

Parmi les dix mille îles et îlots de Méditerranée, moins de trois cents seraient habités et seulement deux cents mesureraient plus de 5 km<sup>2</sup>. Ces îles sont des entités géologiques et géographiques complexes où coexistent des formations de roches très anciennes et d'autres créées très récemment (îles volcaniques). À la fois ouvertes sur l'horizon et les côtes continentales voisines, elles restent, paradoxalement, relativement fermées de par leur isolement, créant ainsi des spécificités quant à leur biodiversité et leur colonisation par les sociétés humaines. Les îles de Méditerranée forment ainsi un objet d'étude privilégié pour la géoarchéologie. Cette dernière emprunte les concepts, les méthodes et les techniques de disciplines relevant des sciences humaines et environnementales (l'archéologie, l'épigraphie, la philologie, la géographie, la paléocologie, la paléontologie...).

Cet ouvrage établit un premier état des connaissances dans le domaine de la géoarchéologie des îles de Méditerranée. L'éclatement géographique de ces dernières, ainsi qu'une histoire de l'occupation propre à chacune, démontrent toute la difficulté de globaliser ces espaces géographiques, progressivement transformés en territoires sous l'action répétée des sociétés humaines. Des spécialistes dressent ici les relations complexes entre les dynamiques et les processus paysagers et les logiques d'occupation humaine depuis la fin du Pléistocène.

Le présent ouvrage recueille vingt-quatre contributions regroupées dans cinq parties intitulées « Anthropisation et mutations paysagères à la transition Paléolithique/Néolithique » ; « Mobilité et reconstitution des anciens niveaux marins depuis la fin de la dernière grande glaciation quaternaire » ; « Adaptation aux mutations paysagères à l'échelle intra-site : la nécessaire prise en compte des paramètres environnementaux » ; « Deltas, lagunes et marais : des interfaces propices à l'implantation des sociétés humaines » et « Matières premières : exploitation et interactions ».

Cet ouvrage s'adresse principalement à des spécialistes de géographie, d'archéologie et de paléocologie mais aussi à un public plus large : étudiants des niveaux L-M-D, enseignants et simples néophytes souhaitant s'initier aux concepts, méthodes et techniques de la géoarchéologie.

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Sous la direction de Matthieu Ghilardi  
Avec la collaboration de Franck Leandri,  
Jan Bloemendal, Laurent Lespez et Sylvian Fachard

Géoarchéologie des îles de Méditerranée  
Geoarchaeology of the Mediterranean Islands



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# Géoarchéologie des îles de Méditerranée

Geoarchaeology of the Mediterranean Islands



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# Reconstructing the coastal landscape of Selinus (Sicily, Italy) and Lipari Sotto Monastero (Lipari, Italy)

MAZZA Alba<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This paper uses an interdisciplinary methodology to investigate the ancient paleolandscape of the ancient coastal settlements of Selinus in Sicily and Lipari Sotto Monastero (LSM) in Lipari Island (north of Sicily), and how these have changed over time. In order to reconstruct the landscape at the time when the cities were inhabited, we focused on the analysis of historical sources and archaeological evidence, which provide insights into the human components of a city. Data from previous geomorphological studies and from geophysical survey were analyzed in order to investigate the physical environment. Additionally, the study focuses on understanding the coastal landscape of these cities, as well as its diachronicity, from antiquity onwards (from the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD). The combination of traditional studies and modern forms of investigation provided remarkable results which enhance our understanding of the coastal landscape of ancient Selinus and LSM and how it has changed over time. In addition, the prediction of future coastal changes, based on this interdisciplinary methodology, offers useful insights into what we should expect in the future.

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## Introduction

Located in the centre of the Mediterranean Sea, Sicily functioned for millennia as a focal point for commercial activity and the exploitation of natural resources, as well as of human migration, interaction and the creation of new identities (Holloway, 2002). During Greek and Roman times the great majority of the coast was occupied by several cities and towns whose role was either economic or strategic (Columba, 1906; D'arrigo, 1965). Syracuse, Megara Hyblaea, Agrigento, Selinus, Palermo, Tindari, Lipari, Messina and Catania were some of the most significant (Figure 1). Despite the importance of such shoreline settlements, very little attention has been devoted investigating the relationship of ancient Sicilian coastal cities to their landscape. Antiquarian studies and later archaeological research undertaken in Sicily over the last two centuries have generally

focused on the monumental aspect of the cities (De Miro and Lombardo, 1984; Tusa, 1984; Voza, 1999; Wilson and Leonard, 1980). Temples, public buildings and the land aspect of coastal archaeological sites were the most investigated aspect. In contrast, very little research has been undertaken in order to understand the coastal landscape, in particular the natural features of the shoreline and the aspect of the waterfront of important coastal settlements such as Selinus and Lipari (Figure 1). The appearance of structures at low tide, rather than a systematic study of the shore, flagged the presence of underwater urban-related structures. This was the case for the "Banchinamento Orsi" at Megara Hyblaea, north of Syracuse (Figure 1; Orsi, 1890; Vallet *et al.*, 1983) and the submerged remains of a Roman structure (dated 50 BC/50 AD) in the small island of Basiluzzo, north of Panarea, in the Aeolian Archipelago (Bernabò Brea, 1985; Figure 1). Studies of these structures had the

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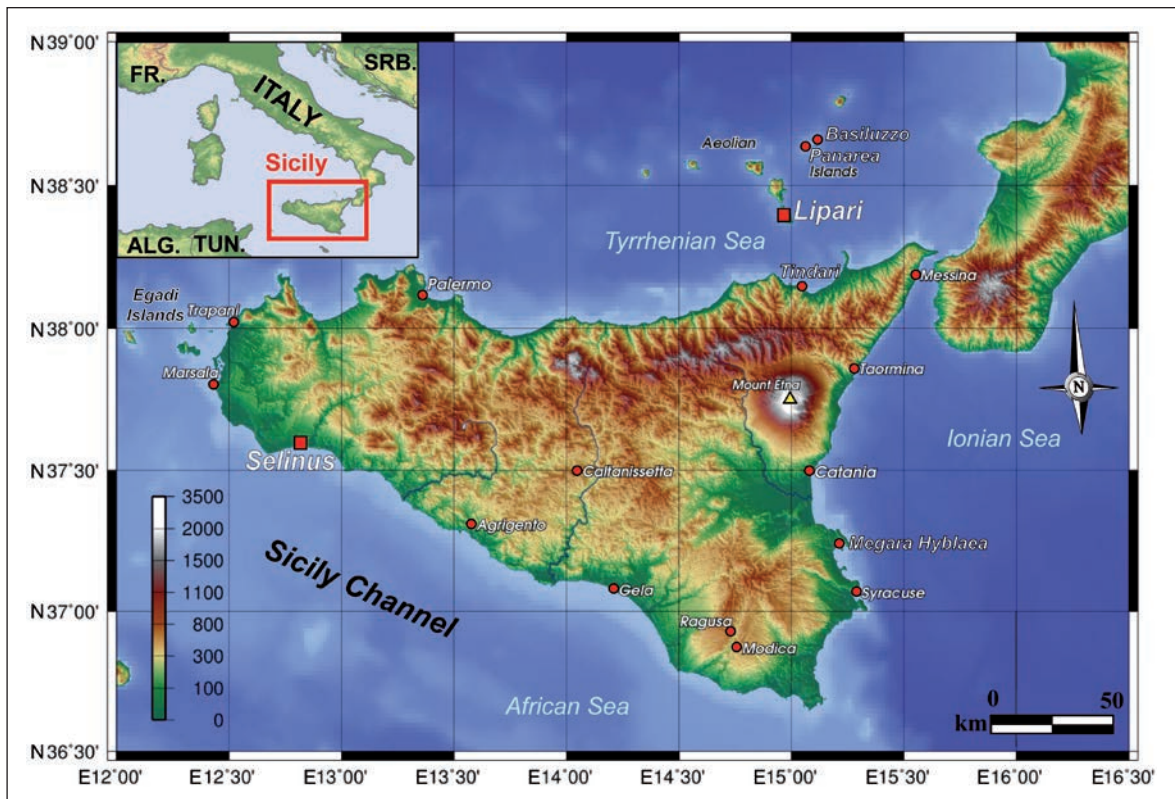


Figure 1: Location map of study sites in the Sicily-Lipari islands.

outcome of drawing attention to below the sea surface; moreover, they also raised awareness of the existence of underwater archaeological evidence other than shipwrecks connected to a land site. However, methodological, qualitative and quantitative gaps in the archaeological approach to the study of the coast have left significant deficiencies in our knowledge of harbor-side infrastructure and waterfront architecture of almost all of the Greek and Roman coastal settlements of Sicily. The maritime aspect of Sicilian Greek and Roman coastal settlements, which includes both social and physical elements, needs hence to be investigated in order to obtain a full understanding of those coastal cities (Hesnard *et al.*, 2011; Marriner and Morhange, 2007). Our research focuses on the study of the ancient coastal landscape of the two key cities of Selinus and Lipari Sotto Monastero (LSM), to which an interdisciplinary methodology has been applied within the scope of the author's PhD thesis. These coastal cities are ideal case studies for investigating the relationship between humans and the coastal landscape. Each site possesses unique circumstances which should be further researched in order to enhance our knowledge of Sicily and its palaeo-landscape. Moreover, by studying these cities it has been possible to highlight changes in the coastal environment, which may enable an improved

understanding of current environmental hazards and the prediction of possible future coastal changes.

## Geological background

Sicily, which covers an area of 25 711 km<sup>2</sup> is the largest Mediterranean island (Figure 1). From a geological perspective, it is a critical component of the Mediterranean belt (Caire, 1970; Catalano *et al.*, 1995) since the island connects the North African Maghrebides, formed by the Tellian and Atlas systems, to the Italian Southern Apennines and the Calabrian Arc (Catalano *et al.*, 2013). According to Agnesi and Catalano (Agnesi, 2004; Catalano, 2004; Catalano *et al.*, 2013), the island can be divided into three geological sectors, corresponding to three main tectonic elements formed by the early Miocene collision of the African continental margin with the Sardinia Block and later movements of migration, duplexing and rotation (Catalano, 2004). The first element, the foreland (Catalano *et al.*, 2013) is mainly composed of carbonaceous rocks. It includes the Iblean Plateau and continues southwards offshore into the Sicily Channel-Malta area and the Western Sicily Channel. Second is the foredeep (Catalano, 2004) that extends from the Iblean Platform to

offshore southern Sicily and occupies almost the entire mid-southern area of the island. This area originated from the Late Pliocene onwards and is filled by Plio-Pleistocene pelagic marly limestones and sandy clays overlying the Messinian evaporites. The third element is the orogenic wedge (Agnesi, 2004; Catalano *et al.*, 2013). Sicily is surrounded by three seas, the Ionian Sea to the East, the Tyrrhenian Sea to the north and the African Sea to the southwest (Figure 1). The Ionian Sea is an oceanic basin of the Eastern Mediterranean basin formed during the early Mesozoic (Catalano *et al.*, 2001) or earlier separation of the Adriatic block from Africa (Catalano *et al.*, 2013). The Tyrrhenian Sea (Figure 1), which bounds Sicily to the north, is a mid-late Neogene partially-oceanic sub-basin of the Western Mediterranean basin (Carminati and Doglioni, 2012). The African Sea (Figure 1), also called the Sicilian Sea, separates the Western Mediterranean basin from the Eastern Mediterranean basin. Two straits separate Sicily from the mainland. The first, the Messina Strait in Eastern Sicily (Figure 1), is a 3.1-km-wide passage between the eastern tip of Sicily and the western angle of Calabria, in mainland Italy; and the second, the Sicily Channel or Sicilian Strait, is a much wider passage, *ca.* 145 km between Sicily and Tunisia which divides the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Western Mediterranean Sea from the Eastern Mediterranean Sea (Figure 1).

## Archaeological context of Selinus and Lipari

### Selinus

The ancient coastal landscape of Selinus, located on the southwestern coast of Sicily (Figures 1 and 2), has never been investigated systematically (Purpura, 1991; Tusa, 2010b). The present landscape provides few indications of the appearance of the ancient city's waterfront. Selinus, founded by the Greeks from Megara Hyblaea and from Megara Nisea (De Angelis, 2004), was one of the most important of the Greek colonies in Sicily and the one with the largest *chora* (Di Vita, 1996). The date of its foundation cannot be precisely determined and historical evidence ranges from 650 BC, as indicated by Diodorus, to 628 BC indicated by Thucydides. The city functioned as a Greek outpost in the Carthaginian West and was economically rich with high defensive walls, monumental temples, sacral areas, extensive necropolises, and direct contact with the fertile hinterland as result of navigable river systems (Cerchiai *et al.*, 2004; Crouch, 2004; Di Vita, 1996). Previous excavations indicate the presence of a port infrastructure in relation to

the Modione and the Cottone Rivers (Lentini, 2011; Purpura, 1991; Figure 2), located respectively east and west of the acropolis (Figures 2 and 3). However, they have not been verified by extensive and systematic research (Purpura, 1991; Tusa, 2010b). Despite the current absence of evidence for the existence of port infrastructure in the Modione River dating to the Greek period, it is probable that the Greek settlers used naturally sheltered areas at the mouth of the river (Morton, 2001). In Greek times the river was considered navigable as far inland as the Gaggera Spring (Tusa, 1986; Tusa *et al.*, 1984). Its navigation would have accomplished two main interrelated tasks. First, was the provision of fresh potable water from the spring (Crouch, 1993); and second, a stopping place at the sanctuary precinct of the Malophoros, on the Western edges of the Modione River. However, the only known evidence of port infrastructure on the Modione River is dated to the Later Roman period (Lentini, 2010b; Figure 3, Nr. 3). To date, there is an absence of comparable evidence dating to Greek times from the Modione River mouth. Unlike in the case of the Modione River, in the Cottone River (Figures 2 and 3) port facilities pertaining to the Greek period were visible to travelers and explorers of the town in the late 1800s (Cavallari, 1872; Salinas, 1886), since they were occasionally exposed during winter and spring storms. Limited research by Salinas in 1886, 1888, 1902 and 1904, Bovio Marconi in 1950-51 and by the German Institute of Archaeology in 1995, has been undertaken on the remains of these mooring facilities on the Cottone River (Tusa, 2010b). These archaeological remains, consisting of docks and mooring facilities (Figure 3, No. 5; Figure 4) have been mapped by 16<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> Cent. travelers. These travellers also documented geographical features such as ponds and marshes. Indeed, since the middle 16<sup>th</sup> century (Fazello and Nannini, 2012), and for the last 500 years, the area has been described as a marshy, unhealthy environment which was a source of malaria. Selinus, abandoned around the 250 BC, was sparsely populated in the Late Roman period and Byzantine times (Lentini, 2010a; Lentini, 2010b) and was not permanently inhabited up to the present. The ancient city of Selinus is currently an archaeological park which is the largest in Europe ([www.selinunte.net](http://www.selinunte.net)). Surprisingly, despite the importance of Selinus in the history of Sicily, no research has been undertaken to understand its waterfront. As a result, many aspects of the topography and the social sphere of the city are unclear, such as the appearance of the waterfront and the related areas of commercial and social interaction.



Figure 2: The ancient city of Selinus (West Sicily, See Figure 1 for location), as imagined by Hulot and Fougères (1910). Red box represents an aerial photo of the acropolis of Selinus.

## Lipari

Lipari is the main island of the Aeolian volcanic archipelago in northeastern Sicily. Since prehistory, and in Greek, Roman and Medieval times, the island has played a crucial role in the Mediterranean as an important node in the network of trade and commerce (Bernabò Brea *et al.*, 1998; Cavalier and Bernabò Brea, 1991). This is well attested by the massive stratification on the Acropolis rock (Bernabò Brea and Cavalier, 1980) which has been inhabited continuously since 4000 BC (Bernabò Brea, 1957; Cavalier and Bernabò Brea, 1991). Unlike Selinus, Lipari has been inhabited continuously up to the present and therefore

the ancient waterfront of the city has also been investigated by considering the urban development the island has undergone. The present coastal landscape of Lipari has left no visible traces of what the ancient waterfront would have looked like. Knowledge of the ancient harbor of Lipari is poor since historical sources do not mention any port-related infrastructure; however, archaeological remains suggest the existence of a possible monumental port (Bernabò Brea, 1985). Recently-discovered underwater archaeological remains in what is the present tourist and commercial port of the island, known as Lipari Sotto Monastero (LSM; Figure 5), finally shed light on the island's coastal landscape.

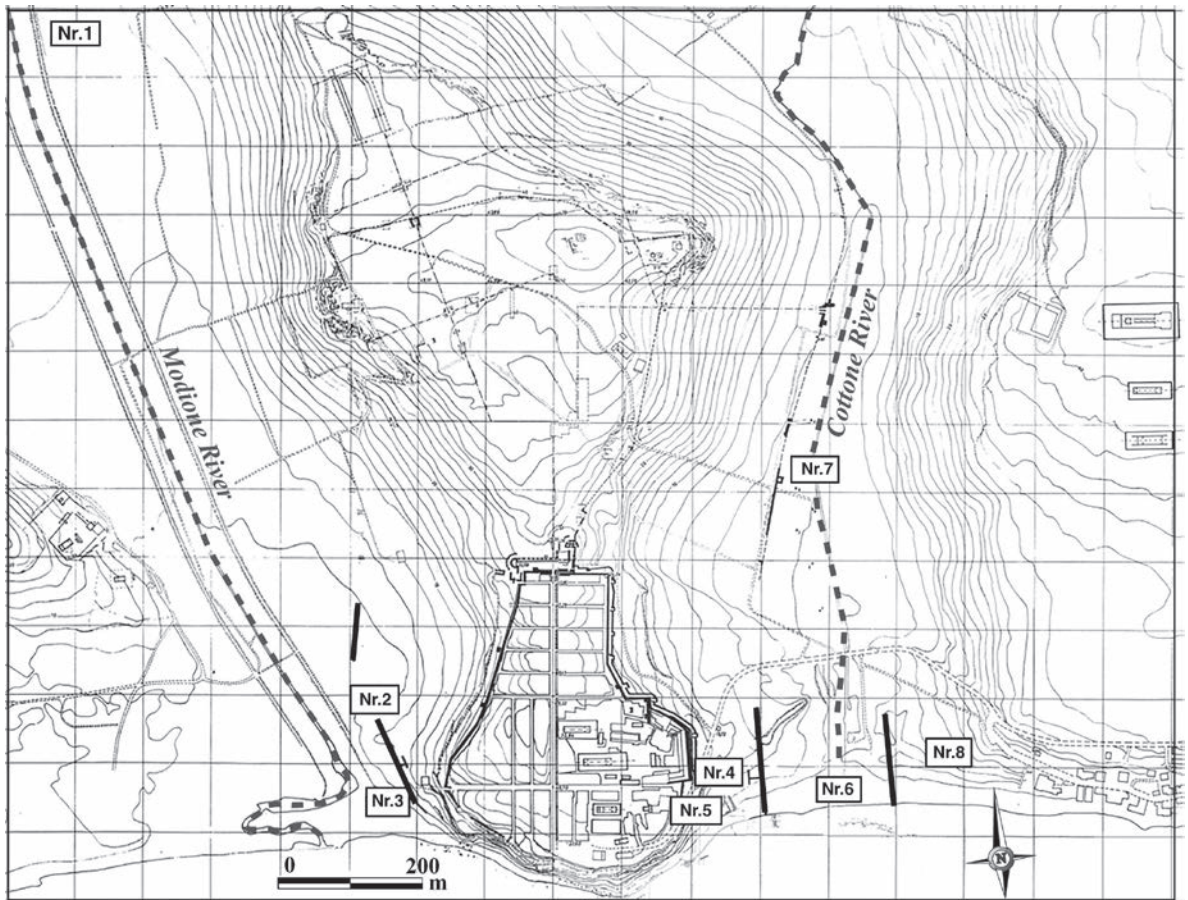


Figure 3: Map of Selinus with the harbor-related infrastructure after Hermanns (2014). N° 1: Structures discovered in *ca.* 1980; N° 2: Harbor structures discovered by Cavallari and observed by Hulot and Fougères; N° 3: Late Roman dock; N° 4 and 6: Elongated structures identified by Jean-Pierre Houel in 1772 and located in a map by William Harris in 1826; N° 5: Docking structures excavated by Bovio Maroni; N° 7: Part of the defensive structures of the eastern wall; N° 8: Core samples of the Rabbel *et al.* (2014) geophysical investigation.



Figure 4: Mooring remains of the Greek port infrastructure at the Cottone River mouth excavated by Marconi in 1950-51 (From Tusa, 2010).

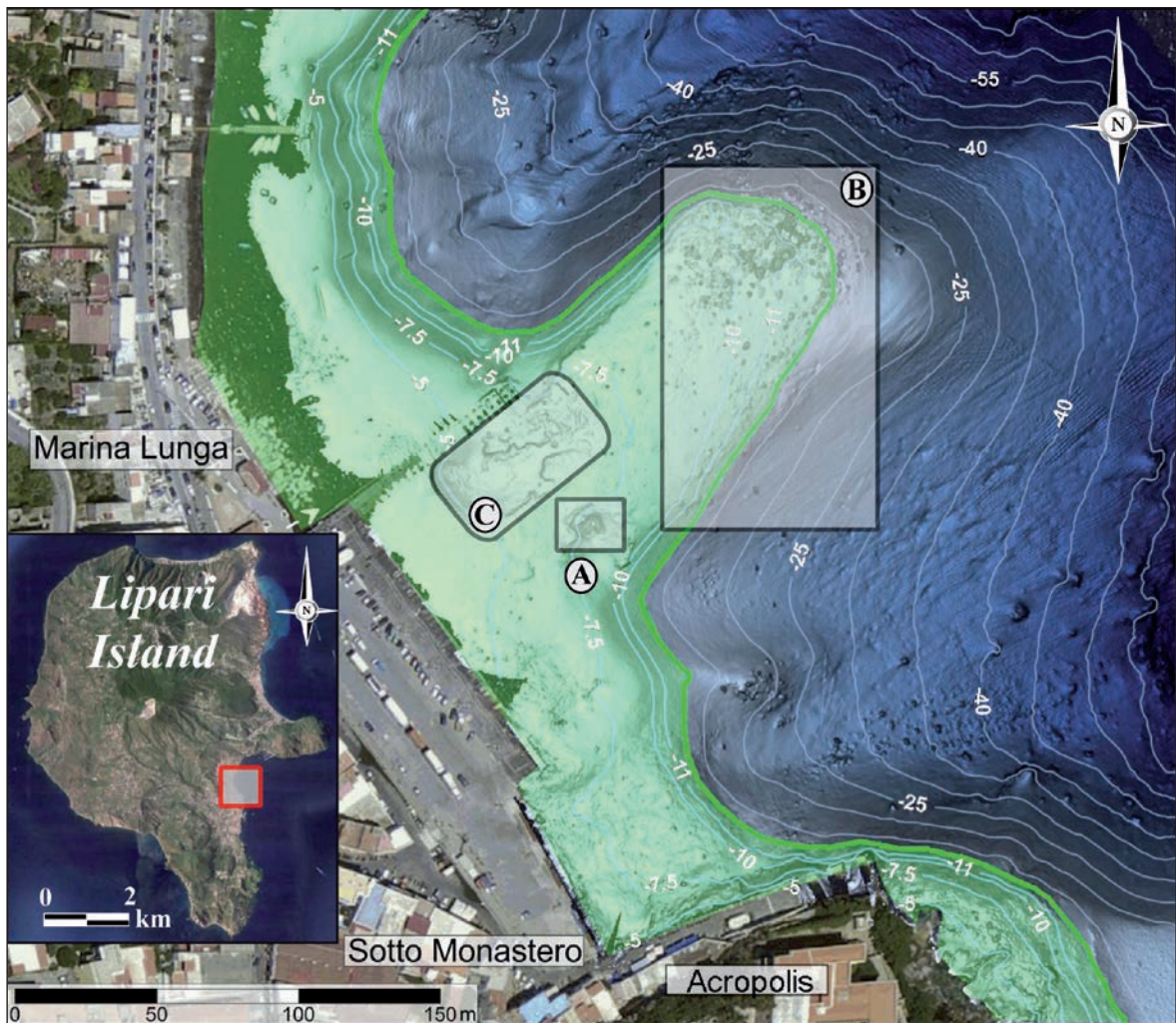


Figure 5: Map of Marina Lunga Bay and the LSM site. (North of Sicily. See Figure 1 for location) Red box shows the location of the LSM site within the island of Lipari. The area A shows the structure with molded blocks. The area B shows the outer end of the pier where it has been suggested the lighthouse was located. The area C shows the grooves caused by the propellers of hydro jet catamaran. Map edited by the author and by Chris Aguirre II, after Anzidei *et al.* (in press).

## A combination of traditional methods and modern techniques for reconstructing the past archaeological landscape

### Scrutiny of written sources

The interdisciplinary approach employed in the present research consists of a combination of traditional methods and modern techniques (Keay *et al.*, 2009; Marriner *et al.*, 2010; Morhange *et al.*, 2013; Rogers, 2013a). Historical written sources, archaeological evidence, and geomorphological and geophysical survey data have been analyzed in order to reconstruct the ancient coastal landscape of Selinus and LSM. Ancient written evidence from sources

ranging from the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD, which mention the coast of Sicily and landscape features of the shore, has been investigated. The works of ancient authors, such as Thucydides (Smith, 1920), Diodorus (Oldfather, 1933) and Polybius (Walbank *et al.*, 2010), have been critically analyzed. However, due to their literary nature, this type of source is limited in terms of accuracy and therefore other forms of evidence have also been investigated. Published and unpublished archaeological evidence from previous excavations and fieldwork activity in Selinus (Purpura, 1986; Tusa, 2010b) and LSM (Tusa, 2010a) provide evidence of coastal-related infrastructure. Elements of archaeological interest, such as submerged building remains, on-land port-related infrastructure and archaeological materials related to the waterfront, have been analyzed. This important evidence has been

combined with other data sources in order to gain a better understanding of the geological context in which these cities developed.

### Study of ancient maps, travellers' description and photographs

In order to assess coastal landscape changes in later periods, the investigation also included the study of 12<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century maps, 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century travelers' descriptions, and photographic evidence of the last 150 years. Cartographic and graphic documentation of the coastal landscape in historical times was analyzed in order to identify important elements such as the topographic position of visible port-related archaeological markers in relation to coastal geographical features (shoreline position, river flow, extent of the coastal embayment). Therefore, a systematic study of available itineraries, portolani, maps and charts of cartographers from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries AD, and diaries of travelers and explorers of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century AD, was undertaken (Cluverius, 1619; Harris and Angell, 1826; Hittorff and Zanth, 1827; Houel, 1782; Hulot and Fougères, 1910; Koldewey and Puchstein, 1899; Lo Faso Pietrasanta Duca di Serradifalco, 1834; Reinganum, 1827; Salinas, 1886; Salinas and Patricolo, 1888). In addition, pictures of the past 150 years from online databases and private collections were also used to investigate more recent times.

### Geomorphological, geophysical and bathymetric surveys

A crucial component of the investigation has been the researching of the geological framework for each site (Marriner and Morhange, 2007; Marriner *et al.*, 2010; Morhange *et al.*, 2013). Thus, existing literature based on field survey employing geophysical methods, Sub bottom profiler, multi beam bathymetric survey and sediment coring has been explored in order to establish the main components of the geological framework. For the site of Selinus data relating to the seabed have been collected from the geophysical survey of Brizzolari *et al.*, (1994) which employed sub bottom profiler operating between 2 and 7 kHz frequency. The geological framework of the land sector of the site of Selinus has been researched in the work of Barreca *et al.* (2014), Bottari *et al.* (2009), Brizzolari *et al.* (1992), and Crouch (2004). Specific data on the Cottone and Modione Rivers have been obtained from the seismic survey employing shear waves calibrated by coring performed by Rabbel *et al.* (2014) For the site of LSM the bathymetry data have been gathered thanks to the recent work of Anzidei

*et al.* (in press) who adopted an ultra-high resolution multibeam system operating at 400 kHz frequency, emitting up to 512 beams across a 140°/165° wide swath. The volcano-tectonic setting of LSM has been researched in the map published by Tranne *et al.* (2002) and Calanchi *et al.* (2002). An important aspect of the study was the identification of features related to past of catastrophic events, such as flooding, tsunami, earthquakes and eruptions, which left an imprint on both the geological matrices and the archaeological record.

## Results and discussion

### Selinus

The analysis of ancient written sources is of significant value for informing us about the landscape of ancient Selinus, and about human interactions with the coast. Diogenes Laertius in his *Life of eminent and opinion of philosophers* (Hicks, 1925) describes an important historical event that helps us investigate a specific element of the city's landscape and the engagement of the inhabitants with it. The ancient historian states that Empedocles reclaimed the area of Selinus from a very unhealthy marshy environment that was responsible for malaria and other diseases. The passage has been a source of speculation for many scholars and we are far from achieving a complete understanding of it (Rambaldi, 2010). However, whether Empedocles' action was an engineering masterwork such as the deviation of nearby streams into a bigger river, or the creation of an aqueduct connected to the "vasca selinuntina" of Torre Bigini (a massive cylindrical tank of 15 m diameter and 4 m depth linked to a 14 km channel system connecting to Selinus; Formount, 2012). It may have been a combination of engineering and pharmaceutical/chemical/medical actions (as personally suggested by Prof. Fernando Santoro of the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, who has published extensively on Empedocles) his achievement represents an important example of human intervention in the landscape. Despite the importance of those port infrastructures on the Cottone River mouth for the understanding of the Selinus waterfront during Greek times, no effort has been devoted to framing it in the broader context of harbor-related infrastructure. The reason that such an important part of the city has been neglected, in comparison with the broader study of Selinus, may be related to the unhealthy and unappealing long-lasting environmental features of the landscape at the Cottone River which has been attested to on the basis of literary evidence and recently by geophysical investigation. This port infrastructure (Figure 3, N° 5)



has been continuously covered and uncovered by sediments during the last three centuries (Purpura, 1975). Recent palaeoenvironmental and geophysical investigations, including seismic profiling, a magnetic survey and sediment coring on both the Cottone and the Modione Rivers by the Institute of Geosciences of the University of Kiel (Rabbel *et al.*, 2014), have revealed evidence of the existence of two palaeo-rivers which have undergone progressive sedimentation. As a consequence of sedimentation, as well as harbour siltation, the port at the Cottone river mouth was probably abandoned at around 200 BC (Crouch, 2004). Those processes created a marsh and lagoonal environment. An important element identified thanks to geophysical survey in both riverbeds is banking which underlies the Greek urban area and terminates at the city wall (Rabbel *et al.*, 2014). Whether this banking is artificial, and possible related to possible measures to reclaim the land in order to improve the channeling of the river water and to prevent the formation of swamps and the occurrence of malaria, cannot be confirmed without further investigation. Indeed, it cannot be completely excluded that the banking is of natural origin. For example, it may represent a layer of limestone debris from the city hill that was intermittently deposited onto the lagoon sediments by landslides before the streets and houses were constructed. However, shells (*Cerastoderma* sp.) and pottery fragments found during sediment coring have not been yet analyzed, and therefore the age of the deposit, which is an important element for investigating the time span of the stratigraphic formation of the banking and the other layers, cannot be established. Knowledge of Selinus' landscape has also benefited from recent investigation of tectonic movements in the area. The identification of active tectonics in southwestern Sicily (Barreca *et al.*, 2014; Bottari, 1973; Bottari *et al.*, 2009; Monaco *et al.*, 1996) could shed light on the many earthquakes in the history of ancient Selinus. Indeed, earthquakes documented by the collapse of Greek temples in Selinus, occurred between 370 and 300 BC and between 300 and 600 AD (Bottari *et al.*, 2009; Guidoboni *et al.*, 2002). These earthquakes (Table 1) had a dramatic impact on the population, influencing building techniques, urban development and possibly also leading to the abandonment of the city (Crouch, 2004).

Thanks to maps and charts of Sicily dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and since the beginning of exploration of the ancient city of Selinus by 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century travelers, details of the paleogeography of the city, especially its hydrology, have been analyzed. Results of the diachronic investigation of these maps demonstrate that both the Modione

and the Cottone Rivers (known in Roman times as ancient Apiario or Lanario, respectively) underwent a progressive sedimentation process that resulted in deltaic progradation (Figures 2 and 3). In addition, modern cartographers and Grand Tour travelers have provided evidence of changes the Modione River changes in later times. Indeed, the geographer Ptolemy, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE, suggested that the river had two mouths (Lentini, 2010b). Despite the fact that the two mouths of the Modione River may have been continuously migrating over the following century, this hydrological feature has been prevalent in the last 200 years. This is demonstrated by maps from 1782 to 1910 (Figures 2 and 3; Cavallari, 1872; Houel, 1782; Hulot and Fougères, 1910; Lo Faso Pietrasanta Duca di Serradifalco, 1834; Reinganum, 1827) which also document the river's meandering, as well as swamps.

Literary sources, archaeological data, the results of geophysical surveys and sediment coring, as well as the modern cartographic evidence presented here, demonstrate that a marshy, brackish environment existed in Greek times and may have been a persistent feature of the coastal environment up to modern times. It can be hypothesized that when the city was inhabited the necessity of maintaining an efficient navigable river system and functional harbors demanded constant maintenance by the inhabitants in order to avoid diseases such as malaria. After the abandonment of the city, possibly caused by sediment accretion which prevented a safe landing, and/or by the frequent earthquakes, both the Modione and the Cottone river bed underwent progressive sedimentation. This process was still *in fieri* during the 17<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century channeling work on both the Modione and Cottone Rivers dramatically changed the flow of both rivers, and today they consist of small confined streams.

## Lipari

In 2008 an underwater structure was discovered 9 m below present-day sea-level (Figures 5 and 6). Preliminary results suggest the existence of a pier of Roman age dating to between the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Since the excavation is still ongoing, other dates are also under discussion: 3<sup>rd</sup> century – 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC (Tisseyre, in press) or the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (Tusa, 2013). However, pottery fragments from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC to medieval glazed ceramics have been collected. The structure consists of a curved artificial terrace (Figure 6A) on two steps, composed of squared lava blocks of local origin, and imported white marble blocks whose provenance is still under investigation. On top of this

Date	Location and possible damage
550-490 BC	Selinus, many old buildings destroyed
426 BC	Selinus, probable minor damage
390-300 BC	Selinus, the Triolo N temple is destroyed
370-200 BC	Selinus, the temple M is destroyed
17 AD	Major event in eastern Sicily and Calabria, possibly also affecting unpopulated Selinus(?)
361-365 AD	Severe earthquake in Belice valley, West of Selinus
After 330 before 500 AD	Selinus, the Temple C is destroyed
6 <sup>th</sup> century AD	Major damage to the temples, possibly caused by an earthquake nearby Selinus
8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> century AD series of earthquakes—the worst in 852—	Near Castelvetro, NW of Selinus
12 <sup>th</sup> century AD	Selinus, two temples damaged
1968 AD	Major earthquake in Belice valley, west of Selinus

Table 1: List of historical earthquakes in Selinus (after Crouch, 2004 and Bottari *et al.*, 2009).

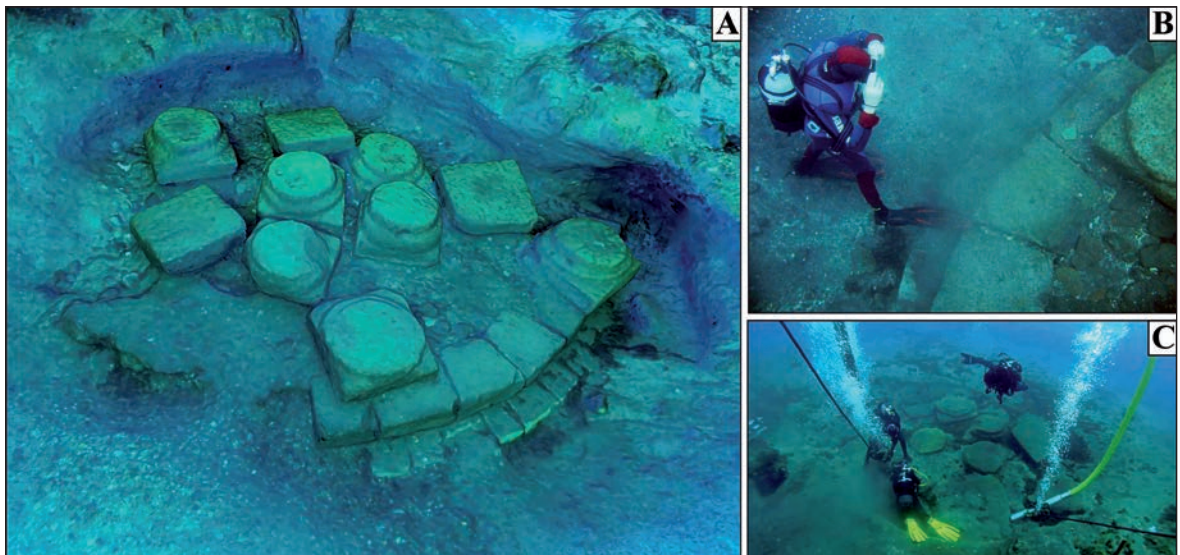


Figure 6: The LSM site. Figure 6A: 3D representation of the submerged archaeological site, courtesy of the Soprintendenza del Mare - edited by Massimiliano Secci - Sassari University; Figure 6B: Detail of the platform on which the blocks are placed, by Salvo Emma - courtesy of the Soprintendenza del Mare; Figure 6C: The site during the 2014 excavation (photo: Salvo Emma, courtesy of the Soprintendenza del Mare).

structure, which has been only partially excavated, 10 molded bases (or capitals) of columns have been found, positioned above a floor made of cmented lava beach stones (Figure 6B). These blocks, which are randomly positioned on the floor and without any visible architectural connection, appear eroded. It has been argued that the blocks may be related to the abandonment of the harbor (Anzidei *et al.*, in press; Regione Siciliana, 2014) which is dated, on the basis of archaeological materials from the excavation, to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD (Anzidei *et al.*, in press). Another archaeological area (Figure 6B) has been found less than 150 m northeast of the previous structure. It is located at a depth of -11.6 m and has been

interpreted, due to its prominent geographical position toward the open sea, as a possible lighthouse in service at the same time as the pier (Anzidei *et al.*, in press). The submerged context of the pier-lighthouse is certainly located at a very deep level in comparison with other underwater archaeological sites of the low Tyrrhenian Sea (Anzidei *et al.*, 2014; Bernabò Brea, 1985; Evelpidou *et al.*, 2012; Lambeck *et al.*, 2004) and therefore local factors have been investigated. A recent Multibeam bathymetric survey, in conjunction with the preliminary results of an ongoing underwater archaeological excavation (Anzidei *et al.*, in press), sheds light on the geological context of the underwater sites. The study shows that the

submergence of the pier and its outer part is related to land subsidence, which has been estimated to be  $5.79 \pm 0.01 \text{ mm y}^{-1}$ . The submergence has been related to the combination of a regional glacio-hydro-isostatic signal estimated at  $0.62 \text{ mm y}^{-1}$  and a local volcanic-tectonic contribution of  $5.17 \pm 0.01 \text{ m y}^{-1}$  for the last  $2100 \pm 100$  years cal. BC (Anzidei *et al.*, in press). Together with these data, and with the functional height of the pier estimated as at least 2 m above sea level, the sea level at the time of usage of the port infrastructure (1<sup>st</sup> century BC-1<sup>st</sup> century AD) is estimated to be  $12.3 \pm 0.7 \text{ m}$  (Figure 5, green line). As a result, during roman times a wider space was indeed available for the many port-related activities related to commercial and social life. Therefore, it is probable that facilities related to the maritime life of a roman harbour would have existed, such as mooring spots, areas dedicated to loading and unloading, storage rooms, warehouse quarters, shipsheds, porticoes and temples (Brandon, 2008; Keay and Millet, 2005; Rogers, 2013b) may now lie underwater. Consequently, the coastal palaeo-landscape of ancient Lipari in Roman times would have been completely different from today. Due to its geographical position at the time of its usage, the pier was a crucial element of the island waterfront. The scene at Lipari waterfront, for those who approached it by sea, was a monumental port entrance, safeguarded by the massive presence of the acropolis on the left, and by the jutting pier on the right. These elements contributed not only to the creation of a protected bay, but would also have shaped the monumental entrance to the city by sea. However, this image would not have lasted for very long. Land subsidence and sea level change (a relative sea level change at  $12.3 \pm 0.7 \text{ m}$  with a subsidence rate at  $5.79 \pm 0.01 \text{ mm.yr}^{-1}$  and a volcanic-tectonic contribution of  $5.17 \pm 0.01 \text{ m yr}^{-1}$  for the last  $2100 \pm 100 \text{ yr BP}$  has been estimated by according to Lambeck *et al.*, 2004). This would have led to the rapid submergence of the structure, which according to the date of the archaeological materials identified in the latest context was completely submerged around the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD (Anzidei *et al.*, in press). It is therefore possible to hypothesize that the 10 molded blocks were placed on the pier, which was already in disuse, in order to create a form of breakwater as protection and a defense from sinking (Regione Siciliana, 2013 and 2014). Subsidence and sea level changes also resulted in marine inundation and therefore had a dramatic impact on the coastal landscape during late roman times. Lipari's inhabitants probably wanted to protect their waterfront from a continuous and irreversible sinking process that created visible and damaging effects as the sea invaded houses and public buildings. Indeed, all of the sea-related construction

along the waterfront, such as piers, docks, ship sheds, port infrastructure, storage rooms and harbor facilities, would have been the most damaged structures.

These coastal landscape structures finally disappeared from the visible landscape, together with the knowledge of an existing palaeo-waterfront. No medieval sources mention a harbor-related infrastructure, and only early cartographic evidence provides a limited basis for coastal landscape reconstruction during modern times (Caruso and Nobili, 2001; Gulletta, 2009). Campis (Iacolino, 1980) describes a sheltered and protected pebble beach at LSM, which persisted until 1894 (Salvator of Austria and Paino, 1989). From 1894 to the present day, the shore has undergone major changes due to development and the construction of a tourism infrastructure. The 20<sup>th</sup> century AD development of the coast, especially construction of residential buildings in the 1950s and 1960s, seems not to have considered the active subsidence which this section of the island is currently undergoing (Anzidei *et al.*, in press; De Guidi *et al.*, in press). As a result, subsidence is causing problems for the people who live at the present waterfront of Lipari. Buildings whose entrance was well above the sea level at the time of their construction are now encountering inundation by seawater. LSM represents an example of how people in antiquity faced the challenges of living in a subsiding environment, and the ways in which they coped with a changing landscape. A complete understanding of the ancient coastal landscape and its changes over time requires further investigation – such as a broader topographical investigation of the urban waterfront – especially in order to answer specific questions such as the initial phases of the structure and the topographic relationship of the submerged structures with the ancient urban plan.

## Conclusions

Greek occupation of the island of Sicily has left archaeological imprints on the coastal landscape. It has been shown that an interdisciplinary investigation is the most successful strategy for studying ancient coastal landscapes. Results of the interdisciplinary investigation undertaken at two archaeological sites in Sicily, Selinus and LSM, have been presented and demonstrate that despite the differences in date, size and type (land *vs* underwater) this methodology has provided an improved understanding of the coastal landscape and its changes. As a result, the maritime and coastal landscape of these important archaeological sites can be pictured in a more realistic way. The investigation of Selinus and LSM has enhanced our understanding of the waterfront of these cities by

presenting it within a more realistic environmental context. Indeed, the results of this study highlight archaeological features of the ancient landscape and the strategies adopted in antiquity to cope with environmental changes and natural hazards. At Selinus, for example, a marshy environment, frequent earthquakes and the progressive sedimentation of the rivers' harbours have been highlighted, together with the attempt by the selinuntines to reclaim the land and inhibit landslides. The evidence presented here documents new elements of the city of Selinus. The continuous maintenance of the urban landscape, the attempt to inhibit landslides possibly by creating an artificial barrier (Crouch, 2004) and to reclaim the river mouths to prevent harbour siltation – and the consequent creation of an unhealthy marsh environment – was often interrupted by catastrophes such as earthquakes and tsunamis (see list of earthquakes; Carrozzo *et al.*, 1992; Guidoboni *et al.*, 2002). Despite the occurrence of these high magnitude events of geological and natural origin, the inhabitants of Selinus cultivated one of the largest *chorai* of antiquity, maintained a peaceful commercial relationship with the indigenous people and with foreigners, and developed some of the most exceptional monumental architecture and artistic productions of the entire Hellenic world. Conversely, at Lipari, land subsidence challenged the local inhabitants who experienced marine inundation and consequently created sea barriers as a protection strategy. The inhabitants of Lipari also had to cope with the challenges of living in a changing coastal environment. The results reveal that the main coastal settlement of the island possessed a monumental waterfront during Roman times, which has been subject to an irreversible and continuous sinking of 12.3 m. An attempt to avoid marine inundation was probably attempted during late Roman times (4<sup>th</sup> century AD) in order to protect buildings and houses from the related effects and the changing landscape. Lipari, unlike Selinus, was not abandoned in medieval times and has been continuously inhabited up to the present day. As a result, the modern inhabitants of Lipari suffer from the same marine incursion problem experienced by their ancestors. Reconstruction of the ancient coastal landscape is an important element that should not be underestimated for palaeo-landscape reconstructions of ancient cities and for accurate investigation of the past (Westley and Dix, 2006). It helps us to better understand how people lived in the past and how they experienced the sea, and therefore also to better understand human-sea-landscape relationships in antiquity. It has been shown that Sicily provides an ideal context for studying changes in the coastal landscape, as well as how people living in past times

faced the challenges of living in a changing landscape. Indeed by understanding the natural causes of coastal changes, and by reconstructing catastrophic events and the strategies that coastal inhabitants adopted to cope with those changes, it should also be possible to apply this knowledge to current coastal issues.

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