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REGIONE AUTÒNOMA DE SARDIGNA  
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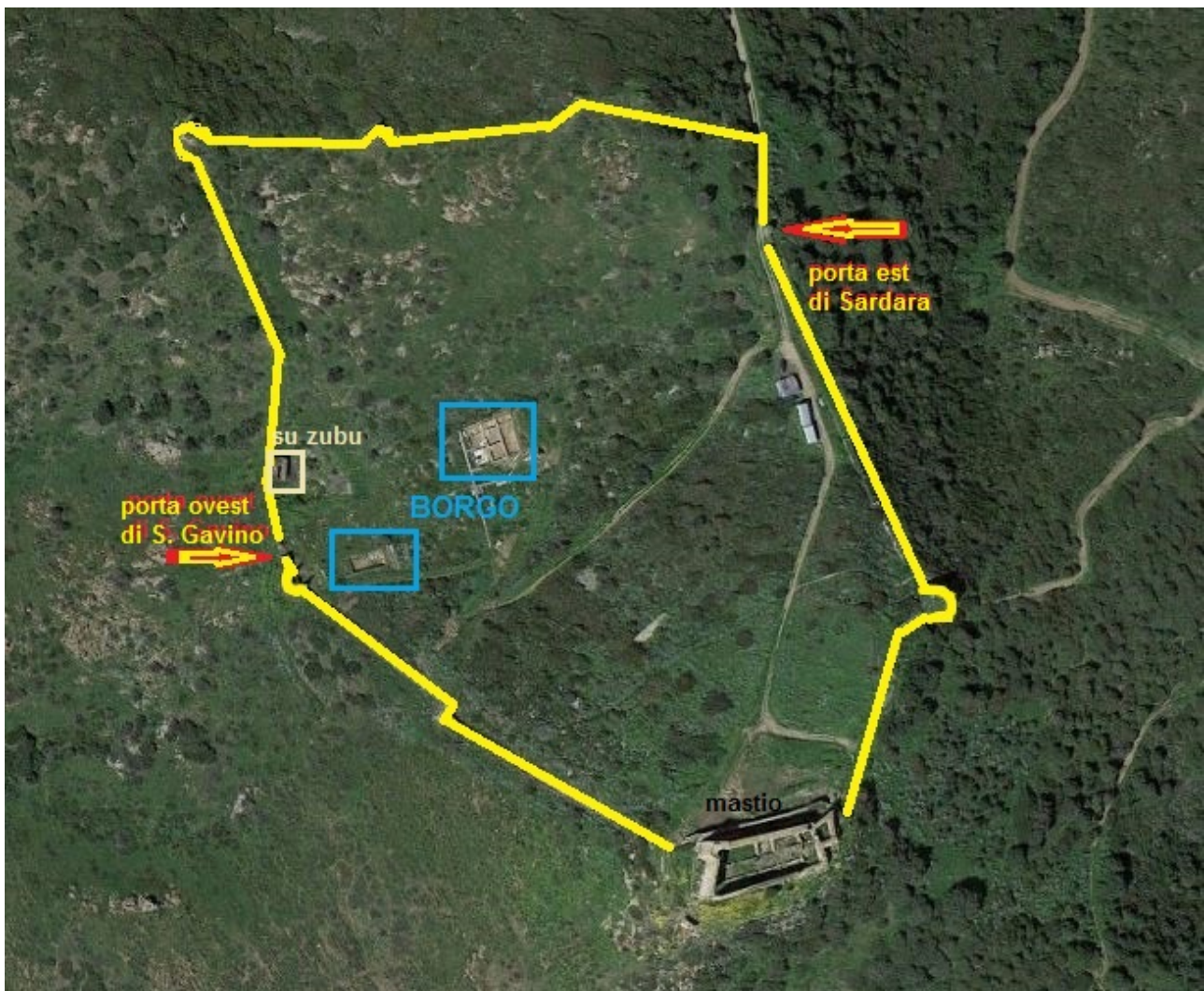
# Castle of Monreale

Patrimonio culturale  
**SARDEGNA** Virtual Archaeology



## ■ The village

The village of the fortified complex was built on part of the two elevations which form the hill of Monreale and the valley between them, enclosed within a circle of walls with a sub-pentagonal plant (fig. 1) The wall, that can still be seen on the ground, was about 950 metres long, with eight (or perhaps nine) semi-circular or square towers, went round the entire village and met up with the keep<sup>1</sup>.



**Fig. 1** - The fortified complex of Monreale (transposition by M.G. Arru, from Google Earth).

<sup>1</sup> See STASOLLA 2010; UCCHEDDU, 2004.

The archaeological investigations carried out over the years<sup>2</sup> in the area of the village have highlighted two residential complexes divided into several spaces placed in sequence (fig. 2). Uniformity of building techniques and stone materials used, particularly the schist, bring about the belief that these dwellings were made in a single period of buildings



**Fig. 2** - The area of the village affected by the archaeological digs (photo by Studio SPAI).

Within the stratigraphy of the buildings, between the floors and the roof collapse, fragments of ceramics (archaic majolica) dating from the late thirteenth century have been recovered. This discovery demonstrates the existence of the village in a period prior to

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<sup>2</sup> The archaeological digs in the village were carried out during the campaigns in 1992-1993, 2000, 2008-2009, 2011.

1309, i.e. the year reported in the first document which mentions the castle.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore likely that the design of the fortified complex already included a stable built-up area in its earliest stages.

The first of the two residential complexes (the larger one) is characterised by the presence of five rooms, connected by stairs, as they are arranged at different heights along the hill slope (fig. 3). One of these rooms was the entrance to the whole complex and was probably intended to host craft activities of various kinds (fig. 4).



**Fig. 3** - The larger part of the village (photo by Studio SPAI).

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<sup>3</sup> This was from a concession made by the King James II of Aragon to the Giudici of Arborea Mariano and Andreotto, to confirm their possessions in Sardinia including the *castrum Montis Regalis*. See SALAVERT Y ROCA 1959, doc. n. 392, pages 506-510.



**Fig. 4** - The larger part of the complex whilst being excavated (photo by G. Ucheddu).

The second housing complex (the smaller one) consists of three spaces which could be accessed through a south-facing entrance, while the North side shows an opening identifiable with a window (fig. 5). On this side, the room was sheltered from exposure to the winds thanks to the rocky bank which was located at a higher level than the floor of the rooms. The entrance to the room is characterised by the presence of an area probably dedicated to food preparation and cooking.



**Fig. 5** - The smaller complex (photo by Studio SPAI).

## ■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Maria Grazia Arru.

Preliminary research by Dr. Valeria Paretta and Dr. Daniele Corda.

## ■ Bibliography

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## La Sardegna cresce con l'Europa



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