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REGIONE AUTÒNOMA DE SARDIGNA
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Castle of Monreale

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology

The territory of Sardara in Roman Times

During Roman times the territory of Sardara experienced a widespread human presence, as is evidenced by the Nuraghic sites of Nuraghe Arrigau, Canale Linu, Nuraghe Axiurridu, Nuraghe Perra, Nuraghe Arrubiu and Santa Caterina which experienced a continuity of life even in later periods. Evidence of the various life stages of the Roman period have also been found in other locations such as Barumeli, Donigala, Nuraghe Jana and Nuratteddu. Archaeological researches carried out at the quatrefoil Nuraghe of Ortu Comidu (fig. 1), located a few kilometres from Sardara, have revealed that the monument was also used during Roman times[1].

However, the most important town in this period was that of Santa Maria de is Acquas, where the ancient *thermae* stood, known as *Aquae Neapolitanae or Aquae calidae Neapolitanae*.[2] Of the big thermal complex, a square pool (9.5 metres wide), interpreted as a *natatio* and a smaller structure, consisting of a large rectangular room with a barrel vault, which held two rectangular pools and two swimming pools, are still visible. Of the big thermal complex, a square pool (9.5 metres wide), interpreted as a *natatio* and a smaller structure, consisting of a large rectangular room with a barrel vault, which held two rectangular pools and two swimming pools, are still visible (fig.1)[3].

[1] USAI 2003, pages 41-44.

[2] The *Itinerario Antonino* by Ptolemy placed them a short distance away from the road a *Turre Karales*, between *Othoca* and *Karales*.

[3] ZUCCA 1987, pages 138-139.

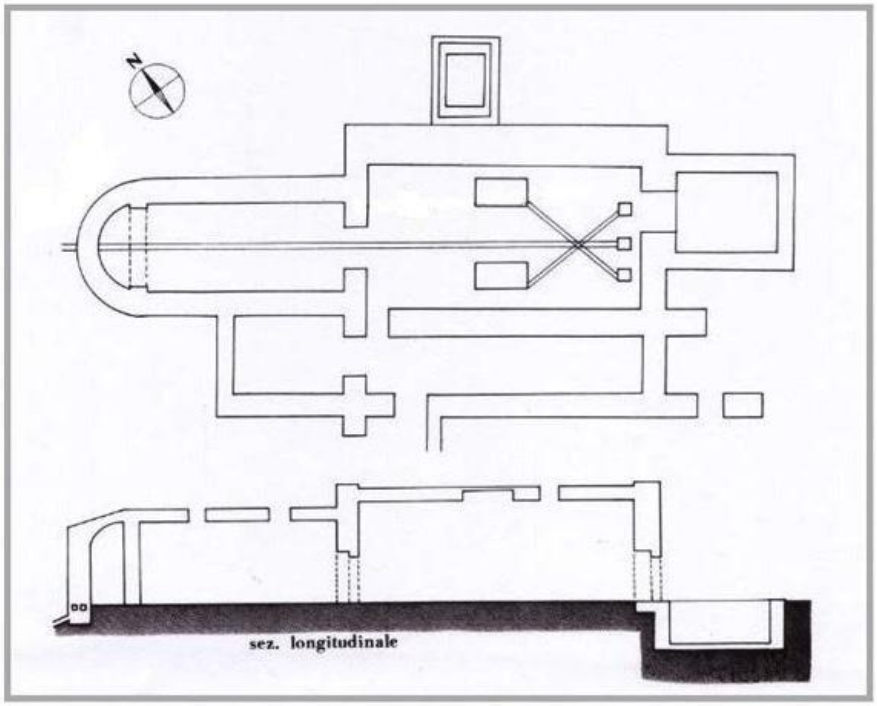

Fig. 1 **-** Plan of the Roman baths in S. Maria de is Acquas (from ZUCCA 1987, Tav. 27, p. 258).

Numerous grave goods have been recovered from the necropolis discovered in the territory of Sardara, many of which are currently on display in the Civic Archaeological Museum of Sardara (fig. 2).

The necropolis of *Masoni Oneddu* consisted of pit graves covered with slabs of limestone, sometimes reinforced by pieces of slabs placed vertically. The material found during the archaeological research carried out in 1909 by Antonio Taramelli, in particular that recovered with the excavation of three tombs, allows dating the necropolis to the first imperial age, from the Augustan period.[4]

[4] TARAMELLI 1909, pages 332-335 ; USAI 2003, p. 44.

Fig. 2 **-** Roman dated artefacts from the territory of Sardara:
a) lamp; b) small jug; c) Bone hairpin (photos the property of R.A.S.).

The necropolis of *Terr'e Cresia* was discovered in 1986 and explored several times until 1999. The approximately one hundred identified graves belong to the pit type and are covered by heavy stone slabs. Both burial and cremation graves have been found which may be dated, thanks to the information provided by the grave goods, to a time span ranging between the first century BC and 3rd century A.D. (fig. 3)[5].

[5] ARRU 2003, pages 45-52.

Fig. 3 **-** Reconstruction of one of the tombs in the necropolis of *Terr'e Cresia* (Photo by the Civic Archaeological Museum of Sardara).

Credits

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La Sardegna cresce con l'Europa

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