



UNIONE EUROPEA



REPUBBLICA ITALIANA



REGIONE AUTÒNOMA DE SARDIGNA  
REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA

# Giants' tomb of Thomes

Patrimonio culturale  
**SARDEGNA** Virtual Archaeology



## ■ African oil lamp (Codula of Fuili)

In one of the many grottoes in Codula di Fuili<sup>1</sup> (fig. 1), in the Dorgali area, a terracotta lantern was found made in African slip ware (fig. 2).



**Fig. 1** - Cala Fuili (from <http://www.sardegnaigitallibrary.it/mmt/480/103001.jpg>).

---

<sup>1</sup> Cala Fuili is positioned in a dominant point suitable for controlling the coast below, in an area which includes a Nuraghe and an adjoining settlement. The large Nuraghic and historical settlement of Nuraghe Mannu rests on a plateau of volcanic origin (about 200 m above sea level) from which it controls the Gulf of Orosei and the natural gateway of Codula of Fuili which begins from the bay of the same name near Cala Gonone. Recent archaeological investigations conducted in the field in 2005-2006 by archaeologist Fabrizio Delussu within the historical settlement of Nuraghe Mannu, under the Scientific Direction of the Officer of the Archaeological Superintendence of Sardinia Maria Ausilia Fadda, revealed the remains of a Roman settlement (II cent. B.C - VI century AD) partially overlaying the Nuraghic one, connected to the trade and coastal shipping routes along the east coast of Sardinia (Delussu F., *Nuraghe Mannu (Dorgali, Nu): scavi dell'abitato tardo-romano e altomedievale (campagne 2005-2006)*, in *FastiOnline*, 165, 2009, pages 1-13).

This oil lamp (measurements: length: 12.1 cm; max width 7.9 cm; max height 5.7 cm) is in smooth, clay and pure dark red clay. It has a circular tank, a short round lip and a long open channel, separate from the body, with traces of black, a flat shoulder decorated with a plant motif of two palm leaves inside a band, that is divided at the side of the channel with two hollow circles. The channelled handle, which is vertical and does not jut out behind, has two symmetrical swirls underneath, with one vertical one in the centre. The bottom has an engraved crown foot, with a small circumference in the centre.

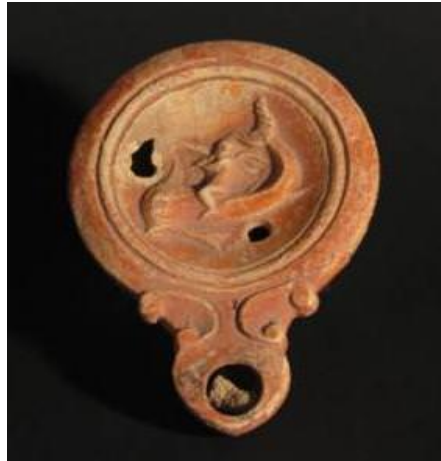


**Fig. 2** - Oil lamp from Codula Fuili (from [http://www.museoarcheologicodorgali.it/wp/museo\\_archeologia\\_in\\_sardegna/la-storia-di-dorgali-in-20-reperti/](http://www.museoarcheologicodorgali.it/wp/museo_archeologia_in_sardegna/la-storia-di-dorgali-in-20-reperti/)).

The concave disc, with a double *infundibulum*<sup>2</sup>, separated from the shoulder by a raised border up to the edge of the canal, is decorated at the top, according to the interpretation shared by archaeologist Roberto Caprara and Maria Rosaria Manunza, the archaeologist officer of the Archaeological Superintendence Department of Sardinia, with a stylised dolphin darting with its tail up in the direction of the lip. This decoration, inherited from Paganism as it is associated with the worship of Apollo, found often in the decoration of disk and swirl oil lamps (fig. 3), is linked to the concept of deliverance in Christian iconography.

---

<sup>2</sup> The *infundibulum* in the oil lamp is the hole placed in the upper part to insert pour in the oil.



**Fig. 3** - Sample of oil lamp with volute spout bearing a darting dolphin ridden by Eros embossed on the disc, from the southern necropolis of Tharros, first century AD, on display at the *Antiquarium Arborensense* of Oristano (from [http://www.antiquariumarborensense.it/it/Museo/Archivi/Reperti/Immagini/076\\_DSC\\_5529.jpg?\\_\\_scale=w:600,h:450,t:1,p:6,c:3c2a1e](http://www.antiquariumarborensense.it/it/Museo/Archivi/Reperti/Immagini/076_DSC_5529.jpg?__scale=w:600,h:450,t:1,p:6,c:3c2a1e)).

This type of lamp produced in central Tunisia, well documented in Sardinia (fig. 4), and widespread throughout the Western Mediterranean (type 2a Pohl/Hayes/Atlas VIII) may be dated within the period of production of this typology from the mid IV to the VI century AD.

Because of its shape, the mark under its handle and the dolphin, it may be compared with a nearly identical lamp kept at the Civic Museum of Bologna, from which the Bologna specimen differs only because of its smaller size and because of the opposite representation of the subject, on the right, with the tail pointing towards the handle.

Based on some elements, such as a not overly stylised type of dolphin and the type of palmetto, it may be chronologically placed within the period of production of this typology during the sixth century AD.





**Fig. 4** - Olbia, oil lamps shape VIII (from Pietra 2013, fig. 4, p. 134).

The finding is on display in the Archaeological Museum of Dorgali.

## ■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Emanuela Atzeni

## ■ Bibliography

ANSELMINO L., PAVOLINI C., *Terra sigillata: lucerne*, in *Atlante delle forme ceramiche I. Ceramica fine romana nel bacino mediterraneo (medio e tardo impero)*, Supplemento all'Enciclopedia dell'arte antica classica e orientale, Roma 1981, pp. 184-207.

CAPRARA R., *Tombe di giganti nel Dorgalese*, in *Dorgali. Documenti Archeologici*, Sassari 1980, pp. 267-268.

CARRADA F., *Le lucerne*, in MARTORELLI R., MUREDDU D. (a cura di), *Scavi sotto la chiesa di S. Eulalia a Cagliari. Notizie preliminari*, *Archeologia medievale*, 29, 2002, pp. 318-321.

GRAZIANI ABBIANI M., *Lucerne fittili paleocristiane nell'Italia Settentrionale*, Bologna 1969.

MANUNZA M.R., *Dorgali*, in LILLIU G. (a cura di), *L'Antiquarium Arborense e i civici musei archeologici della Sardegna*, Oristano, 1988, p. 156.

PIETRA G., *Lucerne tardo antiche dal porto di Olbia*, in *ArcheoArte*, Rivista elettronica di Archeologia e Arte, <http://archeoarte.unica.it/2>, 2013, pp. 121-139.

PULACCHINI D., *Il museo archeologico di Dorgali*, *Sardegna Archeologica. Guide e itinerari*, 27, Sassari 1998, p. 42.

SALVI D., *Luce sul tempo: la necropoli di Pill'e Matta, Quartucciu*, Cagliari 2005.

SANGIORGI S., *Suppellettile da illuminazione*, in MARTORELLI R., MUREDDU D. (a cura di), *Archeologia urbana a Cagliari. Scavi in Vico III Lanusei (1996-1997)*, Cagliari 2006, pp. 145-147.



UNIONE EUROPEA



REPUBBLICA ITALIANA



**REGIONE AUTÒNOMA DE SARDIGNA**  
**REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA**

## La Sardegna cresce con l'Europa



UNIONE EUROPEA

Progetto cofinanziato dall'Unione Europea  
Programma Operativo FESR 2007-2013

FESR - Fondo Europeo di Sviluppo Regionale - Asse I, Linea di Attività 1.2.3.a