

Domestic Archaeology Project on the Punic-Roman living area of Tharros

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Riassunto: Sebbene Tharros sia stata oggetto di vari studi, le case non erano molto note. In anni recenti è stato avviato un nuovo progetto, presentato brevemente in questa sede. La ricerca ha portato a definire la storia degli studi in modo da ricostruire ogni contesto e far luce sulla forma urbis. Ciò con il supporto delle nuove tecnologie, in modo da ottenere delle ricostruzioni 3D delle evidenze.

Parole chiave: Archeologia domestica, documentazione di archivio, *forma urbis*, rilievo 3D, Tharros punico-romana.

Abstract: Although the site of Tharros was the subject of several studies, the houses were not known in detail. A new project has been launched in recent years, of which some notes shall be given in this paper. The research has led to rebuild the studies history in order to rebuild each context and shed light on urban planning. The research is supported by new technologies, for obtaining 3D reconstructions.

Keywords: Domestic archaeology, archive studies, urban planning, 3D relief, Punic-Roman Tharros.

This note is a preview of a project in progress on the residential quarter of Tharros concerning the architectural analysis, the study of archives documents about the excavations conducted in the last century, the establishment of the activities carried out in the domestic spaces and the three-dimensional and virtual reconstructions of the archaeological contexts. The main aim is to present the different components of the project and the expected results that will be published in detail in the immediate future¹.

The living area of Tharros² was excavated by Superintendent of Antiquity Superintendence of Cagliari, Dr Gennaro Pesce, during nine annual archaeological missions held between 1956 and 1964³. After these researches, in this part of the site only some limited excavations were undertaken between the 1980s and the first years of the 21st century⁴. These archaeological evidences are located between San Giovanni Tower and the Oristano Gulf

¹ MARANO *in press*.

² For a latest overview of the site, see DEL VAIS 2015: 39-44 and previous bibliography.

³ PESCE 1955-1957; 1961; 1963; 1964; 1966; MARANO 2014a; *in press*.

⁴ DEL VAIS *et alii* 1995a; DEL VAIS *et alii* 1995b; BERNARDINI 1996; MARANO 2014a; *in press*.



coast, even if a survey in the site shows that the area under consideration was to be wider, involving some other quarters never previously explored (Fig. 1).

After the discovery of the living area, a typology of the houses was drawn up in the 1990s identifying four types of buildings⁵, but the latest researches show a more complicated situation⁶. Indeed, because of the limited information existing in scientific literature on residential spaces of the site and the survived evidences on the field, this part of the archaeological area has been the subject of a PhD project carried out by myself⁷ in recent years. This study has made it possible to review the G. Pesce's excavation documentation that it has never been published in full, together with a fieldwork for identifying exactly the spaces mentioned in the archaeological records and rebuilding the urban planning⁸.

The rereading of the excavation diaries has resulted in a detailed history of the archaeological studies about the whole living quarters and the area crossed by *cardo maximus* and eastern *cardo*⁹. In particular, the research has involved over eighty buildings mostly interpreted as houses by G. Pesce, located in western (n^{os} 1-11, 13, 15-16, 19-38), central (n^{os} 39-68) and eastern (n^{os} 69-82) quarters. The fieldwork and the rereading of G. Pesce's documentation have revealed that only some buildings can be attributable to houses and these are mostly situated in western quarter (Fig. 2).

The buildings were probably used until the abandonment of the site, occurred approximately in 1070 A.D. Therefore, the visible phase of the houses can be attributable to "Roman" age-Late Antiquity, even if a "Punic" cultural continuity is identifiable in the building planning choices, considering the existing information in the excavation diaries and other comparable contexts in Sardinia and in Mediterranean area¹⁰. For this reason, it is possible to accept the designation «*case puniche di età romana*»¹¹ for houses built in "Roman" age, but preserving "Punic" cultural aspects¹². Indeed, in some cases, these preserve some planning features identified in other Punic contexts: the fieldwork has led to attribute some buildings to the houses with courtyard and rooms in the inner part; with two parallel and elongated rooms; with a central corridor surrounded by rooms; and with a quadripartite plan¹³.

⁵ FALCHI 1991: 30-32.

⁶ MARANO *in press*.

⁷ The doctoral project "Punic-Roman Living Quarters of Tharros (OR, Italy). Urban and Architectural Investigation" (Original title: "I quartieri residenziali punico-romani di Tharros (OR, Italia). Indagine architettonica e urbanistica") was conducted within the Inter-University PhD in History of Arts (28th cycle) of Ca' Foscari University of Venice, IUAV University of Venice and University of Verona, with external supervision of *Alma Mater Studiorum*-University of Bologna.

⁸ MARANO 2014a; 2017; *in press*.

⁹ EAD. 2014a; *in press*.

¹⁰ EAD. *in press*.

¹¹ GHIOTTO 2004: 161.

¹² MARANO *in press*.

¹³ *Ibidem*. About the Phoenician-Punic domestic architecture in Sicily and Sardinia, see MONTANERO VICO 2014.

Furthermore, in the buildings, some polychrome wall plasters are preserved: some limited fragments are *in situ*, but many others were found in the earth during the excavations. Two examples, located in buildings n^{os} 20 (Fig. 3 a) and 58 (Fig. 3 b), are particularly significant with regard to good conservation status compared to others. Due to the general visibility and conservation problems of these, the two abovementioned fragments have been the subject of a 3D relief project using laser scanner¹⁴.

Keeping in mind these issues, the 3D relief project has been extended to houses types identified on the field (Fig. 4), in order to include all residential contexts of the site¹⁵.

In addition, the study of the houses has led to extending the analysis to other evidences connected with residential structures, such as water-supply¹⁶ and road systems¹⁷. In particular, the analysis of the latter aspect intends to clarify the town planning in each phase of the site's occupation, in order to rebuild the *forma urbis* of the ancient town in Punic and Roman time¹⁸. The data collected have highlighted the continuing use of the road system during the life of the site, revealed by the similar planning choices in other "Punic" contexts in Sardinia and off the island and by the overlap of the basaltic slabs of the *cardo maximus* on the previous route, which passed directly over the rock outcrop¹⁹ (Fig. 5).

Finally, considering the plundering suffered by the site across the centuries that has ravaged the archaeological contexts, the creation of an inventory of the no longer *in situ* architectural elements has been started recently with the final aim of relocating them virtually into their original positions, through data taken from the excavation diaries²⁰.

This approach and the other undertaken study initiatives abovementioned, together with other archaeological researches at Tharros from teams of *Alma Mater Studiorum* - University of Bologna – to which I belong – and University of Cagliari²¹, constitute the basis to arrive at a more complete knowledge of each context and to rebuild the aspect of the site during the whole occupation.

¹⁴ MARANO, SILANI 2017.

¹⁵ FARISELLI *et alii* 2017a.

¹⁶ BULTRINI *et alii* 1996; MEZZOLANI 1997; ACQUARO *et alii* 2002; DI GREGORIO, MATTA 2002; MARANO 2014b.

¹⁷ EAD. 2017; 2018; *in press*.

¹⁸ EAD. 2018 and previous bibliography.

¹⁹ EAD. 2017; 2018; *in press*.

²⁰ This project is in progress at Punic Archaeology Laboratory of *Alma Mater Studiorum*-University of Bologna, Department of Cultural Heritage.

²¹ It should be remembered the last studies on the temples of the site (FLORIS 2014-2015; 2016), the annual archaeological excavations at Northern (DEL VAIS, FARISELLI 2010a; 2010b; 2012; DEL VAIS 2013; FARISELLI 2013; DEL VAIS 2017) and Southern necropolis (FARISELLI 2014; SECCI 2014-2015; FARISELLI 2016-2017; FARISELLI *et alii* 2017b) and on the isthmus Sa Codriola, now in progress.

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Fig. 1: View of Tharros from San Giovanni Tower (photo M. Marano).



Fig. 2: View of the western quarter from North-East (photo M. Marano).



Fig. 3: a) View of the polychrome wall plaster preserved in the western room of the building n. 20 (from Marano, Silani 2017; photo M. Marano); b) 3D relief of the room with polychrome wall plaster in the building n. 58 (from Marano, Silani 2017; relief and processing M. Silani).



Fig. 4: 3D relief of the building n. 56 from South-East (from Fariselli *et alii* 2017a; relief and processing M. Marano).



Fig. 5: View of *cardo maximus* from South (from Marano *in press*).