are invisible and permeable, their fingerprints left unnoticed and their voices mistaken for communication from the ancient city itself. Local inhabitants, who only see archaeologists in passing, covered in dirt or transcribing research notes, parading each morning to the park and slinking home in tired stupor, are left with nothing but glimpses, and when they do see the archaeologists, it is mostly in a context which characterizes the archaeologists as parts of the park.

Besides those who work at the grocery store we bus to each day, the employees at the cafe in front of the park, the average Selinuntian only sees archaeologists in glimpses. “I rarely see them at all,” was a common answer when I asked locals if they had ever interacted with the archaeologists. I had a couple local Selinuntians, their houses not a kilometer from the park, tell me that they had *never* seen an archaeologist. When I met a relative of one of my interlocutors, she told me I was the first archaeologist she had met and even asked what time I excavated so

that she could come watch the archaeologists in action. She went to the park often, she told me, but had never seen an archaeologist at work.

Archaeologists spend much of the time that they are not working at team dinners discussing recent finds, or at cafes, writing up notes or academic articles. During field seasons, archaeologists work in intense, high pressure and fast paced environments, where the work becomes their whole lives in the often short period of time that they are there. They are detached from the living, trapped instead inside the land of the ancient. They wander the land of the living with heavy lidded eyes and fatigued muscles.

Some do find the time to interact with the community; I occasionally heard from the locals that they knew some of the senior members of the excavation. Given enough time, archaeologists do turn around and see the living, and many who come back year after year may become part of the community. But during the excavation season, the majority of the team does not and cannot interact in meaningful ways with the rest of the town. There simply is not time.

One day, I decided to get a panino from the food truck next to the grocery store. There was a rather large crowd that day, and as I walked up, face and arms caked in dirt, and ordered in faltering Italian, one of the men hanging around turned to me and asked, “are you an archaeologist?” When I nodded, he looked at the owner of the truck, who was making orders, and asked him to make my panino first. “So she can get back to work,” he added, and asked me the first and often only question that both locals and tourists ask upon meeting an archaeologist: “have you found anything interesting recently?” This question is often the one and only I would receive on a daily basis. When people learned why I was in Selinunte, my nationality, age, likes, dislikes, all of this became unimportant. My job was to relay the secrets of the park. Even the archaeological process became irrelevant.

Team dinners occured two times a week, and were at the same place every week, a restaurant called Bar Athena[21]. It was often my longest non-archaeology related event of the week, and offered a chance to meet with teammates free of dirt and work pants. Bar Athena is a large restaurant on the road into Marinella di Selinunte, not far from the entrance to the park. The front of the restaurant imitates the front of Selinunte's Temple C, including reproductions of the temple's metopes. The first dinner, the director took each new archaeologist aside, pointing at one of the metopes and quizzing us on which Greek myth it depicted. Sometimes, one of my interlocutors later told me, tourists would drive into town and park at the restaurant, thinking that they had stumbled upon one of the ancient temples. Even on the nights away from the archaeological park, we ate as a team under the watchful eyes of the gorgon Medusa.

The archaeologists find themselves, through the nature of their work, aligned with the ancient city. When I would tell my interlocutors where we had team dinners, many would laugh. It seemed just right that the ghosts of the archaeoscape spent even their free time in the one restaurant in town modeled after a temple in the park. Even in off hours, the archaeologists are still preoccupied with the past.

On my second week in the field, the director of the excavation told a story to all the new excavators of the team as we stood perched on various blocks and chunks of fallen pillars. On the first official day of his team excavating on the acropolis, in 2009, one of the archaeologists took a fall from the ruins and was injured as a result.

Emergency services rushed to the scene immediately, and he received proper medical care. The whole affair was a dramatic sweep for their first day, but the event seemed to satiate the Greek gods' chaotic needs. The director told us, in a humorous, storytelling voice, that the "the quasi-

[21] Restaurant is detailed in Figure 8

human sacrifice was auspicious"—it was perhaps because of this event that they had so much success in the years following.

Fig. 12. This photo *depicts Bar Athena in Marinella di Selinunte. Photo from the Bar Athena Public Instagram.*

Within the archaeologists' sensibilities, too, we are ingrained within the archaeoscape. Our interaction with the landscape is tempered by the gods themselves. As archaeologists whose morning, afternoon, and night are consumed by archaeological endeavors, we too understand that we become part of the ecosystem and our rules need to align with the age-old laws of the landscape. We, like the ancient Greeks, are not immune from the need to please the gods.

As archaeologists crawl hand and foot from the soil, as they assimilate into the traditions of the ancient city and become dwellers there, archaeologists become permeable creatures of the archaeoscape, indistinguishable from the artifacts they find. These ghosts of the past, emerging

with dirt on their faces as evidence to their allegiance to the world of the dead, are seen as an extension of the world which they reveal.

This is not inherently a bad position to be in; by devoting themselves to the pursuit of archaeological knowledge, by becoming ghosts in the archaeoscape, they make discoveries which would otherwise be impossible, within their limiting constraints of tight budgets and a short dig season. However, as invisible ghosts, the human aspect of archaeological knowledge becomes impossible to visualize.

This creates two hurdles to the experiential reality. First, by removing the humans from archaeology, the divide between the modern and the ancient is accentuated. How is heritage in the making supposed to occur where the ancient city is separated from the agency of real people? As invisible actors, archaeologists become a part of the institutional machine. They are reclassified from modern people to a part of the ancient world; instead of acting as examples of spontaneous, daily interaction with the present, tucked away in their trenches, away from the locals, they become tools for the institution.

Second, as translucent ghosts, their touch is left unrealized, and archaeology becomes a mechanism for revelation of the past instead of as a "social practice in the present" (Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009, 65-87). Archaeologists are not solely messengers of an ancient pantheon. Often unknowingly, archaeologists carry into the archaeoscape their own lives and narratives which are left as invisible fingerprints on the terracotta. Because of their direct connection to the physical remains of the past, archaeologists may be seen less as subjective, motivated academics and more as objective purveyors of truth. But as Hodder explains in *The Present Past,* "the need for archaeologists to examine their own assumptions and preconceptions has become clear. For example, there is a danger that anything we find 'odd' is labeled ritual"

(Hodder 2012, 196). While archaeologists live in uncertain theories, fully knowing that their processes are uncertain, the conclusive evidence of the past has often long disintegrated. There is no room for uncertainty in a past which is supposed to be set in stone.

History is slippery, and the archaeological past is uncertain and malleable. How an archaeologist chooses a place to dig, classifies a stratum, identifies an object, writes an article, frames an argument, chooses a journal in which to publish, all of these actions may be decisions made subjectively, but often these decisions lead to changes in the local understanding of the city, as if archaeologists were objective tools whose job is only to retrieve the memory from the soil. An archaeologist might reiterate again and again, "maybe", but does that matter, when they are classified as extensions to the archaeological park, as direct doorways into the ancient reality? If they are mouthpieces to the ancient, their musings become part of ancient memory. Philips and Reyes write in their volume on Memoryscapes, "Not only are memories constructed, disseminated, challenged, and reformulated by rhetorical means, but so too rhetorical gestures are made both sensible and persuasive by an underlying foundation of collective, cultural remembrance" (2011, 1). Modern actions certainly can and will affect the enduring memory of landscapes such as the archaeoscape. Archaeologists create new layers of interaction, as dwellers in the archaeoscape, and true to their ghostly nature, they also phase in and out of the past, rearranging the layers that are there.

Because of the ghostly nature of archaeologists, all of these unique human facets of archaeology are often lost. Daily interaction, remembrance and destruction, human subjectivity and spontaneity are all aspects of the experiential perspective. But by assuming an identity which belongs more to the ancient city than the modern town, they continue to act within the strict

divide of the institutional outlook between the past and the present. Just like the dunes, archaeologists continue the trend of abject separation between the modern and the ancient.

By reviving archaeologists, by considering them not as ghosts but instead of living dwellers of the archaeoscape, we may be able to reveal the facets of experiential aspects of archaeology that are lost at Selinunte. For that to happen, archaeologists must become allied to the living.

An Experiential Archaeoscape

Tim Ingold writes that cultural anthropology and archaeology are 'part of the same intellectual enterprise" (Ingold 1993, 152). They both elicit meaning from the disorder of reality. They find order out of the entropy of life. Ingold also writes that "the practice of archaeology itself is a form of dwelling" (152). Ingold details a humanistic archaeology, an archaeology where the archaeologists are not ghostly but are instead humans who make real impacts in their surroundings. Ethnographers in cultural anthropology have long contended with the subjectivity of their work. As part of the same intellectual enterprise as anthropology, which thrives on subjectivity and focuses on the human, archaeologists may learn how to shed their ghostly facade.

Hodder writes that "the only rigorous archaeology is a self-aware archaeology…archaeologists have been prone to disregard their own assumptions and have imposed their own ideologies on the past" (2012, 211). Hodder details one way that archaeologists may become part of the experiential: by disregarding their own assumptions, archaeologists may shed the illusion of objectivity and may begin to illustrate a human touch that is not invisible.

However, the simplest way to be revealed as human and not ghost is simply to be seen. Archaeologists and the local community need more opportunities to converge. My interlocutor Enzo, a math teacher to young children in Castelvetrano, thinks that the children at his school aren't taught enough about the archaeology park. After discussing his dismay at the separation of the park and the town through the creation of the artificial dunes around the ancient city, he mentioned that to reintegrate the town with the park, every single grade in the school system should have their children get involved with the park.

"Maybe you could make that happen," I offered.

"For next year, I will try," he replied.

The locals whose jobs bring them into the park lay the groundwork for integrating archaeology into an experiential perspective. While the archaeologists are not seen by the rest of the town, the workmen are. I asked every interlocutor I interviewed, "do you ever interact with people who work in the park?" As stated earlier in this chapter, the answer did not often include the archaeologists. However, many instead voiced that they knew local workmen, or *custodi* in Italian. The workmen were the connection between the archaeologists and the locals; they shift in between both identities and are both simultaneously. They typically work with outside archaeological excavations, clearing vegetation from sites that archaeologists are going to dig, filling trenches after the excavation is complete, and aid in the excavation process alongside the official archaeologists. Though typically without traditional university training in archaeology, many *custodi* are extremely skilled in excavating in the park. I interviewed the owner of the *custodi* company, Giuseppe, and his wife, a tour guide in the park, Adela.[22] Giuseppe was one of

[22] Names have been changed.

the first locals I met in Selinunte, and as I continued to bump into him at the grocery store, at restaurants, and by the ocean, he became one of the first locals I became acquainted with.

Adela and Giuseppe embody the experiential perspective. As Adela recalls moving from her home in Germany to Selinunte to be with her husband who she met abroad, she told me, "I fell in love not just with him, but with the temples." As parents and permanent residents of Selinunte, Adela and Giuseppe transition tirelessly from the world of the archaeology park to the modern town. They lack the ghostly quality of the archaeologists, so they in turn become a bridge between the ancient and the modern. As a tour guide, Adela introduces information about the park to tourists in three languages. They have a passion for the park, but experience it in a local context, among their community, free from the isolation of a short summer excavation season. "The park is important for our lives and our jobs," Adela told me. "Guiseppe loves everything about the park, there's not a good or bad part about his job. He likes everything—he loves excavating, but he also likes everything else."

Giuseppe had begun in the park as a child, his father having had a connection to Vincenzo Tusa, whom Adela called during an interview, "the father of the archaeological park". Giuseppe's whole life he had been connected to the park. Those lines between the ancient and the modern, for him, are blurred. Both Adela and Giuseppe told me that they wished more local Sicilians could become archaeologists and work in the park. "Most students come from foreign universities. The Italian government, they don't give money for this—they need to give opportunities for Sicilian archaeologists." She suggests that the schools need to get more involved: "If the next generation shows no interest, we can close the park. We need some activities for the children to get involved."

Another interlocutor, Charlotte, also believes that to solve the disconnect between the local community in the park, the community has to do a better job of introducing the modern children to the park. “Getting kids involved, this is the future,” she told me. “A connection between the park and the people living around it.”

Giuseppi and Adela introduced their own son to the park, and now, as an adult, he works in his father’s company and excavates with the archaeologists on the acropolis. For the people who live in Selinunte, who do not leave after a short season, the archaeology park cannot become an open-air museum. This land, which they have played on as children, which they work in as adults, which they walk by on weekends and talk about with their local friends, is a part of their home. Their daily experiences shape the park. Local community members becoming involved in the park are integral in continuing “heritage the making” and continuous memory that is so important in the experiential perspective.

In *Forgetful and Memorious Landscapes,* Simon Harrison writes that archaeology is reclamation of human activity from the natural world, therefore is an act of restoration of memory (Harrison 2004, 149). Archaeology is restorative. It reclaims parts of human interaction that have been buried by natural processes. It restores, in whispers, the memory of people who have long been dead. It brings humanity to stone and marble and offers evidence for historians and classicists to continually write and understand the breadth of human activity. Without archaeology, so much would be consigned to history and forgotten. It is by design experiential, but with the institution—the external voices which purposefully divide the modern and the ancient—that experience is diminished. My interlocutors have voiced this concern; many believe that most in the town don’t care about the park or never go into the park. Even fewer know what goes on in archaeological excavations. The festivals which happen in the park, such as the

theatrical production that I recalled in the introduction to this thesis, help to introduce the locals to the park but do nothing to demystify the archaeological process.

The local community needs more involvement with the archaeological processes of the park. This has been called in scholarly circles, "community archaeology" a set of practices within archaeology which promotes local community involvement and often partial control over an archaeological project. Yvonne Marshall writes about community archaeology, "There is a widespread belief among the authors of this volume that the kind of collaborative research fostered by community archaeology will be crucial if archaeology is to have a future" (Marshall 2002, 218). Community archaeology also "diversifies the voices involved in the interpretation of the past" (Tully 2007, 155); in conjunction with Ian Hodder's wise words about archaeologists disregarding their own assumptions, community archaeology may allow for more discourse on subjective archaeological interpretations and may also open up avenues where local Sicilians may engage further in continuous memory of their heritage spaces.

Selinunte archaeology teams already incorporate many community archaeology processes, especially through collaborating with the local director of the park, and through Giuseppe's company of workmen. However, the work is far from done. Local children, as Enzo pointed out, would greatly benefit from participating in projects of an archaeological nature in the park; as we have seen, local labor adds an experiential quality to the archaeological park. For continued production of spontaneous memory, for continued "heritage in the making", the archaeologists, park directors, local educators, and even national government may consider increasing involvement in archaeological processes among the local children, and may consider investing more in the archaeological education of young Sicilians: in the case of Selinunte, Selinuntian and Castelvetranese children.

VI

We Are Waiting for the Next Earthquake:

Considering Historical Legacy and Modern Myth among Selinuntians

> "Cosa sono ideologia Sicilianista, Sicilianità, Sicilitudine?"
> What about Sicilianist ideology, Sicilianity, and Sicilitude?
>
> From "Noi, Sicilianə" by Elena Migotto

Introduction

When I asked Selinuntians if they were proud to live in a place with such sought after, visually stunning, and historically significant world heritage, I was, for the majority, met with puzzlement. When I asked if they thought people in Selinunte cared about the archaeological park, I was met with various iterations of *I am, but most other people don't care* or *the older people don't care* or *the younger generation doesn't know what we have* and sometimes, though rarely, *I haven't even been inside for years.* In fact, the idea of pride based on the ancient ruins of Selinus were usually reserved for locals who worked or otherwise interacted with the park on a daily basis. For those who simply lived in the town neighboring the park, the concept of pride for the park was often met with confused looks or shaking heads.

I was first altogether confused about how overwhelmingly the Selinuntians—barring those whose work directly impacted the success of the park, such as the local workmen—were of the same mind on this topic. It seemed there was an obvious disconnect between the ancient and the modern. The most natural inclination—and my own, in the beginning—was to rationalize this line of thinking by understanding that the local Selinuntians were not the descendants of their ancient counterparts. There was no continuous habitation of the land; the modern town is

only about 100 years old. And though that was my original inclination, as I continued to interview and became more accustomed to the overall atmosphere in Selinunte and more broadly in Sicily, I began to see an additional reason for this disconnect; the issue at hand was not whether they thought they were Selinuntians, but rather, whether they felt that they deserved to be proud.

The Southern Question

The economic and cultural gap between Northern and Southern Italy, often called among Italians and academics the *questione meridionale* (The "Southern question" in English), has been a long-standing issue among anthropologists, economists, sociologists, and historians alike (Schneider 2020, 1). There has been a long held historical bias and economic divide between the North and the South (Musolino 2018, 31), and a current of belief that Southern Italians' economic struggles a result of their more agrarian and "backwards" society that missed the opportunity to succeed in a modern market (Pardalis 2009, 77). Often, the economic difficulties of Southern Europe are rationalized by the public as stemming from the Mafia or the Mafioso mindset (50). As the title of Sicilian Anthropologist Jane Scheider's edited volume, *Italy's "Southern question": Orientalism in One Country* suggests, in whole the Southern question refers to a sort of orientalism between the North and the South of Italy.

Orientalism, a term which was expounded on critically in Edward Said's widely read theorizing on the topic, refers in Said's words to "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said 1977). It is an othering of the East which enables the West to ascribe meaning and rationale to "the other" and how "the other" is fundamentally different from themselves. This Southern question is informed by racist sentiments—Sicilians

are more tied in blood and culture to the Middle Eastern and North African regions than Northern Italians are—and by ideas of superiority of Northern Europeans over Southern Europeans (Cimino and Foschi 2014).

The *questione meridionale* is not only a point of discussion among scholars. It is a major problem spoken about in both the North and the South. In his ethnography about Sicily, Stergios Pardalis writes that while in the North, the Southern question and the difference between the North and the South is the product of a backward culture, in the South, it is believed that Southern economic deficiencies are the result of corruption and the mismanagement of resources by the government (Pardalis 2009, 233). I have documented similar sentiments in my own ethnographic work, but it seems clear that years of this dichotomy—one that frames Southern Italians as repeatedly deficient economically, culturally and even morally—influences how Sicilians view their own region.

This current Italian North-South Divide and subsequent negative self-image among Sicilians for their culture and way of life may also resonate with discussion about the global North and global South divide, and a phenomenon that has been coined "cultural cringe" among scholars in the field of colonial and global South studies. Cultural cringe is a phenomenon where people view their own culture as inferior compared to other cultures. This is visible especially in colonized nations or nations not in the global West (Chauhan and Tiwari 2013). Something one of my local Sicilian interviewees said struck me as embodying this concept: "it's always been civilizations that came from outside that came to Sicily to colonize it. And, in a way, *we deserve it*."

In the case of Sicilians, cultural cringe does not usually develop in a way that causes Sicilians to dislike cultural elements that the individual attaches to themselves. I did not witness

any cultural cringe pointed inward at one's own cultural practices or ways of life. It was because of an uncontrollable external factor that they marked as the root cause of the differences between the North and the South. Cultural cringe was pointed outward—it is as if Sicilians take the feeling of otherness that is projected onto them, and they find their own other: one's neighbor, one's local government, Sicilian bureaucracy, and especially the Mafia. Pardalis reveals this concept succinctly in his Palermitan (people from Palermo in Sicily) ethnography:

> Palermitans often claim 'siamo ignoranti' or 'we are ignorant' to make you understand why their society does not develop…They would complain that their society has to change, and when I set the question 'What are doing about this,' I always got the same answer 'The other has to change, not me.' Therefore, in reality Palermitans were contrasting themselves to their backward fellow citizens…This meant that Palermitans were not ignorant because they wanted to be, but because some others deprived them of the means that would render them antagonistic to the other's aims. (Pardalis 2009, 121-122)

Sicilians are locked in their own battle for the soul of Sicily, and it is with all other Sicilians as their opponents. The self-image of Sicily swings from believing Sicilian culture to be among the best in the world, and believing that the most beautiful parts of this culture—the historical landmarks, the food, the way of life—need protection from other Sicilians and from the malicious forces that surround them. It is the timeless and rich culture pitted up against the backwards and antiquated reality of their neighbor and their government.

My host during my research, Miriam[23], remarked on how she would scold her son when he spoke *dialetto,* the term that Selinuntians often used to refer to the Sicilian dialect that was spoken in Selinunte. According to her, *dialetto* sounded gruff compared to the more eloquent Italian, a belief that she shared with many Local Sicilians in Sicily. Once, we walked by her son playing soccer with his friends in the town square. "See!" She exclaimed, gesturing at him. "Did you hear him? They are all speaking *dialetto*." She even remarked to me once that when she was learning Italian from her husband and in-laws, she learned and then attempted to stop speaking Sicilian because it was negatively influencing her Italian.

Sicilian was in every corner of Selinunte: locals would continuously drift in and out of Sicilian to Italian, often using Sicilian in the most familiar contexts, such as casually with friends. However, most people I spoke to, both local Sicilians and immigrants, had a general bias or dislike of *dialetto,* or if not a dislike, then a concession that it was generally lower in status or class to Italian. One local recounted to me his childhood thoughts: "When I was in school, we would look at the fishermen and say, 'look at him, he doesn't even know Italian'. When I grew up, Sicilian was bad. Sicilian meant you come from a family that works the field."

The only truly positive interaction with *dialetto* that I witnessed locals demonstrate was a love of music in the dialect. While spoken *dialetto* was often attached to rurality, provinciality, and lower-class Sicilians, sung Sicilian was more often attached to the cultural, instead of economic or bureaucratic, reality of Sicily. This reaction further demonstrated to me that the problem many Sicilians had with the reality to their community was not Sicilian culture, but with a larger external reality that affected their government and their neighbors alike. Governmental

[23] Miriam, the Kenyan woman with whom I stayed during the duration of my ethnographic research, has a ten-year-old son from a previous marriage to a native Selinunte. Her son speaks Italian and the Sicilian Dialect, but no English or her native Swahili.

corruption, Mafioso mindset, agrarian-dependent society, these were diseases that infected the pristine Sicilian culture, not the other way around. This often materialized in musings that the glory of the ancient Greek ruins set against the relatively small settlement was an ironic turn in the landscape. Compared to the greatness of the ancient city, Selinunte was a sad eventuality, the land corrupted by ignorance and crooked officials.

In one of the seminal books that utilizes archaeological ethnography to tell the story of archaeological legacy, *The Nation and Its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece,* Yannis Hamilakis concludes that, illustrated through many ways, among them the Greek national inclination to reproduce images of the ancient past to signal their modern culture, the modern nation of Greece often proudly reiterates their connection and natural successorship to their ancient counterpart (Hamilakis 2007, 1-10). However, this need to prove an ancient legacy was often beaten down by voices proclaiming the opposite (1). Hamilakis writes about this dichotomy:

> In nineteenth century Greece the colonial-cum-national project adopted many and at times conflicting formats…some of its agents saw no link between the present-day population of Greece and the ancestral classical past, which had now been appropriated as the past of the Western civilization; others portrayed the present-day inhabitants as the 'fallen from grace' degenerate forms of their glorious ancestors; whereas others…saw in the modern people of Greece the survivors of the classical heritage, placing them thus out a time and history. (Pardalis 2007, 21)

Hamilakis expounds on this thought, clarifying that it is the nationalist archaeology camp that emphasizes connection between ancient and modern and colonial archaeology that denigrates local achievement (2007, 21). In the case of Selinunte, where nationalism is not only

clearly not prominent, but anti-Sicilian sentiment permeates through its citizens, it is only the latter, the colonial archaeology mindset, which characterizes locals as "fallen from grace degenerate forms of their glorious ancestors", that survives in the minds of those who live there. This fall from grace is exemplified by the Mafia presence.

The following section of an interview with two of my local Sicilian interlocutors, Antonio and Enzo,[24] demonstrates the sentiment that Hamilakis discusses. I interviewed the two brothers-in-law outside in a classic seaside cafe in the town center. They had just been to the beach; Antonio wore colorful swim trunks, an even more colorful button down, and a wide brimmed sun hat, while Enzo opted for more conservative beachwear. We ordered *aperitivo*, a classic Italian tradition with wine or beer and small snacks, as they ruminated about the park's situation in the larger context of Selinunte and Sicily. Antonio, who had clearly thought about this topic many times before, had much to say: "This place should be one of the best tourist sites in Italy, we have one of the best archaeological sites in the world," he began. "The difference is striking between the glorious past civilization and today, our civilization, our local culture, compared to that which is very provincial and not very developed. Selinunte was one of the most developed cities at their moment in time, and now this is one of the least developed parts of the Western world."

This has been the eternal struggle of a modern people inhabiting an ancient land. Their small town, which they often classified as haunted by the Mafia, by corruption, and the moral failings of their neighbors—could never compare to the glory of the ancient city. The modern residents of Selinunte did not identify their feelings about the park as pride. They are not direct descendants of the ancient city, but I have otherwise found that Sicilians typically claim all of

[24] Names has been changed.

their heritage and are proud of the abundant cultures that have left parts of themselves in Sicily. Pardalis reinforced this idea in his ethnography, where he writes:

> The inhabitants of the largest island in the Mediterranean consider themselves the centre of 'the centre *[sic]* of the world.' Their perception of the world has Sicily, the only island with 'its own sun' as many say, accumulating only the best from all others around. Racially speaking, Palermitans consider themselves the most physically beautiful people on earth due to the mixing that took place on the Island… Moreover, they believe to have turned into Sicilians all those who have come to the island in the past…Palermitans enjoy their diversity and their capacity for incorporating characteristics of the 'other' in their lives, as they believe polyphony to be indicative of both their openness and of democracy. (Pardalis 2009, 120-123)

Sicilians seem to have no gripe with their history. Using Pardalis's analysis of Sicilian ethnicity, Sicilians may as well claim the Greeks as their own or claim themselves as at least part Greek. Their storied history and subsequent mixed heritage is a point of pride. Because of this, one might otherwise expect the Sicilians to claim pride for the Greek-Sicilian feats of history, but the shame attached to Sicilian culture, because of outside bias and their own reaction to local crime, stops them from fully embracing and feeling pride about the uniqueness of their town.

Antonio continued with his discussion: "It's been a subject since the 18th century when there were some famous Italian painters that did paintings or drawings of ruins and the shepherd. It illustrated the great civilization and then decline. In Italy it's been like this forever, it's not something new. It's just that so many archaeological sites are in Southern Italy, which has been

for the last century and a half the least developed part of Italy. It's a shame that we have this contrast between the great past and mediocre present." I recalled, then, Piranesi and his etchings, and the gentlemen on the Grand Tour, and realized that all of them—like the ruins and the shepherd—constantly compare the present with the past. Centuries of studying ancient Greece has placed ancient ruins such as these as shrines to infallible, unflawed and glorious pasts, museums to local institutions and civil sophistication which has not been rebuilt even after thousands of years. Selinunte is cast into an eternal darkness under the burden of protecting a glorious ancient past from a corrupt present. It lives in that darkness, groaning under the weight of tourism, of academic interest, all the while dealing with outward and inward disdain for their community. "We used to have 70,000 people in this city," Karen, a British lady who had lived in town for 50 years, told me one day, voice sad. "Now we have 1,000."

Antonio continued where he left off. "I think it is pretty easy to come to a conclusion about Selinunte if you think about Google camp." He had the gleam in his eye of a storyteller. I had the impression that he had come to the same conclusion as this chapter far before myself. "The Google guys, the very top top guys of Google, the owners, for the last maybe 10 years, they started organizing this Google camp. They invite all the most famous people in the world, they invite Zuckerberg, Bezos, all the most famous and the richest to this Google camp. They stay in the 5-star resort near here, and they organize dinners, events, shows, every year they do one year in Selinunte, the archaeological park, and one year in Agrigento in the archaeological park area. So these are the most successful, the rich, the smart, the leading community of the planet, they are shaping the future of humanity, and of all the places in the world, they choose Selinunte and Agrigento to stage their show. So, it means that these places are the very best in the world. It is a mix of history, culture, landscape, everything. Then you look here—" he gestured to the area

around us: to the port, to our little cafe by the water—"do you think Bezos or Zuckerburg care about this place? They probably wouldn't even send their drivers to have a drink here. They would think it's too ordinary and not sophisticated. I don't think they ever come here. And that tells you everything about it. They come here because of what the Greeks did 25 centuries ago. They don't come here because of what the local Selinuntes want to say or do, so this tells you about Sicily. There was first, one of the glorious moments of Sicilian history, then there were moments of decline, the renaissance, and then decline again."

Compared to his brother-in-law, Enzo had been shy the entire interview. He was so soft spoken that it was difficult to hear him; I had to hand write everything he said because the audio tape didn't pick up his voice. But after his brother-in-law began to philosophize, he was alight. "Inside, we have the beauty, and outside, we have the ugliness," Enzo told me, voice raising just enough for me to hear. "I don't want the rubbish. They never clean. Never. The only way to change Selinunte, the town, is to destroy it. It needs to be ground zero—we are waiting for the next earthquake."

I didn't ask him at the time which preceding earthquake he was referring to, but whether he meant the 1968 Belice valley earthquake[25] which caused an influx of refugees to Castelvetrano, or the earthquake which caused the collapse of the iconic Selinunte temples, his intent was clear: Selinunte was unsalvageable. The only thing that can rejuvenate the land was a new beginning, one that is untied and unburdened with the societal issues of the present reality.

[25] For discussion on the (rather infrequent) seismic activity of Southwestern Sicily, see Guidoboni et al. (2002) and Azzaro et al. (2020).

The Mafia, and the Making of a Modern Mythos

On April 12, 2001, the face of a local man from Castelvetrano was put onto the front page of the popular Italian magazine, L'Espresso, with the headline: *"Ecco il nuovo capo della Mafia"*—'Here is the new boss of the Mafia' (L'Espresso 2001). Messina Denaro's name was brought up in hushed voices by most locals I met in Selinunte. He was born in Castelvetrano, a town about fifteen kilometers from Selinunte; Castelvetrano is Selinunte's gateway to civilization, where Selinuntians did their big grocery or clothes shopping, where they went to take the bus to Palermo, where many found work when tourism season wound down. On my way from the Palermo airport to Selinunte for the first time, someone leaned over to me and pointed out the window at the passing city, just before we arrived in Selinunte, and said: "That's Castelvetrano; it's the Mafia Capital".

It held up to its reputation. My first time in the city, on a Saturday evening, the eve of my twenty-second birthday, Miriam and I had decided to visit a local bar in Castelvetrano to celebrate. "There probably won't be many people," she said, which confused me at first. Saturday nights during the summer in Selinunte meant packed streets with old ladies who link their arms on a *passeggiata*—a leisurely stroll—kids playing soccer on the side of the road, young adults sitting on the outside patios of bars. The streets were so full of people that it became difficult to walk on the main road. So when we parked in Castelvetrano and walked toward the center square, I was sure there would be some commotion in the large, old city. We arrived in the city *piazza,* a square lined with beautiful old buildings, the ground fixed with clean stone slats. There was not a soul in sight. As we walked across the glowing *piazza*, past a 16th century church, our footsteps echoed off the hollow of the empty square. I looked over to Miriam in alarm: "it's like a ghost town!"

We sat down at a bar, a beautiful outdoor space with a table built around an olive tree. We were the only patrons for several hours. “The Mafia killed this city,” Miriam told me. “No one wants to run a business here—no one wants to spend their money here. Everyone leaves town to go out, to spend their money. No one wants to be here.”

Later into the night, two other small groups came to the bar, but it remained largely empty. A small crowd of teenagers gathered on a nearby stage, sitting and laughing in the dark. Men on motorcycles and the sirens of police cars were the only other sounds in the area, echoing off towering stone buildings. As midnight came around, Miriam had excused herself, and when she came back, *tanti auguri*—happy birthday—was playing on the bar speakers. I looked around, blushing, as the song too joined the hollow echo of sound against bare stone. Then the large group of teenagers, making the best of their evening in the empty city, joined in on the song. This was a town that was clearly struggling against two realities: the stifling weight of the mafioso legacy, and an intense want to celebrate the vibrant Sicialian culture that radiated through everything.

No one who I talked to about Castelvetrano—especially the people who lived there—had many compliments to impart on the city. “It's covered in disorganization, it's degraded over the years,” one Castelvetranese said. “When I’m driving through the city and I see a family of tourists, I think that they are probably hating themselves thinking, ‘what can I do? Where can I eat?’ The city center is barren. I’m sure many people come here to visit the park, and they think it is very disappointing.” Another local Castelvetranese told me that there were times when there was no mayor in Castelvetrano because they had found that he was involved in the Mafia. Even Jochen, as he told me how he is trying to change Selinunte for the better, confessed, “I hope that

as time goes on, if I stay here, things will get better, we will solve this old-fashioned Mafia business. But if you go to Castelvetrano, things are already lost."

In the winter of 2023, one year before my fieldwork, the infamous mafioso boss Matteo Messina Denaro was finally arrested after years at the top of the world's most wanted list. He was found receiving chemotherapy in a hospital in Palermo under a false name. One local recalls the arrest: "When the big arrest happened, they found his house, it was right by where I worked in Campo Bello. Apparently my daughter's preschool teacher got arrested because she was involved with him the whole time. I was so shocked. She was a great teacher! Apparently a lot of people in town knew who she was and didn't say anything. People here, they don't have a lot of respect and fear for the government."

I learned through my interlocutors that a few months before I arrived, the Archaeological Park of Selinunte held a festival to honor local Mafia victims—a festival against Mafia violence. The music performances lasted eight and a half hours, housed on an enormous stage erected next to Temple E. The event was called *A Nome Loro*—In their Name—and featured testimonies from families of victims and local voices of resistance against the Mafia. Messina Denaro died of cancer nine months after being captured.

Though there have been moments of resolution and a promise of a future beyond the Mafia, the idea of the mafioso mindset still permeates through Selinunte and Castelvetrano. The mafioso legacy survives with laments to a potential unmet because of the societal problems that permeate throughout the land, creeping along with the flames of fires set because of vendetta and corruption. The Mafioso Mindset, named by one interlocutor but spoken of in indirect terms but most others, is the way in which the ideals and reality of the Mafia leaks into and poison their society, a mindset of acting only in one's own self-interest; it is a mindset which sets fires to

olive trees, that allows farmers to burn their fields without caution on a windy day. The Mafioso mindset gives leave for people to throw trash onto the ground, for the government to ignore merit in favor of hiring their cousin, for corrupt officials to take buyouts, and in Selinunte, the mafioso mindset means that the government cannot manage the park properly. The Mafia and their effects are a mystical "other," a cancer which cannot be dealt with because it has spread to every fingertip of their community.

In their book on the Mafia, *Made Men,* Nicaso and Danesi quote Antonio Cutrera, an anti-Mafia activist, who said, "Sicily has for many years suffered a social vice perpetrated on it by the Mafia. This vice has hindered its social development and has compromised the thrust of its civilization." Nicaso and Danesi go on to write that "examining Mafia culture without understanding how it is intertwined with Sicilian society and culture would be a futile enterprise" (Nicaso and Danesi 2013, 6). Pardalis (2009) writes that "anthropologists focus mainly on the Mafia linking every other Sicilian cultural aspect to it" (76). Historically, socially, and in literature, locals and scholars alike reiterate to one another and to Sicilians that their community is defined by the Mafia.

This is the institutional perspective of Sicilian culture and community; for years, in news and media, Sicily and the Mafia came together as a pair. This has influenced how Sicilians see themselves, in part defined by the international conflating of Sicily and the Mafia and in part defined by the external Sicilian bias becoming internalized. From the institutional, external perspective, the Mafia *is* Sicily.

Nicaso and Danesi's *Made Men: Mafia Culture and the Power of Symbols, Rituals, and Myths,* which tackles the mythos and demystification of the Mafia, says that "Mafia culture has always understood the power of fiction," and that "Sicilian culture was for too long confused

with *Mafiosità* ('Mafia-ness') and that confusion served the interest of organized crime" (Nicaso and Danesi 2013, 95). They propose that the media saturation of the Mafia in Hollywood and beyond, and especially the mythmaking of the Mafia through these mediums, has been co-opted by the Mafia to create their own fictitious mirage, one that accentuates the media and characterizes their own moral codes as chivalrous and brave. But the Sicilian Mafia has become so prominent across space and time that its name has become a generic umbrella term from all organized crime groups (4).

The history of the Mafia is muddy, but is constantly fictionalized for both television purposes and for the Mafia to legitimize themselves as an old establishment. "In *The Godfather, Part II,"* Nicaso and Danesi write, "the origins of the Mafia are traced back to Sicily, and the organization is portrayed as a timeless and mythical society… In sum, criminal gangs justify their existence by looking to the past" (2013, 119-122). The Mafia and its enthusiasts in the outside world work together to fabricate their very own creation story.

The movie and television industries have co-opted the image of the Mafia, reinforcing the image that the Mafia likes to impose themselves as honorable family men with their own codes and laws. The Mafia did not begin this in response to their glorification through the media. Their brother organization in Calabria in Southern Italy, the 'Ndrangheta, are a poignant example of this: the term 'Ndrangheta itself comes from the Greek *andragathos,* meaning a man of great courage (Nicaso and Danesi 2013, 122).

Paul Lunde writes that it is the historical conditions of Sicily that gave rise to the Mafia, stating that because of these historical occupations that the Mafia came about:

> They lived desperate lives on the margin of survival. It was from this social milieu that the Mafia eventually rose, not as liberators of the oppressed, but as able individuals intent on obtaining their

> share of wealth and privilege however they could. Traditional Sicilian suspicion of state institutions created the conditions in which the Mafia could develop. (Lunde 2004, 90).

History crowns the Mafia as a cosmic response to their historical conditions as a perpetually conquered people—they are an inevitable reaction to Sicilian historical reality. They create themselves as a response to their oppression, as a way to get ahead in a world that already works against the average Sicilian. But now, they have become not a symptom but the cause for the messy Sicilian reality, the chicken and the egg of economic and social despair. To the Mafia, their roots wind down through the long and intense history of Sicilian land, beginning with the first occupation of the Greeks and continuing all through modern day, where Italian unification still keeps Sicily down from its potential.

But the veil has been lifted in the case of those who co-exist with the Mafia and their mirages. Their reality is rife with mafioso neighbors, horror stories, and murdered investigators; they know that depictions like *The Godfather* unjustly glorifies the harm that the Mafia inflicts into Sicilian reality. But there is a mythos that remains. The mystification of the Mafia does not stop when the local Sicilians begin to see through the cracks. The mythmaking persists, fueled by the institutional inclination to tie Sicilian identity with the Mafia. A modern mythos is created which inlays the Mafia with all negative aspects of their reality. Northern Italy's "other" might be Sicily, but Sicily created their own other in the Mafia.

It is through understanding this that one may begin to see the divide in perspectives in Sicily—the institutional and the experiential—in regards to their community and culture. From the institutional perspective, Sicily is a place bogged down by agrarian society, uncivil culture, and rampaging Mafia. However, from the experiential perspective, Sicily has a vibrant culture of music, good food, and rich history. I discuss in the first chapter that Henry Corbin calls the space

between the institutional and experiential perspectives the "imaginal world." Kazlev adds that it is in the imaginal world that mythopoesis—mythmaking—may occur. Wedged between the institutional and the experiential, the mythos of the Mafia halts and is used as an explanation for the obvious dissonance.

When I asked my interlocutors what they would change about the Selinunte or Castelvetrano, I received the same answer almost every time: some iteration of the mentality of the people. In response to this question, one of my interlocutors, Elena, responded succinctly: "The people, of course. The mentality. They don't care about public spaces, they only care about their own place." Her husband, Enzo, has a similar answer: "The people, but they don't want to change. In the last 20 or 30 years in Selinunte, nothing has changed. Even if the buildings, or the province, or the hotel changes, the people haven't. If you take a time machine and come here from the past, more or less it is the same people, same place, same restaurant."

"The mentality of throwing rubbish," another local said in response to my asking what they could change. Many of my interlocutors mentioned the trash on the ground—it was as if the trash was the physical manifestation of the Mafia mythos, part of the infrastructure of the imaginal world.

"They allow everyone to build in a totally illegal way," Elena's brother-in-law, Antonio, told me. He spoke a lot about the lack of building regulation enforcement in Selinunte and Castelvetrano because of the absence of a properly functioning government. He and several others implied that allowing chaotic and ugly building styles was equivalent to a visual representation of lawlessness in Sicily.

"They should teach the kids about beauty," Jochen said about what he would change, "and that the old buildings are nicer than the modern concrete and the Mafia influence."

"The mentality is that you take care of your own," another local told me. "Have you ever noticed when you walk around, the streets are dirty? There's garbage everywhere? But then you go into someone's house, it's like a palace. Why do you care about your house and the area right outside your house, and not the streets of your city? Why is there such a sharp line between you and everyone else? It sounds wrong because in a social context I would say we are full of community! But people don't feel so much like citizens of Castelvetrano; it's more like, 'this is my house and these are my kids.' It's a paradox. It's because of this mindset of the Mafia."

I heard what everyone was telling me; it is not often that every interlocutor chorused the same sentiment. I saw it too; I did see the trash on the road, the many degraded or illegally built buildings lining the oceanside. I saw the galleries of fires as they popped up on the side of the road as we drove from town to town. But I confess that I did not fully understand it.

As I was hearing from my interviewees that they believed that their community lacked cohesion or sense of identity, and that everyone fends for themselves, that the mafioso mindset and corruption of officials has leaked into local sensibilities, I was experiencing the most profoundly welcoming and gracious of host-communities. I was offered a place to live by Miriam after two conversations. My collaborators in my research not only volunteered their time with such kindness that my American sensibilities were left speechless, but they also sent me to their friends and family for additional interviews following their own. Only one person who I asked for an interview ultimately declined—and his reasoning was only that he didn't feel like he was a part of the community, so he wouldn't be able to give me any good data for my research. I was offered rides to the bus station by acquaintances. Whereas in many other places I had visited

in Europe, being an outsider meant that I would exist on the periphery of the inner community, in Selinunte, I was only ever offered ways that I would feel more at home.

This paradox illustrates the dissonance between the institutional and experiential realities, and the way that the Mafia bridges this dissonance. The constant invisible presence of the Mafia looms over the local community. They are burdened with the belief that their connection to that world inhibits their community, coloring daily life into something intrinsically tainted because of their association. The Mafia, in this framework of thought, reaches into the righteous aspects of Sicilian society, poisoning the water and corrupting everything good. The Mafia has been built on ensuring the code of silence among its members (Rakopoulos 2018, 1), and by extension, the invisibility of the Mafia makes it impossible to sense or track, and therefore, it is in everything. The trash, crime, corruption, all of it is by extension a part of the Mafia.

These two landscapes, one representing the rich history and culture in Sicily, and the other representing the corrupt present of Sicily, overlap continuously. The reality of the temples, representing to the people the peak of civilization, often contrast bitterly against talk about the Mafia and rural reality and government corruption. The fires on Manuzza hill spoken about in chapter IV, for example—a fire most likely fueled by the mafioso mindset, charred the hallowed ground of the ancient city, leaving many to point at it as an example of the neglect of Selinuntians and disrespect the great civilization that came before. But on the same land, there is a festival against the Mafia, against this current of corruption. It is the created atmosphere of the archaeoscape, as sacred, as infinitely valuable, often tied with other sacred Sicilian history such as food and music, against the created atmosphere of the Mafia, which sets out like fire to destroy this reality. This conflict rules conversation in Selinunte. It is an absolute good versus an absolute evil. However, hours and hours of Sicilian music and the many voices that were

speaking against the Mafia showed that though many feel as though this community only fends for themselves, still they come together, and they come together in the ancient city, nearly on the steps of the Temple of Hera.

So even though the reality of the Mafia and what it has become in Sicilian society looms over Selinunte, unity still exists. Though in a place where the world conflates your nationality with organized crime, in the end this may color how Sicilians see themselves, but it does not stop kindness and community from permeating Selinunte.

"I feel community now," Jochen supplied, when I spoke with him about how so many thought that Selinunte did not have a strong community. "You cannot approach it with bad feelings and hate, you'll never be a part of a community otherwise. We have to accept differences and find the few things that we have in common. I think that here—" he gestured to his restaurant, where I had spent countless days by the beach, countless nights listening to bands play by the water, where I had met friends and gone out to dinner—"Here we have a community."

Perceptions of Past and Present

The main sentiments I observed in relation to the park were threefold: regret for unrealized potential, shame for mishandling of the ancient park, and indifference to its existence. In chapter III, I discussed the debate regarding the dunes, and how many believe they are necessary to keep locals from destructive behaviors in the park. Among those interviews, I found that those who liked the dunes were people who thought that the park needed protection from misuse. They were often the same people who thought that the park could be on par with more popular sights such as Agrigento. Leah told me, "There are so many beautiful places in Sicily,

and this could be one of them, but it's not;" this summed up what so many were reiterating time and time again. This place could be better, if the government paid attention to it. It could be better if the officials weren't corrupt. It could be better if the locals cared to make it better.

The festivals in the park, such as the theatrical production from chapter I, the art festival from chapter IV, the anti-Mafia festival from this chapter, spur conflicting thoughts from my interlocutors. My musician friend, Dante, described his feelings: "Last year I performed at a small concert in the park. I played guitar. But I don't do that too often—I don't want too many people in the park for festivals because we need to preserve the site. People get drunk and leave bottles." Another said: "Small festivals are okay--but when you have 15,000 people here—this is not the right place."

Many feel the indifference: "everything is so beautiful and nice here and it doesn't even matter to anyone that it could be way better. They just exist in this amazing place and that's enough," Leah said to me.

"The archaeological park is not important to the people of the town," another said. "We have managed the park really badly in the last 20 years. That's how it is in Sicily, no respect for what is important. The end result is bad and uncoordinated."

Maria, another local who worked in the ticket office in the park for several years, had her own ideas about the park's relationship with the people: "People think that the park belongs to us, it belongs to the Castelvetranese, but it belongs to the world. It's not mine. It's so big, it's so old, and we are lucky to live here, but it is not ours, like the sea. The sea is not mine. But the people here have a responsibility to take care of it. A lot of people don't feel that responsibility. Lots of people say that the things in disrepair are the fault of the local council but it is ours too."

But many others have hope for the future. As I had become accustomed to, Jochen had a story to go with his philosophy: “The park for many years has been about driving the personal interests of the families. Finally, I like the current director. He’s a local guy, he’s not from the outside. He’s a customer of mine, and I went to school with his son. We finally have what we need—a dialogue. It's actually a miracle that they got someone who is actually doing good for the park. Corruption has really impacted the park. And there are young people leaving, but there are also others coming back to Selinunte. Some friends of mine are studying pharmacology and things like that, but now they are coming back to manage the olive trees of the father that died. I am not the only young person here anymore. And as we make new connections, it helps us realize that we are not alone.”

Conclusion

Like the layers of soil in our excavations on the Acropolis, continued life in Selinunte is complex and storied. The legacy of Sicily, its colonial history, the modern biases that the island still contends with, and the looming, sticky presence of Mafia, malice, and corruption, all continue to create layers of interaction on this land which has dealt with thousands of years of intricate webs of civilization and conflict. People in Selinunte deal with an additional layer: the large shadow cast from the ancient city pitted against their modern town like it was competition. With tourists and archaeologists, scholars and bureaucrats flooding their streets to see and obtain just a part of the ancient city of Selinus, the local people have to at once relinquish their ownership of the park and work tirelessly to protect it.

I asked my musician friend Dante if he felt proud to live next to the park. Dante was born and raised in Selinunte. His family had been fishermen in the town since it started to become a settlement about 100 years ago. “For me,” he began with a slow breath, "Selinunte is sacred

because I am from here. I am connected to Selinunte—I am connected to the ancient. I get inspiration for my music from the park." That evening he played a Sicilian song on his guitar for me to record, sitting at my favorite pizza bar on one of my very last days in Selinunte. The owner of the bar and his wife, who I had become accustomed to seeing nearly every day, paused their duties and listened. As Dante played, I felt as though this was the Sicily that is often forgotten in discussions of Mafia and trash and corrupt officials and glory of a city long lost. As Dante's voice rose above the buzz of fellow restaurant goers, a reverent hush settled over the crowd. Most people in the restaurant had greeted Dante earlier in the night, and Dante had introduced me to cousins, friends, uncles and teachers, so I had the impression that for many, this was not the first time Dante sang on that patio.

When the song completed, the restaurant roared in applause. When I asked, Dante supplied that the song was entitled "Santù", and it was by Pino Veneziano. When I asked who that was, the restaurant owner laughed and chastised me for not knowing and promptly brought me to the cash register and pointed at a photograph of Pino that was framed and hung up on the wall. I learned that Pino Veneziano was a famous Sicilian singer who lived in Selinunte for many years.

There was something about that performance, about the way that everyone stopped to listen, that continued to echo in my mind long after I came back to the US with my notes and my recordings. There was a knowledge held there on that patio that this was important, and as I listened, I felt as though *dialetto* was no longer a sign, for the Selinuntians present, of incivility or gruffness, a language inferior to Italian; *dialetto* was the language of this land and this people, a language perhaps tied to the streets, to the park, to even the dunes and the temples. It was the language of a people living in a shrine to the ancient, whose relationship with this ancient world

was as complex and detailed as their relationship to their island and their government. In this moment, the experiential perspective shined through the burden of the institution. As Dante played, and everyone listened, I was reminded that Dante spent his evenings sneaking into the park by climbing over the dunes through the forest, sitting next to the ruins and finding inspiration from the ancient. My original question coming into this research was considering the ways that the past and present communicate in this land. Listening to *dialetto*, to a song written by a Selinuntian, sung by one who found his inspiration in the park, I understood that the past was not only revealed through scientific inquiry. It could be experienced.

VII

Conclusions: Does the Past Speak?

Among this sea of uncertainty, caveats, and conflicting narratives, I set out to discover the reality of a modern people in an ancient land. But I instead discovered overlapping realities, worlds stacked one on top of another. So whose perspective do I attempt to understand and uplift? The institutionalized perspective? The truth of the archaeological canon, historical record, the truth of legal documents and preservation initiatives, of stone tablets, painted ceramics, decaying fishhooks? Or do I learn from the experiential perspective, which in itself exists overlapping narratives—Did I discover Charlotte's truth, or Dante's, Jochen's or Elena's? Do I instead opt for the voices of Diodorus Siculus and Thucydides? Is Selinunte an open-air museum, made to be looked at from afar and experienced in glimpses of the past long dead? Is it a playground, someone's backyard, a shrine to future memories? Who does the land belong to? The locals? The government? The Ancient Greeks? The world? In the experiential perspective, there are too many answers for me to record, but the land graciously does it for us.

The town itself exists as a contradiction: the ancient and the modern live on top of one another, overwriting and memorializing each other simultaneously. Ecology, in parallel, changes and morphs the land while also connecting humans in both the institutionalized and experiential perspectives through generations of interaction. Archaeology in the park both memorializes the past and demolishes it in a moment. And just like every other aspect of this knot of time that is Selinunte, legacy is complicated. The path of communication between the ancient and the modern is not a telephone wire, nor is it a note written in a time capsule. It is mixed up with politics, with shame and honor, goodwill and malice. It is written over by children with crayons,

archaeologists with pickaxes, and with echoes of an unkind reality. But the past is memorialized in much the same way: colored in by children's hands, revealed by archaeologists, and made into a symphony which overruns the echoes.

It is not a flaw that two actions are happening at the same time. It is not wrong that the modern finds meaning in the past, and it is not wrong that the modern may repurpose it. Antique stores do not dishonor the previous owners of their items, they simply give them new space to carry their history from the past into the future. It is not correct to assume that spaces of heritage are only museums, because they are not. In many cases, people still live in these spaces, making their own meaning and ascribing it into the land. Among the contrasting perspectives, that of the institutionalized past and the experienced present, there exists spaces that are fully engulfed in both. As *lieux de mémoire,* realms of memory, ancient spaces become thresholds between realities and between time. And those who live next to these *lieux de mémoire* may become keepers of this place that is both frozen in time and slowly changing, an ancient past and a fully realized present. In their daily interactions, their thoughtful observances, their memories of childhood gazing upon the ancient, they become part of these realms of memory.

The institutional perspective certainly has its place in Selinunte. In order to respect and understand history, it is important to sometimes separate the past and the present. The dunes, for example: many community members were angry that they were pushed out from their own backyard, while others see the creation of the dunes as a positive way to protect the ancient city and to allow for one to "time travel" to the past and truly experience the park free from outside interaction. Arson may further obliterate the important history of the ancient city, and may erase evidence of ancient civilizations from the ecology and the soil. The institutional perspective

values historical record, scientific reasoning, and continued and systemic discovery of the past free from contamination from the present.

However, the institutional perspective removes one aspect which is extremely valuable from heritage spaces. As *lieux de mémoire,* places like Selinunte are defined by modern interaction. In fact, it is often through continued interaction that the past may communicate with the present. As a tourist takes the long path from the acropolis to Malophoros, they are mimicking the journey of ancient Selinuntians and are experiencing the same separation from urban life that caused the unique, isolated fusion of cultures that are expressed within Malophoros and Meilichios. As laborers harvest olives from the ancient trees in Selinunte, they are engaging in a thousand-year practice on the land and interacting with those who planted those olive trees with hope for future generations. When archaeologists dwell within the land and make it their home, they themselves add onto the storied history of the land, communicating with the past by adding their own mark to the land and becoming part of the story of the land. When Dante sneaks into the archaeological park in the dark, as he jumps over the dunes and draws inspiration from the ruins, as he takes that inspiration and sings in *dialetto,* he continues that conversation with the past.

When I recall the frameworks put forth by other scholars that I discussed in the introduction, *lieux de mémoire*, memoryscapes, heritage in the making, the dwelling perspective, memory as a phenomenon in the present, memory as magic, I always find myself imagining the children playing and hiding among the ruins of Selinunte. I have expounded at length about the important place of children in the future of Selinunte. In the experiential perspective, I find the vision of Selinunte as a child's playground to be the most poignant. Children are the crux of

experience; like the fictional character of Piranesi in the book by Susanna Clark, children find meaning not just in the storied history of the land, but also in their immediate surroundings.

Selinunte is not only enjoyed because of its thousands of years of history. It is not only important because of the great battle that occurred there, nor the large population it held. It is not only the extrinsic value taken from historians like Diodorus Siculus or the pamphlet waiting for tourists at the ticket office. Selinunte is valuable, too, because it is a child's playground. Because it is a music studio. Because it is a theatre. In chapter one I learned from the literature that heritage is about the past. But, informed by my ethnographic interviews, I believe heritage is about the present.

It is an important endeavor to uncover using the traditional avenues the intricate details of art history and archaeology as a whole; but that is not what I hoped to accomplish with this thesis. Instead, I hope to communicate that there is another avenue for discovery. By experiencing memory instead of discovering, by *making* heritage instead of preserving, by dwelling in landscape instead of mapping it, the past may communicate in unfamiliar ways. Through the landscape, the past speaks. But it is only if we listen that we may understand.

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