

Poseidonia/Paestum



Above: plan of Paestum indicating the principal functional areas

On opposite page: the "Temple of Ceres" (*Athenaion*)

History

Poseidonia was founded by Achaean colonists from Sybaris with the help of a contingent from Doris; history does not record the names of the founders or the date of its foundation, but, calculated from the archaeological evidence available, this can be set around 600 B.C.

According to a brief reference by Strabo, before the actual colony was founded, a preliminary "fortified outpost" (*teichos*) was set up beside the sea; according to one theory, this was located more

to the south, on the Agropolis promontory, where historical tradition places the sanctuary of Poseidon, the god who gave his name to Poseidonia.

In the course of the sixth century B.C. the city took on a preeminent role in the southern Tyrrhenian area. Its influence in dealing with the native people of Lucania (Oinotria) made it possible for exiles from Phocaea to found Velia (Elea) around 540 B.C., and a little later they helped the Sybarite refugees to found Laos after they had been obliged to abandon their city following its violent destruction in 510 B.C., thus creating a new Sybaris near the river Laos (the present-day Lao). Poseidonia appeared in many respects to take on the entire political and commercial legacy of the ancient mother city—something that is clearly indicated by coins minted in the first half of the fifth century B.C., which were of a weight and design similar to the Sybarite coinage.

At the end of the fifth century B.C. the city was conquered by the indigenous Lucanians; this event does not appear in the historical record, but is indicated by the important changes in funeral rites and in the type and contents of the tombs that can be seen to have taken place in the *necropoleis* around this time. It was probably the Lucanians who changed the name of the city from Poseidonia to Paestum. Their "conquest" should not be seen as a military defeat of a Greek city by "barbarians," but rather as the result of a process of integration and political recognition of the







indigenous element in the Greek structure. Above all, this is confirmed by the fact that everything within the city—the monuments and public spaces and the religious and political institutions set up by the Greek colonists—continued during the time of the Lucanians as before.

Between 334 and 331 B.C., the city was occupied by, or perhaps even welcomed, Alexander the Molossan, king of Epyros, called to Taranto to lead the Italiote League against the Lucanians, the Brettii, and the Samnites. In the third century B.C., after the war against Pyrrhos, Paestum came under the control of Rome, which, in 273 B.C., made it a colony, with rights under Latin law. The city went on to become one of the naval allies of Rome, to whom it continued to give considerable support during the difficult years of the Second Punic War (218–201 B.C.).

The establishment of the Roman colony caused a major reorganization of the inhabited area. The most obvious sign of this was the position of the Forum, which occupied an area smaller than that of the *agora* of the Greek city and encroached on the north face of the southern sanctuary.

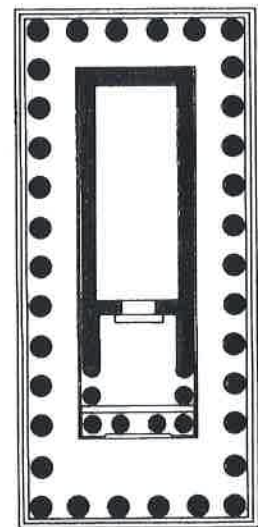
The Organization of the City

The city was built on the left bank of the river Sele, at the center of a fertile coastal plain, which the settlers intended primarily to exploit for agricultural purposes. The inhabited area developed on a limestone platform, slightly elevated above the plain. To the west was a lagoon connected to the sea that offered good port facilities; this has now disappeared. A second lagoon opened out about 1.9 miles (3 km) to the south, near the mouth of the river Solofrone, in the Linora area, and it was there that the maritime quarter of the city was situated, connected by a road leading to Agropolis. Along this road, a short distance from Poseidonia, excavations revealed the necropolis near Tempa del Prete, which included the famous “Tomb of the Diver,” now on display in the Archaeological Museum of Paestum.

The urban development covered an area of about 439 acres (120 hectares) and was surrounded by an imposing, and still well preserved, perimeter wall almost 3 miles (5 km) long. This

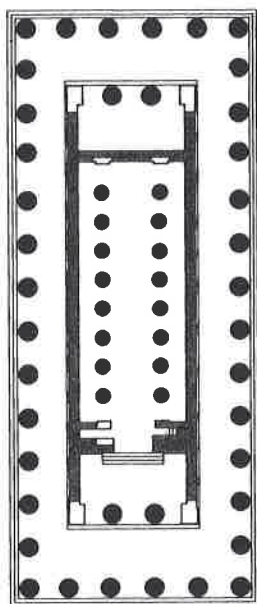
The “Temple of Ceres”
(*Athenaion*)

Below: plan of the “Temple of Ceres” (*Athenaion*)



Plan of the Temple of Neptune
(Temple of Apollo [?])

On opposite page: the Temple
of Neptune and, to the right,
the Basilica (*Heraion*)



was made up of two lines of masonry connected internally by straps, filled with earth and stones. Originally it was at least 7 m high, surrounded by a ditch and protected by 28 round or square towers or, in one case, pentagonal. Three of the four access gates—the Siren Gate on the east side, the Justice Gate to the south, and the Marine Gate to the west—have been preserved almost intact, while the last one, the Golden Gate to the north, was badly damaged during the building of the modern road, which today still crosses the area of the old city. The present state of the wall is the result of successive additions which, in some sections at least, included doubling the size of the earlier phase. While the reinforcements could possibly have been connected to the withdrawal of the Latin colony, the construction seems to go back to the Lucanian phase of the city, at the end of the fourth century B.C.

In its essential arrangement, however, the plan of the urban center, where the residential area was divided by a wide central strip destined for public functions, dates from the time of the foundation of the city. This central strip was divided into three areas and extended over approximately 0.6 of a mile (1 km) from north to south, and more than 330 yards (300 m) from east to west. The middle part was the vast square (*agora*) where the major political activities took place; the sectors to the north and south, where the great stone temples are still to be found, contained the sanctuaries.

In the northern sanctuary was the Temple of Athena (the so-called Temple of Ceres); the southern one contained the temple dedicated to Hera, known as the Basilica and the so-called Temple of Poseidon, probably dedicated to Apollo. The three temples have a common orientation that differs from that of the streets and blocks. This seems to indicate a desire to differentiate the space reserved for the gods from that used by men, a policy also applied in the ancient temple buildings at Metapontion.

The two sanctuaries developed in the earliest days of the colony at the beginning of the fourth century B.C.; the street network, while planned at the time of the foundation of the city was, however, only constructed at a later stage, in the last quarter

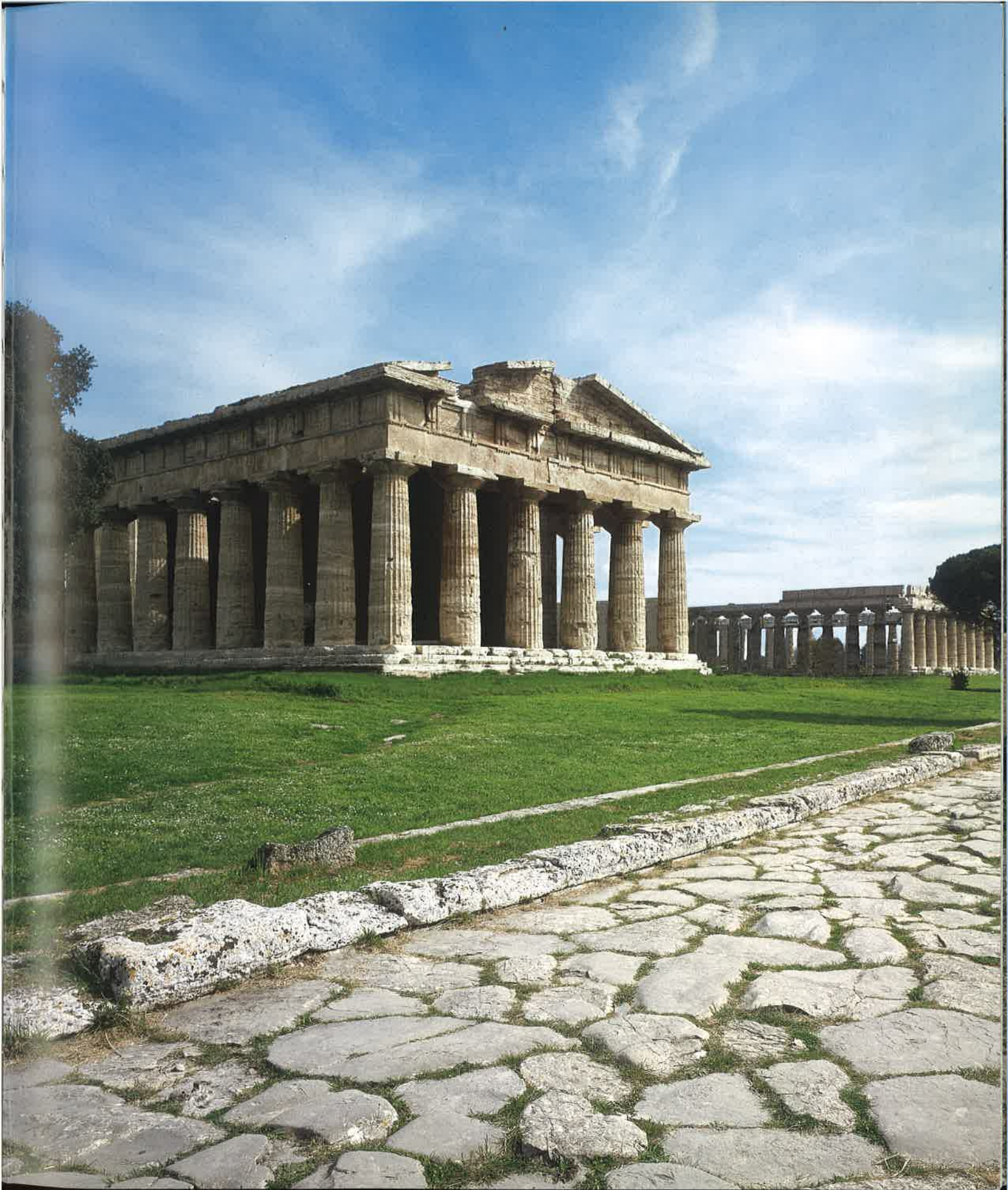
of the sixth century B.C. It was arranged on two main arteries (*plateiai*) that crossed the city at right angles from one of the gates in the wall to another. The road that ran north–south from the Golden Gate to the Justice Gate was 10 m wide; the one running east–west from the Siren Gate to the Marine Gate was 20 m wide. Two more *plateiai* ran parallel to the east–west road, to the north and the south at a distance of 330 yards (300 m). These three east–west roads were intersected at right angles by minor streets (*stenopoi*), 5 m wide, thereby forming long, narrow blocks 35 × 273 m in size.

The north–south *plateiai* separated the residential sector from the public area. The central east–west artery and the parallel one to the north, separated the area of the *agora* from the two parts used for the sanctuaries. The modern road, which crosses the archaeological area, has interrupted the continuous expanse of the *agora*, which extended beyond it, behind the present Archaeological Museum. Thanks to recent excavations, it has been possible to verify that there was a sacred area on the southeast border of the main square, indicated by the presence of votive pits that were in use from at least the fifth century and until the second and first centuries B.C.

The Urban Sanctuaries

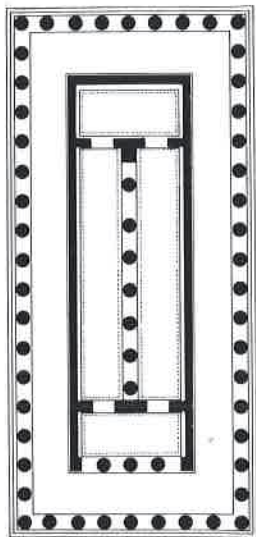
The Northern Sanctuary The northern sanctuary was situated on the highest point of the city, in a prominent position compared to the adjacent *agora*. It was dedicated to Athena from at least the time that the great stone temple (the so-called Temple of Ceres) was built at the end of the sixth century B.C. It is not impossible, however, that the goddess was venerated right from the first phase of development of the sanctuary, dating from the start of the sixth century B.C. In addition to Athena, Aphrodite, Dionysos, and Demeter were probably also represented in the sacred area. The cult of Athena continued during the Roman period, when she was worshiped under the Latin name of Minerva, who was associated with of Jupiter.

The oldest monument in the sanctuary was a small temple built at the beginning of the sixth century B.C., of which the foundations are still



Urban Temple of Hera, the
"Basilica"

Below: plan of the Basilica



visible to the southeast of the main temple. To the east it is possible to see an ancient treasury (*thesauros*) and a series of porticoes.

The Temple of Athena constituted the monumental center of the sanctuary. It faced east toward the great altar where the cult was celebrated. The temple itself, 14.5×32.9 m in size, was surrounded by a continuous Doric colonnade (*peristasis*)—six columns on the short and thirteen on the long sides. The very deep *cella* was approached via an entrance porch (*pronaos*) of which each of the anta walls ended in a half-column. The façade was embellished with six Ionic columns, four set in the façade and two behind it, parallel to the anta walls. At the sides of the door between the *cella* and the porch were two shafts for ladders that gave access to the roof for maintenance work.

The *peristasis*, the porch with its colonnade, and the *cella* were built on different levels, rising progressively and connected by steps; this accentuated the monumental aspect of the building and, in particular, emphasized the importance of the *cella*, which housed the cult statue. The decoration of the façade and the temple elevation was particularly fine, especially in its use of two kinds of stone. Along the architrave ran a frieze of metopes and triglyphs framed in cornices (*cymatia*) decorated with ovolos, leaves, and wave motifs. The protruding parts of the pitched roof (*geisa*) supported by the lower façade, visible from below, were decorated with coffers that framed rosettes and stars. Above that were the eaves (*cyma*) with lion-head spouts alternating with palmettes on the long sides or just palmettes on front edges of the roof over the façade.

The Southern Sanctuary The activities of the city's most important cults were celebrated in the southern sanctuary, especially that of Hera, the goddess who guaranteed the fertility of both women and the soil and, at the same time, guided and defended the colony. Some votive inscriptions indicate that other deities were also present, in a complex system of cults that continued to flourish even during the Roman era. Worthy of note among these are Apollo, to whom was probably dedicated the "Temple of Poseidon," and





Zeus, venerated in an Archaic inscription with the attribute *Xenios* (the “hospitable”). A magnificent terracotta cult statue from 530–520 B.C. now exhibited in the Archaeological Museum is probably also a representation of the god. The married couple Zeus and Hera are depicted in later terracottas, bearing testimony to the importance of the marriage rite as the focal point of legitimate reproduction in the community. Use of the sacred area was not restricted to the Greeks; also found here were the remains of terracotta roofs decorated in a style indicating that they were gifts dedicated to the centers by “Etruscanized” Campanians.

The southern sanctuary, too, had its beginnings in the first half of the sixth century B.C. Among the earliest items uncovered was a series of stone stelai—perhaps connected, as at Metapontion, to the cult of Apollo—that was found in the southern section of the sanctuary where the altars and temples were built. On one of these is inscribed the name of the centaur Chiron, expert in the medical arts and tutor of Achilles; another had been reverently preserved in a small box made from stone slabs. An altar from the same period came to light northwest of the Temple of Hera (the so-called Basilica), as did the remains of a roof in terracotta tiles from an older sacred building.

The first stone temple was the Doric one dedicated to Hera, begun shortly after the middle of the sixth century B.C. but only finished around 520–510 B.C., after two changes to the original plans for the *cella*. Measuring 24.5 × 54.3 m, it had a *peristasis* of nine by eighteen columns and was made up of a deep *cella*, a closed room to the rear (*adyton*), which probably contained the cult statue, and an entrance porch (*pronaos*) with three columns between the antas.

The *cella* was divided into two parts by a central line of six columns, and linked to both the *pronaos* and the *adyton* by two pairs of entrances that allowed people to circulate in the interior when participation in the cult warranted. The capitals were decorated in fine relief. At the bases they bear a decoration of leaves, in some cases with a sculpted ring of palmettes and lotus flowers or rosettes above it.

The architrave of the *peristasis* supported a frieze of metopes and triglyphs, framed in two cornices sculpted in a different stone and decorated with ovolos and leaves. The edge of the roof was sumptuously decorated with polychrome terracottas. This was made up of a box facing, an upper fascia with fake lion-head spouts on the long sides, a kind of paterae on the short, sloping sides which served as eaves (*cyma*), and antefixes in the form of palmettes and lotus flowers securing the last row of tiles on the roof.

The second stone building was the “Temple of Poseidon,” probably dedicated, as mentioned before, to Apollo. The temple, measuring 24.3 × 59.9 m, dates from a little before the middle of the fifth century B.C. Built in the now canonical Doric order, it had a *peristasis* of six by fourteen columns which surrounded the *cella* with a room open to the rear (*opisthodomos*) and a front porch (*pronaos*) with two columns between the antas.

The *cella* was divided into three rows by two lines of seven columns each, which supported a second sequence of smaller columns; the upper floor was reached by two stairways, of which the two shafts can be seen on either side of the door into the *cella*. The elevation had a continuous frieze of metopes and triglyphs, surmounted by the protruding cornice of the roof (*geison*).

East of the two temples were the altars. Of the two in front of the “Temple of Poseidon,” the one nearest to the sacred building dates from the Roman era. Behind it, only traces remain of a larger altar from the fifth century B.C. Along the northern side of the sanctuary were other sacred buildings, not all of them positively identifiable. Under the *macellum*, or market, from the Roman period one can glimpse the foundations of a temple from the end of the sixth century B.C. which, unlike the larger temples, was aligned with the road and extended to the west beneath the so-called Curia. Immediately to the east was a large sacred complex dedicated to the cult of Asklepios, the healer god and son of Apollo. The phase now visible is from the fourth century B.C., and consists of an enclosure with a courtyard with porticoes, a waiting area for the faithful, and a wide recessed platform where the cult was practiced. Near the

sacred enclosure there should have been a shrine to Aphrodite, indicated by inscriptions to the goddess found on vases.

To the south of the temple situated beneath the “Curia” and the *macellum* stood the “Amphiprostyle Temple,” built during the transition from the fourth to the third century B.C. over an older cult structure. The building, of which only the foundations remain, was oriented in the same way as the major temples, and was 30 m long and 8 m wide. It faced the east and was divided into four areas: two frontal spaces with a façade with four columns; an entrance porch; and a deep *cella*, paved with stone slabs, in the center of which there was probably a sacred well. According to a recent theory, the temple could have been dedicated to Herakles. In the final part of the fourth century B.C., or at the start of the following century, the sanctuary was enclosed by a massive wall built of blocks (*temenos*), easily recognizable along the western side, while its northern boundary was marked by a portico that bordered the main east–west *plateiai*.

The Agora

The *agora* was made up of an enormous square which extended over an area of 330 × 300 m. For a long time it remained simply an open space set aside for meetings and the citizens’ political activities. It was divided into two sectors, though it is unlikely that this division occurred before the second half of the fourth century B.C. The area to the north was the site—as will be seen—of important public monuments and retained its original politico-sacred function; that to the south was reserved more for the commercial activities of the marketplace. The Latin colony’s Forum was later situated here, and even extended over part of the southern sanctuary.

In the northern sector of the *agora* are two monuments that are emblematic of the city’s political image: the assembly building (*ekklesiasterion*) and a shrine to a heroic cult (the so-called “Hypogeal Shrine”). Both monuments were built in the Greek period of the city and, after continuing to be used during the Lucanian period, were buried at the time of the Roman conquest—an act

Hydria (water vessel) in bronze, 520–510 B.C., from the “Hypogeal Shrine” at Poseidonia (National Archaeological Museum, Paestum-Salerno)



The "Hypogeal Shrine" at Poseidonia.

On opposite page: the *ekklesiasterion*, the building that housed the political assemblies.

performed by the new colonists to signal the definitive rupture with the political structure of the past. The assembly building, circular in shape, was constructed in 480–470 B.C. Steps carved out of the rock which led to the two entrances are still visible. Other buildings were probably added to it, set on an embankment enclosed by a perimeter wall, also circular. Inside this building archaeologists found a votive stele dating from the end of the fourth or the beginning of the third century B.C. which bears a dedication to Zeus written in the Oscan dialect of the Lucanians. The stele was probably surmounted by a statuette of the god, donated by one of the city magistrates, and evidently implies that the circular building and the political activities

carried on there came under the auspices of the principal celestial deity.

The *ekklesiasterion* was surrounded by a large enclosed space which also contained other buildings; one, a quadrangular shrine situated immediately to the north of the assembly building, was probably erected at the end of the fourth century B.C. Another small temple, about 20 m to the west, may have been dedicated to Zeus. Built of reused materials, it dates from the fourth century B.C.; the *cella*, paved with stone slabs, still remains, but whether there was a *pronaos* with *antas* is uncertain.

The "Hypogeal Shrine," built around 520 B.C., was further to the west. It consisted of a great tomb



divided into compartments, partially carved out of the rock, with walls made of stone blocks. It was roofed with stone slabs, with a second, pitched roof placed over the top of the first and tiled. The monument was probably covered by an earth mound. In reality the tomb was a cenotaph and contained no body. However, it did contain an exceptional find, now exhibited in the Archaeological Museum: on a table in the center were five iron swords and along the walls were eight large bronze vases, intended for the storage of wine and honey. Beside these was a black-figured Attic amphora depicting the arrival of Herakles on Olympos. What explanation can one give for this exceptional monument? The presence of a tomb within the dwelling

area is a complete anomaly; the dead were strictly segregated from the living and the *necropoleis*—with a few exceptions, such as at Taranto—were placed outside the city walls. Only people of exceptionally high rank were buried within the city. The “Hypogeal Shrine” was therefore the likely seat of a heroic cult (*heroon*), placed in the heart of the square at the center of the ancient city’s political area. In this way, Poseidonia venerated the mythical hero, founder of the colony.

With the arrival of the Romans the cult was suspended. The Latin colonization was like a refoundation of the city and the old hero was no longer required. The shrine was encircled with a wall of rectangular stone blocks and covered with earth.

On page 74: metope with dancers, 500 B.C., from the Temple of Hera at the mouth of the river Sele (National Archaeological Museum, Paestum-Salerno)





The Territory

From the moment of its foundation, control of the city's vast territory was ensured by a ring of sanctuaries that marked its boundaries and put the colony's new lands under divine protection. To the north, about 5.5 miles (9 km) from the city, a famous sanctuary dedicated to Hera was built near the bank of the river Sele, a natural boundary beyond which lay the territory of the Etruscans, who occupied an important permanent settlement at Pontecagno. The sanctuary of Poseidon was undoubtedly situated on the southern slopes opposite this, on the Agropolis promontory, where traces of a sacred building from the Archaic period have indeed been found.

In the interior, where the coastal plain gave way to hills, ancient tradition places a sanctuary, still to be discovered, dedicated to Artemis, the virgin goddess of the wild countryside. Other cult places formed a kind of "sacred belt" around the city and separated the area reserved as living space from the *necropoleis*.

At a greater distance, little country sanctuaries were created on the edges of the cultivated areas, near springs, or beside roads. These protected the city's agricultural areas and at the same time served to associate the peasant population with a cult dedicated not to Hera but to Demeter, the goddess who gave the first grain to humankind.

The rich and fertile land around Poseidonia does not seem to have played a great part in the first centuries of the life of the colony, as it was particularly suited to cereal production, a form of cultivation that did not require farmers to live permanently outside the city. A drastic change in this situation in the middle of the fourth century B.C. is indicated by the discovery of number of small burial grounds, evidence of an increase in family-type farms occupying the agrarian area, though this movement seems to have exhausted itself in the course of a generation. The part of the countryside that was permanently occupied was centered either on the plain or on the line of hills around the city, and concentrated on the development of specialized crops, such as olives and vines, whose cultivation needed a workforce that was constantly in attendance.

The Sanctuary of Hera at the Mouth of the River Sele

According to ancient tradition, the sanctuary was founded by Jason, leader of the Argonauts, in thanks for the protection afforded to the heroes' expedition on their voyage aboard the Argo. It was venerated under the name of "Argive."

The saga of the Argonauts offered a mythical parallel to the adventures of the colonists and lent them legitimacy, together with the right to conquer unknown lands. The sanctuary was built in an area of swamp close to the river, in the kind of wild country that best represented the power of the goddess. Its foundation dates from the beginning of the sixth century B.C., the same as that of the city. The earliest evidence of the cult is an ash altar, enclosed in the first half of the sixth century B.C. by a wall and incorporated into one of the altars of the great temple buildings at the end of the sixth century B.C. Two monumental porticoes situated to the north-east of the altar date from the first half of the century; the first housed what was possibly a banqueting room (*hestiatorian*), connected with public ceremonies held at the sanctuary.

Dating from around 570–560 B.C. is a series of exceptional sculpted metopes which, at the time they were found, were assumed to be connected with a building (the so-called *Thesauros*) that, as will be seen, was in fact built during the transitional period between the fourth and the third century B.C. Thanks to a recent discovery, these can now be attributed to a sacred building of which only traces of the foundations remain beneath the aforementioned temple from the Archaic period. According to one theory about its original form, the older temple had a colonnade (*peristasis*) of six columns on the short side, twelve on the long, and a *cella*, measuring 7.58 by 21.50 to 22 m, with a small porch (*pronaos*) preceded by four columns.

The metopes were sculpted in a style evoking the Ionic order of eastern Greece, using two different techniques: one group is characterized by very strong relief which makes the figures stand out boldly; in the other the molding is much less pronounced and the contours of the figures, which were probably finished in color, assume a much greater importance. Their decoration has been

Above: lion-head spout, 500 B.C., from the Temple of Hera at the mouth of the river Sele (National Archaeological Museum, Paestum-Salerno)

Below: archaic metope with Herakles slaying the giant Halcyoneus, 560–550 B.C., from the Temple of Hera at the mouth of the river Sele (National Archaeological Museum, Paestum-Salerno)



Painted side from the Tomb of the Diver, depicting lovers, 480–470 B.C., from the Tempa del Prete necropolis (National Archaeological Museum, Paestum-Salerno)

drawn from a rich mythological repertoire: the labors of Herakles play an important role, as do images of such heroes as Achilles, Ajax, and Odysseus, and pictures of the episodes from the adventures of Orestes and the saga of the Argonauts, who were connected—as we have seen—with the foundation of the sanctuary itself.

The building of the great temple at the center of the sacred area dates from the sixth century B.C. The temple, measuring about 18.60 × 39 m, has survived only to the level of its foundations. Built in the Doric order, it faced east and had a *cella* with an entrance porch (*pronaos*) and a



On pages 78–79: cover slab from the Tomb of the Diver, 480–470 B.C., from the Tempa del Prete necropolis (National Archaeological Museum, Paestum-Salerno)

closed room to the rear (*adyton*), surrounded by a *peristasis* of eight by seventeen columns. Two stepped towers were placed at the entrance to the *cella*; the anta walls of the *pronaos* ended in half-columns, with two Ionic columns set between them. Particular emphasis was applied to the façade, broadening the width of the ambulatory between the *pronaos* and the colonnade of the *peristasis*. As for the elevation: the architrave was surmounted by a frieze of metopes and triglyphs, framed by two limestone cornices decorated with a double garland of leaves (*cymatia*). The metopes were tastefully decorated in the Ionic order with sculpted couples of female dancers following the lead of a single companion—a theme employed also in friezes found in Sybaris





and Rhegion. The roof was furnished with eaves with lion-head spouts, also in limestone.

To the east of the temple two altars of different sizes have been found; the smaller one—enclosed, as mentioned previously—was the ancient ash altar. Seriously damaged at the end of the fifth century B.C., the sanctuary was extensively rebuilt in the Lucanian era. At the beginning of the fourth century B.C., apart from the restoration of the temple, two structures were built over the top of the one from the Archaic period, using reclaimed materials, with porticoes set at right angles to each other. Libation ceremonies took place in one, while the other seems to have taken over the function of the real banqueting hall from the older portico.

To the north of the main temple, and with the same orientation, was the so-called *Thesauros*, to which the older series of metopes were originally thought to have belonged. This misconception came about because, during excavation of the building, numerous architectural items from the Archaic period were recovered, but recent excavations have placed the temple's date at the transition from the fourth to the third century B.C.

The *Thesauros*, measuring 12.60×9.05 m, was built on a bed of sand dug out to create a small canal for the drainage of the surface water. It took the form of a simple rectangle, with an east-facing façade, probably with antas. The precise information now available about the time it was built suggests that the architectural elements from the Archaic period, found close by, probably came originally from other buildings and were reused to decorate its elevation.

The construction of one last important monument, in use in the sanctuary during the Lucanian era, dates from the beginning of the fourth century B.C. It was destroyed at the time of the foundation of the Roman colony. This building was built on a square plan, 12×12 m, about 80 m to the east of a temple, of which the foundations—a stone plinth worked in folded elements—have been preserved. Its small entrance faced south and it was probably covered by a roof with a pitch of one in four.

Found in its interior was a marble statue of Hera; the goddess was represented seated on a throne, wearing a tall, cylindrical headdress (*polos*) while her hands, which rested on her lap, held a cup for libation and a pomegranate.

The iconography of Hera derives from that of the statue sculpted by the famous sculptor Polykleitos for the sanctuary of the goddess in the Greek city of Argos. This was consciously exploited by the Lucanians in an attempt to create for themselves a prestigious origin similar to that of the Greeks, under the protection of Argive Hera. The same iconographic type was repeated in thousands of statuettes in terracotta produced locally, dedicated simultaneously in all the sanctuaries of the city, and diffused even more widely around the plain of the river Sele.

The square building stood on the site of an earlier collection of votives that had accumulated between the end of the sixth and the end of the fifth centuries B.C., and has yielded, in its turn, an immense deposit of votive items dating from as late as the early decades of the third century B.C. So it was probably not by chance that it was built on the site of the older cult site, whose function it appears, in some way, to have inherited.

The votive material was most probably contemporary with the life of the monumental building. Apart from statuettes of females, jewelry, containers for cosmetics, and jars for storing or preparing food, it included numerous loomweights and also a large number of coins. It was a vast, cohesive collection, all related to the feminine world, which exalted the role of women as pivotal to the household; an expression of beauty but, at the same time, repository and custodian of the wealth and patrimony of the family.

The plan of the square building also seems to confirm this cultural picture. In fact its architecture evokes that of the domestic scene and, in particular, that part of the house used as a storeroom (*pyrgos*). With this in mind, it has been suggested that the loomweights that were recovered were perhaps connected with the ancient ritual of weaving sacred vestments in honor of Hera.



Painted slab called the Black Horseman, 340 B.C., slab from the west side of tomb 58 from the Andriuolo necropolis (National Archaeological Museum, Paestum-Salerno)