

## Selinunte Ruins – April 20, 2018 – Selinunte Ruins, Sicily, Italy

By Tom Allin

The Tunis, Tunisia to Palermo, Sicily ferry's PA system woke us up about 5:30 am for a docking at 7:00 and a drive off the ferry at about 8:30. In summary we had been up for three hours plus before the Toyota 4Runner's wheels touched Sicilian pavement.

Took about another 30 minutes to pass through customs and passport control. Our first stop of the day is 120-km/1.5 hour drive to the south side of the Sicilian Island. Exiting Palermo isn't too bad and the highway is an easy drive. Damn if that isn't the entrance to the Selinunte Ruins dead ahead.

What the heck, there are a half dozen tour buses already parked in the parking lot. What is this, some kind of tourist destination? Nancy and I just won't accept the idea that some of the world's best destinations aren't for our enjoyment only. But the good news is this ancient Greek city covers almost 700 acres and therefore doesn't appear crowded. The bad news is 700 acres requires some significant walking.

However, first things first. No, not food and coffee. That comes after a bathroom stop.



Our travels are forever updating my historical knowledge. Selinunte is another case in point. The city was founded in 628 BC by the Greeks, during the next 250 years became *one of the wealthiest and most powerful in the world*, was destroyed by the Carthaginians in 409 BC, rebuilt only to fall to the Romans in 350 BC. After falling to the Romans it was all downhill for Selinunte and the city soon no longer existed.

It is a short walk from the ticket office to the first temple, Temple E. All the temples at Selinunte are identified by letters. Due to the age of the temples and lack of historical records no one is sure whom the temples were built for. Temple E was built about 460 – 450 BC



Much of Temple E was rebuilt in the 1950s from the materials scattered about the site. What you see today standing isn't what has survived from 450 BC but the parts that survived and were reassembled in the 1950's. Still very impressive to me!

There are two details which always surprise me: (1) the immense size of the ancient columns wherever they are found in the pre-Greek through Roman eras and (2) the colors used to paint the temples – it never dawned on me in my 8<sup>th</sup> grade world history class that the gray to sand colored temples in my history book were actually brightly painted.







Inside Temple E:





Looking from the Temple E toward Temple C.



Another view of Temple E with parts of Temple G in the foreground.



Temple G and its parts lying on the ground.





The base of a column.



A section of a column.





Various parts/sections of a column and a partial standing column.



Parts of a column lying one after the other.





We begin our walk to Temple C.



This species of lizard is everywhere. The lizard's green color is almost iridescent.





Temple C. that was built about 550 BC and is believed to have been dedicated to Apollo or Heracles.



And on our way out of the site one last photograph of Temple E.





Note the wildflowers in the photograph. "Try to visit in spring when the surroundings are ablaze with wildflowers." Lonely Planet Italy. What you can't see in the photograph is Nancy and me high fiving each other for visiting at the correct time of the year.