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REGIONE AUTONOMA DE SARDIGNA  
REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA

# Necropoli of Is Pirixeddus

Patrimonio culturale  
**SARDEGNA** Virtual Archaeology



## ■ Gold and enamel ring

Gold and silver jewellery of different shapes was unearthed from the necropolis in Sulky. One of the most beautiful examples is gold with a so-called *cloisonné* decoration, an artistic enamelling technique already used in ancient Egypt and the Near East from the third millennium B.C., in which a few thin wires (filigrees) or metal strips were welded to a surface to be decorated thereby creating small cells (in French *cloisons*) inside which coloured enamel was cast, thus obtaining a sort of mosaic, where the tiles are surrounded exactly by the metal strips. The Sulky ring is worked according to this technique on a round set-ting, decorated with a central flower with alternate blue and white petals, surrounded by five filigree circles in turn framed by a series of small arcs which also alternate blue and white (fig. 1).



**Fig. 1** - Cloisonné ring found in the necropolis of Sulky.  
Municipal Archaeological Museum "F. Barreca" (photo by Unicity S.p.A.).

The flat knitted filigree band is welded to the setting, while two tubular foils ending in two coils at the sides of the setting are welded along the edges of the band itself (figs. 2-3)



**Fig. 2** - Side view of the *cloisonné* ring. Municipal Archaeological Museum "F. Barreca" (photo by Unicity S.p.A.)





**Fig. 3** - Detail of the Sulky ring band. Municipal Archaeological Museum "F. Barreca" (photo by Unicity S.p.A.).

The type just seen is one of the most complex and particular, although a ring was found in the same necropolis of Sulky with the same petal motif on the setting, but smaller, which is in a poor state of preservation. There are no significant comparisons with other sites in the Punic Mediterranean, however there are examples of filigree work that, together with the granulation technique, was widely used in Phoenician and Punic jewellery making (figs. 4-5).





**Fig. 4** - Edged ring decorated with filigree and granulation, from Carthage. Museum of Bardo, Tunis (from Pisano 1988, p.373).



**Fig. 5** - Corolla-shaped stud, with filigree workmanship, found in Tharros. National Archaeological Museum of Sassari "G.A. Sanna" (from Pisano 1988, p. 387).

Jewels are one of the most characteristic and significant aspects of Phoenician-Punic craftsmanship. The development of this class of materials, with the possibilities offered by trading of metal along Mediterranean routes, is linked to an artistic tradition that was rich and successful for centuries in the Phoenician motherland. In Sardinia, the evidence from Tharros so far appears to be the largest and most important because of the quality and quantity of the jewellery as well as of the other athyrmata (bric-a-brac). It is hard to say whether the Sulky ring was forged in a workshop in Sulky or whether it hails from the well-known ones in Tharros, or even from Phoenicia. The doubt in question comes from the evidence of a substantial homogeneity and conservatory nature of this kind of production that makes it difficult to distinguish between items made in the East and those in the West. The hoarding of jewels that could be kept for several generations, always being used, limits the possibility of precise chronological definition, as even when found in easily datable archaeological contexts, it isn't possible to deduce the period of actual production, but only that of use.

Precious metal jewellery was adornment and very probably were indications of belonging to a high social class with great economic possibilities. According to their symbolic and magic depictions, they also had to ward off evil, and it is likely that these were specifically created to adorn the dead.



## ■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Cinzia Olianas

## ■ Bibliographic abbreviations

BARTOLONI 2007      P. BARTOLONI, *Il museo archeologico comunale "F. Barreca" di Sant'Antioco*, Sassari 2007

PISANO 1989      G. PISANO, *I gioielli*, in Aa. Vv., *I Fenici*, Milano 1989, pp. 370-393.





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