



# Megalithic circles of Li Muri

Patrimonio culturale  
**SARDEGNA** Virtual Archaeology



## ■ Between oaks and granite: the territorial context of Gallura

Gallura is the largest geographic region of Sardinia, an extensive granitic district which spans the entire North East of the Island.

There are several credible hypothesis concerning the origin of the name of Gallura and still no agreement has been reached. One of these attributes its name to the Gauls, the colonising population, but there is no real historical documentation; another to the Visconti, the Pisan noblemen who ruled the area during the Middle Ages, on the basis that there is a rooster depicted on their heraldic emblem.

The attractiveness of the Gallura territory consists largely in the charm of its landscapes: the unending variety of stone formations and the shapes of its landline, the different modes of human adaptation to its territory (fig. 1).



**Fig. 1** – Aggius, a landscape of Gallura

(from <http://www.sardegnaigitallibrary.it/index.php?xsl=626&s=17&v=9&c=4461&id=436898>)

From a geomorphological point of view, Gallura consists of a natural rock granite coast and a wooded hinterland with mixed formations of oaks, holm oaks and cork oaks. Among the different forms of degradation of Gallura's granite landscape, there are the "conchi": more or less rounded boulders, empty inside. They are natural rock shelters, often close to rural houses and therefore used as storerooms, barns, stables; sometimes they have bizarre shapes which often recall the shape of an animal or a vegetable (fig. 2).



**Fig. 2** – Arzachena, Monti Incappidatu  
(from <http://www.sardegнадigitalibrary.it/index.php?xsl=626&s=17&v=9&c=4461&id=527919>).

Sea and wind erosion helped give Gallura its particular coastal conformation: the coastline is in fact very rugged and consists of a succession of basins and creeks. The sea takes on characteristic colours and shades which help to create a landscape of exceptional beauty (fig. 3).



**Fig. 3** – Overview of the Gulf of Arzachena

(from <http://www.comunearzachena.gov.it/index.php/gallerie-fotografiche3/category/14-fotografie-aeree>).

The scattered rural settlements of "*stazzi* (farm houses)" are one of the main features of Gallura; these were originally built as self-sufficient single-family houses by the shepherds who fled from nearby Corsica between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The construction typology of the peasant-shepherd dwelling was rather simple, a generally rectangular plan, with thick walls built with local stone, granite, and a double-pitched roofing sometimes resting on rudimentary juniper trusses (fig. 4).



**Fig. 3** – Stazzo (farmhouse) of Mount Limbara  
(from <http://www.sardegna.digitallibrary.it/index.php?xsl=626&s=17&v=9&c=4461&id=527919>)

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