



Necropolis of Is Pirixeddus

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ Post-cremation burials

Punic and Roman Age cremation burials were found at the *Is Pirixeddus* necropolis at Sant'Antioco.

Cremation took place in Sulky in the Punic period, between the third and second centuries B.C. This was not a case of restoring the Phoenician age ritual (8th-6th century B.C.) but the result of spreading the Hellenistic culture and therefore a Greek burial ritual, in the overview of a *koinè* born from the feats of Alexander the Great in the East and that started in Sardinia with the Roman conquest of the island in 238 B.C. In these cases, containers were often used for bones that had previously had a domestic use, such as small jugs, urns, amphorae (fig. 1) next to which a burial stone or a large *sema* stone was often placed.



Fig. 1 - Small Punic amphora manufactured in Carthage used as an ossuary. Municipal Archaeological Museum "F. Barreca" (from BARTOLONI 2007, p. 91, fig. 60).

Sulky also evidences cremated corpses without urns, whose ashes and burned bones were probably buried after being collected in small shrouds. Numerous artefacts of this kind

have been found inside the underground chamber tombs, placed, together with simple grave goods, above the pre-existing layer of buried people, or in the side niches with a layer of pebbles as bedding.

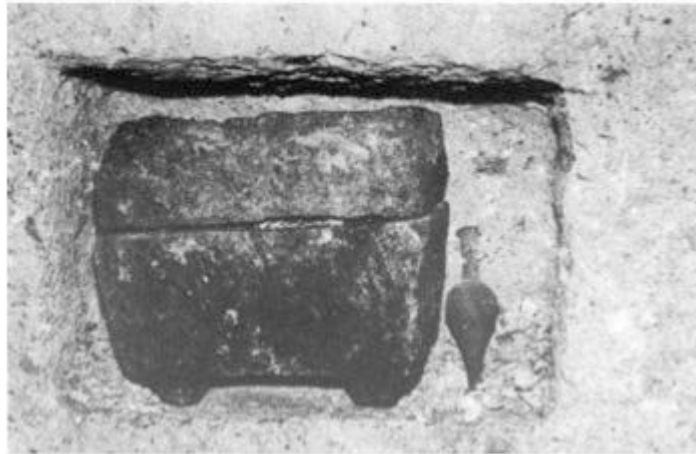


Fig. 2 - Funerary urn with Roman ointment-holder placed in a niche in a Punic underground chamber in Sulky
(from TRONCHETTI 1989, p. 35, fig. 21).

The hypogeum chambers in the Punic burial site were used again for cremations in the Roman Era. In fact, the cremated remains of the deceased were placed in square stone boxes with or without feet, sometimes placed inside niches (figs. 2-4) or inside square or round lead urns, or very often inside terracotta containers with lids or sealed with limestone.





Fig. 3 - Stone box used as a container for ashes and burned bones, still arranged inside it. Municipal Archaeological Museum "F. Barreca" (photo by M. Murgia).



Fig. 4 - Stone urns with lid from the Roman period. Municipal Archaeological Museum "F. Barreca" (photo by M. Murgia).

In other cases, the remains of the cremated corpses were put outside the chambers, in urns, jars or jugs, placed in shallow graves, next to a grave marker generally consisting of a stone. The conservation state of these containers is generally poor and the necropolis of Sulky has returned two almost intact ones only in one case, complete with a lid, which survived because the pit in which they were positioned was covered with a large squared stone placed as a grave marker.

■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Cinzia Olianas

■ Bibliographic abbreviations

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