



Archaeological area of Tharros

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ The thermal baths nr. 1

This thermal baths building, called thus as it was the first to be investigated in the Tharros area, stood overlooking the Gulf of Oristano coastline, on the north-east edge of the public area of the city (figs. 1-2).

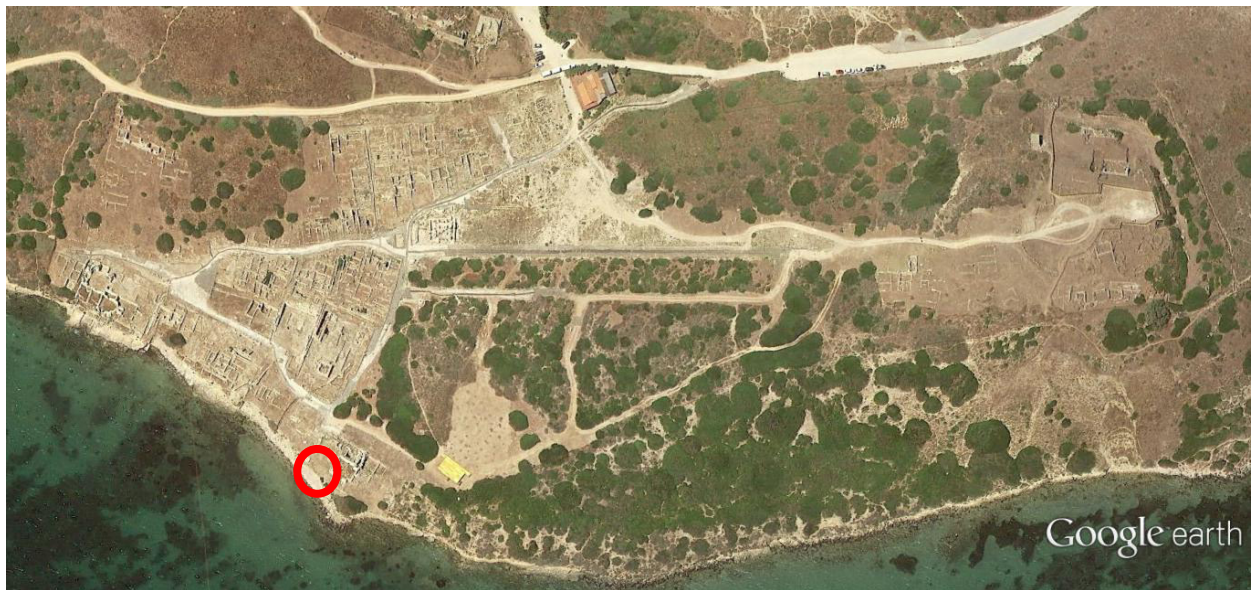


Fig. 1 - Location of the Thermal baths nr. 1 (from Google Earth. Reprocessed by C. Tronchetti)



Fig. 2 - Thermal baths nr. 1 (photo by Unicity S.p.A.)

Unfortunately erosion by the sea and several renovations, changes and plundering that the building underwent over the centuries on the other has made it rather difficult to interpret, especially due to the largely missing wall elevations (fig. 3).

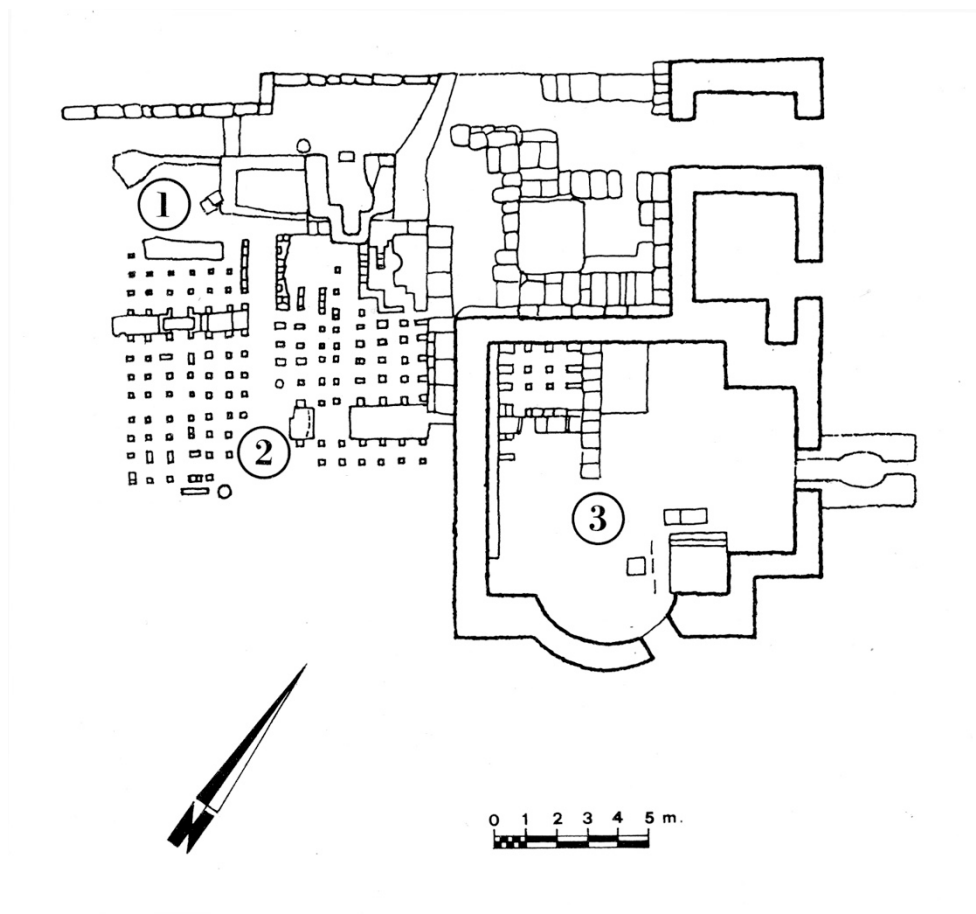


Fig. 3 - Map of the Thermal baths nr. 1: 1) changing room; 2) *calidarium*; 3) *calidarium*
(from ZUCCA 1984, p. 88)

An *apodyterium* (1) was accessed from the road, which, during the dig, still contained fragments of flooring; the *frigidarium* has been completely lost, but it was likely placed in the northern part of the building, where the remains of the large cisterns remain, that probably feed the tubs for cold baths.

To the east of the changing room, there were two *calidaria* (2 and 3) of which the *suspensurae* in brick or elements reused and sandstone blocks are still preserved. Two square bricks on the bottom of the floor of the first *calidarium* carried the stamp *IULIANI ET*

QUAD(rati), the names of the local manufacturers whose products were also found in the area inland of Tharros.

The heated room shown with the number 3 on the map shows an apse on the eastern side that probably contained a *labrum* for cooling down; on the northern side there is still a *praefurnium*.

The thermal baths are thought to have been built in the 2nd century A.D. (figs. 4-8).



Fig. 4 - Thermal baths nr. 1 from the south (photo by Unicity S.p.A.)



Fig. 5 - Detail of the Large cisterns for Thermal baths nr. 1 (photo by Unicity S.p.A.).



Fig. 6 - The northern *calidarium* transformed into a cemetery (photo by Unicity S.p.A.)



Fig. 7 - The entrance to the northern *calidarium* opened in the Vandal era (photo by Unicity S.p.A.)



Fig. 8 - Remains of a *praefurnium* (photo by Unicity S.p.A.)

The building was dismantled in a late period and re-adapted for other uses. Room 3 and adjacent ones were partly transformed into a cemetery and partly perhaps connected to a PaleoChristian place of worship that was built immediately to the north. The dates taken from the few items in graves indicate the Vandal and Byzantine Ages.

■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Carlo Tronchetti

■ Bibliography

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