



UNIONE EUROPEA



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REGIONE AUTÓNOMA DE SARDIGNA
REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA

Archaeological area of Tharros

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ The Tophet

The tophet is a particular necropolis, specific for Phoenician and Punic towns in the West. It is an area for depositing cremation urns of deceased children or newborn babies, or small sacrificed and cremated animals. The tophet area is usually without structures, although there are sometimes urns gathered together within boundaries marked by stones or slabs. Stone stelae also began to appear in the Punic age, sculpted with various symbols. The tophet was recognised as a sure clue that the centre it stood in had reached the status of city.

The Tharros tophet stands on the top of the Su Muru Mannu hill, exploiting the remains of the huts from a previous Nuragic village (figs. 1-3).



Fig. 1 - The area of the Nuragic village on which the tophet stands (photo by Unicity S.p.A.)



Fig. 2 - The tophet during the dig (by ACQUARO, FINZI 1986)



Fig. 3 - The tophet during the dig (Cagliari and Oristano Archaeological Superintendency)

In the Roman era, dwellings were built on the tophet and several stelae were re-used as building materials, in one case to make the podium of an important building, which no longer exists above ground (fig. 4).



Fig. 4 - The podium of a Roman building built with stones from the Punic tophet (photo by Unicity S.p.A.)

The Tharros tophet was built in the final decades of the 8th century B.C. And the last period of frequentation was the 2nd century B.C.

From 1974 to 1998 the tophet was investigated by a mission from the Phoenician and Punic Study Centre from the CNR in Rome, with a consequent publication of results, with annual dig reports and summary values of the materials found.

■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Carlo Tronchetti

■ Bibliography

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La Sardegna cresce con l'Europa



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