

Basilica of San Saturnino

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ The well

A square well, now no longer visible, was found in front of the basilica of San Saturnino (fig. 1) in Piazza San Cosimo, during the digs carried out in 1990 by Letizia Pani Ermini. Its opening was located on the north-eastern side and was accessible via a staircase; it was closed by walls at the bottom, set on the rock and made of reused architectural materials and at the top by various stone materials bonded with mortar (figs. 2-3). The materials and stratigraphic data allow us to date it to the Roman imperial age, coinciding with the funerary use of the area.

It was restructured during the VI century by closing the entrance wall and building a circular wall all around which opened to the north-east, with an access corridor bordered by a structure on the south side. It was certainly used for the necropolis and the basilica under construction, and has been suggested that it was a holy well, probably linked to the ancient worship of water in Sardinia and the God Taurus. Moreover, a bovine skull was found in the foundations of the circular wall, together with a big bone, which some scholars suggest could be a deconsecrating ceremony, certainly of pagan origin but most likely already Christianised: it would seem therefore to be the transformation of a sacred well from pagan to Christian.

The area around the well was once again restored during the Middle Ages, with the partial demolition of the circular wall and the creation of square masonry pillars clad with bricks. In the modern age, the well is connected to a system of tanks by means of a conduit.





Fig. 1 - Piazza Sa Cosimo: the well was found where the flowerbed is now (photo by Unicity S.p.A.).

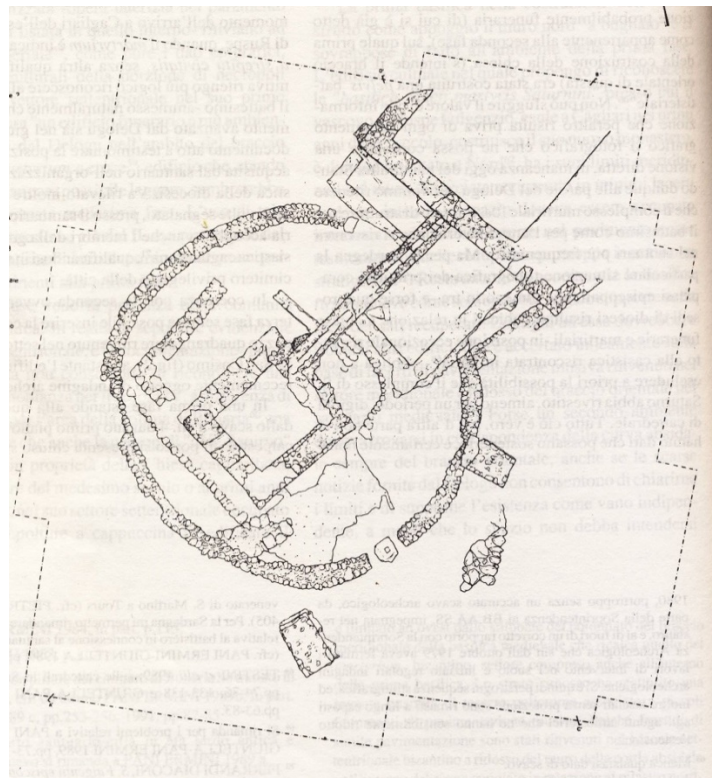


Fig. 2 - Piazza Sa Cosimo: floor plan of the well (from Pani Ermini, Spanu 1992, p. 26, fig. 16).

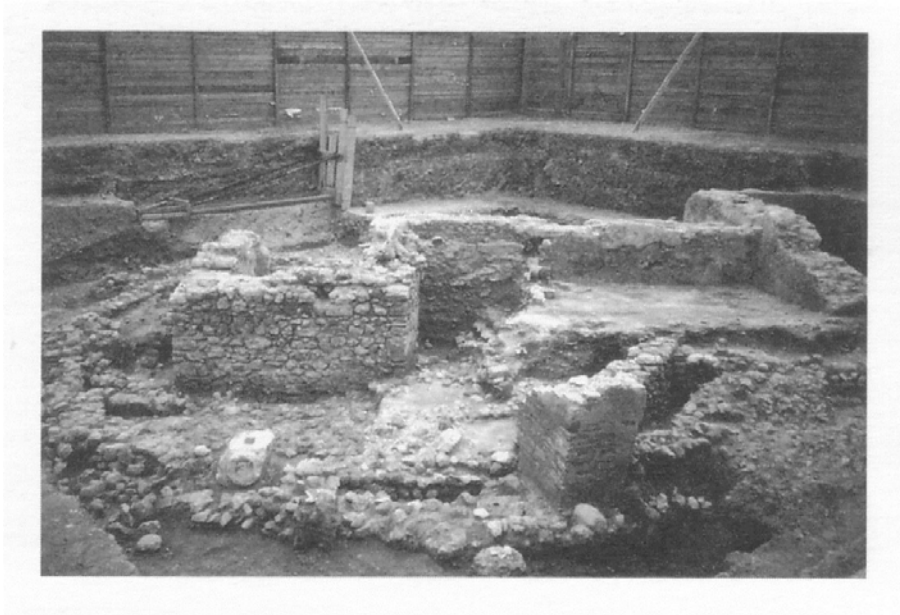


Fig. 3 - Piazza Sa Cosimo: the well during the excavations (from Pani Ermini, Spanu 1992, p. 31, fig. 20).



■ Credits

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■ Bibliography

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