



Via Conte Ruggero - CAP 94010 - Italia - Tel. +39 0935 569111 - Fax +39 0935 33426

**Si ringrazia per la traduzione Rita Stivale e Margaret Murphy
Realnese**



It is the second most important pantalican necropolis in Sicily. The Regia trazzera (Royal road) Calascibetta - Gangi goes through the area of the necropolis of Realnese, where it is still possible to see part of the old 'cutu' (sandstone) paving and a section carved out of the living rock.

The trazzera passes through the xibetan countryside, reaching the village of Cacchiamo, near the private chapel of St. Joseph, decorated with 18th century frescoes, annexed to the country home of Baron Bongiorno di Gangi

The ancient road continues along the present "Mint road" and passes near Bordonaro and the ancient castle of King John, a few kilometers from Cacchiamo, reaching Gangi and Cefalù on the Tyrrhenian coast. The necropolis of Realnese 9th century B.C.E. (protohistoric era) has 288 tombs of the Pantalican type, and re-used in the 6th century BCE (Archaicperiod.).

The excavation of this archeologicigal site was carried out in 1949-1950 under the direction of Luigi Bernabò Brea. The finds include pottery, small knives, rings, earrings and buckles, as well as miniature artifacts that are all displayed in the Museo Regionale Paolo Orsi in Syracuse., along with a big black and white photo of the site during the excavation works.



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Canalotto



È This is a rocky settlement of the late Roman – Byzantine period.

In Sicily the Byzantine occupation began in 535 c.e. with the general Belisarius whose conquests reached the center of the island and changed the habits and customs of the local population. The Byzantine conquerors brought their formal and iconographic heritage of primitive Christianity to the island.

During the Byzantine domination the population of what is now Calascibetta lived in small villages in the countryside, only a few kilometers from the town center. After the Arab conquest, they moved gradually to the highest part of Calascibetta where we find the first Arab nucleus with narrow, winding streets, such as Via Balata and Via S. Agata, and they occupied the rocky dwellings of the early troglodyte inhabitants.

The regia trazzera (royal road) Calascibetta - Alimena is the natural continuation northwards of the regia trazzera Calascibetta – Palagonia, but the original name of the ancient route was Siracusae - Thermai, passing through Calascibetta and leading to today's Termini Imerese.

This old route shows yet again a historical past, rich in stories of the early centuries of Christianity. In Canalotto, about half a mile from the trazzera and only five minutes drive from Calascibetta, there is a whole cave village from the Byzantine era.

The community used these rocky environments for both civil and religious uses. They lived independently, collecting water from canyons which they created in the rocks. From here water flowed into smaller pools for practical use.

The village has two two-story rock churches and thirty caves at different levels, used as dwellings or as shelters for animals. Above the door of one of these caves we can clearly distinguish a cross carved in the rock in testimony of the Christian faith.

On the walls can be seen small niches carved into the rock used for funeral urns, as the cult of the dead still followed the ritual of the Roman Empire: the dead were cremated and their ashes collected in urns.

The villagers also used a stream that passed nearby and flowed into the Morello river about seven miles away. Naturally in ancient times, communities used to settle in places near water resources.



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Contrada Quattrocchi



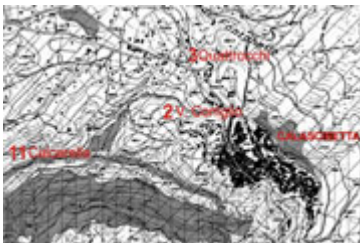
The district dates back to the sixth century BCE and consists of two tombs, one big enough for two bodies and the second one for five. The finds, decorated pottery of different shapes, can be seen in the Paolo Orsi museum in Syracuse.

Malpasso



This necropolis dates back to the period between 2500 and 2300 BCE, and has nine tombs of three different types. The monochromatic pottery is preserved in the Paolo Orsi Museum in Syracuse.

Valle Coniglio



The Valle Coniglio necropolis, whose existence was discovered in 1950, is made up of 21 tombs, but currently not all of them are identifiable. Artifacts such as vases, cups and amphorae have been found together with personal objects such as precious silver buckles and rings.

Cozzo S. Giuseppe



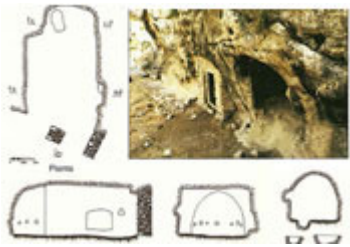
In this cave complex there are two sylos for food from the Roman period carved into the bedrock. On one of the walls there are Byzantine graphic symbols.



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Calcarella



78 graves from the late Bronze age have been found in this site. They are located in the lower part of the valley and 18, from the same period, on the top part of the Destro district.