



Necropolis of Is Pirixeddus

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ Savoy stronghold of Su Pisu

The Savoy stronghold of Su Pisu is located in the highest place of the village of Sant' Antioco, on the so-called Mont'e Cresia, and is located in a strategic point, evidenced by the succession of buildings over the centuries. The older structure has a Nuragic multi-lobed tower, probably built in the 15th century B.C., with a central tower and at least two additional side towers. on the slope leading down to the necropolis of *Is Pirixeddus*, next to the remains of the Nuraghe where traces of the Nuragic village were found. During recent digs, traces of occupation dating back to the 8th century B.C. They can therefore be placed in time immediately after the arrival of the first Phoenician-Punic navigators (fig. 1),



Fig. 1 - Su Pisu stronghold. Detail of the trachyte blocks remaining from the nuraghe (photo by Unicity S.p.A.).

The nuraghe was razed to the ground at the end of the 6th century B.C., after the conquest of Sardinia by Carthage and a polygonal tower was built on the ruins, that probably acted

as a connection for the recently built walls: it is in this place that there was probably the huge northern urban gate, built, like the rest of the walls, in ashlar blocks of red trachyte and on which sides the statues of the two lions were presumably placed, which then decorated the amphitheatre podium, in the age of the Roman Empire (fig. 2).



Fig. 2 - Lions of Sulky at the time of their discovery
(from <http://www.archeotur.it/santantioco/immagini/category/3-museo-archeologico.html>)

With the Roman conquest in 238 B.C., the Carthaginian fortifications were dismantled and reused for building other structures, including a temple.

Many centuries went by before another defensive structure was built on the hill, and this happened only when the island of Sant'Antioco, after a long period of neglect due to the continuous raids of the Saracens which had already started during the VIII century, began to be repopulated during the eighteenth century.

The fortress was designed and planned in 1812 by the Captain of the Royal Artillery Corps Ambrogio Capson and remained in use until 1815, when it suffered a last attack by pirates from Bey in Tunisia.

This was a small building (270 m²) erected, as we can see, on a previous Punic element that now helps to outline the map.

The fortress is of an irregular shape that is typical of this type of defence and inside there is a number of small rooms used by the Captain, the artillery and the troops. At the centre of the courtyard, there is a small building that could have been the arms store. The courtyard is almost entirely paved with stone blocks of basalt.



Fig. 3- Panorama of the Savoy fortress courtyard with the armoury and its vaulted roof (photo by Unicity S.p.A.).



Fig. 4 - Front view of the powder magazine of the Savoy stronghold
(from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/vincenzovacca8369882604/inalbum-72157632494099862>).

A sentry box with several loopholes protected the entrance where a drawbridge was probably placed in the original plan. A yard in the south-east corner, being the highest point, acted as the watchtower, with steps that lead to the floor below, via walkways on several levels along the perimeter walls. The courtyard has an arched opening for the cannon which faces east, towards the sea, and other cannons are located along the perimeter of the fortress (figs. 5-6) on which the embrasures for the gunners opened, narrowed to-wards the outside. Under the pavement in front of the entrance hall there is a vaulted cistern.



Fig. 5 - The cannon in the yard of the Savoy fortress, aimed from its position (photo by Unicity S.p.A.).



Fig. 6 - A group of embrasures for cannons placed along the perimeter of the fortress (photo by Unicity S.p.A.).

■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Cinzia Olianas

■ Bibliographic abbreviations

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