

SANTA MARIA NAVARRESE

SITE

Santa Maria Navarrese lies along SS 125, in the territory of Baunei which develops along the central-eastern strip of Sardinia and constitutes, both historically and geographically, the northern limit of the Ogliastra area. This seaside hamlet, on the borders of the Municipality of Lotzorai, is about 8 km from the main town and a few km from Tortolì – Arbatax.

BACKGROUND

Baunei, a settlement dating from Nuragic times, from the 12th century onwards formed part of the Giudicato of Cagliari and from 1257 was incorporated into that of Arborea together with the whole of Ogliastra; during the 13th century it passed under the domination of the Pisans and subsequently under that of the Aragonese. It was always a poor center, basing its livelihood on cultivation and exploitation of communal and privately-owned lands.

The hamlet of Santa Maria Navarrese developed round the church of the same name as an area for offloading the fishermen's catches and sheltering their small boats: sea traders from Genoa, Naples and Sicily stopped here to load farm produce for export. Not far from the church we find the still inhabited stone houses built by the Quilicis, a family of coal merchants, a reminder of times gone by in which the port was of some trading importance. In spite of the vicinity of the sea, the local population never engaged in fishing but rather focused on farming and livestock rearing. Probably as a result of this lack of propensity for fishing, as well as because of the closeness of the plains areas - marshy and rife with epidemics - only recently (in 1960 there were still just a few houses) has this become a tourist locality, initially with the use of holiday homes and subsequently inhabited year-round. In the vicinity of the church there is a stand of a thousand year old olive trees, considered a natural monument, an ancient well and a Spanish tower that closes off the central beach to the north. South of the tower, the beach stretches as far as the municipality of Lotzorai, while to the north there is a modern marina, starting point for the tourist boats heading for the beaches on the gulf. Near the stand of wild olives, facing the main beach an ancient archaeological site is marked by a stele with several cupels on its flat surface. The whole area round Santa Maria Navarrese offers testimonials and monuments demonstrating intense activity and habitation during the Nuragic period: the fortress of Doladorgiu, the Giants' Tombs of Santu Pedru and Annida, the nuraghi of Loppellai, Nuragheddu, Turru and above all of Orgoduri, Alvu and Co' e Serra, where there are also remains of village huts and megalithic graves.

NOTABLE FEATURES

The Church

The Spanish Church of Santa Maria Navarrese, dating from the 11th century, originally had a Romanesque structure, which was however irremediably altered by the restoration works which took place over the centuries and above all by works performed in the 1950s.

The Tower

The coastal tower of Santa Maria Navarrese formed part of the coastal defense system built in the 16th century by Philip II of Spain, to combat the raids of the Barbary pirates. The current tower, built between 1785 and 1790 over a preceding guard post dating from the 16th century, is in the shape of a truncated cone measuring 12 m in base diameter and 10 m in height. Renewal works in the second half of the 19th century added a further floor, used as office space. Moreover the original outer walls, probably in limestone, are today plastered over in cement.

The Park

The urban park of Santa Maria Navarrese, set up by Decree of the Regional Department for the Protection of the Environment no. 22 of 18.01.94, is set back from an inlet facing the Isle of Ogliastra; it hosts a number of different tree species such as carobs and nettle trees, but above all among the wild olives there is a clump of trees dating back thousands of years and protected as a *national monument* by Regional Law 31/89 .

CONTEXT

The municipality of Baunei, created in 1998, taken together with its outlying districts, numbers about 51,198 inhabitants – whereas the main town numbers about 4,100 – and extends over an area of 216 km² with a population density of 18 inhabitants per km². It is situated at 480 m asl and spreads across a limestone ridge facing south west, crossed by the road linking it to the hamlet of Monte Colcau. In the hinterland of the Supramonte of Baunei opens out the plateau of the Golgo, an extensive depression in the limestone territory filled in by a flood of basalt lava, in which some traces of nuraghic times have been found. The terminal portion of the Supramonte moves in the direction of the Tyrrhenian sea in a sequence of cliffs and a steep, mainly limestone coast line that extends for 40 km, broken up by only a few rare beaches which are difficult to access. The most important of these, *Cala Luna* and *Cala Sisine*, represent the terminal portion of the 'codule', singular land formations consisting of deep, narrow valleys, typical of this portion of the eastern coast of Sardinia. The territory is marked by dense native vegetation, with formations deriving from primary Mediterranean forest, with a predominance of brush growth with centuries' old ilex and the junipers which dominate the whole area of *Capo di Monte Santo*.

Law 1497/1939 was the first attempt to protect the territory of Ogliastra and together with law 431/1985 it was transposed into legislative decree 460/1999. The total protected area in the province of Nuoro is 2,496 km², that is no less than 35% of provincial territory. The majority of this protected territory falls within the area of Ogliastra, and in particular in the municipalities of Baunei, Triei, Lotzorai, Girasole, Tortoli, Barisardo and Cardedu.

This area is linked to Nuoro by SS 129 which joins up with SS125, to Olbia again by SS125 and by a portion of highway 131 in the direction Nuoro-Olbia. In general terms, the southern area of Ogliastra is an autonomous system, with Arbatax as its hub connecting it with external areas (both port and airport), albeit less important than other regional hubs.

THEME

S. Maria Navarrese, which came into being as a port for fishermen and traders, marks the transition between the large beach of Lotzorai and the rocky coast of Ogliastra. This village, which in recent times has become a tourist locality, initially with holiday homes and subsequently inhabited year-round, absorbs the greater brunt of summer tourist traffic gravitating around the municipality of Baunei. Its accommodation offer mainly consists of holiday home rentals, several hotels and other accommodation facilities, which are undersized with respect to the true tourist potential of the area. Possible themes for reflection include the rehabilitation of public spaces and green areas paying special attention to enhancement of the main sites of the local cultural heritage, with the aim of introducing a form of year-round, non-seasonal, tourism, better integrated into the social and cultural fabric of the area and not linked exclusively to summer-time enjoyment. An associated issue is the renovation of the built stock to create a widespread hospitality network and small residential hotels. Other themes include access systems and the creation of integrated parking areas with upgrading of spaces for socialization, so as to encourage pedestrian use of the town.

More detailed themes could emerge from addressing these general themes in greater depth, such as the proposal for a series of services and non-permanent structures for the pine woods behind the beach of S. Maria, a true natural oasis within the urban system; or the proposal for new service structures at the port, completing those already existing, linked not only to commerce and restaurants but also with the objective of integrating the area and its port within a more extensive tourist system. This means fostering excursion tourism through creation of a network of territorial services supporting these itineraries and a widespread hospitality network, less 'sensitive' to the seasonality of summer tourism.

Proposals should refer to the goals, guidelines and criteria of the RLP. The present suggestions provided are in no way binding to competitors who are free to supplement and integrate them with other considerations deriving from the study of the village and its relations with the surrounding context.

