



Megalithic circles of Li Muri

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ Dagger with a gammadion hilt (Nuraghic complex of Albucciu)

A bronze amulet shaped like a dagger (dimensions: height 7 cm, width 2.8 cm), of the type called with a *gammadion hilt* because of the shape of the handle which folds up to protect the fingers of the hand, was found in room *n* at Nuraghe Albucciu Arzachena (fig. 1).



Fig. 1 - Nuraghe Albucciu (from http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/41/Nuraghe_Albucciu.jpg).

The object has a votive nature and an apotropaic meaning, and reproduces in miniature form one of the most frequently used weapons during the Nuraghic Age; it was probably used as a pendant or sewn to garments (fig. 2).



Fig. 2 - Small votive dagger with a gammadion hilt (from MERELLA 2014, p. 288).

It features a vertical handle between two elements placed crosswise; the upper one has an eyelet on the top part of the handle, in imitation of the loop which tied the object to the shoulder strap in the real-life version, whilst the lower one bends upward forming a kind of raised hand-guard. The blade with a rounded section, is characterised on one side by a decorative "herringbone" pattern, in imitation of the sheath. The chronological reference is between the X and XI centuries B.C. The artefact is exhibited at the National Archaeological Museum G.A. Sanna of Sassari. Daggers of this type, attributable to the range of offensive weapons, were deposited as votive offerings in the holy cave of Su-Benatzu Santadi during the Late Bronze Age (fig. 3).



Fig. 3 - Small votive dagger with gammadion hilt from the Grotta Piosu - Su Benatzu in Santadi on display at the Archaeological Museum of Cagliari (from MERELLA 2014, p. 308).

The dagger, used for animal sacrifices, is widespread in Nuraghic sanctuaries. It is frequently depicted in numerous bronzes, inserted in the shoulder strap of warriors or offerers (fig. 4). This confirms the hypothesis that its function was not only practical and ritual, but also symbolic.



Fig. 4 - A bronze votive praying statuette from Monte Arcosu-Uta (from MERELLA 2014, p. 371).



■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Emanuela Atzeni

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