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REGIONE AUTÒNOMA DE SARDIGNA  
REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA

# Archaeological area of Mount Sirai

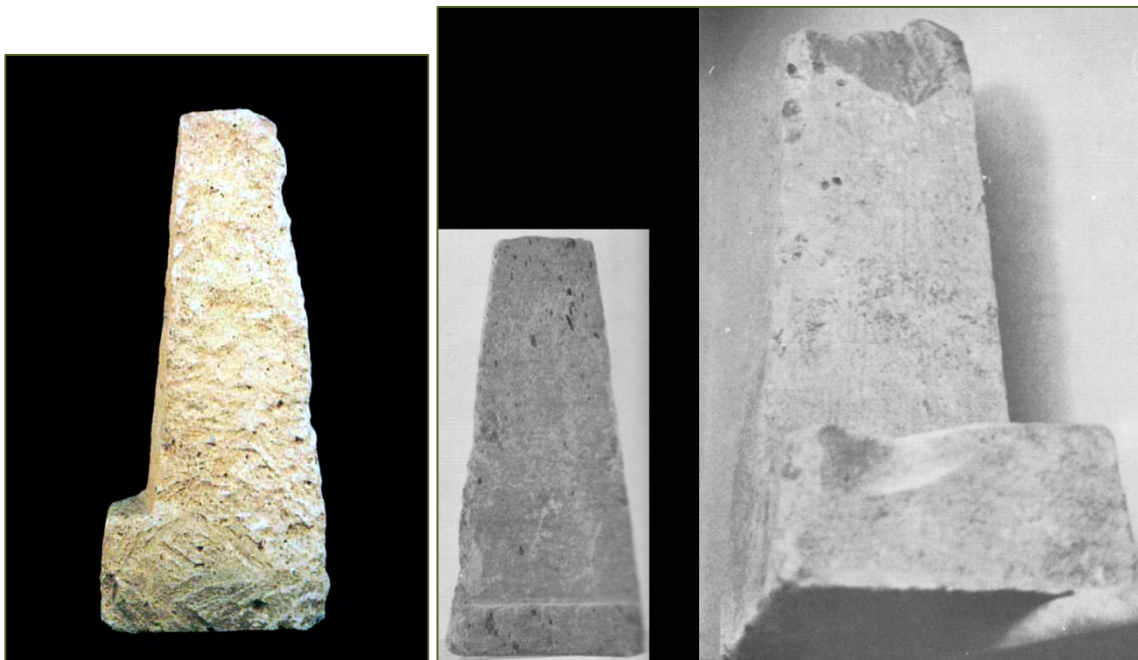
Patrimonio culturale  
**SARDEGNA** Virtual Archaeology



## ■ Bethel from the temple of Astarte

During the complete investigation carried out in the area of the temple of Astarte, important holy stone items were found, from different eras.

During the temple dig (fig. 3 in the area highlighted in yellow) the end of 3rd century B.C. Layer returned a bethel with a jutting out base, near the small statue of Astarte. It dates to a later period, as is also clear for the statue and for the materials found on other levels in the same context, such as the bronze figures, for example. The bethel, that may date to the 6th-5th century BC, is close to the aniconic representations known in Punic stelae, particularly in the so-called 'stone-throne', where were well-known in nearby Sulky. The known connection of the bethel with the goddess Astarte makes its association with the statue even more significant, even if historically re-used.



**Fig. 1, 2** - Bethel from the temple of Astarte" (BARTOLONI 2004, fig. 4); stele with bethel from Sulci, a 'throne-stone' (MOSCATI, BARTOLONI 1986, 'Catalogue', nos. 42-43).

Again in the sacred complex area (fig. 3 highlighted in green), but this time probably relating to a period way before the Phoenician era, there is a stone decorated with cups (fig. 4), a residue of one of the two *menhirs* found in the so-called tower-quarry area.



**Figs. 3, 4** - The temple of Astarte (photo by Unicity S.p.A.) and the menhir with cups (BARTOLONI 2004, fig. 4).

Archaeological analysis has shown that the *menhirs* used again in the Hellenistic period, around the last decades of the 3rd century BC. They are traces of a previous prehistoric phase already found in wall and items from Monte Claro culture, found on the tophet high plain and the hypogeum necropolis, in the residential area and in tomb 207.

## ■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Giuseppina Manca di Mores and Prof. Marcello Madau

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