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Roman baths of Forum Traiani

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ The *natatio*

The *natatio*, which is the core of baths I (fig. 1), is a large pool measuring 11.20 m (East-West) x 6.10 (North-South) x 1.60 in depth (fig. 2).

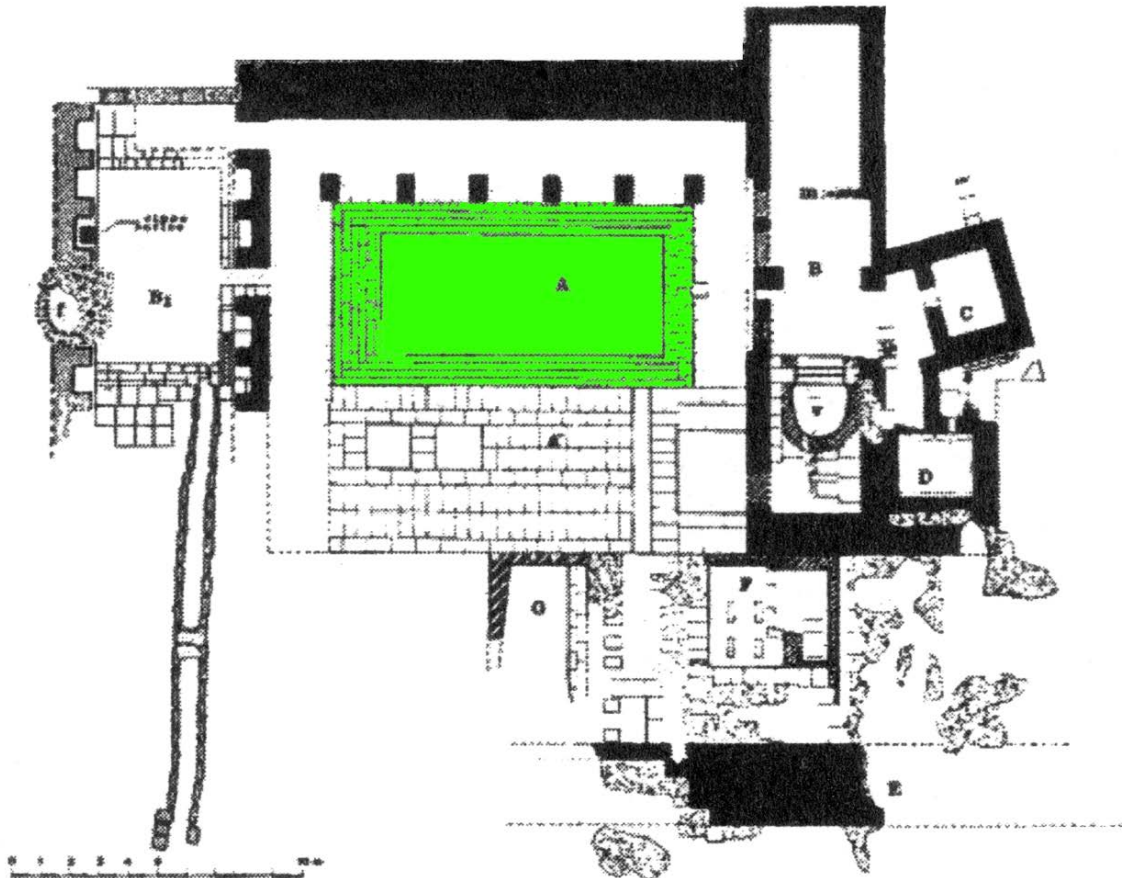


Fig. 1 - Map of baths I. In green the *natatio* (from Bacco-Serra 1998; re-worked by C. Tronchetti).



Fig. 2 - The *natatio* seen from the East (photo by Unicity S.p.A.).

The pool is edged by four steps on the north, west and south sides, while the eastern one has five. The mixed hot and cold water flowed in from the higher part on the western side; it streamed from a mouth shaped like an animal protome, now no longer there (fig. 3).

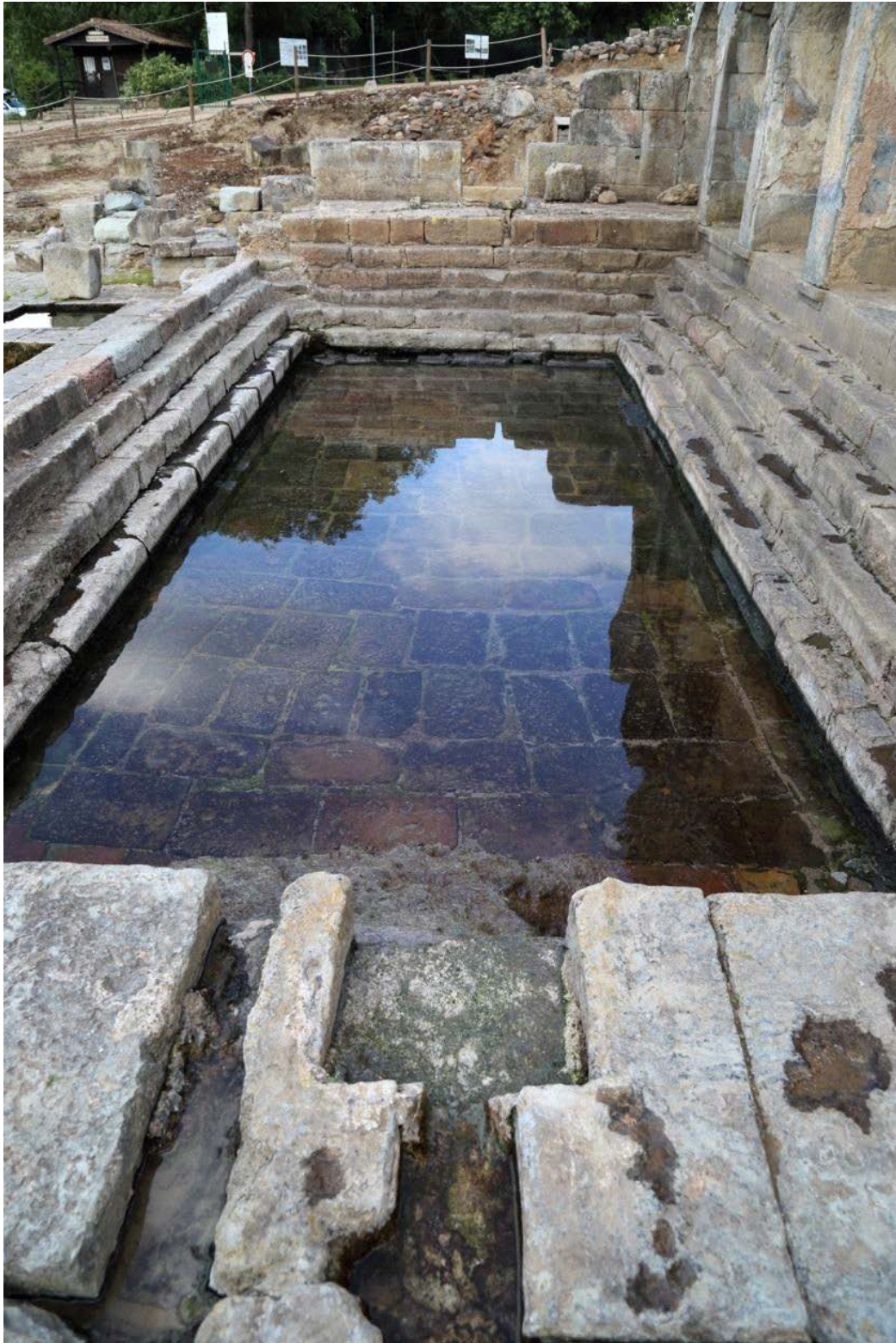


Fig. 3 - View of the *natatio* with the water supply point (photo by Unicity S.p.A.).

On the western side you had some of the service areas and the tanks where the water was mixed (fig. 4)

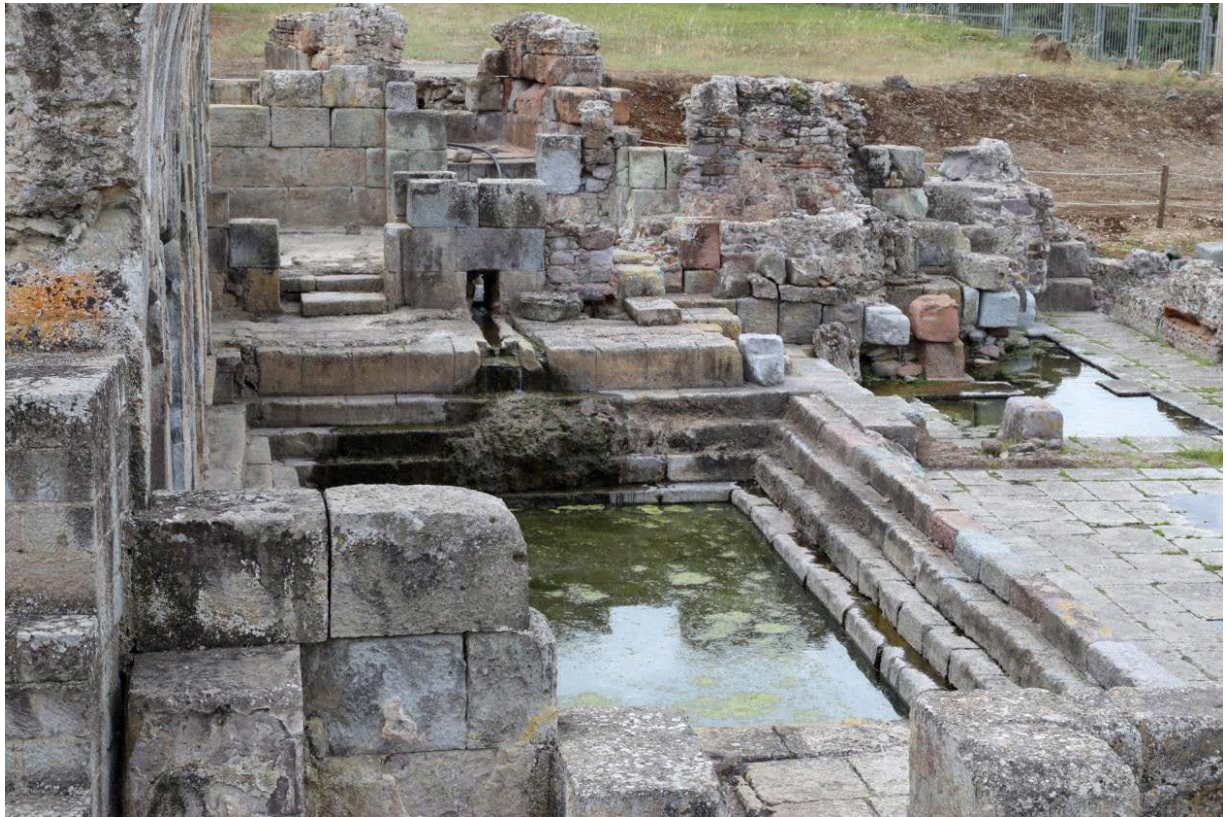


Fig. 4 - The *natatio* with its service areas in the background (photo by Unicity S.p.A.).

Like the portico, the pool was covered by a barrel vault, but we cannot say with any certainty whether it had skylights or not. However, this hypothesis is concretely acceptable through the similarity of the remaining structure with other better preserved buildings, even if found in different geographical areas.

The *natatio* was maintained over time as can be seen from the fragments of inscriptions used at a later date to recompose the damaged steps (fig. 5).



Fig. 5 - Inscriptions reused as steps in the *natatio* in the Late-Antiquity period (photo by Unicity S.p.A.).

■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Carlo Tronchetti

■ Bibliography

G. BACCO, P. B. SERRA, *Forum Traiani: il contesto termale e l'indagine di scavo*, in *L'Africa Romana XII*, Sassari 1998, pp. 1222-1224.



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