

## **Pordenone, Roman Villa**

The first excavations that led to the discovery of the ancient structures of the Roman villa were carried out by Count Giuseppe di Ragogna, owner of the castle of Torre and a passionate lover of archaeology, between 1950 and 1952 through two excavation campaigns in the area of the present shore left of the river Noncello.

Investigations began following the signalling of the outcrop of wall crests in the land owned by the adjacent Cotonificio Olcese. During the first campaign of 1950 the foundations of an articulated architectural complex were brought to light, which was interpreted by Ragogna as a thermal building, due to the presence of elements (pillars and pipes) usually used in thermal rooms heated with hot air flowing under the floor. With the second campaign of 1952 the consolidation and restoration of the structures brought to light was mainly carried out.

Further studies on the masonry, on the decorative apparatuses found and the archaeological investigations carried out between 2008 and 2009 in the area of the park of the Castle, have allowed to recognize in this site the existence of a vast residential and productive complex, datable between the end of the first century B.C. and the fourth century A.D.; this was distributed with a single building project in several sectors with different intended uses, both in the area excavated by the count in the Noncello valley, where it was probably the productive part, and in the height now occupied by the church and the park of the Castle, where perhaps the residential space was located and, maybe, the servile environments. The villa was endowed with rich and refined wall and floor decorations, given by exceptional frescoed plaster and fine marble coatings. This wealth presupposes that the owner had been a rich and cultured person, perhaps linked to the imperial house of the Julio-Claudian era (end of the 1st century B.C. - first half of the 1st century A.D.).

All the material found during the excavation campaigns, in particular the decorative apparatuses, are today exhibited in the Archaeological Museum of Western Friuli, set up in the halls of the Castle of Torre.

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