



UNIONE EUROPEA



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REGIONE AUTÓNOMA DE SARDIGNA
REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA

Archaeological area of Tharros

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ The mausoleum in the moat

The moat from the northern fortifications on Su Muru Mannu was no longer used after 50 B.C., and from the 1st century A.D. onwards, was used to build a small necropolis (fig. 1).

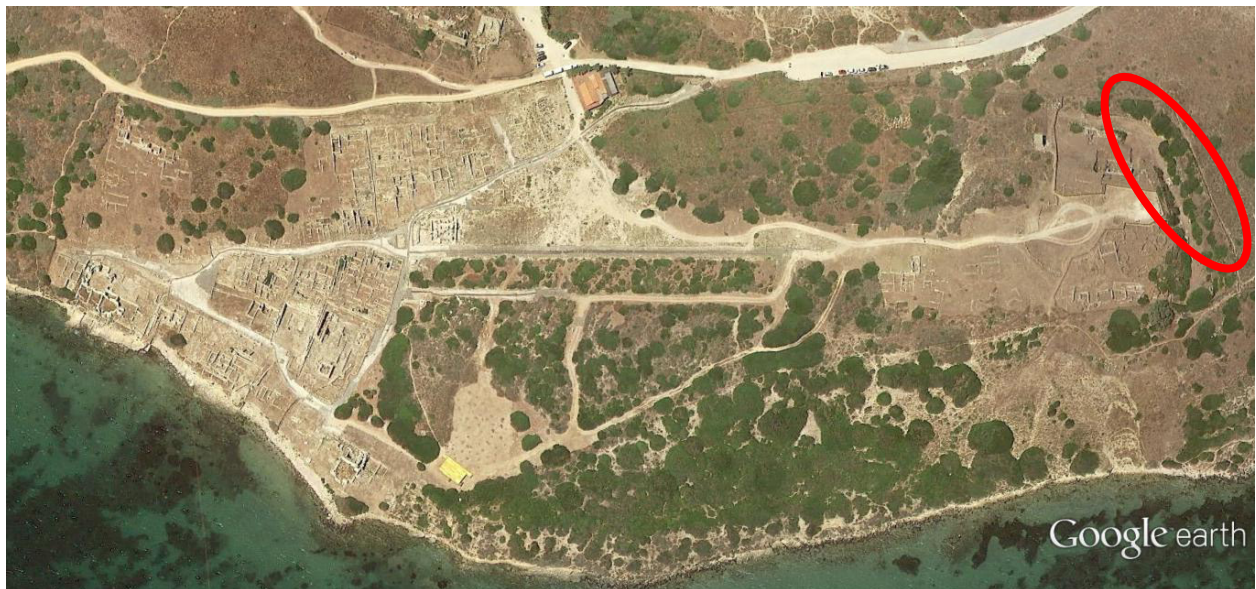


Fig. 1 - Location of the necropolis in the moat at Su Muru Mannu (from Google Earth. Reprocessed by C. Tronchetti)



Fig. 2 - The moat and the Roman necropolis (photo by Unicity S.p.A.)

There is a small funeral building in the burial area, found in a fair state of conservation, that was placed in front of the opening of the postern in the old boundary wall (fig. 3).



Fig. 3 - The mausoleum built in front of the postern (photo C. Tronchetti)

The building was simple, with a small square fence, perhaps open-air, made from blocks joined by limestone mortar, that could be accessed by two steps, and paved with stones. On one side, there was a real tomb, already violated and destroyed in earlier times, but which can still be identified as a mound, i.e. with a parallelepiped and an upper vaulted part (fig. 4), widely found in the moat necropolis.



Fig. 4 - The mausoleum built in front of the postern (photo C. Tronchetti)

This small mausoleum had a square block base, one of which carries a relief sculpture of an axe (fig. 5).



Fig. 5 - Base of the mausoleum with the symbol of an axe (photo C. Tronchetti)

The sign of the axe was well known throughout the western Roman world, where it has been found on tombs from the Roman Empire era. Its interpretation is not unique and shared by all experts: the most commonly accepted one interprets the axe as a sign to ward off evil and therefore protect the tomb; others believe it represents the type of burial by inhumation as opposed to cremation; another interpretation is the axe as a mystic symbol.

below the floor, about 60 cm down, there was a small stone sarcophagus, with two parts that don't match well to reach the necessary length, that contained the remains of a person and a few glass fragments, residues from burial items (fig. 6).



Fig. 6 - The sarcophagus with the remains of the deceased (photo C. Tronchetti)

This small monument has been dated thanks to a bronze coin from the Emperor Domitian's reign, between 88 and 89 AD, which was found in the foundations.

■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Carlo Tronchetti

■ Bibliography

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