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REGIONE AUTÓNOMA DE SARDIGNA  
REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA

# Archaeological area of Tharros

Patrimonio culturale  
**SARDEGNA** Virtual Archaeology



## ■ Female mask

Terracotta masks are one of the best known products of Phoenician and Punic art. In the western part of the Mediterranean, in the Punic Age, there was a certain uniformity of representations, for which Carthage appears to be the main centre of diffusion.

The female “Egyptian” masks are the more common group from the end of the 6th B.C. and throughout the 5th century and are particularly found in the necropolis.

The so-called Tanit Gouin, named after the collector who came into possession of it, probably comes from the southern Tharros necropolis and is one of the most famous and best-preserved examples of this art (fig. 1).



**Fig. 1** - Female mask in terracotta known as the “Tanit Gouin” (Archaeological Superintendency Archive)

The woman, whose head is covered with a headscarf decorated with shells in concentric circles; her ears are shown flattened to the sides of her face, with large almond-shaped eyes and a large, ancient-style, smiling mouth.

The mask is hollow and unfinished at the back, and has a hole for hanging it on the top of the head.

Tharros has turned up a large number of female masks, with different details (fig. 2) and that are more detailed as time went on (fig. 3).



**Fig. 2** - Female mask from Tharros, with head cloth that descends over the neck in folds (from CIASCA 1988, p. 363)



**Fig. 3** - Female mask from Tharros, with outlined lines and details (Oristano, *Antiquarium Arborensis*)  
(photo by Unicity S.p.A.)

The dig on a chamber tomb in Sulci (Sant'Antioco) dated between the end of the 6th century and the start of the 5th century B.C. allowed the position of these masks in the graves to be identified, deposited above the wooden coffin that contained the deceased person (fig. 4).



**Fig. 4** - Female Mask from the tomb 12 AR in Sulci, from the end of the VI-beginning of the 5th century B.C. (from TRONCHETTI 1997a, p. 114)

## ■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Carlo Tronchetti

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