

La Pirrera del Labirinto alla Favorita (Palermo, Sicilia)

The Pirrera of the Labyrinth at the Favorita (Palermo, Sicily)

Marco Vattano^{1,3}, Pietro Todaro², Cipriano Di Maggio³, Giuliana Madonia³

RIASSUNTO

Nel presente articolo vengono presentati i risultati delle prime indagini effettuate in una cava sotterranea di calcarenite ubicata a Palermo. L'ipogeo, interamente scavato nelle Calcareniti di Palermo, litofacies del Sintema di Marsala del Calabrian (Pleistocene inferiore), si trova all'interno del Parco della Favorita, nei pressi del Museo Etnografico G. Pittè e insiste al di sotto di un'area verde priva di costruzioni. Da quanto ricostruito la cava fa parte delle "pirrere" di Pallavicino, strutture realizzate per l'estrazione di conci di calcarenite, utilizzati per la costruzione di opere edili nell'area urbana di Palermo. La cava ha uno sviluppo lineare di poco meno di 340 m, interessa un'area di circa 2000 m² e raggiunge la massima profondità di 8 m dal piano campagna, restando sempre prossima alla superficie e con un esiguo spessore di roccia al tetto. Risulta scavata con lunghi corridoi che intersecandosi isolano dei pilastri di roccia, funzionali a garantire la stabilità dell'ipogeo. Per quanto gli ambienti sotterranei siano in un discreto stato di conservazione e stabilità, anche in questa cava diversi vani risultano invasi da sfrido di cava e materiali antropici fino al loro completo riempimento.

Parole chiave: Cava sotterranea, Labirinto alla Favorita, Pirrera, Calcarenite, Palermo.

ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of first investigations carried out in an underground calcarenite quarry located in Palermo. Entirely excavated in the Calcareniti di Palermo lithofacies of the Marsala Synthem of the Calabrian age, the underground quarry is located in the Parco della Favorita, near the G. Pittè Ethnographic Museum and lies below a green area free of buildings. From what has been reconstructed, the quarry is part of the Pallavicino 'pirrere', facilities realised for the extraction of calcarenite blocks, used for the construction of villas and palaces in this area of Palermo. The 'Pirrere di Pallavicino' are among the last remaining underground quarries in the public green space of the Palermo Plain. They are easily accessible and are now part of the Parco della Favorita. The territory of the Pallavicino quarter has been described since the beginning of the 18th century as arid, barren and unproductive due to the lack of water sources, until the Palermo aristocracy discovered the pleasure of summer holidays with the construction of villas and mansions in the Piana dei Colli countryside. This transformation was also made possible thanks to the exploitation of the underground water-bearing strata in which the area was and is rich, by means of the water systems known as qanāt, or 'lacing wells'. The quarry is a little less than 340 m in length, covers an area of approximately 2000 m² and reaches a maximum depth of 8 m from ground level, always remaining close to the surface and with a small thickness of rock at the roof. It is excavated with long corridors that intersect and isolate rock pillars, which serve to guarantee the stability of the underground environment. The study of the Pirrera of the Labyrinth at the Favorita consisted of several interconnected activities. Careful research and analysis of sources from ancient texts and historical cartographies was carried out to reconstruct the history of the quarry, to identify the date of its opening, the period of its activity and its location. This phase was accompanied by field investigations, during which a detailed topographical survey of the cavity was carried out. However, collecting historical information, has not yet made it possible to find specific references or archive documents indicating the date of the opening of the Pirrera of the Labyrinth at the Favorita and its period of activity. The quarry is characterised by the presence of several entrances, although not all of them are practicable, as some of them are affected by the collapse of the vault, while others are obstructed by earth or entirely occupied by vegetation. In the northernmost sector of the quarry, it is also possible to recognise the original access and handling routes for materials coming from the

Autore di riferimento: Marco Vattano / marco.vattano@gmail.com.

¹ Associazione Speleologica Naturalistica Le Taddarite, Palermo.

² Società Italiana di Geologia Ambientale (SIGEA)-APS.

³ Dipartimento di Scienze della Terra e del Mare, Università degli Studi di Palermo.