



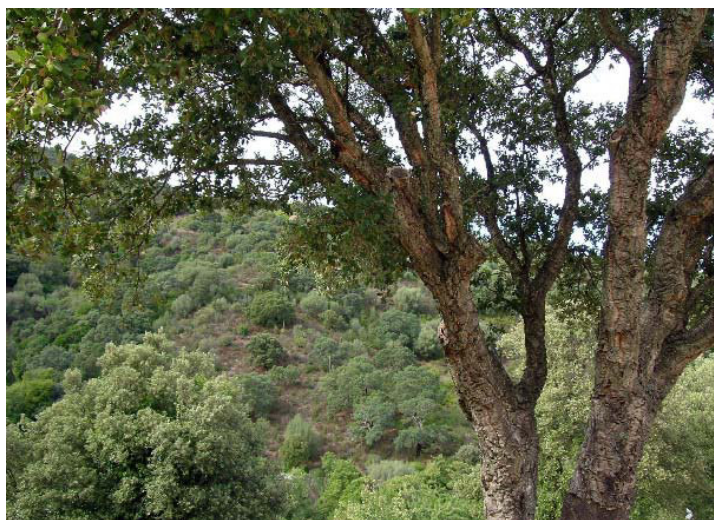
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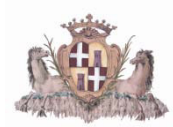
3° National Congress of Cork

Sassari, May 25 – 26 2017

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ISBN **978-88-907678-0-7**

DOI **<https://doi.org/10.14275/978-88-907678-0-7>**

Tipiditappi



*Sughero d'albero fatto a pezzetti,
tipi di tappi , quelli che vuoi.
Tagliali lunghi, tagliali stretti,
tipi di tappi, fatti da noi.
Taglialo bene, taglialo tondo,
tipi di tappi, quanti ne vuoi.
Tappi di sughero per tutto il mondo,
tipi di tappi fatti da noi.*
(Cecchi-Tognolini, Filastrocche e Canzoni)

Dettori S., Fligheddu M.R., Cillara M. Editors

Printed by
Università degli Studi di Sassari
Centro Stampa

POSTER

Session 4: *History, economics and policy, social perception and communication, certification*



THE USE OF CORK IN ANTIQUITY: SOME ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA IN SARDINIA

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In modern and contemporary Sardinia, the cork is an important economic resource and the *Q. suber* woodlands have a very specific role in rural landscapes and in traditional agroforest and silvopastoral systems consolidated over time.

In this paper, we report some archaeological data from Sardinian contexts useful to summarize the use of the cork and the cork oak in antiquity. This use has its roots in the prehistory of Sardinia Island. Many archaeological researches document that it was already used during the Nuragic period (Bronze Age). The cork was extracted and processed in order to obtain plates, foils, planks, shavings and it was shaped to create various artefacts, such as footwear, containers, boxes, cases, stoppers, etc. Cork wedges were also used in nuragic dry stonewalls as thermal insulating.

Until a few years ago and even today in some areas of the Island, people used to gather oak acorns to produce a flour and to prepare bread. The discovery of acorns in Sardinian archaeological contexts suggests that they were employed for foods even in the Nuragic period. Especially *Q. ilex* acorns were used, but probably where cork oak woodlands predominate even *Q. suber* acorns were used. We consider that some place names (toponyms) in different Sardinia territories, like *suelzu dulce* (“sweet cork oak”) in Gallura areas, could be associate with food preparations and “sweet” might be referred to acorns of cork oaks.

Romans worked cork for making caps to close amphorae, often sealed with additional lime or pozzolan. Also in Sardinia, some Roman archaeological sites document the use of cork for containers and to close amphorae.

Plastic and multiple use of cork products and multi-functionality of trees, fostered by traditional silvicultural systems which have enhanced cork oak ecological potential instead of other Mediterranean forest species, may have contributed to spread *Q. suber* in Sardinia better than any other Mediterranean island.

Keywords: prehistory, history, archaeology, Sardinia, nuragic civilization.