



# Necropolis of Is Pirixeddus

Patrimonio culturale  
**SARDEGNA** Virtual Archaeology



## ■ The wooden sarcophagus of tomb no. 11

Tomb no. 11 of the Punic necropolis of Sant'Antioco produced an exceptional finding, a portion of wooden sarcophagus with the lid sculpted into the shape of a woman. The hypogeum, that has the traditional partition of the chamber with a wall that divides the area into two cells and a cross rectangular ante-cell, housed about fifteen burials, datable to the second half of the 5th and the first half of the 4th century B.C. (fig. 1).



**Fig. 1** - Right cell of the burial chamber of tomb no. 11 (from BERNARDINI 2010, table II, 1).

The first occupant of the chamber was buried inside a wooden coffin with an elaborate system of hinges and bronze handles, the sides of which are decorated in red, blue and green paint, with palms, other plants and stars; the upper part of the coffin has relief work and traces of paint, the image of a woman with a feather-covered dress (fig. 2), of which remains the head, crowned by an elegant *pòlos* headdress, with painted drops in red and blue, and elegant lines emphasised by the colours red and black.



**Fig. 2** - The sarcophagus with the female figure found in tomb n. 11 (from BERNARDINI 2010, table II, 2).

At the base of the nose there is a *nezèm*, a bronze ring that is a precious example of the mix between eastern and Greek iconography, that shows the Phoenicians' skill in mediation and adopting figurative elements from other cultures, giving rise to original artistic productions.





**Fig. 3** - Detail of the face of the female figure carved on the sarcophagus of tomb no. 11  
(from BERNARDINI 2010, table III, 1).

The figure, although deteriorated, can still be seen: the right arm is lying along her side and ends with the hand gripping a scroll; her body is wrapped in a garment which is shaped like two folded wings and whose feathers are painted blue and green (fig. 4).





**Fig. 4** - Detail of the painting on the folded wings of the figure engraved on the sarcophagus in burial chamber no. 11 (from BERNARDINI 2010, table III, 2).

A similar image is found in the famous marble sarcophagus found in the necropolis of Santa Monica of Carthage (fig. 5) dated to the 4th century B.C. A good wooden relief work covered in gold leaf, datable to the 3rd century B.C., was found in the necropolis of Kerkouane, the ancient Punic town on Capo Bon, in Tunisia, an item that carried a completely different iconograph.





**Fig. 5** - The marble sarcophagus found in the necropolis of Santa Monica in Carthage  
(from [https://inferneland.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/sarkophag\\_d.jpg](https://inferneland.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/sarkophag_d.jpg))

Chronologically, therefore, the sarcophagus in question is in some way a precursor of said craftsmen's experiences.

## ■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Cinzia Olianas

## ■ Bibliographic abbreviations

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## ■ Periodicals and magazines

- AlmGa*** *Almanacco Gallurese*, Tempio Pausania, I, 1992 e ss.
- Quaderni di Darwin*** *Darwin Quaderni: Archeologia in Sardegna*, I, marzo/aprile 2004 e ss.



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