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REGIONE AUTÒNOMA DE SARDIGNA
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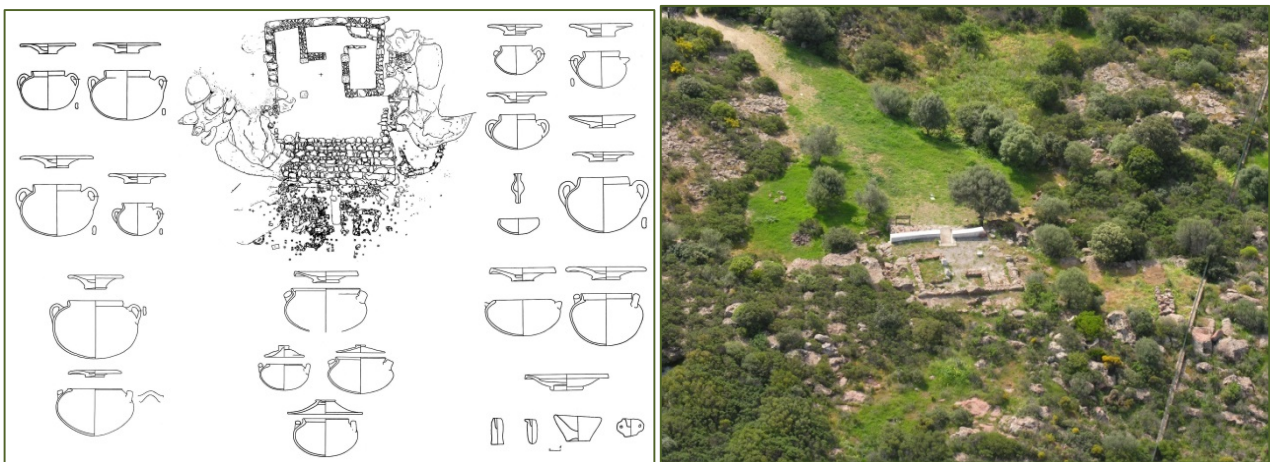
Archaeological area of Mount Sirai

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ The urns from the *tophet*

In the *tophet*, the Phoenician sanctuary reserved for deceased infants who died by periodical ritual sacrifice according to some experts, by premature birth or abortion, according to others, and where in any case the ceremony included a purification sacrifice using fire, combusted human remains (and those of animals) were placed in urns, sometimes together with stelae (figs. 1-2).



Figs. 1, 2 - The area of the *tophet* and the types of urns (GUIRGUIS 2013, fig. 7).

About four hundred have been found in two layers, dated between the 4th and 2nd century BC. They are round urns (figs. 3-4) with vertical handles, or horizontal handles on the upper part of the body, that are variante of kitchen pots. They were covered by a plate or lid when buried (of typical Punic or Athens traditional style in the former case).



Figs. 3, 4 - Examples of urns with relative lids (GUIRGUIS 2013, fig. 44; MARRAS 1998, fig. 49).

The current arrangement of the site has some copies of the urns and stelae (fig. 5). A reconstruction of the “field of urns” offered by the Nuovo Museo Civico Archeologico Villa Sulcis in Carbonia.



Fig. 5 - Reproductions of urns and stelae from the Monte Sirai *tophet* (photo MANCA DI MORES 2015)

■ Credits

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

■ Bibliography

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La Sardegna cresce con l'Europa



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