

The area of the Cornus basilicas

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ Grave goods of Patriga (t.80)

In the eastern cemetery area of Columbaris amongst the 157 tombs found there is the capuchin one no. 80 (fig. 1), located in sector IV 2. That tomb held a young noble woman named Patriga. It contained carefully arranged grave goods including a buckle, a hairpin (fig. 2) a cup and an *unguentarium*.

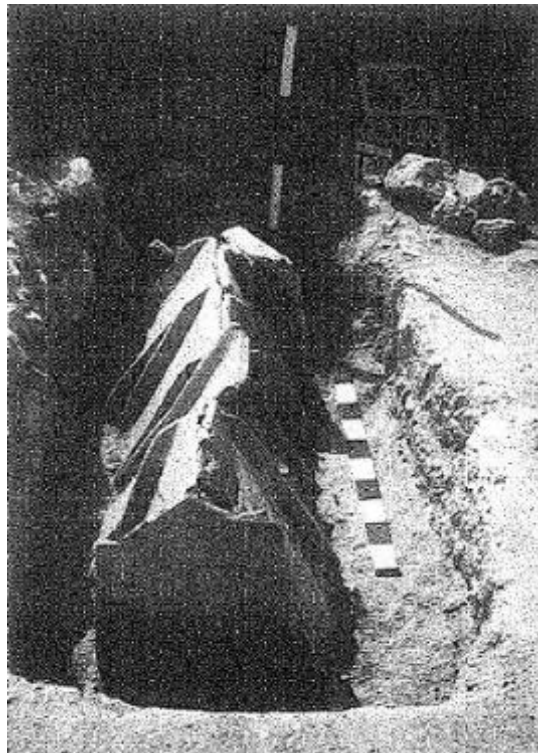


Fig. 1 - Capuchin tomb 80 (from *Cornus* I.1, p. 145).



Fig. 2 - Buckle and pin found in T. 80 (from PANI ERMINI, ZUCCA 1989, p. 264, fig. 26).

The buckle was found at the height of the deceased woman's collar bone: it has a beaded edge, a groove made from small triangles and the central button-shaped boss (fig. 3) used to close the cloak that the woman was wearing. The brooch is silver and the tongue bronze while the hook is in bronze, with a intact spiral and block. This item provides a decisive date, as it can be attributed to the 6th-7th century; this is supported by another three items found in Sardinia (fig. 4) and shows a typical item of clothing in the Roman-Byzantine age.

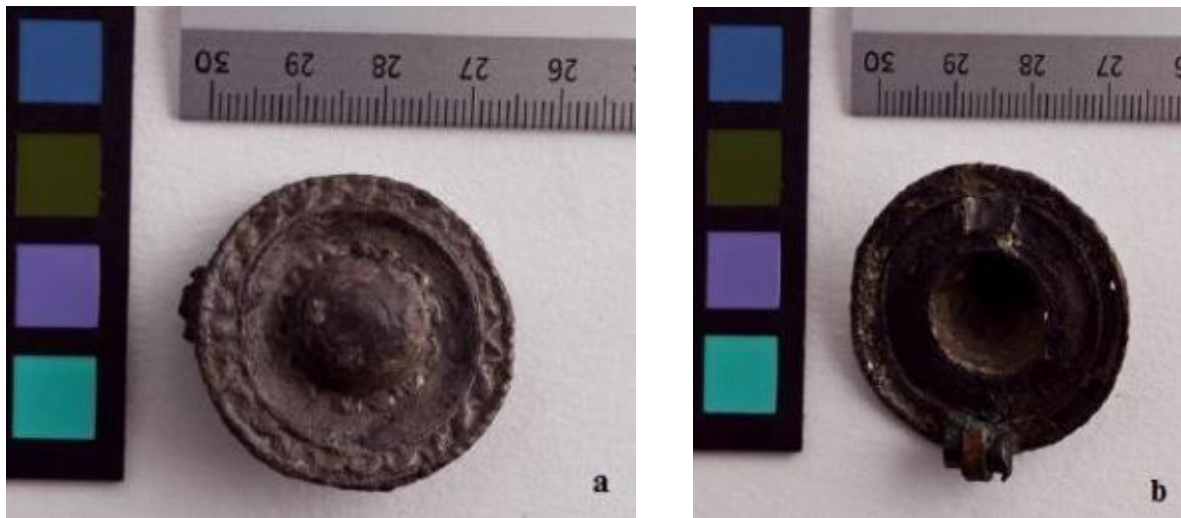


Fig. 3 - Front (a) and back (b) of the disc-shaped fibula of T. 80 (photo by N. MONARI- RA_00046758/R.A.S.).



Fig. 4 - Gold fibula from Dolianova (from PANI ERMINI, ZUCCA 1989, p. 269, fig. 34).

This tomb provides an opportunity to know certain aspects of High Medieval clothing (see figs. 10-11): this is hypothesised by the presence of silver under Patriga's neck, perhaps from a precious fabric cushion on which her head lay, or more likely from a net that held the young woman's hairstyle in place. Her hair was held by a silver hairpin (figs. 5-6) found under her jaw, to the left of her head. The item has an irregular shape, the middle part is square and the rest of the pin is circular with an upper end flattened and the lower end pointed. On three of the four surfaces of the pin you have the inscription *Patriga / Femina / Honesta* with a series of engraved decorative motives. From that praise, probably from her spouse, you can deduce what her name was (fig. 5) It is preceded by a Greek cross and a decoration with thirteen "V"s followed by a wavy line, while the words *Femina* and *Honesta* are preceded and followed by a wave motif. Examining the brooch, it has been dated to the 6th-7th century. Hairpins were rather conservative items: the ones with inscriptions make it easier to date them. Only two other engraved examples were found in Sardinia, that are now kept in the National Archaeological Museum in Cagliari.

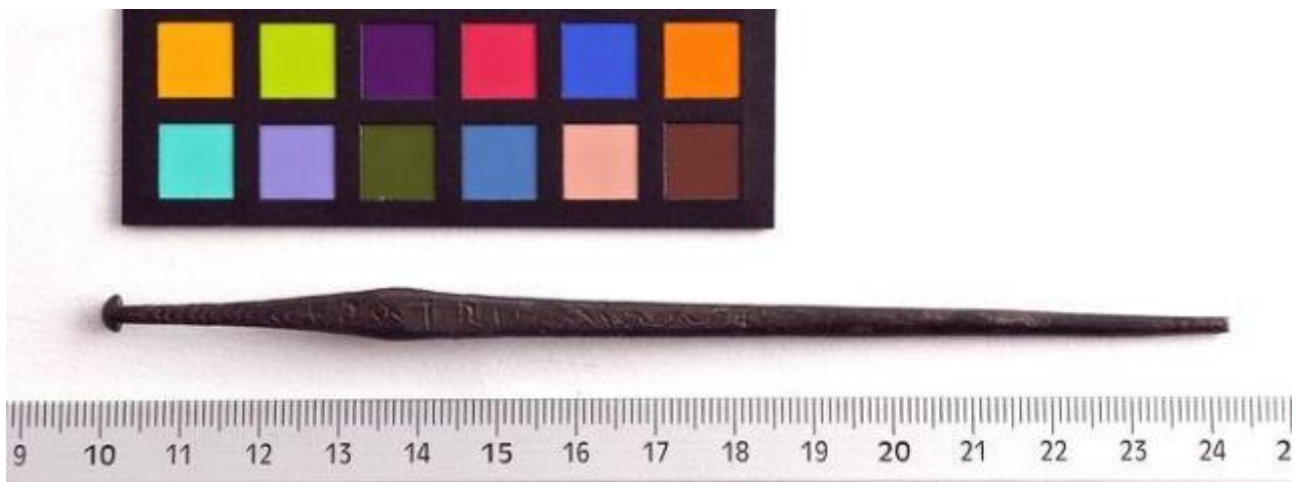


Fig. 5 - Pin with inscription "Patriga" (photo by N. MONARI- RA_00046759/R.A.S.).

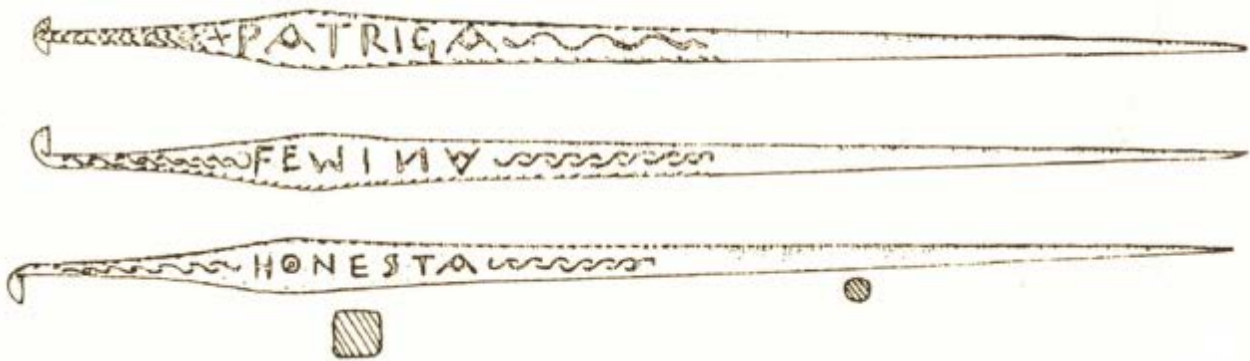


Fig. 6 - Drawing of the three faces with inscription of the pin from T. 80
(from CUGLIERI I, tab CIII, n. 133).

From the soil filling the tomb, a ceramic goblet (see fig. 7) and a glass *unguentarium* (see figs. 8-9) have been found, two types of material often associated with burials. The goblet, in African terracotta sigillata D, can be identified with the shape Hayes 81 dated to the last twenty years of the 4th and 5th century, while the *unguentarium* in glass can be dated between the 3rd and 6th century A.D. Glass *unguentaria* were used to contain perfumes and ointments to be used during the funerary rite. Various fragments were found in the eastern cemetery area, with a number of about 22 items, the shape of which is difficult to identify (for the shapes, see figs. 8-9). As for grave goods, we need to distinguish between the true funerary ones, considered both as an offering to the deceased (like the cup and the *unguentarium*) to accompany her to life in the afterlife,

and what belonged to the person, like ornaments or clothing items revealing the person's social status (fibula and pin). These accessories confirm the presence of *inhumation habillé*: a use widely documented in the necropolis, in spite of the fact of the repeated admonishments and prohibitions of the church in early centuries, that tried to limit the ostentation of wealth inside tombs; these customs were followed, perpetuated by previous habits and traditions.

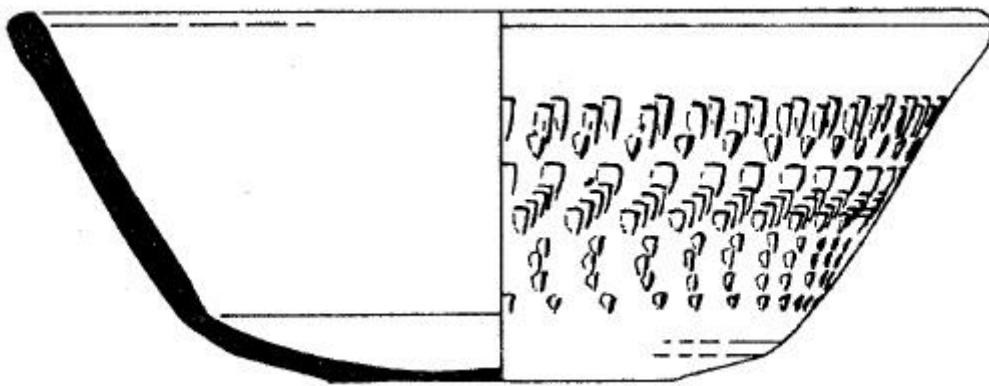


Fig. 7 - Drawing of a cup in African terracotta sigillata D, shape Hayes 81 (from HAYES 1972, p. 126, fig. 22).

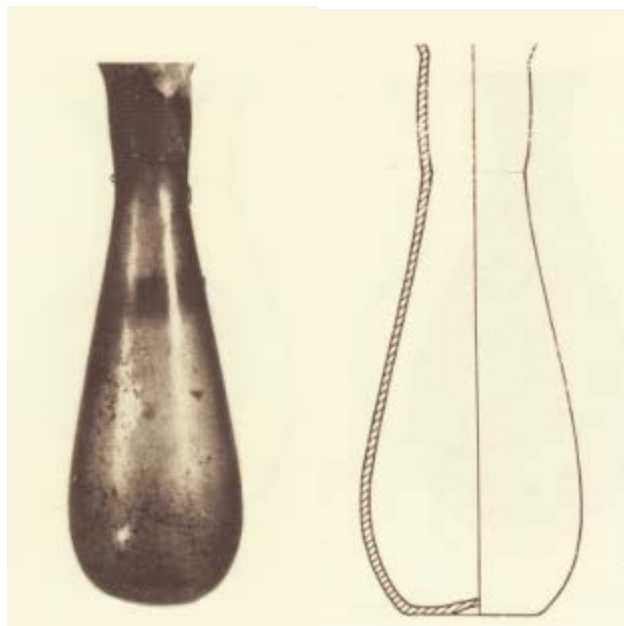


Fig. 8 - *Unguentarium* shape Isings 8 (from BORGHETTI, STIAFFINI 1994, p. 176, tab. 28, no. 235).



Fig. 9 - *Unguentarium* shape Isings 82B1 from the National Archaeological Museum of Cagliari (from BORGHETTI, STIAFFINI 1994, p. 288, tab. 33, no. 288)



Fig. 10 - Ravenna, San Vitale: Teodora and her retinue. The dames are clothed in the "Byzantine manner" (from <http://viaggi.corriere.it/viaggi/weekend/citta/2012/dicembre/ravenna-unesco.shtml?photo=6>).



Fig. 11 - Detail of the mosaic from San Vitale of Ravenna: Teodora shows two disc fibulae on her collar bones and the dames to the left have their hair gathered up (from <http://www.turismo.ra.it/ita/Scopri-il-territorio/Arte-e-cultura/Patrimonio-Unesco/Basilica-di-San-Vitale>).

■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Claudia Cocco and Dr. Francesca Collu

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