Cult Places and Votive Objects as Markers of Commercial and Cultural Relations in Late Punic and Roman Sardinia

Romina Carboni

As confirmed by the case of Punic-Roman Sardinia, cultural overlaps and interactions often make the interpretation of acculturation dynamics complex. The island, in fact, during the transition from the Punic to the Roman period, and even after the final conquest of the island by Rome, show some peculiarities that were due to the presence of different traditions; the presence of the Punic and the Roman element, as well as of a substratum that shows cultural continuity with the Nuragic period, involves the alternation and coexistence, on the one hand, of forms of innovation and on the other of events linked to strong conservative phenomena. It follows that in this province of the Empire, as well as in other areas under the control of Rome, the religion, on which this written contribution will focus, expressed itself through forms of innovation and persistence, which had an essential ideological value. What emerges is a scenario in which the influences of North Africa are evident and fundamental, as well as Roman-Italic influences, which led to the creation of a peculiar model of integration, rather than of contrast. We find, in fact, many examples that show a clear intention of foreign populations to conform to local traditions, while creating something original, the result of the syncretic relationship between different cultures and the importation of "external" traditions and beliefs. This combination of cultural and cultic traditions emerges both from the analysis of sacred facilities and from that of votive deposits.

This is confirmed, first of all, by a peculiar architectural model in Sardinia: Nuragic facilities reused as sanctuaries, in the Punic period and then also in the Roman period, which show a continuity of worship, with an evident syncretism, over the centuries.[1] On the island there are many examples of nuraghes reused for cultural purposes, as evidenced by the presence of votive deposits inside them: in some cases a continuity of use from the Nuragic period up to the Roman period was identified,[2] while in other cases the reuse of Nuragic facilities for cults began in the Punic period and continues up to the late Imperial period.[3] A significant example in this regard is offered by the Lugherras Nuraghe (fig. 1).[4] This facility was used at least until the early Iron Age,[5] and was then abandoned and turned, from the late Punic period and probably already starting from the 4th century BC and until the late Imperial period, into an outdoor rock sanctuary dedicated to the worship of a goddess of harvest.[6] The central tower of the nuraghe had a double overlapping room, with a *sacellum* in the upper room and a votive deposit in the lower room. In the latter more than 700 specimens of female head *thymiateria*[7] (fig. 2) were found as well as many lamps[8] and coins.[9] The presence of matrices and the high number of finds allowed to hypothesise a local production of the same, used by lower classes.[10] The many *thymiateria* discovered, or rather the features of some specimens with a disk and a crescent moon on the kalathos, are a

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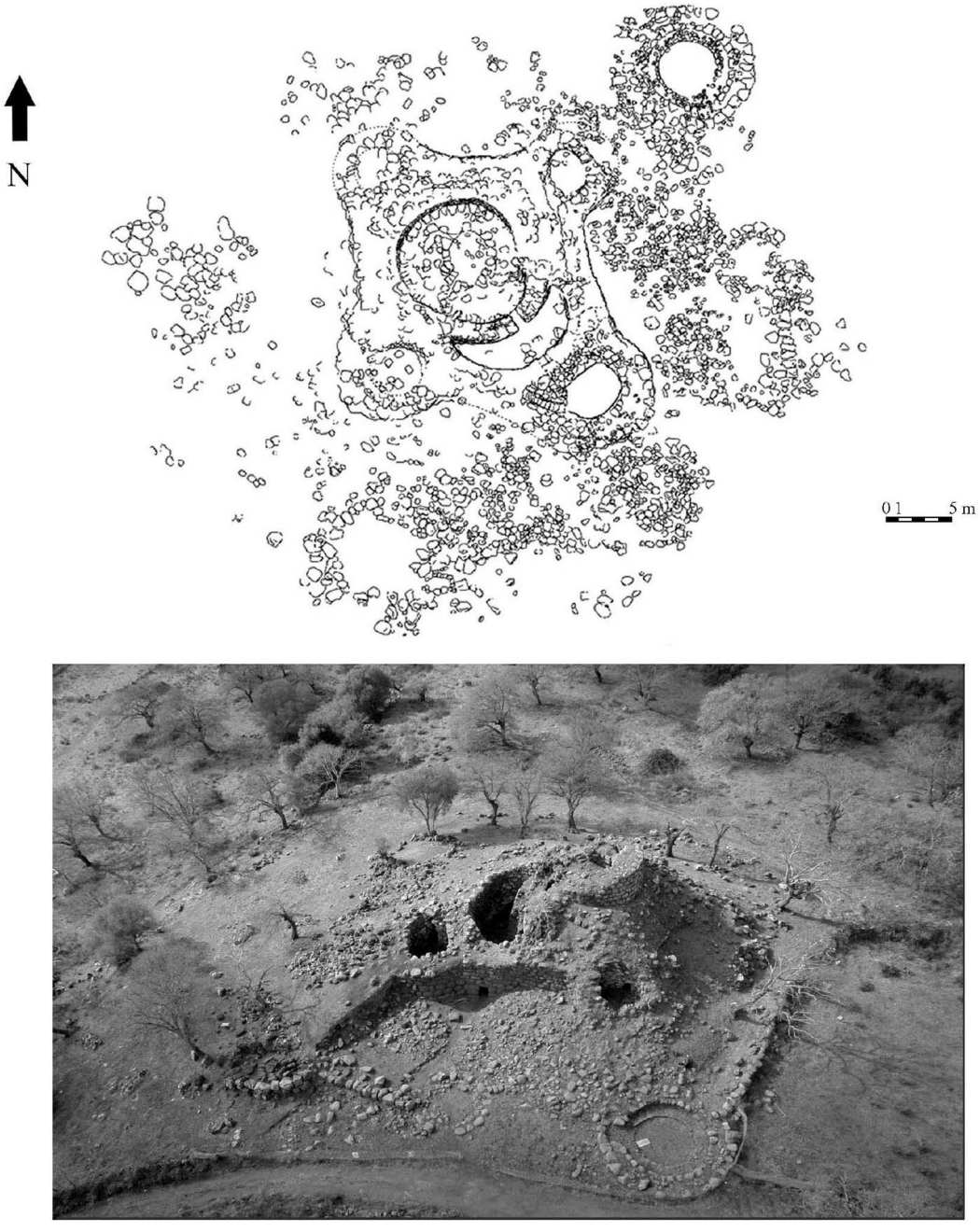

Fig. 1: Lugherras Nuraghe: plan and aerial view.

clear sign of the coexistence of different traditions that, in this case, refer to the cult of a female deity belonging to the rural world; the deity in question can be identified indifferently, based on the available data, both with Demeter and with Tanit or Astarte. For this reason we prefer to speak more generally of a female deity belonging to the agricultural world, to be identified as a goddess of the harvest, probably the result

Fig. 2: Lugherras Nuraghe: female head *thymiateria*.

of a syncretism between different local and imported divinities, with no prevailing features of any of them.[11] Even the presence of a figurine of Bes God in the sacred area does not seem to be a coincidence, since he is often linked to sacred places dedicated to female cults, in its original healing role of protector of motherhood and infants.[12]

Of course, this difficulty in identifying precise deities and any overlapping phenomena are strongly linked also to the reference historical period. The period of transition from the Punic to the Roman influence coincided with the spread of a new language, that of Hellenism. In this phase the scenario of the cults was very varied and the local culture continued to play an important role as evidenced, in fact, by the continuity of frequentation of some sectors of the nuraghes for religious purposes.

The same temples built in Sardinia, whether they were urban or extra-urban, between the 3rd century BC and the 4th century AD confirms, on the one hand, the persistence of pre-Roman building traditions, and on the other the innovations coming from the eastern and Italic world. Two extra-urban sacred buildings, those of Antas and Terreseu, and the urban temple on Via Malta in Cagliari are some examples of the integration between the local and the "external" language.

Fig. 3: Antas temple.

In the first case it is a temple built along the west coast of Sardinia, in the area of Fluminimaggiore,[13] known for the exploitation of silver-bearing lead[14]. Among the ruins of the temple (fig. 3), the fragments of the dedicatory inscription addressed to the Sardus Pater, whose cult seems to end around the 4th century AD with the spread of Christianity, were found.

The temple was built on an area already occupied since the Iron Age and went through several construction phases between the Punic period (4th–5th or 5th–4th BC[15]) and the kingdom of Caracalla.[16] In the early centuries of Roman rule a new temple was built,[17] with an altar probably set on the sacred rock dating back to the Punic period, to sanction the continuity of worship.[18] The Roman temple (fig. 4), to which the architectural terracotta seems to refer – usually attributed to good quality urban matrixes of Italic inspiration[19] – consisted of a pronaos, a cell and a bipartite *adyton*, revealing the presence of some elements that refer to the Greek-Roman world and other elements that have different origins.[20] The general structure of the temple features an architectural type of Phoenician-Punic tradition with a front room and two smaller rooms at the bottom, of which some examples can be found in Phoenician area, but more generally in the eastern world, and in Sicily.[21] The bipartite *adyton* could be interpreted as a reference to the eastern influence, but also be considered in relation to a joint cult, with dedication to a couple of deities well known in the Phoenician and Punic tradition: Melqart and Sid, replaced in Roman times by Sardus Pater[22] and Hercules-Augustus, celebrated on the pediment of the temple of Antas.[23] This cult duality could have been intentionally preserved by Augustus for two main reasons: on the one hand for political-religious purposes, and on the other for purely economic reasons. In the

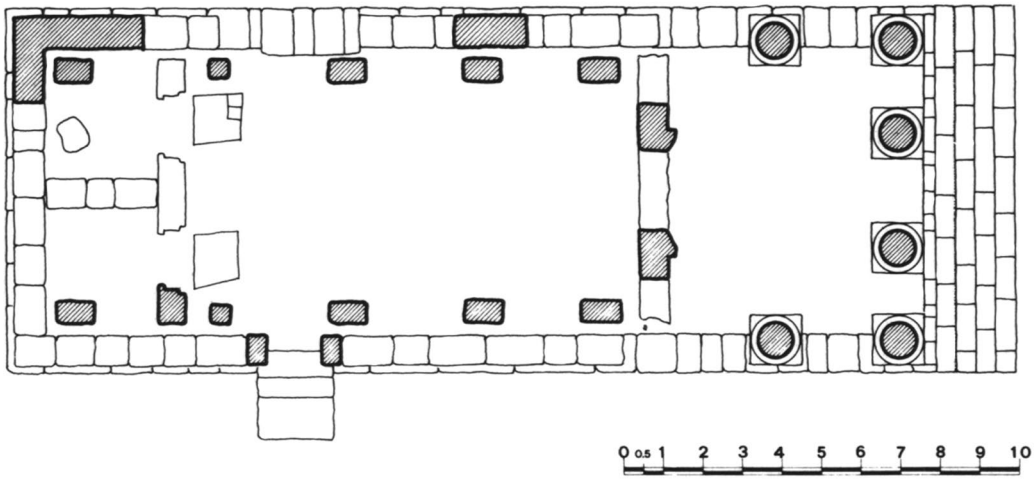

Fig. 4: Antas temple: plan of Severan age.

first case, in fact, it appears evident that the emperor deliberately supported a local cult of great importance for the inhabitants of the place in order to maintain control of the area, through a peaceful acceptance of its role, in order to "fare del tempio e del dio degli abitanti della valle il tramite della sua legittimazione".[24] On the other hand, there were also more practical reasons, linked to the economic revenues deriving from the metal resources in the area, the already mentioned silver and lead mines, already an object of interest in the Carthaginian period.[25]

The temple of Antas was, therefore, the seat of a Punic cult that found continuity in the Roman period, through a re-functionalization aimed at the political propaganda in Rome. The place of worship is of great importance as a symbol of coexistence and union of Roman and Punic elements under the aegis of a local deity, venerated as a patriotic god of the Sardinians.

Although from a different point of view, the combination of Punic, Roman and eastern tradition also emerges in another extra-urban religious context, that of Strumpu Bagoi in Terreseu, a hamlet of Narcao, a municipality in southern Sardinia. The sanctuary belonged to a small settlement of the Nuragic civilization and survived until the Aurelian period. Although it is not possible to determine a precise chronology of the construction phases of the complex, due to the lack of stratigraphic data, the materials found make it possible to identify the chronological period of life between the end of the 4th century BC and the Antonine period.[26] The construction of the sanctuary, on the other hand, seems to refer to the 3rd century BC, but it is not clear if the different units of the complex were built before or after the period of the establishment of the province.[27] What is evident, however, is the presence of several construction phases: in fact, if the building technique is Punic, the roof of the last building phase of the sanctuary together with the altar and the votive deposit date back to Roman times (fig. 5).[28]

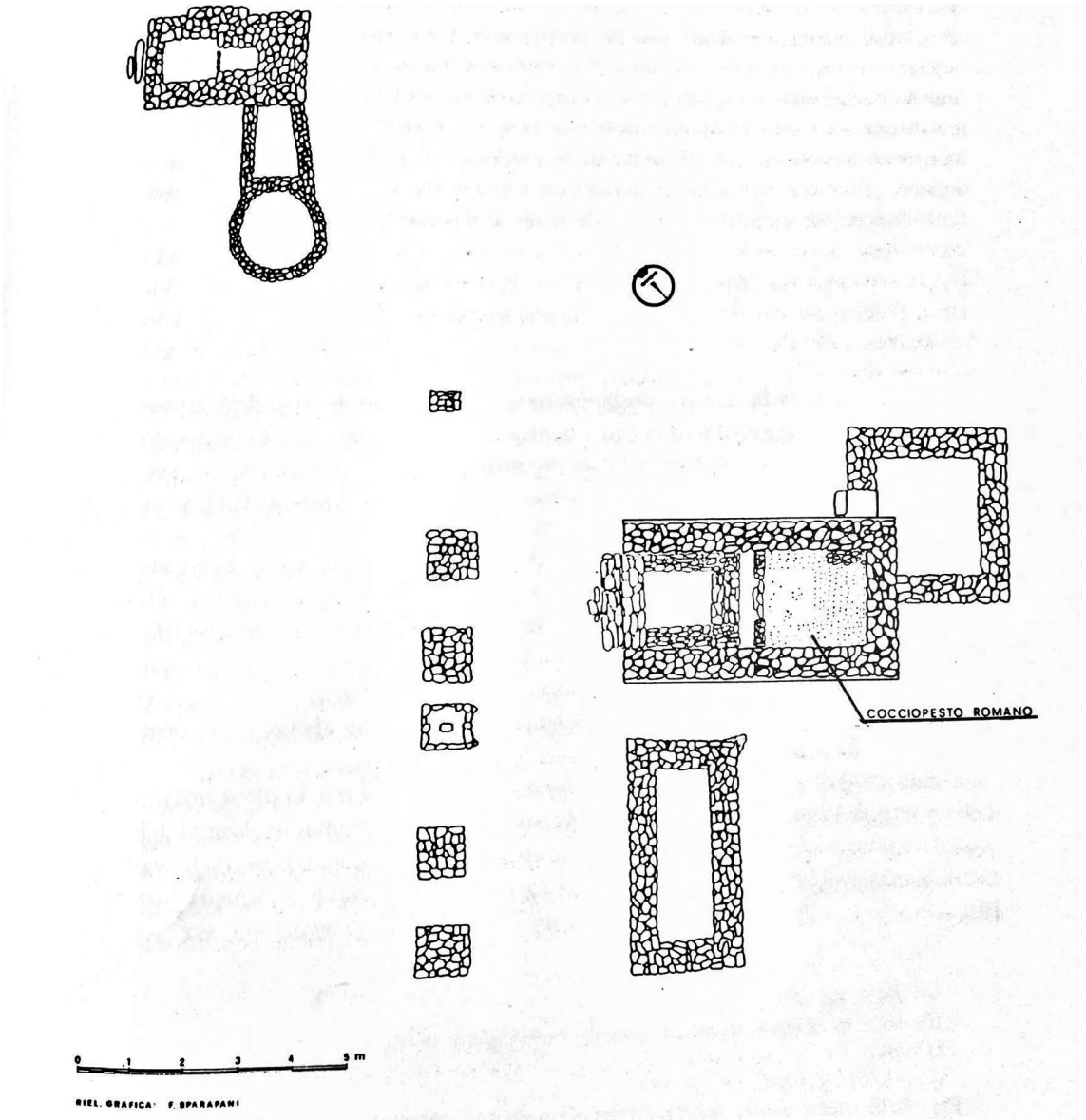

Fig. 5: Terreseu temple: plan.

Unlike the temple of Antas, the sanctuary in Narcao is not strategically located in relation to the mineral resources of the area, but is associated with a rural context. The deity venerated in this sanctuary is, in fact, an earth goddess and evidence of her cult dates back to the Punic period up to late Roman times. The link between the cult deity and the agricultural world is evidenced by the presence in the sacred area of terracotta figurines, mainly represented by female body *thymiateria* so-called kernophoros (fig. 6a), by the cruciform female figurine with outstretched arms (fig. 6b) and female busts with a torch and a piglet; as well as by phytomorphic ex-votos and a dove, the

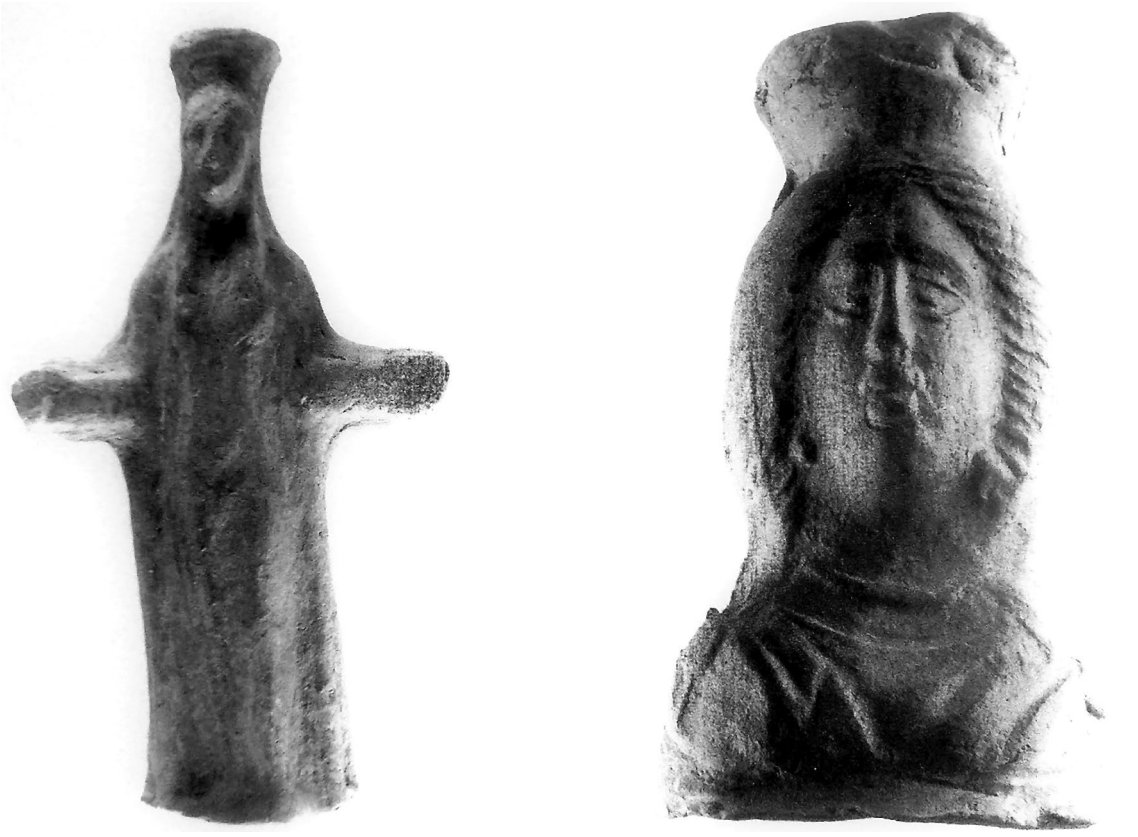

Fig. 6 a–b: a) Terreseu temple: female body *thymiateria* and b) cruciform female figurine.

symbol of Astarte-Tanit.[29] If the offers found in the area of the sanctuary clearly show the cult of a female deity, linked to the agricultural and chthonic spheres, the concealed votive deposit – placed under a small altar and kept inside a quadrangular lithic box,[30] the remains of sacrificed pigs and the presence of water also refer to the same context. Therefore, all the elements mentioned seem to be attributable to Demeter, the goddess of agriculture. This interpretation is also confirmed by the affinities existing between the sanctuary of Terreseu and other sanctuaries dedicated to Demeter with agricultural connotations and linked to the thesmophoria. An example in this regard is provided by the thesmophoria in the area of the Siceliotes and by the sacred buildings in the area of Magna Grecia,[31] which shares with the Sardinian sanctuary the placement of the materials of the votive deposit and the simple nature of the buildings, and both have nothing to do with the majestic temples of the motherland consisting of open spaces with shrines and sacella. These considerations do not exclude that in the sanctuary of Terreseu the goddess was venerated in a syncretic form, with overlapping of the cult and images of different deities with similar features.[32] If in fact the busts of the goddess with a torch and a piglet are a clear reference to Demeter, the female cruciform statuettes and, although in smaller quantities, the kernophoroi refer both to Demeter

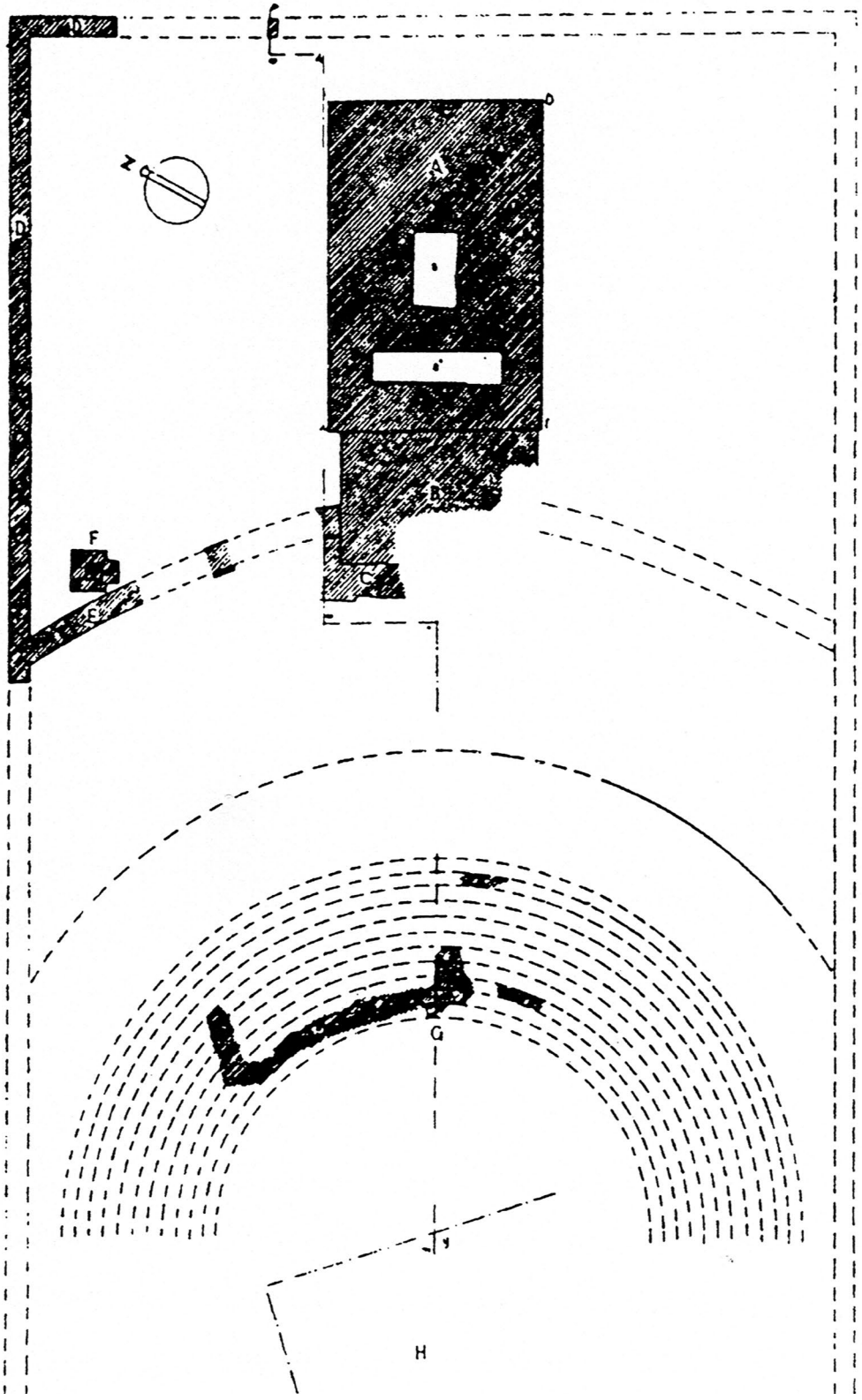

Fig. 7 a: Theatre-temple of Via Malta in Cagliari: plan.

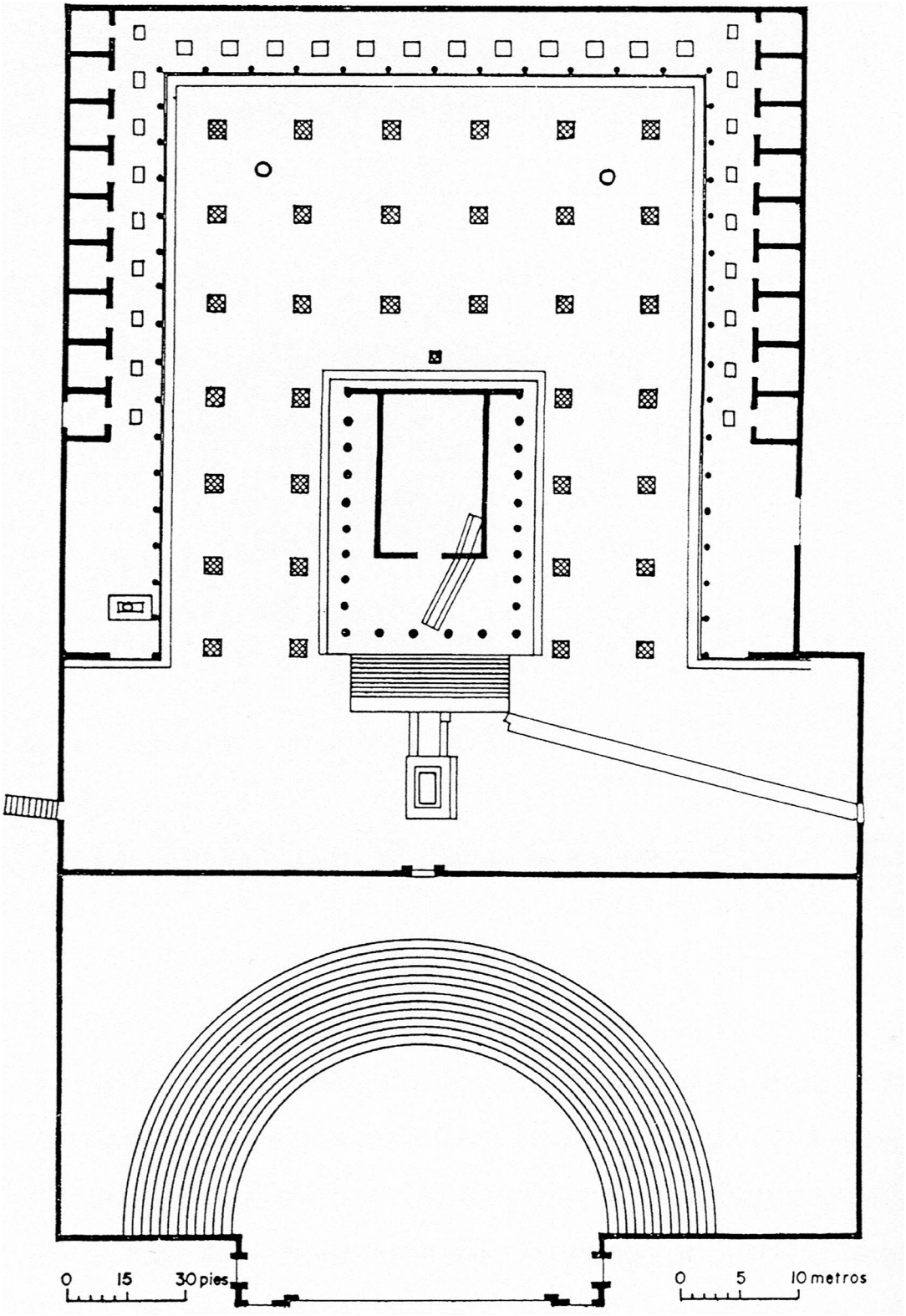

Fig. 7 b: sanctuary of Juno at Gabii: plan.

and to Astarte and Tanit. This is not surprising if we consider that the goddess venerated in this sanctuary and identified with Demeter is not the Greek deity, but a Punic version of the same. This seems to be confirmed by the north orientation of the sacella and of the sacred deposit[33] – contrary to what happens in the case of Greek temples – and the syncretism with the cult of a "Punic" female deity, first of all Astarte, to whom the symbol of the dove refers.

External influences and the related cultural relations are clearly evident also in the urban sacred buildings, as in the case of the theater-temple on Via Malta in Cagliari (fig. 7a), which refers to an architectural type known in the Italic area. The building, investigated in the 30s[34] and then replaced by the modern settlement, stands on an artificial terracing with a flat area and a slope. Initially, based on the discovery inside the well of a high number of clay matrices and materials,[35] it was thought that it was built between the beginning of the 3rd and the mid-1st century BC.[36] Subsequent studies allowed to state with greater precision that it dates back to the 2nd–1st century BC, based on archaeological and historical considerations.[37] S. Angiolillo was the first to point out the Italic nature of the building through an almost unanimously accepted interpretation that highlights the evident similarities between this and, in particular, the sanctuary of Juno at Gabii (fig. 7b).[38] The latter, dating back to the mid-2nd century BC, in fact, has some features that can also be identified in Cagliari: the fact that the area is divided into two sectors by means of a partition wall, a side access to the boundary wall, the presence of a triportico[39] and the wood that refers to those of the tradition of the luci in Lazio.[40]

The tradition of the theatre-temple, with a temple built in summa cavea and in line with it, refers to Hellenistic and eastern Greek origins,[41] but the formula then became popular particularly in the Italic area,[42] where the cult is usually connected to agricultural, healthy, pastoral and oracular practices. It is not clear, which deity or deities were venerated in the temple of Cagliari.[43] Among the different interpretative hypotheses, there is one that links the cult of the temple to Venus – understood as the Roman interpretatio of Astarte-Aphrodite –, or to Venus and Adonis, on the basis of epigraphic, sculptural finds and finally of the discovery of three kilos of coral during the excavation.[44] Regardless of the identification of the revered deity, theater-temples refer to the sanctuaries that in the late Republic are the expression of the ideology of an Italic community which uses that architectural type to identify itself and show its opposition to Rome.[45] In the case of the theater-temple on Via Malta we are not sure of a direct relationship with the Italic negotiatores, who, in the late Republic, had commercial and cultural relations with Sardinia; there is no reason not to consider this building as a monumental result "*dell'adozione di modelli architettonici esportati in Sardegna*".[46] This architectural model is found in Sardinia only in later, with the late Republic, with respect to the models of the Italian area. If, in fact, the sanctuary is part of the urban plan of the Roman terraced city with a probably central role, as an expression of the ideology of a new Roman-Italic ruling class, the fact that it spread slowly and not everywhere could

be due to the strong and persistent influence of a Punic substrate.[47] This combination and contamination between different traditions and cultures, which leads, sometimes, to original results, could in fact be related both to some architectural elements, such as the low podium, which does not belong to Italic constructions, and cult elements, such as the supposed cult of Venus, to be understood as a reinterpretation of the Punic goddess Astarte.

This combination of figurative languages that belong partly to the local substratum, of both the Nuragic and Levantine tradition, and partly to the Greek and Italic one, emerges on the island also in relation to the cultural contexts, in particular through the typologies of votive terracotta figurines.[48]

These figurative languages in Punic and Roman Sardinia met the most urgent needs of those who frequented places of worship.[49] Needs that were linked, on the one hand, to the protection of individuals and the community, and therefore restoration needs, and, on the other, to the agricultural vocation of the settlements, and therefore belonging to the agricultural sphere. This already emerges in the Punic age contexts, such as that of Neapolis, currently Santa Maria di Nabui in the Oristano area, from which mainly hand-made figurines of the so-called suffering devotees[50] come, and that of Bithia, a site located at the southernmost point of Sardinia, in the province of Cagliari, from which statuettes with the same subject produced mainly on a lathe come.[51]

The same applies also to votive contexts belonging to the transition from the Punic to the Roman period, such as that of Santa Gilla lagoon in Cagliari.[52] The complex is of great interest both for the originality of the findings that made it up, and for its connection with the votive productions of Italic sanctuaries. Among terracotta figurines, we should mention the many male and female protomes, hands and anatomical votive figurines, and, finally, the few female full heads and animal specimens, such as bulls, Molossian dogs, griffins, greyhounds and crocodiles (fig. 8).[53] The technical level is, on the whole, quite high and, according to S. Moscati, it was probably built by a single workshop where skilled, perhaps African artisans worked, specialised in the production of certain types of materials, who produced good quality specimens that "da un lato si rifanno alla tradizione dei santuari italici, dall'altro innovano in funzione del culto locale".[54]

Remarkable affinities with the complex of S. Gilla can be seen in another high-level context, that of Padria, the ancient Gurulis Vetus, in the province of Sassari.[55] The deposit seems to belong to the late Punic period and the late Roman empire (4th century BC – 3rd century AD) and is related to an open-air sanctuary.[56] It consists mainly of anatomical ex-votos – especially hands, feet, fingers, eyes, ears, but also internal organs –, depictions of animals or parts of them – snakes, lions, bovines, horses, doves, cockerels, raptors –, fruits – apple, pomegranates, figs – and vegetables, as well as statuettes, heads, protomes, masks and architectural elements, such as capitals and small columns (fig. 9).[57] There are also some evident affinities with the complex of S. Gilla, perhaps due to the presence of coroplasts or the transfer of matrices; a connection with votive complexes in the Etruscan-Latium-Campanian area, from which the one under

Fig. 8: Santa Gilla lagoon in Cagliari. Terracotta figurines.

examination differs for the absence of depictions of babies and genital organs, with the exception of a uterus, is also evident.[58] If the materials – in particular anatomical ex-votos, the rooster and the snake – seem to belong to a cult related to health, the presence of terracotta figurines depicting Heracles wearing the leontè, and with a club and snakes clave lead us to identify the deity to which the cult is addressed with the legendary founder of the Ogryle colony.[59]

Another town of great importance where interesting finds confirming once again the main lines that influenced the culture and religion on the island in the period taken into consideration were discovered, is Nora, in the municipality of Pula (Cagliari).

A first important discovery consists of a batch of 22 terracotta figurines found between the last years of the 70s and the beginning of the 80s in the waters of Nora, southeast of the island of Coltellazzo, during underwater surveys conducted by M. Cassien.[60] These terracotta figurines are generally connected to a wreck "of the Punic-Hellenistic period" that sank near Nora[61] and seem to date back to the 2nd century BC.[62] Among the most interesting specimens we should mention five clay heads, including the famous Dama

Fig. 9: Padria. Terracotta figurines.

di Nora (fig. 10), a large head that probably belongs to a worship statue.[63] If it is quite difficult to establish the place of origin of these terracotta figurines,[64] the Italic influence is evident, identifiable in the similarities with the terracottas of Santa Gilla. The two complexes share the good workmanship and eclectic taste, typical of the productions of the 2nd and 1st century BC.[65] The composition of the complex - statues, heads, statuettes, anatomical votive offerings – recalls the votive deposit of Padria and therefore the materials of the Etruscan-Latium-Campanian area.[66]

The same cultural matrix can also be seen in the cult findings coming from the ancient Punic-Roman town of Nora, concerning both the temples[67] and ex votos.[68] The production level of the artifacts is usually simple, probably due to a local manufacture. Among the unearthed specimens we find anthropomorphic statuettes, protomes, votive

Fig. 10: So-called Dama di Nora.

plaques and anatomical ex-votos, as well as some female capite velato statuettes, which refer to mid-Italic matrix models that became popular on the island, both in Nora and in several other sites in Sardinia, during the last centuries of the Republic, especially during the late Hellenistic period.[69] A special type of votive statuettes with the same reiterated iconography.[70] coming from the so-called former Military Area in Nora refers (fig. 11, a. b), on the other hand, to the eastern context. It is a series of about 30 specimens – whose height ranges from 14 to 20 cm – made as a matrix with embossed subjects. The iconography is that of a female figure with bare breasts, naked up to the pubic area, with the legs covered with a robe and the upper part of the body wrapped in a veil arranged in a shell, with both arms over her head (fig. 12). On the right of the

Fig. 11: Former Military Area in Nora. Plan and aerial view of eastern context.

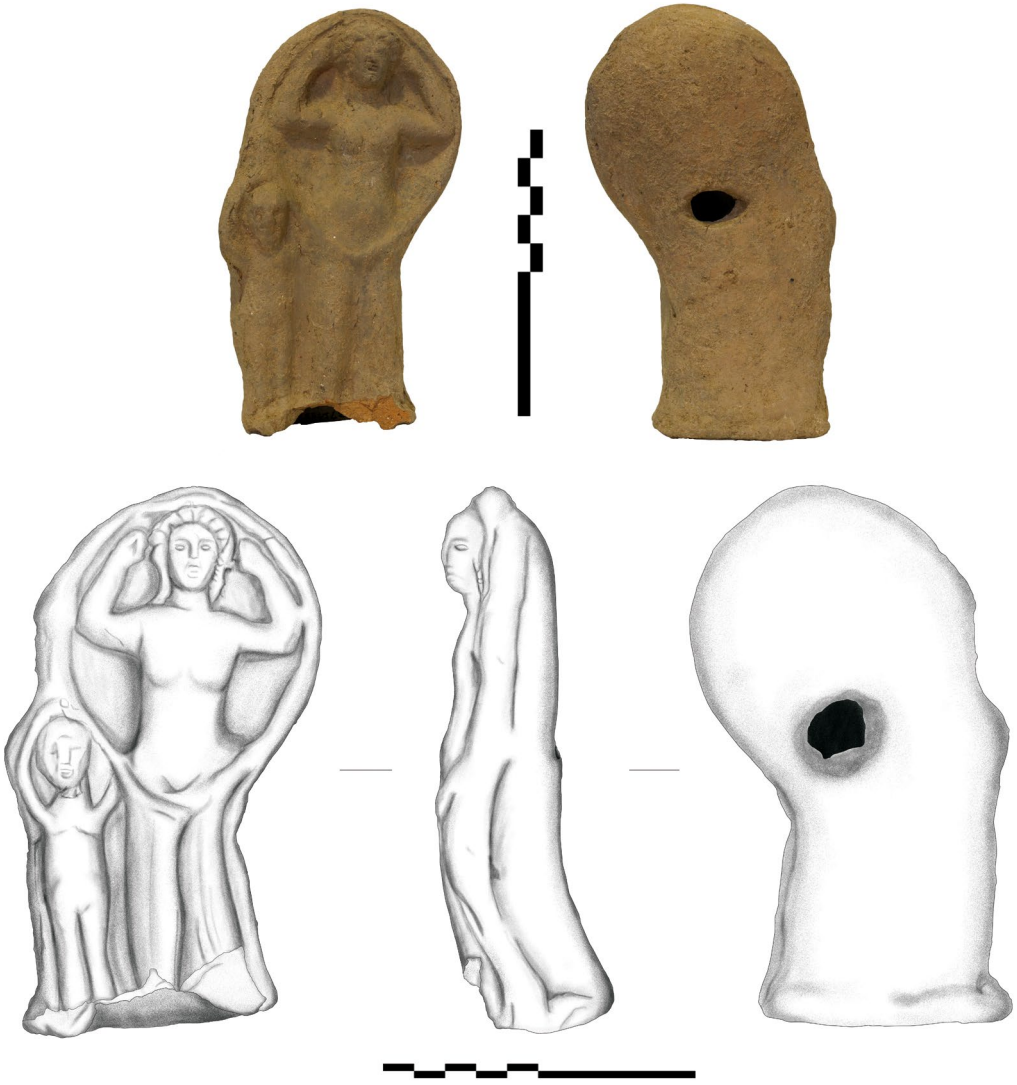

Fig. 12: Former Military Area in Nora. Terracotta figurine.

female figure there is a second smaller figure related to a bearded male character, who is grotesque, naked and also with his arms raised, apparently imitating the main figure: the right arm is over the head, while the left one seems to disappear behind the female figure. The link with the iconography of Aphrodite / Anadyomene Isis, as well as with some more specific representations of Isis, is evident.[71] The iconographic motifs on the Hellenistic braziers coming from the site, depicting crocodiles, dogs, jackals and hippos also seem to belong to the Nilotic context.[72]

The statuettes in question seem to refer to a cultural substratum with a strong eastern influence, perhaps linked to the sphere of Isis with an agricultural connotation of the cult, in a form combined with other deities with the same role, such as Demeter and Aphrodite/Venus.

The importance of the agricultural connotation is not surprising as it appears to be linked to economic choices based on the exploitation of the resources in Sardinia, in particular those of cereals, both by the Carthaginians and by the Romans.[73]

What emerges from the set of data collected so far is a scenario in which Punic influences appear evident and fundamental in Sardinia, just like Roman-Italic and eastern influences, which resulted, in most cases, in the creation of an interesting model of integration, rather than of contrast. The situation of the island, at the time of its annexation as a Roman province, was characterized, in fact, by the coexistence of Sardinian-Punic human groups – who descended from the Phoenicians and joined exponents of the Nuragic world.[74] At first, the Roman strategy consisted mainly of interventions addressed to those aspects that were in sharp contrast with the system of government of Rome, while leaving the administrative and fiscal organisation of the island intact, so as not to undermine peace and the existing structure; this way, the subjugated populations were free to choose whether to preserve their traditions or adopt the Roman cultural and political ones.[75] It follows that the Levantine and the Punic substrata continued to survive, playing an important role even after the Roman conquest of the island.

During the Republican period, the construction techniques, as well as the religious traditions rooted in the island before the arrival of the Romans remained substantially the same. An example, in this regard, is the case of the already mentioned Nuragic facilities reused for religious purposes until the late Imperial period and the use of Punic-inspired kernophoroi in the early Roman period. A similar situation emerges also from the analysis of the temples, such as that of the temple of Antas where, despite the presence of construction phases of the Roman period, the cult identified after the conquerors' arrival preserves a substantially Punic imprint, although reinterpreted in Roman key, for economic-political purposes. The temple of Antas is also an interesting example of the island's openness to external influences, which, in this case, created a combination of Sardinian, Punic and finally Italic culture. The Italic element, indeed, plays a central role on the island, already starting from the 4th–3rd century BC;[76] this gradually became more evident in the Republican period, when the Italic influence manifested itself both through the monuments, as confirmed by the diffusion of architectural types known in the Italic context – such as, for example, the theater-temple on Via Malta in Cagliari –, and through the material culture, as shown by the ex-votos clearly influenced by the Etruscan-Italic culture, such as those belonging to the votive areas in Santa Gilla, Padria or even Nora.[77] If both the Italic and the Carthaginian mediation were crucial for the introduction of Hellenistic motifs in Sardinia, Italic negotiatores were the driving force of the importation of eastern cults, especially in the Campania area, starting from the late Republican period on the island, where they brought their own forms of devotion, once arrived, including the cult of Isis. An emblematic example in this regard is offered by the iconographic motifs on the aforementioned Hellenistic braziers and the spread of cult practices in honour of Isis.[78]

The result is a new provincial culture with its own characteristics, which reinterprets Italic models and is influenced by the link with Rome.

Notes

[1] See, in this regard, Stiglitz 2005. See Lilliu 1990 e Pala 1990.

[2] See the case of the Su Mulinu nuraghe in Villanovafranca (Ugas – Paderi 1990; Saba 2015, 28–31).

[3] See, for example, the Genna Maria nuraghe in Villanovaforru (Lilliu 1988; Lilliu et al. 1993) or the Lugherras nuraghe in Paulilatino (see below). See also Stiglitz 2005.

[4] First edition of the excavation by A. Taramelli (1910).

[5] Taramelli 1910; Depalmas 2012; Depalmas 2014.

[6] Del Vais – Serreli 2016.

[7] Regoli 1991; Del Vais – Serreli 2016, 26–31. To these we should add another 16 fragmentary specimens of statuettes of different types, including cruciform types, and a depiction of Bes God. More information is provided by Del Vais – Serreli 2016, 15.

[8] The specimens amount to almost 2700, whose main nucleus dates back to the 4th and 1st century BC. See Secci 2012–2013.

[9] Taramelli 1910, 168–170; Del Vais – Serreli 2016, 10–12.

[10] See the considerations in Regoli 1991, 78.

[11] In this regard, see Carboni 2012a, 14–16; Garbati 2016, 93–95.

[12] Garbati 2008, 49; Stiglitz 2012, 144 f.

[13] On the geographical location of the facility, see Zucca 1989, 5–14.

[14] Esposito 2000, 116–118; Bernardini – Ibba 2015, 76 (with previous bibliography).

[15] See Bernardini 2005, 132 (with previous bibliography) and Bernardini – Ibba 2015, 82 f.

[16] For an accurate description of the various phases of life of the sacred building, see Tomei 2008, 19–42. In particular, for the restoration works performed during the age of Caracalla, see Bernardini – Ibba 2015, 104–105. After the deadline for the submission of this paper, the volume „R. Zucca, Il tempio del Sardus Pater ad Antas (Fluminimaggiore, south Sardinia) (Rome 2019)“ was published, to which we refer for an overall analysis of the context.

[17] The new construction seems to date back to the late Republic on the basis of the analysis of the architectural terracotta coming from the sacred building. This hypothesis is supported by G. Manca di Mores (later Manca di Mores 2018) and even earlier by S. Moscati (among others, Moscati 1977), who suggest as the reference time frame the half/ second half of the 2nd century BC. Bernardini – Ibba 2015, 95, note 81 also hypothesize that this period of time could be extended to the last quarter of the 2nd century BC – the beginning of the 1st century. According to others, it was built in the Augustan age. See Mossa 1976, 9 f.; Ghiotto 2004, 43; Bernardini – Ibba 2015, 95 (with previous bibliography).

[18] Although it is possible that the Roman facility substantially reproduces a well-defined plan, which can be compared to facilities in the eastern world and that of the Siceliotes (Tomei 2008, 35ss.), the Roman influence is clearly visible in the typology of architectural terracotta and in the sculptures of the pediment. In this regard, see Manca di Mores 2012, in particular 200 f.

[19] Manca di Mores 2012, 200 f.; Manca di Mores 2018, 296.

[20] The longitudinal layout with bipartite *adyton* is also found in the Roman-Republican phase of the temple of the Monte Sirai fortified tower. See Perra 2004 (in particular 143).

[21] Tomei 2008, 35–37.

[22] His name appears in the inscription ELSard, 583, B13; AE 1971, n°119.
[23] Manca di Mores 2012, 194. 201.
[24] Tomei 2008, 41.
[25] Zucca 1993, 39–41; Esposito 2000, 116–118 (with previous bibliography).
[26] The latest stage of life identified is the Antonine Period, as shown by the discovery of coins by Faustina Minore. See Barreca 1983, 299 and Moscati – Uberti 1990, 86–88.
[27] The complex consists of two sectors: the first includes a well and a small aedicule, the second six square altars aligned in front of the main chapel – leaning against a second oldest room – and a rectangular base whose function is uncertain. Barreca 1986, 304; Tomei 2008, 55–63.
[28] Tomei 2008, 55 f. (with previous bibliography).
[29] Moscati – Uberti 1990, 80–83; Moscati 1993, 77–82.
[30] The deposit comes from a room, partially replaced, at a later stage, by a rectangular sacellum, consisting of a vestibule and a raised platform, on which the worship statue was probably located (Barreca 1986, 299). The deposit was found hidden under a small altar for bloody sacrifices, covered and surrounded by offerings, ashes, teeth and burnt pig bones (Barreca 1983, 299). Here small urns with the remains of a sacrifice, a four-spout lamp, three kernophoroi and a female clay statuette with open arms, interpreted as a depiction of Demeter, were found. The offering of the deposit, which dates back to 15 BC, refers to a re-consecration of the temple, as a previous phase of the 3rd century BF is known, as confirmed by the discovery of a kourotrophos statuette in an underlying layer.
[31] Garbati 2003, 135; Tomei 2008, 59–62.
[32] See Carboni 2012a.
[33] The vestibule equipped with "banchette", which is not found in Sardinian temples – where altar counters found, as in the small temple K and the temple of Capo San Marco in Tharros, refers, on the other hand, to the eastern traditions (Perra 1999, 55 f.).
[34] Mingazzini 1949.
[35] Comella 1992; Ibba 1999; Ibba 2012.
[36] Mingazzini 1949, 219 f. See the considerations in Angiolillo 1985, 102 f.; Angiolillo 1987. P. Mingazzini (1949, 219 f.) points out that the inside of the well shows two different life stages; as highlighted by J. Bonetto (2006, 265), the first one, referring to materials dating back to the 3rd century BC, seems to belong to a period prior to the construction of the place of worship, and the presence of materials of this stage seems to confirm the presence of "dell'esistenza di forme di devozione nella zona già in quest'epoca, continuate e integrate nel quadro monumentale del complesso, sicuramente successivo".
[37] In this regard, see Angiolillo 1987, 59–64; Bonetto 2006, 264–266 (with previous bibliography).
[38] Angiolillo 1987, 60–62.
[39] Bonetto 2006, 263, nota 4.
[40] Coarelli 1993, to whom reference is made for the correct etymology of lucus.
[41] About the contribution of the two traditions, see, among others, Johannowsky 1970 e Nielsen 2002, 275–282.
[42] Coarelli 1997, 562.
[43] Nielsen 2002, 189–196.
[44] Angiolillo 1987. For other interpretative hypotheses, see Tomei 2008, 79–99.
[45] Angiolillo 1985, 107; Coarelli 1996, 333.

[46] Ghiotto 2004, 36. On this topic see Colavitti 1999, 39–41.
[47] See the considerations in Bonetto 2006 (in particular 268), Tomei 2008 (in particular 95. 107). See also Nieddu 1992, 15.
[48] On this topic, see Carboni 2017.
[49] See Carboni 2012a and Carboni 2012b.
[50] Zucca 2005 (with previous bibliography).
[51] Uberti 1973; Moscati 1991, 75–83 (with previous bibliography).
[52] Moscati 1991; Moscati 1992, 33–41.
[53] See Salvi 2003.
[54] Moscati 1992, 40 f. See, in this regard, the considerations in Salvi 2003, 73, who prefers "l'ipotesi di una bottega o di un gruppo di botteghe a quella di una stipe votiva".
[55] Campus 1994; Campus 1996.
[56] Galli 1991, 19.
[57] Campus 1994, 99–101.
[58] Campus 1994, 111 f.
[59] Campus 1994, 118.
[60] Ghiotto 2014.
[61] Barreca 1985.
[62] Ghiotto 2014, 516 (with previous bibliography).
[63] Ghiotto 2014, 516. 521–523 (with previous bibliography). The other specimens refer to draped human figures, animal depictions and anatomical details.
[64] There are not enough elements to clarify whether the terracotta pieces in question were made in Nora, with imported matrices or artisans coming from the outside of the island and cult models of Italic origin, or were imported from an external centre, whether it is Sardinian or outside the island. In this regard, refer to Ghiotto 2014, 541–543; Ghiotto et al. 2016, 223 f.
[65] Ghiotto 2014, 544. See Nieddu 1989, 115–117.
[66] See Comella 1981, 758.
[67] Consider the case of the temple of the forum with Italic features, such as the orientation to the south, mixed with other Punic features, such as the low podium and the bipartition of the pronaos. Angiolillo 2012, 23-24.
[68] Among the most recent Carboni 2016; Magliani 2016; Giuman – Carboni 2018. The paper presented here was submitted to the AIAC congress 2018. In the meantime, the analysis of the archaeological site of Nora and the context analyzed here has undergone some interpretative changes, which have flowed into the recently published book „R. Carboni, Nora. Le terrecotte votive dell'ex area militare (Rome 2020)", for which we refer for further and more precise functional and chronological informations regarding the excavation. area.
[69] Carboni 2016 (with previous bibliography).
[70] Giuman – Carboni 2018.
[71] Giuman – Carboni 2018, 102 f.
[72] Carboni – Cruccas 2019, 289–292.

[73] Colavitti 1996 (with previous bibliography); Mastino 2005; see Roppa 2013, 23 f. The central role of the island as a source of grain supply, although important, has been scaled down, thanks to data from systematic surface surveys and stratigraphic excavations of rural sites (cfr. Van Dommelen et al. 2010).
[74] In this regard, see, among the most recent, Blasetti Fantauzzi 2015.
[75] Van Dommelen 1998, 172–177; "The principal characteristic of Sardinia under Roman rule, in particular in Republican times, has been identified as the continuity of Punic culture" (Van Dommelen 1998, 174). See Ibba 2015, 14–16.
[76] Colavitti 1999, 16; Bonetto 2006, 259.
[77] In this regard, the votive trilingual inscription (CIL X 7856 = IG XIV 608 = CIS I 143) coming from San Nicolò Gerrei, which clearly shows the coexistence of the Sardinian-Punic and Latin-Italic languages during the second century BC, is also quite interesting. See Mastino 2005, 407 f.; Carboni 2012b, 37 f. (with previous bibliography).
[78] In addition to the statues in Nora described above, please refer, for further evidence of the cult of the goddess, to Pilo 2012 and Gavini 2014.

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Fig. 1: edited by the author after Depalmas 2012, fig. 1. – Fig. 2: Regoli 1991, pl. 10, 441. – Fig. 3: by the autor. – Fig. 4: Zucca 1989, 40. – Fig. 5: Moscati – Uberti 1990, 85. – Fig. 6 a–b: Moscati 1992, pl. 45, a–b. – Fig. 7 a–b: a) Angiolillo 1987, 60, fig. 1); b) edited by the author after Nielsen 2002, 193, fig. 81. – Fig. 8: Moscati 1992, pl. 11–16. – Fig. 9: Carboni 2017, 110 f. – Fig. 10: Carboni 2017, 115. – Fig. 11: edited by L. Lanteri. – Fig. 12: photo and drawing by A. Mossa.

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