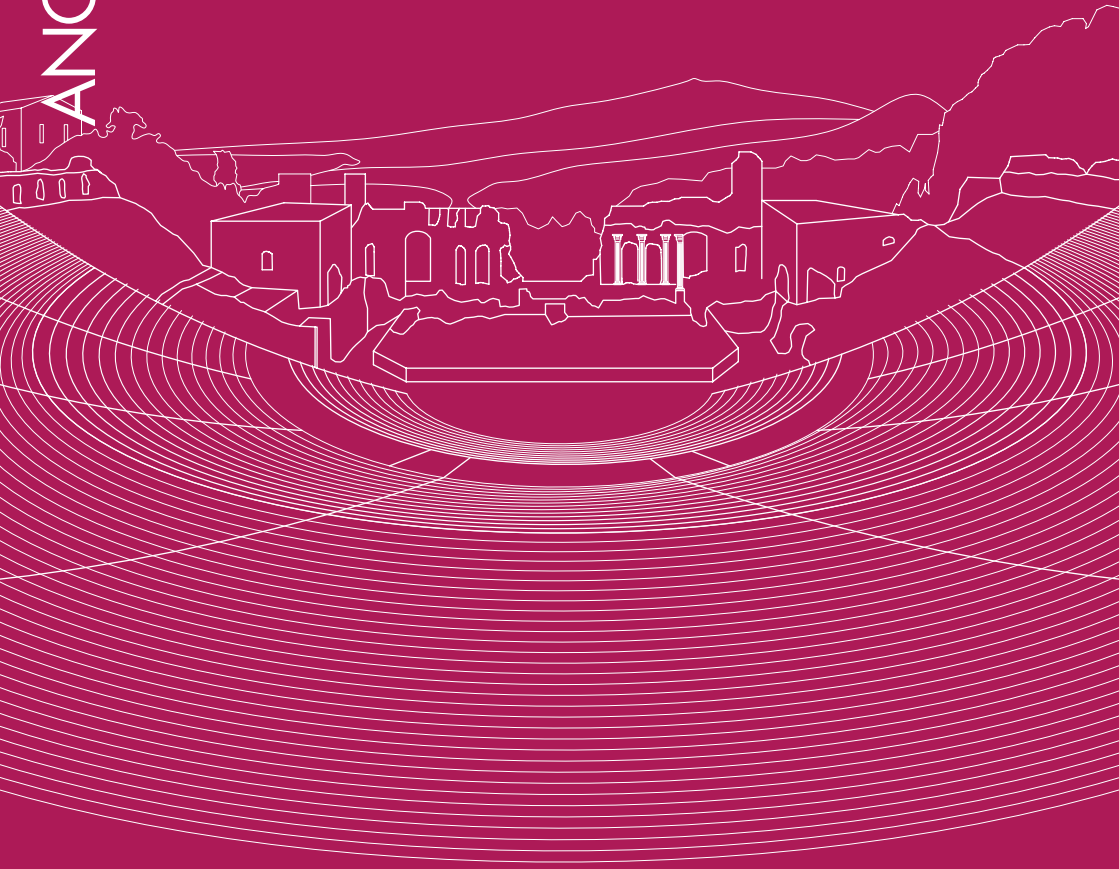


# ANCIENT THEATRE OF TAORMINA



# ENG

# A TEMPEST OF EMOTIONS AND BEAUTY

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**N**ow, sitting down at the spot where formerly sat the uppermost spectators, you confess at once that never did any audience, in any theatre, have before it such a spectacle as you there behold". Thus Wolfgang Goethe, who arrived in Sicily in 1787, described the ancient theatre of Taormina in his famous *Journey to Italy*. Since then, Taormina and its theatre have become the coveted destination of the young people of the European aristocracy, and over time the very icon of Sicily. The scene frames the sea, the coast, and the smoking cone of Etna, now covered with snow, and lit by the glow of the lava: a fatal attraction for travellers in search of space and silence. On summer evenings, it welcomes music, prose, opera, and dance performances under the stars and inside nature, giving a synaesthesia of emotions unique in the world.

Gabriella Tigano  
*Director of the Park of Naxos - Taormina*

# RESTORATIONS: A STORY IN THE HISTORY

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**T**he first interventions inside the Ancient Theatre are directed by Biagio de Speches, Duke of Santo Stefano, and date back to the years 1748-1749, as evidenced by an inscription now preserved in the west hall of the theatre. Since then, excavations and restorations have continued on a regular basis, up to the most complete conservative restoration concluded in 1956 by Luigi Bernabò Brea. On this occasion, the cavea and other essential parts for the reading of the monument are partially reconstructed, including a part of the vault of the external summit ambulatory. Today the Ancient Theatre of Taormina is a pulsating cultural hub: it hosts performances of classical and contemporary theatre and is the home of international events such as the Taormina Film Festival.

# MAP








- 1 VERSURA OVEST
- 2 VERSURA EST
- 3 ORCHESTRA
- 4 FRONTESCENA
- 5 RETROSCENA
- 6 CAVEA
- 7 DOPPIO PORTICO
- 8 TEMPIETTO ELLENISTICO
- 9 ANTIQUARIUM
- 10 CAMERA SOTTERRANEA
- 11 SENTIERO DI GOETHE
- 12 GYMNASIUM

ENTRANCE  
via Teatro Greco

## VISITATION PATHS

-  UPPER ROUTE
-  LOWER ROUTE  
/ACCESSIBLE TO ALL
-  PANORAMIC PATH
-  EMERGENCY EXIT

## FACILITIES

-  ENTRANCE
-  EXIT
-  WC
-  BOOKSHOP
-  TICKET OFFICE
-  VIEWPOINT
-  SEMAFORO CAFÈ

# MONUMENT TO THE TALENT OF MAN

— Nature, art, history, landscape: it is no coincidence that the Ancient Theatre, after having enchanted painters and travellers since the eighteenth century with its ruins, continues to thrill today. The Greek building, built in a dominant position, dates back, by layout, to the III-II century BC, but the monument appears today in the forms acquired in the Roman imperial age, in the first half of the II century AD, under the emperor Trajan or Hadrian. The theatre retains a rectangular scenic building between two grandiose vaulted halls for access to the orchestra and a 109m diameter auditorium, divided into nine wedges by eight stairways. After the one of Syracuse, it is the largest building for shows not only in Sicily, but also in the Italian peninsula and Africa. In the imperial age, a double portico in brick with granite columns and vaulted roof, surmounted the auditorium, while the scenic building, apparently articulated on three orders, with a *frons scaenae* sumptuously decorated by statues and columns, interrupted by three big openings. The current *frons scaenae* belongs to a nineteenth-century restoration.

# A PLACE BORN TO AMAZE

— Between the 2nd and the 3rd centuries AD, probably under the Emperor Caracalla, the theatre was transformed into an amphitheatre and the orchestra converted into an arena to host *venationes* and gladiator fights. After the fall of the Roman Empire, centuries of neglect followed until 1465, when the western hall began to be used

as the palace residence of the Zumbo family as proof of the heraldic coat of arms still visible. The Theatre is once again the protagonist with the rediscovery of Sicily, in the period of the Grand Tour, starting and promoting a new history that has made Taormina one of the capitals of international tourism.





# EPIGRAPHS: AN ARCHIVE FROM THE ANCIENT WORLD



On the highest terrace of the hill that houses the Theatre, the building called "Casina degli Inglesi", today, as in the nineteenth century, houses a small "Antiquarium". The important epigraphic collection, consisting of texts in Greek and Latin from the urban excavations of Tauromenion, includes some exceptional Greek epigraphs of a public nature (tables of the Strategists and Gymnasiarchs and financial statements) dating from the second and first centuries BC. Among the other exhibits on display there is a marble sarcophagus from the late 2nd century AD, found in the monumental necropolis of Via Pirandello in the nineteenth century AD, used for the burial of a child, decorated with a scene from the Dionysian setting in which it was proposed to recognize the narrative of the myth of Psyche and Cupid.

## PLAN

## YOUR VISIT

### Tickets

Adult  
€ 12,00  
Reduced  
€ 6,00 (18-25 y.o.)  
Free  
Information available at the  
ticket office

### How to get here

Car  
Highway exit Taormina taking  
A18 (Catania-Messina) Towards  
Taormina  
Bus  
Taormina last stop.  
Train  
Taormina – Giardini Naxos  
Railway Station and then  
Taormina bus  
Plane  
Airport Vincenzo Bellini  
of Catania – Fontanarossa

### Facilities

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and finds.



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or drinks.



*Open daily according to the site's hours.*



*You can choose between sweet or savoury breakfast.*

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*Aperitifs with a selection of mixed cold cuts or fresh fruits and a glass of local wine.*



*Light lunch with local products' salads or gourmet sandwiches, combined with non-alcoholic drinks.*

## THE PLEASURE OF REMEMBERING

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A COMMENT  
ABOUT  
YOUR VISIT!**



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Ancient Theatre of Taormina

Regional Gallery of Palazzo Bellomo

Museum and Archaeological Area of Naxos

Archaeological Regional Museum Paolo Orsi

Aeolian Archaeological Park - Museum Luigi Bernabò Brea

Interdisciplinary Regional Museum of Messina

Naturalistic Regional Museum of Isola Bella

Monumental Area of Neapolis

Archaeological Area of Tindari

Roman Villa of Patti



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