

The area of the Cornus basilicas

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ Bronze mirror and cork case

In the Columbaris region, in the farm of the canon Mastino, they found a bronze mirror inside a fragmentary cork case (figs. 1-2) then donated to the G.A. Sanna Archaeological Museum in Sassari where they are still on shown.



Fig. 1 - Cork case and bronze mirror (photo by P. DESSÌ - RA_00008015-00162070/R.A.S.).



Fig. 2 - Cork case and bronze mirror (photo by P. DESSÌ - RA_00008015-00162070/R.A.S.).

The item has a bronze disc with a reflecting concave face without decoration (fig. 3); it is a “box type” used from the Etruscan Age.



Fig. 3 - Bronze mirror (photo by P. DESSÌ - RA_00008015-00162070/R.A.S.).

The upper part of the case must have been sliding, through bronze hinges fixed to the sides and thin nails in the upper margin (fig. 4). The cover fragments show the decoration made with a thin silver thread inserted in the engraved cork.



Fig. 4 - Cork cover with decoration (photo by P. DESSÌ - RA_00008015-00162070/R.A.S.).

The image presented is an amphora inserted in an architectural structure with a lowered arch, where the lintel rests on columns, with Corinthian or composite capitals (fig. 5).



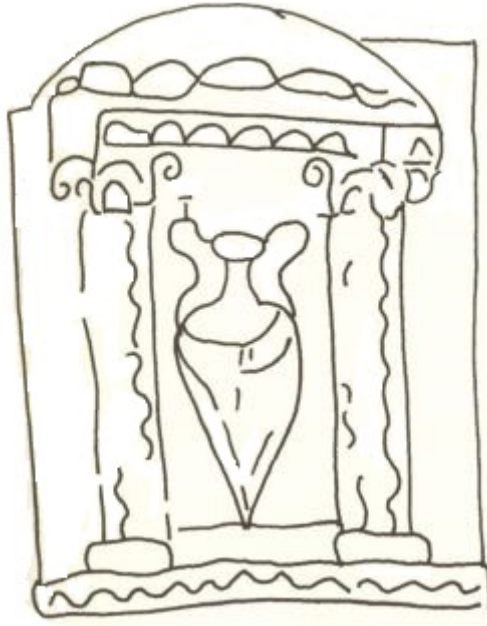


Fig. 5 - Drawing of the decoration on the cork case (from MARTORELLI 2005, p. 29, fig. 3).

The item is a *unicum*, both in its material and the engraved decoration on the lid: the latter is seen in other types of objects from burial rituals, such as slabs, but is occasionally also used in other contexts. The assumption is that the portrayal does not refer to a real life moment, but it is symbolic. The shape of the amphora seems to propose the union of elements borrowed from transport containers circulating in the western Mediterranean especially between the 4th and 6th century A.D. (see fig. 6).

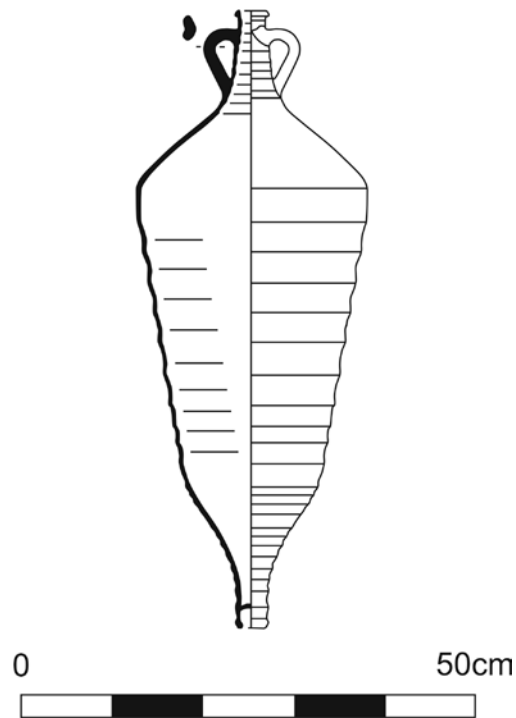


Fig. 6 - Late Roman Amphora 3 (from http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/amphora_ahrb_2005/drawings.cfm?id=240).

The item possibly comes from a tomb context as both the mirror and the amphora have a symbolic role in the funerary sphere: the former reflects the image of life even after death, while the amphora could represent the body as a container of the soul, and is therefore an allusion to the religious believer destined to enjoy eternal beatitude. The mirror and case could have been produced by local craftsmen even though the pattern engraved on the cover reveals an inspiration to Byzantine or Ravennate cultural models, which spread in Sardinia around the 6th-7th century A.D.



■ Credits

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

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