La Sardegna cresce con l’Europa

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Sulcis-Iglesiente Territory

Necropolis of Is Pirixeddus
Sant’Antioco

Archaeological area of Monte Sirai
Carbonia

Cultural heritage SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology
We thank the Superintendence for the Architectural, Landscape, Historical, Artistic and Ethno-Anthropological Heritage for the metropolitan city of Cagliari and for the provinces of Oristano, Medio Campidano, Carbonia-Iglesias and Ogliastra for the kind cooperation.

Sulcis-Iglesiente

Territory

Necropolis of
Is Pirixeddus | S. Antioco

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Unicity Srl:
Coordination and Production
3D and 3D Render Reconstruction
and Production Virtual Guided
Visits and Virtual Views Production
Communication and Multimedia

Testaluna Srl:
3D Planning and Interactivity

Polonord Adeste Srl:
USB Pendrive Production

Imago Multimedia Snc:
Texts, Graphics and Photographs of the sites inside the Digital and Paper Guide

FSG Sas - Unicity Srl:
Interactive multimedia stations and technical support
The archaeological and architectonic heritage of Sardinia offers a lot of unusual traits compared to the other Mediterranean territories. Its peculiarities are concentrated in particular between the late pre-history and the proto-history and have their apex in the Nuragic civilization. However, some other distinctive historical-time features of Sardinia come from the significant presence of the Phoenician, Punic, Roman and Byzantine civilizations. A new and specific culture arose from the interaction of the local culture with those outer civilizations: its material and immaterial aspects can be easily found and they are fundamental elements of the nowadays Sardinian identity heritage. The essential aspects of the Sardinian archaeology and architecture are well known, even if in a partial way, thanks to those excellent examples of the Nuragic complex of Barumini or the Romanesque church of Saccargia, which are already part of a common heritage; but in a world where gathering information is relatively simple, the public administration has the duty of presenting the culture of Sardinia in an objective and complete way, so that it could be available for any kind of experts and or

The project “Cultural heritage Sardegna Virtual Archaeology”
any people without experience. That is why the R.A.S. (Regional Administration of Sardinia) has chosen to stimulate the spectacular aspects of some of the main archaeological and architectonic remains, which were already built in dramatic landscapes that could fascinate even the least interested visitor. But the real challenge lies in contextualizing the archaeological sites in their cultural environment. The idea comes from the concept that the remains of ancient cultures can “tell a story” when they are “examined” all together, as if they were the pages of a book that otherwise would be incomprehensible at the end. Basically, the project aims to illustrate a monument or a site showing the reasons why it is interesting not just for itself but also and above all for its importance in the surrounding cultural and natural environment. This aspect is essential and useful for the interpretation of the today world: it helps us to understand why we should preserve our archaeological and architectonic heritage, beyond its monumentality and although pertinent to cultures, as for instance the Roman one, that are usually considered extraneous to the identitarian inheritance. The ways through which this kind of knowledge should be spread, are set depending on the media to which they are addressed for its fruition. Still, the available products will go beyond the mere didactic presentation of the site to come to a wider and complete description from all cultural points of view.

Content and purpose of the project

The project “Sardinian Virtual Archaeology Cultural Heritage” was set up with the aim to enhance the so-called “Homogeneous System of Visual Identity” that the R.A.S. has already started with the main purpose to create an instrument of safeguard and promotion of the Sardinian cultural heritage. Besides, the project contributes to the improvement of the scientific, didactic and innovative educational products connected to the Sardinian places of culture, creating an integrated system of sites and monuments that will be rebuilt with the use of the most recent 3D technologies. So, the Sardinian heritage will be available for any kind of user through high quality products characterized by fascinating graphics and rich interactive information. With these purposes, seventeen sites among the most significant of the Sardinian history and culture, deployed in eight areas of interests, have been virtually reconstructed with three-dimensional and realistic features, as a result of an accurate research on the bibliographic and cartographic material. The digital reconstructions meet those reconstructive hypotheses that have been validated by the scientific and academic community and that originate from the excavations, the field researches, the historical-archaeological and artistic studies. Therefore, the 3D reconstructions offer the highest degree of fidelity to the original building or site, reproducing the surrounding natural landscape and the archaeological environment with the external structures, the inner spaces and real-life settings. The ultimate digital product will be available at some of the most important cultural places of Sardinia, as for instance museums and universities, and at the so-called “access points”, that are specific public spaces where the interactive multimedia posts will be installed and accessible to all visitors. Moreover, the product will be available on digital support to be distributed during conventions, fairs, forum and tourism exhibitions. In fact, the specific purpose of the RAS” “Linea di Attività 1.2.3.a” aims to increase the production, divulgation and sharing of digital contents referring to Sardinian cultural assets, so to improve the knowledge of the diverse users and to enhance the education of the different segments of students, in view of a useful socio-cultural repercussion on the territory.
General map of Sardinia

Sulcis-Iglesiente territory

Iglesiente

Sulcis

Iglesias

Monte Sirai

Carbonia

Is Piriexedds (Sant’Antioco)

Necropolis of Is Piriexedds (Sant’Antioco)

Archaeological area of Monte Sirai (Carbonia)
The ancient Punic inhabitants of Sulky, the actual town of Sant’Antioco, used to bury their dead at a necropolis out of the urban settlement, whose tombs were carved inside a rocky hill. What you can see and partially visit today is the remain of a Punic necropolis that was used about from the end of the 6th-5th century to the 3rd century B.C. Afterwards the necropolis was reused by the Romans during the Republican...
Age (between the 2nd and the 1st century B.C.) and also during the Imperial Age (at least during the entire 1st century B.C.). Later, since the 4th-5th century A.D., the old necropolis was transformed by the first Christians into a catacomb by connecting some of the burial chambers and creating new burial spaces, like rectangular graves into the floor or recesses into the walls to obtain a sarcophagus surmounted sometimes by a small arch (arcosolium tomb); sometimes these tombs were decorated with paintings. The two main nucleuses of the sepulchral galleries are under the parish church of Sant’Antioco and they are:

1) the catacombs of Sant’Antioco; 2) the catacombs of Santa Rosa, under the same parish church but very small being formed by just two rooms. Another small nucleus of the old necropolis,
Seventies of the 19th century) and it includes the houses of the hypogeal village. Some tombs were also used as cellars and storage closets and still today they serve this useful purpose. A sector of the original Punic necropolis has remained almost intact in the same area of Is Pirixeddus: it is situated on the eastern and north-eastern slopes of the hill at the top of which stands the Piedmont’s blockhouse of Su Pisu. It keeps and shows to visitors the most common kind of tomb that was used inside this funerary area: the hypogeal–chamber tomb, provided with an entrance corridor, named dromos, and of a staircase, which led to a ledge just before the

↑ Burial chamber of the necropolis converted into a house

↑ Burial chamber of the necropolis converted into a house

↑ Fortress of Su Pisu, entrance side

↑ Fortress of Su Pisu, entrance side

↑ Fortress of Su Pisu, the courtyard

↑ Fortress of Su Pisu, the courtyard
The burial chamber since the small size of its entrance. The chamber sometimes was sculpted or finely decorated. The burial chamber could be formed by a big room divided by a partition wall, whose façade could be decorated both with rough sculpted architectonic elements and with some high-relieves. This is the case of two tombs, one discovered in 1968 and the other in 2002: the partition wall of the first and the central pillar of the second tomb were decorated with a life-size high-relief representing a human figure portrayed as an Egyptian man wearing Egyptian clothes. He is depicted while walking solemnly, with his right arm on his shoulder.

Entrance corridor to one of the burial chambers of the necropolis of Is Pireddus

Reconstruction of the depositions inside one of the burial chambers

Reconstruction of one of the burial chambers with a single entombment
bodies in the course of time (like the sepulchre called “of the winged goddess”, inside of which they found about fifteen entombments), particularly when the hypogea were too busy and there was no other space for new burials; so they got some new chambers digging new levels inside the old tombs. In addition to the hypogea-type tomb with the wide chamber divided by a partition wall, it was also common the single-room hypogeum, that represents the oldest kind of funerary chamber. The dead were set down inside the burial chamber, wrapped up in a shroud or a tunic, on a wooden litter or inside a sarcophagus and with their trousseau and all the objects of the chest and his left arm along his body, with a beard, wearing a short kilt and the typical handkerchief often depicted in the iconography of the Egyptian personalities. The tombs could host one or more dead person. The tombs could host one or more dead person.
funeral rite, like for instance terracotta crockery, terracotta or polychrome glass lachrymatories and their personal objects, like glassy or pearl amulet necklaces, beetles, jewels (rings, necklaces and earrings), razors and other kinds of things that help to reveal if the dead was a man or a woman and sometimes even what they did in their life.
The site of Monte Sirai is the doorway to the history of Sardinia, the representation of the memory of the places in the region of Sulcis: southwards there is the island of Sant’Antioco and westwards there is the island of San Pietro; opposite you can have a complete view on the city of Carbonia and to the inwards routes leading to the areas of wheat and metals. The site of Monte Sirai, which was populated since the pre-historical and the Nuragic ages, stretches with a thick building structure on the plateau at the top of a hill and it was wittingly chosen for its landscape characteristics and the possibility of an intense use of the habitable land. A necropolis and the sacrificial
The religious area of the temple of Ashtart was built on the remains of a Nuragic area and it was used for centuries on. This monument is one of the most symbolic evidence of the relations between the Nuragic area known as “tophet” are at a brief distance but separated from the acropolis. A fortified entrance leads to the settlement, organised in quarters dedicated to private and public scopes: the first quarters is characterized by houses and workshops, the second by small squares, connecting streets and a temple. The religious area of the temple of Ashtart was built on the remains of a Nuragic area and it was used for centuries on. This monument is one of the most symbolic evidence of the relations between the Nuragic and the Phoenician people, as attested by the archaeological finds. Several edifices have been excavated so far, as the complex “Casa Fantar”, “Casa Amadasì”, “Casa del lucernario di talco”, and some others that are disclosing their secrets to the knowledge and the fruition as the so-called “Casa di tufo”: these are houses built with sturdy walls, wall bases and façades – sometimes with a framework – or clay brick walls, and sometimes they present even two storeys and an inner courtyard. The oldest phases of the settlement – proceeded...
by Neolithic and Nuragic remains with Punic and Roman traces that have still to be defined in their arrangement, out of the built-up area – are dated back to the 8th century B.C. This old horizons find confirmation in the coeval and nearby areas of S. Antioco, S. Pietro where they found typical Phoenician red slip ceramics, locally produced pots, sculptures, bronze statues and amulets. In the following 7th and 6th centuries B.C., an intense building activity affected the entire plateau: during this phase they built the archaic incineration necropolis, where the dead were cremated and the remains were kept inside the classical trilobed-rim or mushroom-shaped jugs, precious decorative objects linked to magic, Greek ceramics from Corinth. The successive phase, which began with the conquest of Sardinia by Carthage during the final decades of the 6th century B.C. until the first half of the 4th century B.C., is not easily recognisable in the buildings because of the superimposition of the
different cultures, although it is well documented by Punic strip ceramics, some pots from Athens with red and black figures, commercial amphorae, illustrated terracotta an by the coeval hypogeic necropolis. The settlement of Monte Sirai reached its maximum expansion between the 4th and the 2nd century B.C., between the Late Punic age and the Roman Republican Age, when the entire settlement took the today-visible urban structure and the sanctuary-topphet was open. The necropolises are located in three important areas northward of the acropolis, with an extraordinary chronological, typological and spatial sequence: from the area of the Phoenician tombs (mainly fossa tombs with the cremation rite and with the interment rite to a lesser extent) to the Punic-age chamber tombs with interesting architectonic and decorative solutions (like stone masks and the symbol of the Goddess Tinnit carved on a pillar of Tomb 5). These tombs were destined to the most powerful families. In some other tombs the...
archaeologists found amphora burials, other incinerations, tombs with a double entombment; it is also attested the use of the Phoenician crematory area for children burials, pertaining to a successive phase but probably coming from the previous culture. The graveyards lie in a gradually wider area as a consequence of the demographic increase and the necessity of new spaces, showing the presence of different cultural traditions. The tophet was a sacred area reserved to the deposition of the urns with the children’s remains, a recurring sacrificial rite following some researchers, a place for premature deaths or miscarriages following some others; in any case, the ceremony provided for a purification sacrifice through fire. According to tradition, the tophet was topographically set up at the edge of the built-up area although it is a proof of the urban culture, being linked to it, and that the site was gradually more populated. The excavations have revealed its configuration and have attested its frecuention from the half of the 4th to the end of the 2nd century B.C. The area of the depositions was composed of about four hundred identical urns containing the ashes of the dead babies that were covered by small plates and then buried. Some of them were marked by a stone stele of different kind and some effigies in Egyptian and Greek style or with simpler motifs. A small temple was built on the tophet area characterized by some rooms and reachable through some steps and a ramp. The built-up area of Monte Sirai was abandoned since the first decades of the 1st B.C., but it was repopulated during the Late Antiquity and its structures were levelled between the 6th and the 7th century A.D.
01. Buggerru → Mining site of Porto Flavia
Founded in 1864, the village of Buggerru developed quickly thanks to the activity of the mine of Malfidano, where they extracted lead and zinc. The mine closed down in 1977 and now it is part of the Geo-Environmental park of Sardinia. Abandoned plants, structures on the hill declining intense industrial story. The mines: planned by the engineer Cesare Vecelli, it was made in 1924 on a sheer cliff boring for 600 metres inside the mountain. The project revolutionised the loading system for minerals, until then practised by the boatmen (galanzè) of Carloforte.

Calasetta is the chief town of the region of Sulcis and it lies in an area that is really rich in charcoal formations dated back to the Eocene era and represents the most important Italian coal basin. Although Carbonia is the youngest town of Sulcis, it was curiously born few kilometres far from some of the oldest humans’ settlements of Sardinia: inside the rock shelter of Su Carroppu, nearby Sirri, the archaeologists found the oldest evidence of the Sardinian Early Neolithic, inside the present urban area, in the locality of Cannas di sotto, they brought to light a necropolis dated back to 2000 B.C. Along the state road to Sant’Antioco, a detour on the right leads to the top of Monte Sirai, where there is one of the most important archaeological sites of the Mediterranean area, the Phoenician-Punic fortress of Sirai. The strategic position of the hill, overlooking the sea between the islands of San Pietro and of Sant’Antioco, did not pass unnoticed to the Nuragic people, who were the first to use the area. In the 8th century B.C. the Phoenicians of Sulky built a village, after conquered by the Carthaginians and then suddenly abandoned during the Roman Imperial Age. Most of the ruins belong to the Punic Age, with a public area dominated by the temple of Ashtar, the civil and administrative heart of the village. The main attraction is

02. Calasetta → Savoy tower
Calasetta is an enchanting village of fishers and peasants situated at the southern extremity of the island of Sant’Antioco and immersed in a natural and uncontaminated environment. The territory keeps lots of Nuragic and Punic evidence. The name of the village probably comes from “Calà di seta” (the silk bay), which was the name of the area in front of the actual harbour where they fished the bivalve pisana nobilis, from which they obtained the bisso (a sort of fine linen). The coastline is characterized by white sand beaches, like the famous spiaggia Grande, the beach of Salina and the beach of Sottotorre. The village was founded in the 17th century by a group of Ligurian colons coming from the island of Tabarka, and is known as “La Bianca” (the white town) because of the colours of its houses. A stout tower built by the Savoia dominates the village: it was built with the use of volcanic blocks in 1756 and today hosts an archaeological collection with Phoenician-Punic findings, while the ground floor hosts exhibitions of contemporary art. Also interesting is the Civic Museum of contemporary art. From the harbour set sail the ferries to the town of Carloforte, with which Calasetta share the same Ligurian origins. In the island they produce also vintage wines and there is a rich gastronomic tradition.

Mining site of Porto Flavia

Cala Domestica

03. Carbonia → Main monuments
Carbonia is the chief town of the region of Sulcis and it lies in an area that is really important from a geological, historical and archaeological point of view. The subsoil is rich in charcoal formations dated back to the Eocene era and represents the most important Italian coal basin. Although Carbonia is the youngest town of Sulcis, it was curiously born few kilometres far from some of the oldest humans’ settlements of Sardinia: inside the rock shelter of Su Carroppu, nearby Sirri, the archaeologists found the oldest evidence of the Sardinian Early Neolithic, inside the present urban area, in the locality of Cannas di sotto, they brought to light a necropolis dated back to 2000 B.C. Along the state road to Sant’Antioco, a detour on the right leads to the top of Monte Sirai, where there is one of the most important archaeological sites of the Mediterranean area, the Phoenician-Punic fortress of Sirai. The strategic position of the hill, overlooking the sea between the islands of San Pietro and of Sant’Antioco, did not pass unnoticed to the Nuragic people, who were the first to use the area. In the 8th century B.C. the Phoenicians of Sulky built a village, after conquered by the Carthaginians and then suddenly abandoned during the Roman Imperial Age. Most of the ruins belong to the Punic Age, with a public area dominated by the temple of Ashtar, the civil and administrative heart of the village. The main attraction is

Fortress of Sirai

Necropolis of Sirai

The Phoenicians of Sulky built a village, after conquered by the Carthaginians and then suddenly abandoned during the Roman Imperial Age. Most of the ruins belong to the Punic Age, with a public area dominated by the temple of Ashtar, the civil and administrative heart of the village. The main attraction is
the Punic necropolis, with 13 shaft graves that still have their sarcophagi and sacred sculpted decorations in place, among which the well-known upside-down symbol of the goddess Tanith. Downhill there is the Punic tophet, with a temple and an area called “Cam po d’Urne” (Field of Urns). At the southern foot of the hill stands an evidence of the pre-existing Nuragic colonization: the imposing Nuraghe Sirai (15th century B.C.), a complex monument oriented to the cardinal points, and a village. The origins of the present city are much more recent. The quarter of Serbariu was the first core of the village: it was founded during the 18th century by joining several isolated rural settlements (furiadroxius), then it was raised to the rank of municipality in 1853. Here, in 1936, the geologists found the wide coal deposit of Sirai-1936, the geologists found the wide coal deposit of Sirai.

During the post-war period, Carbonia became the third Sardinian city with more than 60000 inhabitants. Its urban structure is a good example of the Fascist architecture, with wide treelined boulevards centring on Piazza Roma, where there are the Town Hall, the Central Theatre, the Dopolavoro, the Littoria tower and the church of San Ponziano, with its trachyte bell tower inspired to that of Aquileia and an inscription dedicated to the workers who built the church in the “3rd year of the Empire”. Today the square is adorned with the Gio’ Pomodoro’s sculpture “Fragments of void”.

The urban structure around the town centre reflects the hierarchy of roles in the mining system: from “Villa Sulcis”, the director’s house, you go to the managers’ houses, then to the employees’ and the workers’ houses. At the centre of the city there are three important museums: the Archaeological Museum of Villa Sulcis, which gathers findings from the Neolithic to the Roman age, the Museum of Palaeontology and Speleology “E. A. Martel”, with fossil remains from the Paleozoic, Mesozoic, Tertiary and Quaternary ages and a speleological and bio-speleological section. The most important museum is the Coal Mining Museum, hosted in the restored structures of the mine of Serbariu and that gathers a collection of tools and documents and inside some faithfully-built rooms shows the evolution of the coal mining techniques used from the Thirties of last century until the suspension of the production. Along the state road to Iglesias there are the hamlet of Flumentepido, with the church of Santa Maria dated back to the 11th century, the hamlet of Cortogiana, a mining village inaugurated in 1942 nearby a coal mine and of which you can still admire the urban rationalist structure and the mining village of Bacu Abis, where they mined the coal until the Sixties of last century.

04. Carloforte → Island of San Pietro
The village of Carloforte is the only town in the island of San Pietro, which is linked to Sardinia by the ferries that set sail from Porto-vesme and Calasetta. The island is one of the most uncontaminated places in the Mediterranean area; it was inhabited since the Nuragic age. There are several evidence of the Phoenician and Punic ages, particularly some housing structures and some necropolises. The island settled in 1542 to fish coral. During the first period of the colonization, they built massive city walls to protect the fort, the church and the governors’ house. New colons came from Liguria and from the island of Ponza to fish tuna and coral and to work in the saltworks. The ship traffic grew during the last century thanks to the export of the minerals extracted in the Sulcis and the Iglesiente areas. Today the town is a tourist resort thanks to its uncontaminated environment and the seafaring traditions that are jealously kept alive.
hosts the Civic Museum, which keeps the documents of the foundation of Carloforte and several evidence of the tuna fishing in the Sulcis region. At the southern edges of the town there is the church of Novelli Innocenti, erected in the 18th century on a previous sacred place dedicated to the memory of some children who, legend has it, were travelling in 1212 towards the Holy Land to take part in the fifth Crusade but unfortunately shipwrecked on the coasts of the island and died. South of Carloforte there are the saltworks, which are the habitat for numerous species of birds. Beyond the tower of San Vittorio, seat of an astronomic observatory, a series of paths lead to the white sandy beaches: you can reach the beaches of Giunco, Girin, Punta Nera, Guidi and La Bobba. This last is closed to Carloforte. So, you can reach Cape Sandalo, an area of great environmental and landscape importance, characterized by high cliffs and Mediterranean scrub and the ideal environment for the reproduction of the Eleonor’s falcon. On the top of Cape Sandalo stands the most Westernmost lighthouse of Italy. The northern cliffs open on the green waters of two unmissable inlets: Cala Fico and Cala Vinagra. Eastwards there are the wild cliffs of Tacche Bianche, the inlets of Calaliunga and La Punta, the northern extreme of the island and really fascinating because the presence of an old tuna-fishing village. Just before La Punta there is the Piana island, where there was another important tuna-fishing village, founded in 1698 and now transformed into a tourist resort.

05. Domusnovas → Nuraghe Sa Domu‘e S’Orcu

The village of Domusnovas lies in the plain of the river Cixerri, dominated by Punta San Michele (m 906). Its territory keeps lots of evidence of the old human presence. The most important Nuragic site is Nuraghe Sa Domu‘e S’Orcu, few kilometres far from the village. Built in the 17th-11th century B.C. with the use of roughly-shaped limestone blocks of medium and big size, it was inhabited at least until the 10th century B.C. The complex is made of a central tower enclosed by a trilobed bastion and surrounded by a pentalobed compound wall. The main tower is just 4.50 m high. The linteled entrance is still partially underground. On the right of the entry corridor starts the staircase that led to the upper floors but that presently is obstructed by fallen stones. The bastion includes a courtyard from which you could reach the lateral towers, that keeps some rows of stones up to 3.70 m of height. Around the complex there are the remains of the village of circular huts. During the Roman age, Domusnovas was an important village along the road Kalantis-Suitti; its territory was intensely exploited because it was rich in silver lead. The Pisans surrounded the village with walls and built a castle. The 11th-century church of Santa Barbara, many times restored, is the only evidence of the medieval village. The surroundings of the village are really interesting: the well-known grotto of San Giovanni is entirely crossed by a road that leads to the foot of Monte Marganai. Inside the state forest of Marganai-Oridda there are some important abandoned mines: Barraxiutta, Sa Duchessa, Tiny and Arenas and that of Malacaltzetta.

06. Fluminimaggiore → Temple of Antas

The village of Fluminimaggiore is situated in the valley of the river Mannu, among thick holm-oak forests. The village was founded in the Middle Ages but it was abandoned and then refounded in 1704 by the viscount Ignazio Asquer. Between the 19th and the 20th century the mining activity was the main resource. In the village you can visit the Archaeological Museum and the Palaeontological Museum. Inside the 18th-century Licheri Water Mill, they have set up an ethnographic exhibition. Along the state road S.S.126 to Iglesias there are the mines of Su Zurfu and Gutturu Pala. Near the mines of...
Candiazzu, a detour leads to the grotto of Su Mannau, with a tourist itinerary, inside of which they found some votive lamps dedicated to the goddess Tanith and to the god Taurus. Another farther deviation leads to the most important and fascinating site in the territory of Fluminimaggiore: the Punic-Roman Temple of Antas. It is a true unique monument unlike any other in Sardinia, built using blocks of local limestone. It stands on a site previously used by the Nuragic people, probably dedicated to the worship of ancestors, then it was used during the Iron Age, as documented by a series of shaft graves just close to the podium, in one of which archaeologists found a bronze Nuragic statuette featuring the Punic god Sid. During the Punic Age the temple had an important role, as witnessed by the numerous Punic ex-votos found in the area. The present structure was erected during the Roman period in two phases: the first dates back to the Augustan Age, the second to the 3rd century A.D., and when an inscription dedicated to Caracalla was put on the pediment. The temple has some steps and a podium and it is divided in pronaos, cela and adyton. The pronaos has four columns on the façade and one on each side with Attic bases and Ionic capitals. On the pediment inscription the Romans carved the words: “TEMPL (um) DIE SARDI PATRIS BAB”, a dedication to the god named “Sardus Pater” and identifiable with “Sid Babai”, the Carthaginian god Sid. The cela presents some pillars leaning against the walls, while the floor has still its white mosaic drawings. On the rear wall of the cela there are two doors that lead to the double-room adyton provided with two rectangular cisterns. The archaeologists found also the ruins of a Nuragic village and of a Roman road in the area. Northwards from Fluminimaggiore you can easily reach Capo Pecora and its wild environment of rocks shaped by the wind. Southwards, the beautiful beach of Portixeddu leads to the territory of Buggerru.

07. Giba → Nuragic complex of Meurra
Looking into the gulf of Palmas, the small village of Giba lies near the lake of Monte Pranu. There is lots of evidence of the human presence in the territory since the Nuragic age. The most important site is the complex of Nuraghe Meurra, which includes a polilobed nuraghe erected during the 12th century B.C. and the remains of a village of circular huts, some giants’ tombs and a sacred well. There are also many votive lamps dedicated to the goddess Tanith and to the god Carazius, another farther with two rectangular cisterns. The archaeologists found also a bronze Nuragic statuette featuring the Punic god Sid. During the Punic Age the temple had an important role, as witnessed by the numerous Punic ex-voto foundations in the area. The present structure was erected back to the 3rd century A.D., when an inscription dedicated to Caracalla was put on the pediment. The temple has some steps and a podium and it is divided into pronaos, cela and adyton. The pronaos has four columns on the façade and one on each side with Attic bases and Ionic capitals. On the pediment inscription the Romans carved the words: “TEMPL (um) DIE SARDI PATRIS BAB”, a dedication to the god named “Sardus Pater” and identifiable with “Sid Babai”, the Carthaginian god Sid. The cela presents some pillars leaning against the walls, while the floor has still its white mosaic drawings. On the rear wall of the cela there are two doors that lead to the double-room adyton provided with two rectangular cisterns. The archaeologists found also the ruins of a Nuragic village and of a Roman road in the area. Northwards from Fluminimaggiore you can easily reach Capo Pecora and its wild environment of rocks shaped by the wind. Southwards, the beautiful beach of Portixeddu leads to the territory of Buggerru.

Marta, whose original structures date back to the 11th century. In short time you can reach the beach of Porto Botte, where the Aragonese landed in 1323 with about one hundred ships to conquer the island. From Porto Botte towards Porto Pino stretches the third widest marsh area of Sardinia, with the ponds of Porto Botte and Baiocca, a really important habitat thanks to the presence of the flamingo, the heron, the sultan chicken and the marsh hawk.

08. Gonnesa → Nuragic complex of Seruci
At a brief distance from the homonym gulf, the village of Gonnesa was founded during the Middle Ages but was abandoned during the Aragonese domination. It was refounded in 1774 by the nobleman Gavino Asquer Amat and since the half of the 19th century the activity of the coal mining supported its development. The only evidence of the Middle Ages is the church of Sant’Andrea, built in Romanesque style in the 13th century but restored many times. The remains of the mines of Sedda Modditizis, Monte Onixeddu and Monte San Giovanni are really spectacular. Along the state road to Iglesias, a detour leads to the beaches of Plog’Mesu and of Sa Punta e S’Arena. On the right of the same road there is the wide marsh of Sa Masa, the most important marsh area of the territory. The beach at the southern edge of the long beach of Gonnesa is called Porto Paglia, it can be reached by a detour from the state road S.S.126 Portoscuso-Seruci, through a steep slope that offers a fantastic panorama on the gulf, it is a wild and fascinating area, with the high dunes of Is Arenas and the restored tuna-fishing village, that once was one of the most important of Sardinia. Not far from the detour to Porto Paglia, inside the territory of the hamlet of Nuraxi Fiusi, stands the big Nuragic complex of di Seruci, one of the most imposing Nuragic settlements of Sardinia. It was erected with the use of big trachyte blocks on the top of the hill of Seruci, an important trade area in ancient times because it was very rich in metal and mineral deposits. The complex overlooks a wide region, from Monte Sirai to the island of Sant’Antioco in the south, and the Gulf of Leone in the north. It stretches for about six hectares and its primary structures date back to the Late Bronze Age. It includes an imposing nuraghe, with its main tower surrounded by a five-tower curtain wall, a village of about one hundred huts, three giants’ tombs and a circular compound wall. The huts gather to form quarters separated by narrow streets leading to a central square. The ruins of a quarter called “Isolato A” include eleven housing buildings. At the centre of the village there is the so called “Sala del Consiglio” (Council Hall), a large hut with thick walls and a stone bench running along the...
inside wall, probably the heart of the settlement’s civil life.

Iglesias → Main monuments

The history of Iglesias, the chief town of the Iglesiente region, has always been tied to the mining industry. Although still uncontaminated in some ways: the coastline is rich in fascinating beaches and inlets, wild cliffs and grottoes, while the inner territory is dominated by the granite massif of Monte Marganai, with the state forest of the mining activity it became an essential part of the town’s economy. The Pisan rulers wrote the town statute, the so-called “Breve di Villa di Chiesa”, now kept at the Town Archive. In 1124 the town was taken by force by the Aragonese and during the Spanish domination it passed through a long period of decay until the middle of the 19th century, when the town saw a new phase of prosperity was brought about by the increase of the demand of minerals at a national level. After the Second World War the mines closed down. The visit of the town starts from Piazza Sella, where the monument to Quintino Stella stands to honour the statesman that supported the mining activity in the Sulcis-Iglesiente areas. East of the square, on the hill of Altai, are the remains of the Castle of Salvaterra (or of San Guantino). Some remains of the Pisan city walls are still visible in Via Eleonora d’Arborea, while the Aragonese crenellated walls are visible in Via Campidano. Walking along Corso Matteotti you can enter the old town centre. On Piazza del Municipio look the 19th-century Town Hall, the cathedral of Santa Chiara, built before 1288 by the earl Ugolino, and the Bishop’s building (18th century). The church of San Francesco, built in the 16th century in Gothic-Catalan style, keeps a noteworthy altarpiece called “Retablo di San Francesco”, made by Antico Mainas. Not far from the cathedral stand the church of Purissima, built in the 17th century and that keeps the church candles used during the procession of Assunta, and the church of N. S. delle Grazie, that keeps some 13th-century elements on the facade, among which a marvellous Gothic single-lancet window. You can also visit the Mineralogy Museum, hosted in a Liberty building. At the southern entry of the city there is the church of San Salvatore, one of the few cross-plan Byzantine temples of Sardinia (9th–11th century), which proves the existence of a settlement before the Villa di Chiesa. At the western edge of the town there is the sanctuary of N. S. di Valverde, erected at the end 17th century in Romanesque style, with the 16th–century monastery. The territory of Iglesias keeps some of really important mines that until the middle of last century were among the most technologically advanced in Europe and today are part of the UNESCO patrimony. In the eastern outskirts of the town stand the remains of the big mine of Monteponi, on the most important of Italy, where they extracted lead and zinc until the Seventies of last century. Among the imposing buildings in ruins stand out the Sella and the Vittorio Emanuele Wells; the 19th-century Palazzo Bellavista hosts a university Materials Science course. Northwards there are the remains of the mine of Campo Pisano and those of the mine of Genna Luas. Near the hamlet of Bindua there is the mine of San Giovanni, one of the most flourishing since the Pisan age. Among the other structures stands Laveria Idina and the jewel of the grotto of Santa Barbara, just inside the Carolina Well.

10. Masainas → Nuraghe Fais

At a short distance from the gulf of Palmas, the village of Masainas was founded during the 17th–18th century around the church of San Giovanni Battista, whose first structure probably dates back to the Middle Ages. The territory includes the gulf of Palmas, a coastal area of great environmental interest, with the beaches of Sa Salina and a system of marsh and dunes. The area was intensely inhabited since the Neolithic age. During the Bronze age they built lots of Nuragic towers, among which Nuraghe Arramini, composed of a central and a secondary towers and a wide village, and Nuraghe Fais, a polilobed complex erected during the 13th century B.C. with the use of big trachyte and basalt blocks; it presents a main tower linked at least to two
lateral ones by a bastion. The archaeologists suppose also the presence of a compound wall surrounding the entire monument.

11. Musei → Church of Sant’Ignazio di Loyola

The small village of Musei lies along the banks of the river Cixerri. The fertility of its territory attracted some Nuragic people, but there also lots of traces of the Roman and Punic presence. During the Middle Ages and until the 17th century the village was called “Villa di Prato”. The actual settlement was founded after that the family of Rossellon gave some fields to the Society of Jesus, who built the church and the monastery of Saint Ignatius of Loyola in Late-Baroque style, around which the peasants built their houses. Inside the church they keep a wooden 18th-century crucifix, a 17th-century procession cross and a 19th-century stone holy water font. After the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773, the fief was given to the Marquis of Villacidro and Palmas, who owned it until 1839.

12. Narcao → Punic temple of Terraseo

The village of Narcao is included in the Geo-Mining, which the excavations brought to light some sacred structures and a rich deposit of ex votos, with about 700 remains of small statuettes, pots, votive lamps and coins. Just before the temple there are the traces of six altars. Nearby Narcao there is the complex of the Rosas Mines, where they began extracting lead, copper and zinc in 1832; the mine stopped working in 1978. The restoration of the site has allowed to convert the structures of the mining village into an open-air Industrial Archaeological Museum, where the installations and the buildings are immersed in an important environment and gather several findings that witness the economic and historical reality of the territory.

13. Nuxis → Church of Sant’Elia

The village of Nuxis lies at the foot of Monte Nieddu, from the top of which you can admire a wide panorama towards the mountains of Capoterra to the valley of the river Mannu. From the village, a road leads inside the valley of the river Tattinu, an area inhabited since the prehistory, as attested by the presence of a Nuragic village and a Bronze-age sacred well. The road arrives to the country church of Sant’Elia di Tattinu, built during the Byzantine age between the 8th and the 9th century. The present structure is the result of a significant remodelling in Romanesque style made in the 11th century, which preserved the basic elements of the Byzantine church, like the Greek cross plan with the barrel-vaulted arms and covered with tile sloped roof, surmounted by a quadrangular lantern at the intersection of the arms and by an ogive dome recently restored. The facade is surmounted by a small belfry.

14. Perdaxius → Church of San Leonardo

The small village of Perdaxius lies in a fertile valley that was inhabited since the Neolithic, as attested by the materials found inside the sepulchral grottos in the locality of Su Moini de Perdaxius. There are lots of nuraghi in the territory, among which the most important is Nuraghe Camboni, in the western outskirts of the village. It is a complex monument with a central and three or four lateral towers linked by a curvilinear bastion. On the north side is still visible a linteled entry. East of the nuraghe there are the remains of the village of circular huts, almost completely underground, of a rectangular

15. Piscinas → Villa Salazar

The hamlet of Piscinas lies at the centre of a fertile plain, at a brief distance from the sea and of a Nuragic well. During the Late Middle Ages, a community of Franciscan fathers boosted the economy of the area. At the centre of the village stands the Romanesque church of San Giacomo, dated back to the 13th century, while along the road to Tratalias, inside a park with century-old olive trees, stands the important church of San Leonardo, built during the 17th century.
Salazar got since 1587, just when Piscinas was bought by Don Peroche Salazar. Today it hosts a cultural centre.

16. Portoscuso → Spanish tower
The village of Portoscuso was founded in the 17th century near a Spanish tower by Sardinian, Sicilian and ponzesi tuna and coral fishers and after the construction of the tuna fishing village of Su Pranu, one of the oldest tuna fishing nets of Sardinia and one of the most important of Italy since its activity dates back to 1594. The Spanish tower stands on a hill between the inlet of Ghinghetta and the cliff of Porto Paleddu, in a strategic position to control the maritime road between Calasetta and Carbonara. Erected between the 16th and the 17th century, it is still in good conditions and it was one of the Sardinian “strong towers”, equipped for a heavy defence. It presents a truncated cone shape and a single floor enlightened by eight windows. Some cantilever corbels crown the terrace. The interior is vaulted with a dome characterized by some ribs. Near the tower and the tuna fishing village there is the church of S.M. d’Itria, erected in 1665 by the same owner of the tuna fishing activity. The tuna fishing is still today one of the main economical resources of the village together with tourism and the industrial activity of Portovesme. The most beautiful beaches are those of Porto Paleddu (Porto Paglietto) and La Ghinghetta, the wild cliff of Capo Altano is fascinating too; from there you can admire a wonderful panorama towards the gulf of Gonnonsa.

17. San Giovanni Suergiu → Necropolis of Is Loccis Santus
The village of San Giovanni Suergiu was founded joining several isolated hamlets (jurradorixius) among which San Giovanni, Palmas, Matzaccara and Is Urigus. Its territory includes the Neolithic necropolis of Is Loccis Santus, one of the most important archaeological sites of the Sulcis region and dated back to the Late Neolithic (3000 B.C.). It presents 13 tombs where the archaeologists found some materials attributed to the “Bell beaker culture”, today kept at the “Villa Sulcis” Museum of Carbonia. Some tombs are characterized by accurate architectonic details.

In the hill behind the necropolis there are the remains of a single-tower nuraghe. Near the village of San Giovanni Suergiu, in the area where the medieval village of Palmas di Sulci stood, you can visit the Romanesque church of Santa Maria di Palmas, built in the 11th century.

18. Sant’Anna Arresi → Nuraghe Arresi
The village of Sant’Anna Arresi was founded during the 18th century at the foot of Nuraghe Arresi. This Nuragic monument was erected in the Middle Bronze age (17th-16th century B.C.) and presents a central tower linked to another one by a bastion that contains an inner courtyard. The ogive vault has collapsed. The eastern entry is surmounted by a massive granite lintel; it leads to a corridor and then to the courtyard. The nuraghe stands just between two churches, the old and the new one and both dedicated to Sant’Anna. In the last years the village has rapidly developed thanks to the sea tourism, attracted by the beauty of the coastline, which includes the ponds of Maestrale and that of Is Brebeis, a really important marsh area thanks to the presence of the flamingo and shag, and then the sea resort of Porto Pino, with a wide pine wood, a long sandy beach, amongst the most beautiful of Sardinia and protected by spectacular dunes more than 30 m high. Northwards, beyond the promontory of Punta Mena, reachable through a dirty road, there are the dunes and the fantastic beach of Porto Pineddu.

19. Santadi, Fortress of Pani Loriga
Santadi is an agricultural village situated in the plain of the river Mannu, which divided the settlement in two quarters: Santadi Basci, recently built, and Santadi e Susu, built during the Middle Ages when the village was called Sant’Ada de Sulcis or Sant’Agata. Here stands the 15th-century church of San Nicolo. At the centre of the village there are the Museum “Sa Domu Antiga”, which gathers some evidence of the agro-pastoral culture, and the Archaeological Museum, which keeps lots of findings from the Neolithic to the Roman age. West of the village, on the top of a hill, there are the remains of the Phoenician-Punic fortress of
Pani Loriga (7th–3rd century B.C.), with a compound wall containing the acropolis, a housing quarter and a sanctuary, maybe the tophet, and the necropolis with Phoenician and Punic tombs. Near Monte Meana there are the noteworthy grottoes of Is Zuddas and that of Su Benatzu. Along the road to Capoterra, the former seat of the Mediterranean area. Santadi is immersed in the mining village of Pantaleo, one of the most beautiful wooded areas of the Mediterranean area. Santadi is also the seat of the winegrowers’ association that produces some of the most vintage wines of the island, like the Carignano of Sulcis, a DOC wine that probably came from Spain but that in the sandy and clayey valleys of Low Sulcis offers the maximum thanks to its winds blowing saltiness and today restored for tourist purposes, stands the majestic cathedral of S.M. di Monserrato. This is one of the most intact and important monuments of the Pisan-Romanesque architecture in Sardinia. It was erected between 1213 and 1282 following the will of the Gherardesca family and it was the cathedral of the diocese of Sulcis until the bishop’s seat was moved to Iglesias in 1903. It presents a three-nave plan. The facade and the side views are decorated with lozenges in Pisan style and hanging arches with floral decorations. The side views and the apse are divided in units by pilasters and contain rows of hanging arches. The apse presents splayed arched windows with one light and a beautiful single-lancet window of Gothic taste. The portal on the north view has a pointed arch and an architrave with a two-lion relief. At the interior, simple but fascinating, the nave is separated by the aisles by round-arched arcades resting on octagonal columns. The collection of works of art include a beautiful triptych (1596) representing the enthroned Virgin, the Annunciation, the Crucifixion and a row of Saints.

21. Villamassargia → Church of S.M. della Neve
The peasant village of Villamassargia, situated on the right bank of the river Cixerri, is known for the textile production, in particular of traditional carpets. During the Middle Ages it was protected by walls and today keeps a quiet Spanish atmosphere. You can visit the beautiful church of N.S. del Pilar, erected in Late Romanesque style in 1307 by the earl Bonifacio dei Donoratico, and the church of S.M. della Neve, built in Romanesque style by the monks of Victor of Marseille in the 13th century. The three-nave plan and the Cistercian columns are the only remaining parts of the original structure. The Gothic-Neolithic necropolis of Montessu. It is the biggest Neolithic necropolis in Sardinia carved in a fascinating rocky amphitheatre. It contains 35 tombs of various typologies, with 12 sanctuary tombs dating back to the 3rd millennium B.C. and ascribable to the “Ozieri” Culture. The tombs are placed in four groups: among the eastern group is the wonderful “Tomba delle Spirali” (Tomb of the Spirals) and the remarkable “Grutta de is Proccus” (Grotto of the Pigs); the northern group, called “Is Tuttoneddus”, keeps a series of mono-cellular tombs; on the western side are the tombs called “Sa Cresiedda” (Little Church), with a wide pavilion and two cylindrical columns carved out from rock, and “Tomba delle Corna” (Tomb of the Horns), with marvellous bull-horn shaped carvings.
LIST OF GUIDES

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- Basilica of San Saturnino | Cagliari
- Archaeological area of Sant’Eulalia | Cagliari

SULCIS-IGLESIENTE TERRITORY
- Necropolis of Is Pirixeddus | S. Antioco
- Archaeological area of Monte Sirai | Carbonia

MEDIO CAMPIDANO TERRITORY
- Nuragic village of Su Nuraxi | Barumini
- Castle of Monreale | Sardara

ORISTANESI TERRITORY
- Archaeological area of Tharros | Cabras
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OGLIASTRA TERRITORY
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GALLURARA TERRITORY
- Megalithic Circles of Li Muri | Arzachena
- Baldu’s Palace | Luogosanto