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REPUBBLICA ITALIANA



REGIONE AUTONOMA DE SARDIGNA
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Roman baths of Forum Traiani

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ The cults of *sanatio*

In Fordongianus, worship of nymphs, generally linked to water, also takes on a health meaning, obviously thanks to the curative properties of the thermal spring. The presence of inscriptions dedicated to the Nymphs and Asclepius, god of health, supports this. It enables us to add Fordongianus to the list of Sardinian locations linked to the cults of *sanatio*, healthiness, existing from the late-Punic and Republican period, between the III and II century B.C.. At times connected to Baths, like in Mitza Salamu di Dolianova; at others they are in an objective curative context and are just simple places of worship normally dedicated to the god Bes/Asclepius, like at Bithia (fig. 1) and Nora (fig. 2).



Fig. 1 - Statue of Bes from Bithia, linked to a *sanatio* cult. (from Barreca 1986, p 137)



Fig. 2 - Small devotee statue from Nora, sanctuary of Asclepius. The sick person is portrayed sleeping, wrapped in the coils of a serpent, sacred animal of the god (photo Archaeological Superintendence Cagliari).

The offerings are often simple and at times rough, small, terracotta statues, with the hands indicating the part of the body for which healing is being invoked (figs. 3-4).



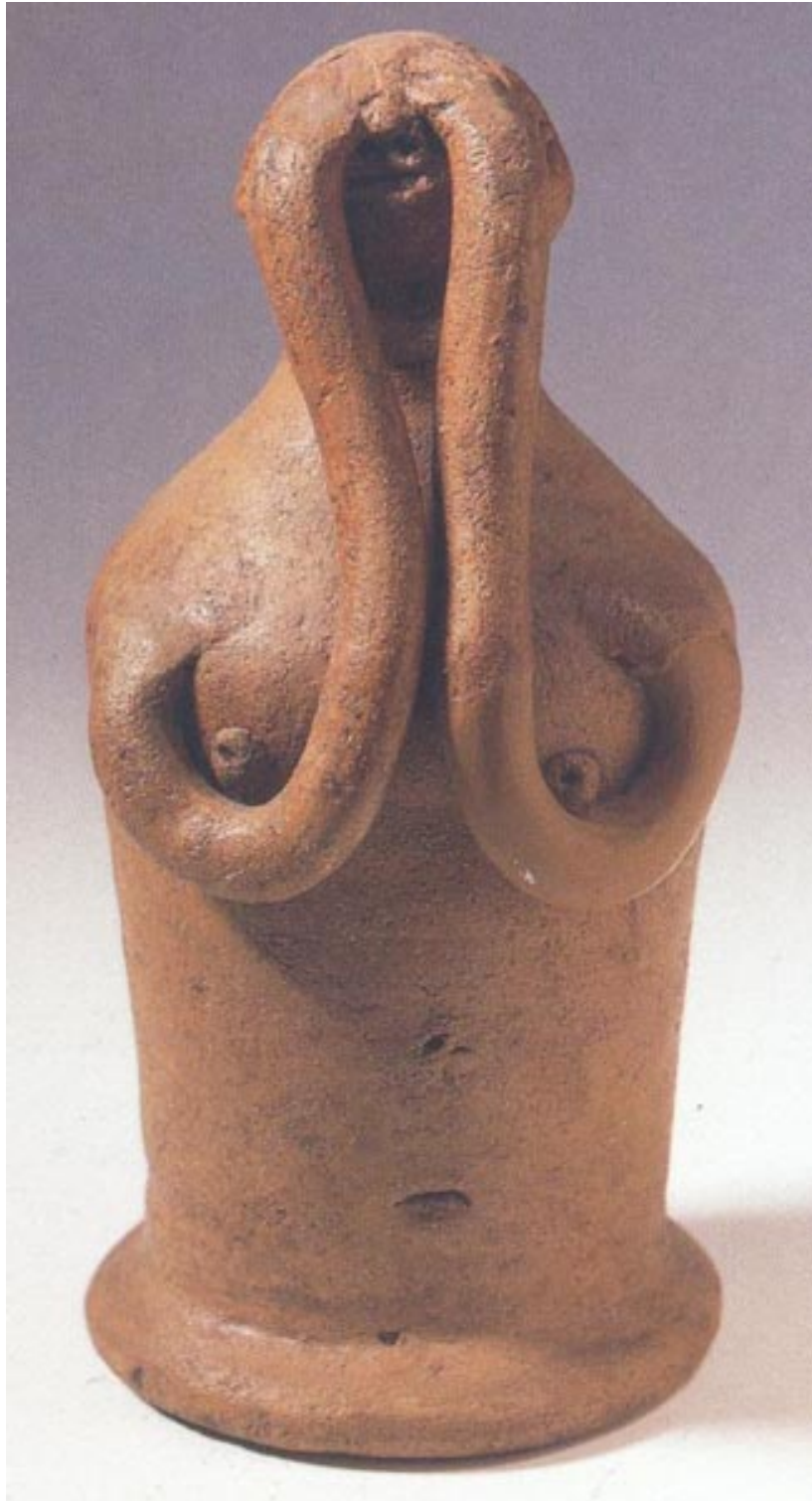


Fig. 3 - Small devotee statue offering from Bithia which indicates the body part the healing is being invoked for (from Bisi 1988, p. 341).

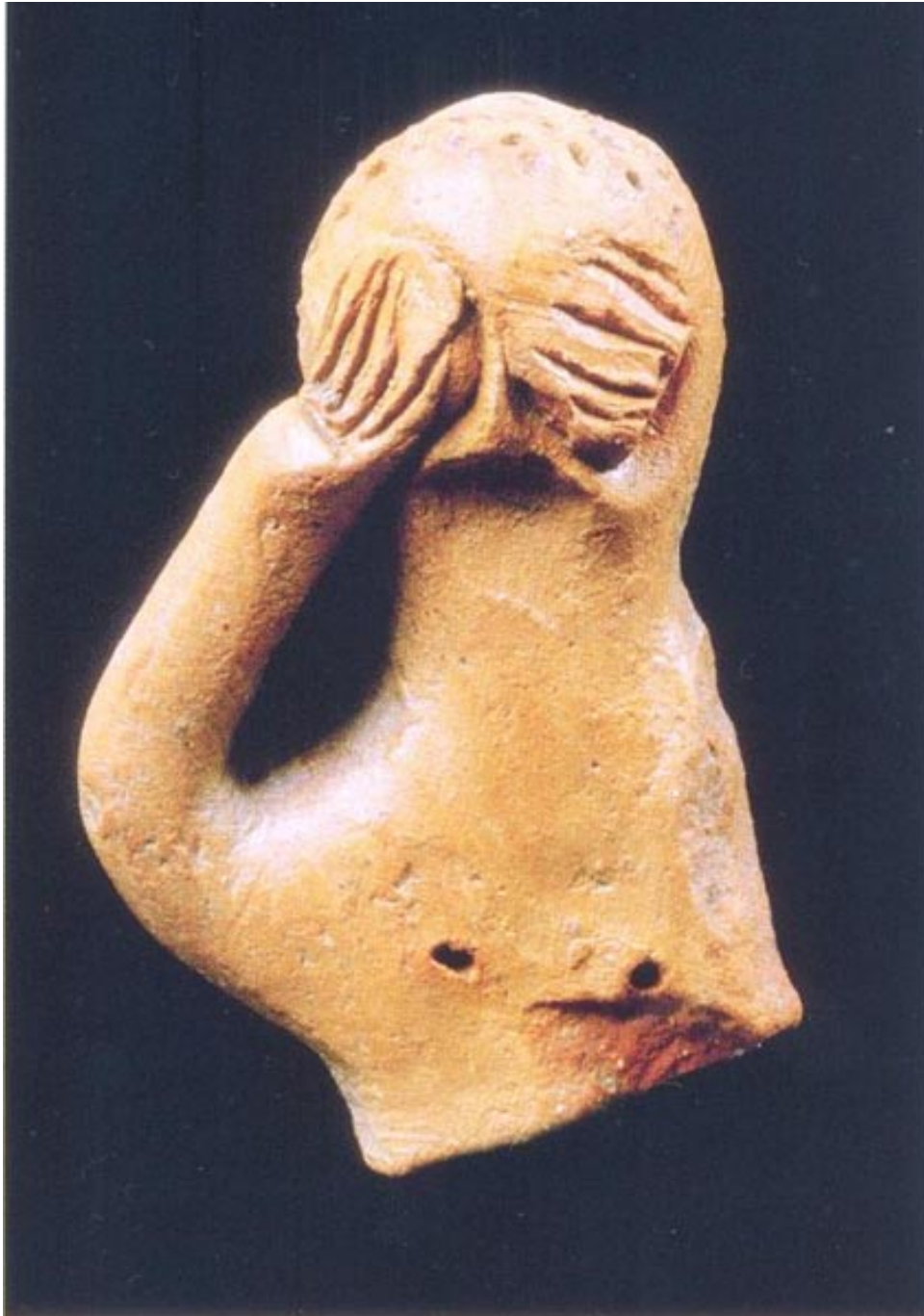


Fig. 4 - Small devotee statue offering from *Neapolis* (Santa Maria di Nabui-OR) indicating the body part healing is being invoked for (from Campus 1997, p. 175)



■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Carlo Tronchetti

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La Sardegna cresce con l'Europa



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