

Nuraghic village of Su Nuraxi

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ The Zapata family and their residence: Palazzo Zapata

The presence of the noble Zapata family, of Aragonese origin, is proven in Sardinia from 1216 up to the 20th century. In an anonymous manuscript from the second half of the eighteenth century, it can be read that *"the Zapata family was one of the most illustrious and ennobled in Aragon and Valenza. Its members were all knights and great electors... They came to Sardinia when it was conquered, to follow the king of Aragon."* One branch of the family came to Sardinia to follow the Infante Alfonso in 1323, helping him to defeat the Pisa rulers and create the "Kingdom of Sardinia and Corsica". Members of the family resided at the Castle of Cagliari, where they held important offices, took part in parliaments in the Military Section and were granted the office of *Alcade* of the Castle of, a role that could be inherited. Azore Zapata purchased the peerage of Las Plassas, comprising the villages of Las Plassas, Barumini and Villanovafranca in 1541. This was the base of the Zapata family's power, lords for almost half a millennium of this corner of Marmilla (fig. 1). On 4th January 1564 the above-mentioned Azore was invested as the feudal lord, a title that remained with the Zapata family until 1839 when the territory was returned to the lands of the kingdom.



Fig. 1 - Coat of arms of the noble Aragonese family the Zapatas, sculpted inside the tympanum of the door: the shield with the three shoes (from <http://www.fondazionebarumini.it/it/gallery/?album=polo-museale-casa-zapata#>).

His niece Eleonora Zapata started the work on the noble palace (16th-17th) on the Western edge of the villa of Barumini, in the area currently known as Guventu, which was completed by their son and heir, Francesco.

Casa Zapata also includes the feudal home (figs. 2, 3), with the garden in front of it, and the connected buildings (warehouses, stalls, farmer's house). This wonderful palace, with its L-shaped layout, lived in until the early eighties by Countess Concetta Zapata, is an example of Hispanic civil architecture, from an architectural point of view that is inspired by Renaissance style in a Sardinian context.



Fig. 2 - Overview of Casa Zapata

(from <http://www.comune.barumini.vs.it/export/sites/barumini/Amministrazione/immagini/102.jpg>).



Fig. 3 - Casa Zapata seen from Su Nuraxi

(from <http://www.comune.barumini.vs.it/export/sites/barumini/Amministrazione/immagini/102.jpg>).

At the end of the 80s, the Municipality of Barumini purchased the building to turn it into a museum (fig. 4), opened in July 2006, and currently run by the Fondazione Barumini Sistema Cultura.

In 1990, during work on the structure of the main body of the feudal residence, and after removing the original floors, some walls were found that belonged to the trefoiled Nuraghe Su Nuraxi'e Cresia (13th-10th centuries B.C.), that had been used as foundations for the supporting walls of the noble palace.



Fig. 4 - Casa Zapata Museum

(<http://www.fondazionebarumini.it/it/gallery/?album=polo-museale-casa-zapata#>)

■ Credits

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