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Necropolis of Is Pirixeddus

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ Cappuccina Tomb

The remains of the Roman necropolis in ancient *Sulky* have largely disappeared, due to the fact that the Romans created their imperial necropolis above the Punic underground one, often using *dromoi* to lay their dead, so burials tended to stay close to the surface and were therefore exposed to damage or destruction due to agricultural work or to other reasons. The Cappuccina tomb was one of the characteristic forms of burial during the Roman Empire and was one destined for the lowest classes of society (fig. 1); they were often rather poor tombs, in some cases without the accompanying burial items.



Fig. 1 - Two Cappuccina tombs in the necropolis of *Is Pirixeddus* in San'Antioco (photo by Unicity SpA).

They are constructed with a bed of clay roof tiles, on which the deceased was placed, which was then covered by other large tiles arranged as a pitched roof (fig. 2).



Fig. 2 - The pitched roof arrangement of the tiles covering the Cappuccina tomb (photo by Unicity SpA).

In other cases, the deceased was laid directly on the bare ground, in a wooden coffin or on a litter still made of wood: this aspect is evidenced by the discovery of iron nails in several of *Sulky's* tombs.

The Cappuccina tombs of Sant'Antioco are usually placed in a shallow grave dug in tuff and with the tiles supported by stones or plates. The roof tiles may be three or four per side. Only one part has shown any burial items in these tombs: each tomb could contain a minimum of one item and a maximum of seven. These are not rich collections, usually comprising two locally-made pyriform jugs accompanied by an oil lamp, often important from North Africa and/or a fine pottery shape for the table (light terra sigillata ware) also imported from Africa (figs. 3-4).



Fig. 3 - Single handle pyriform jug. Municipal Archaeological Museum "F. Barreca" (photo by Unicity S.p.A.)





Fig. 4 - Plate and bowl fragment in light African red sigillata, with a stamp in *planta pedis* and an oil lamp found in the necropolis at the Municipal Archaeological Museum "F. Barreca" (photo by C. Olianias).

Inside some burial item collections, coins have been found, one of which refers to Gordian III (238-244 A.D.). One last finding that is worth mentioning is a small statue of Venus which still retains its original colours and which was found in a Cappuccina tomb then renamed the "Tomb of the Blonde Venus" (fig. 5). As concerns the dating of the examined tombs in Sulky, on the basis of the study of the grave goods, they can be placed in a period between the 2nd and 3rd century A.D.



Fig. 5 - A statuette depicting Venus, from the "tomb of the Blonde Venus" at the Municipal Archaeological Museum "F. Barreca" (photo by Unicity S.p.A.)

■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Cinzia Olianas

■ Bibliographic abbreviations

- TRONCHETTI 1989 C. TRONCHETTI, *S. Antioco*, Sassari 1989.
- TRONCHETTI 1990 B C. TRONCHETTI, *La necropoli romana di Sulci. Scavi 1978: relazione preliminare* = QuadCa 1990, pp. 173-192.

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