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REGIONE AUTÒNOMA DE SARDIGNA
REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA

The area of the Cornus basilicas

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



The revolt of Ampsicora

Sardinia became a part of the Roman possessions from 238 B.C. after two and a half centuries of Punic rule, after the defeat of this population by Rome (fig. 1).



Fig. 1 - Drawing of the Punic wars
(from <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/punico/>).

The island became a province of the Italic power. Corsica and the surrounding islands belonged to the same province. Despite that, Romanising the island progressed slowly and with great difficulty. Those problems arose during the first operations of the second Punic war (218-202 B.C.) with the rebellion of the Sardo-Punic peoples; this was peaked by the Revolt of Ampsicora (fig. 2) This event gets its name from its commander: an inhabitant

of Cornus, of uncertain origin, the tendency is to consider him a Sardo-Punic landowner, based on references from various sources.

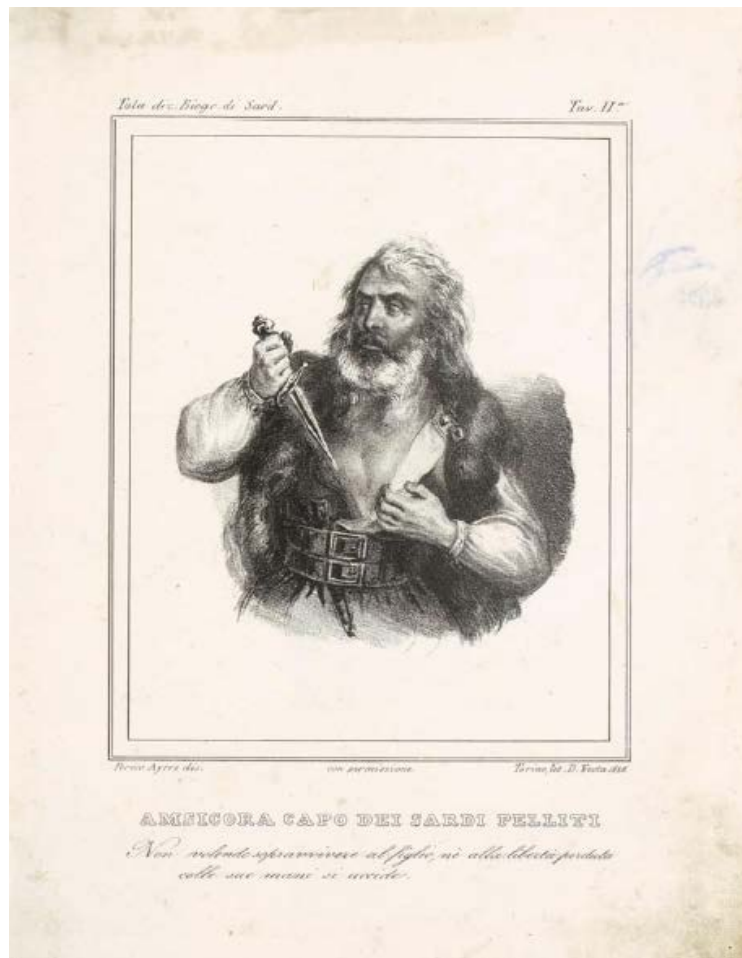


Fig. 2 - Ampicora presented in the biographical *Dictionary of illustrious Sardinian men* (from TOLA 1838, Tab. II).

Sardinia was in a moment of particular taxation problems due to the large requests from Rome in its provinces, to aid the costs of wars. This caused considerable discontent amongst the Sardinians, especially the Sardo-Punic landowners who saw their economic interests seriously damaged. For that reason, in 215 B.C. the island requested the intervention of Carthage, which accepted the rebels' proposal and decided to send an expedition force commanded by General Hasdrubal (fig. 3).



Fig. 3 - Coin of Hasdrubal

(from http://nonciclopedia.wikia.com/wiki/File:Moneta_di_Asdрубale.jpg).

Knowledge of these events is owed mainly to the narration in Titus Livius' XXIII Book of History (fig. 4), that in turn got a lot of the information about the Punic wars and on the *bellum sardum* from the work by Polibius, who lived at the time of some historical facts narrated by him. Further details about military episodes in 215 B.C. Can be taken from the work of the poet Silius Italicus.



Fig. 4 - Statue of Titus Livius in Padua, his home town

(http://www.miti3000.it/mito/libri/imagesd41d.htm?http://www.miti3000.it/mito/libri/img/Tito_Livio_Padova.gif).

Two legions of a consular army were sent to Sardinia to quell the revolt, captained by T. Manlius Torquatus: Cagliari was the reference centre for Roman power on the island, whilst Cornus was for the rebels under Ampsicora. The war took place in two essential battles (fig. 5). While the Sardo-Punic general was recruiting allies amongst the Sardi Peliti, tribes who occupied inland areas, his army, commanded by his son, Osto descended from the northern part of Campidano towards Cagliari.



Fig. 5 - Path travelled by the troops and fields of the Battle of Cornus
 (from http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ampsicora#/media/File:Sardinia_215_aC_-_Ampsicora_rivolta.png).

The result of the first battle, probably near San Vero Milis, was not in the rebels' favour, who were defeated and escaped. The fighting did not stop with this defeat, but started again soon afterwards at the news that the Carthaginian fleet was drawing close to Sardinia, in time to add strength to the rebels. The place where the Carthaginians landed is not known, but it was probably near *Korakodes portus*, that was 5 nautical miles (9 km) south-west of Cornus. The Punic forces, headed by the Carthaginian commander, Hasdrubal, Osto and Ampsicora descended towards *Karales* again, continuously devastating everything in their path. In a place probably located between Sestu and Decimo, perhaps at Sanlluri, the second battle took place that was a victory for the Romans, thanks to Manlius Torquatus's forward views.

About twelve thousand Sardinian-Punic men died on the battlefield, including Osto. Ampsicora, learning about his son's death, killed himself during the night, so that he could not be stopped.

■ Credits

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

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La Sardegna cresce con l'Europa



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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