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REGIONE AUTÒNOMA DE SARDIGNA
REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA

Castle of Monreale

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ Bone flute (XIV-XV century)

During the archaeological investigations carried out in 1992 in the castle of Monreale, a dump relating to the various life stages of the keep was identified, which returned a significant amount of pottery, glazed and metal artefacts.

Among these materials, there is one of particular interest: a flute made of bone (incomplete), which could indicate a royal environment in the castle because of the likely presence of musicians (fig. 1).



Fig. 1 - Fragment of bone flute from the castle of Monreale (photo by R.A.S.).

The flute is a musical instrument with extremely ancient roots, so much so that it is possible to date its invention to the Palaeolithic Age. The first rudimentary examples were made from animal bones, horns or ivory, reeds or bamboo.

All the ancient populations knew and used wind instruments similar or related to today's flute.

Various types were perfected during different historical periods. In the Medieval Age, the flute was made of a single piece (from bone, cane, wood or horn) which was played through the introduction of a linear air flow.



A meaningful comparison for the finding in Monreale can be made with the flute made of bone recovered in 2012 during the archaeological excavation led by Marco Milanese in the castle of Serravalle di Bosa. Again the discovery took place in a landfill, where materials dating between 1320 and 1330 were found and it represents a sign of the presence of an aristocratic atmosphere within the walls of the manor (figs. 2-3-4).

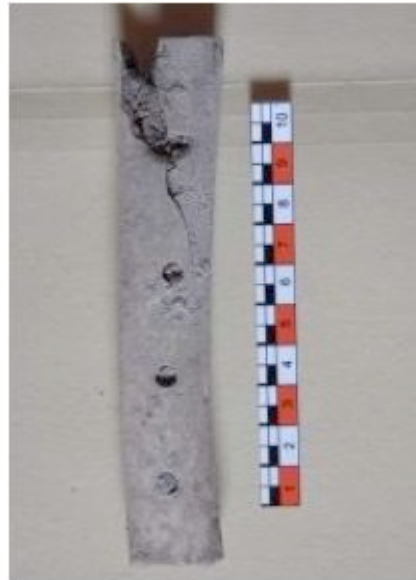


Fig. 2 - Bone flute from the excavations in the castle of Serravalle, Bosa (from <http://lanuovasardegna.gelocal.it/oristano/cronaca/2012/08/18/news/scavi-al-castello-c-e-un-flauto-osseo-1.5561203>)



Fig. 3 - Miniature with viola and flute, XIV century (from <http://www.centrostudiadolfoebroegg.it/archives/author/goffredo/page/4>).



Fig. 4 - Music and dance, drawing from the *Tacuinus sanitatis casanatensis*, XIV century
(http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musica_medievale#mediaviewer/File:40-svaggi,suono_e_ballo,Taccuino_Sanitatis,_Casanatense_4182.jpg).

■ Credits

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