



UNIONE EUROPEA



REPUBBLICA ITALIANA



REGIONE AUTÒNOMA DE SARDIGNA
REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA

The area of the Cornus basilicas

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ Cargo ships

Trade involving the Cornus area is proven by images of trading ships landing at *Korakodes Portus*, the wrecks found in the opposite gulf and imported items recovered during the digs. The main function of those trading ships was to transport goods distributed in a regular way, optimising space in the large hold (see fig. 1).

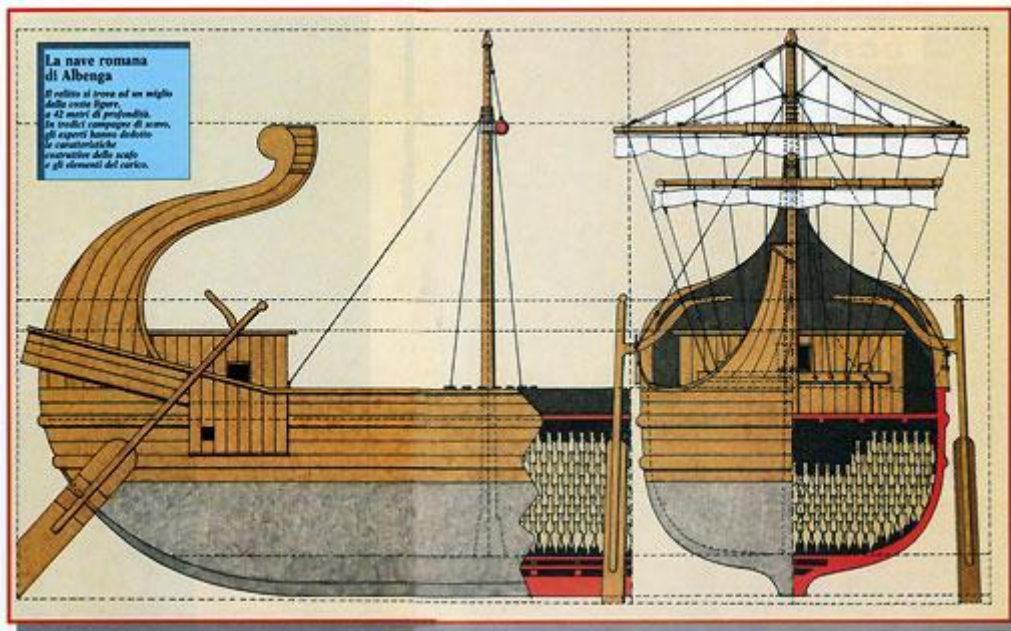


Fig. 1 - Roman ship of Albenga

(from http://www.guidopicchetti.it/articoli Pubbl/Il%20Subacqueo/SBC_8812_Lanil.htm).

A *tabula epigraphica* from the 5th century comes from the Columbaris burial area, which was probably placed over a sarcophagus lid. A ship (fig. 2) has been drawn on it: this is a traditional Roman merchant ship used without any formakl changes between the Late Antique age and the High Medieval era.

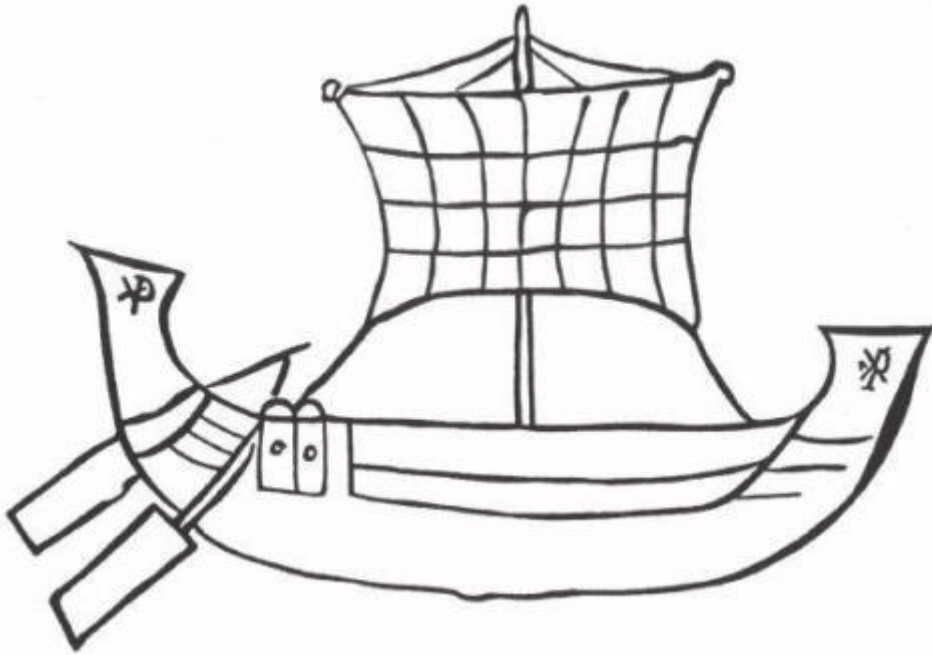


Fig. 2 - Drawing of cargo ship (from MASTINO 1984, p. 148, fig. 22).

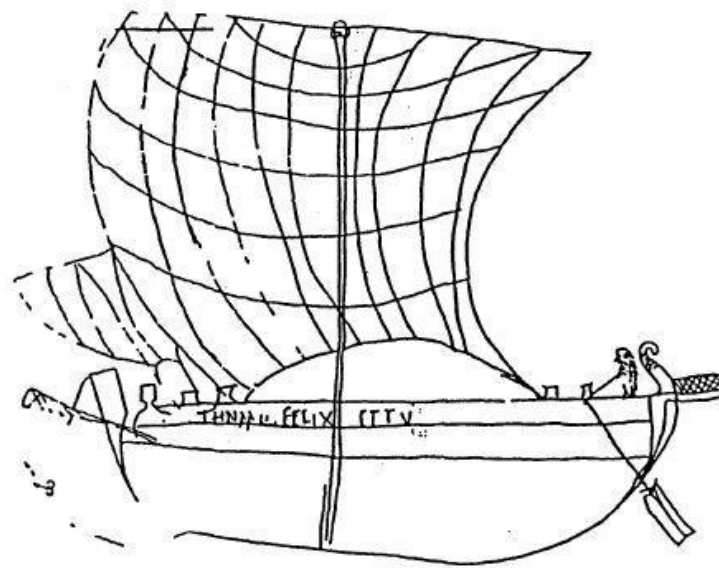
The ship has a long hull, with a flat keel and low sides; bow and stern are much higher. The stonemason probably intended the two horizontal bands above the hull to be a bridge or a decoration, while two narrow doors alongside each other and looking to the top, he wished to portray the quarter deck. The pair of helms, joined in the top part, end with two wide rectangular paddles. On the mast (*fusum*) there is an unfurled square sail (the classic *acatus*). The sail panels indicate a lattice made of cloth and the knots used to wrap it up.

A second item comes from the same cemetery area. It is a brick fragment with a ship of the same type engraved on it (fig. 3).



Fig. 3 - Tile from Cornus with engraved ship and drawing (from SPANU 2002, p. 284, figs. 2-3).

The similar images found in Sardinia or regarding the island (figs. 4-5) all present cargo ships, except for the one case of the tile found in the Palace of the Barbarian King of Porto Torres, where they recognised a military ship with twenty-one oars.



T H N N A U F E L I X C T T V

Fig. 4 - Roma, *Domus Tiberiana*: engraving with ship and enlargement of the inscription on the side (from ZUCCA 2000, p. 1131, fig. 7).



Fig. 5 - Ostia, Forum of the Corporations: floor mosaic of the "navicularii Turrítani", that is shipowners and traders of Porto Torres (from <http://www.archeo.it/mediagallery/fotogallery/1590>).

The stretch of sea in front of the western coast of Sardinia has turned up several wrecks, which prove the existence of the trading routes from the Iberian peninsula to the central Italian ports, that included a middle stop-off at the Sardinian ports. This traffic can also be proven by the several Iberian amphorae in the central coastlines of the island, such as Cornus. (fig. 6).



Fig. 6 - Iberian amphorae of the type Almagro 51 C and drawings (from <http://amphorae.icac.cat/tipol/view/75>).

■ Credits

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

■ Bibliographic abbreviations

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