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REGIONE AUTONOMA DE SARDIGNA
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Giants' tomb of Thomes

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ Other examples of giants' tombs in Sardinia

The giants' tombs are grand collective funerary monuments exclusively found in Nuragic Sardinia (1600-1150 B.C.), whose site diagram seems to recall a bull's head.

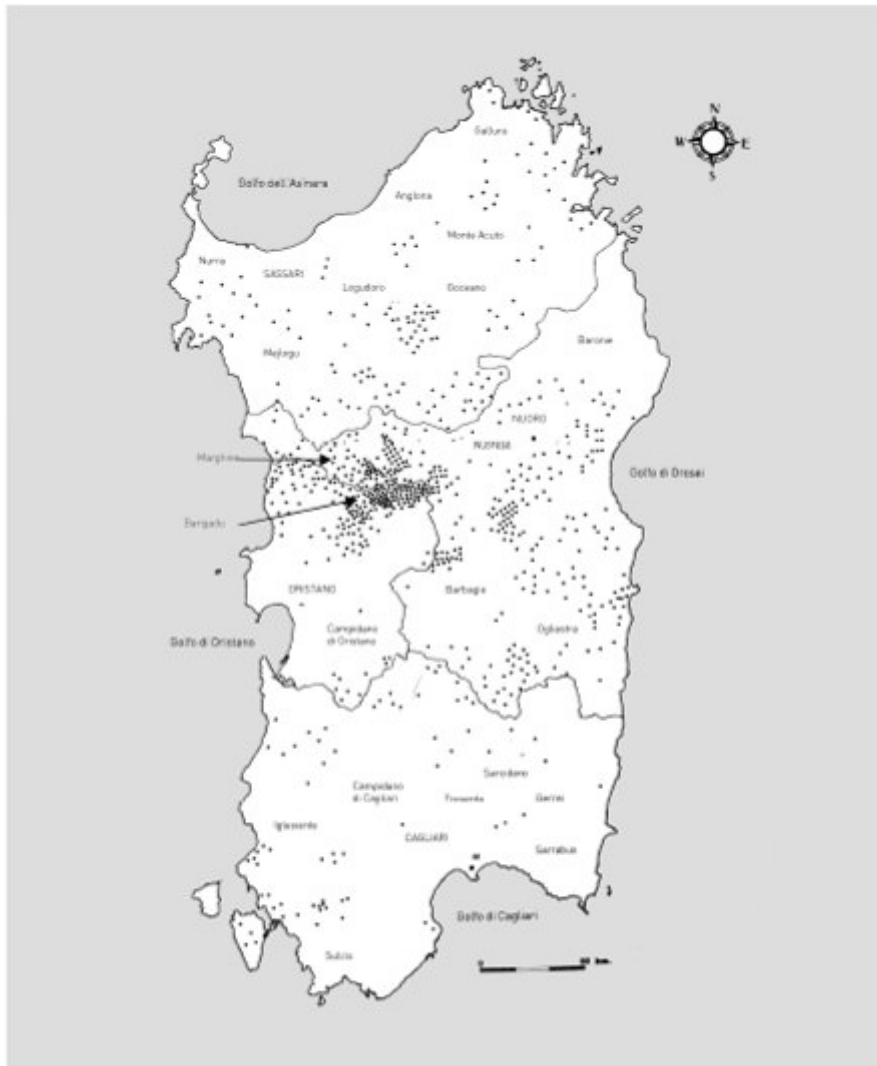


Fig. 1 - Distribution map of the Giants' tombs (from MORAVETTI 2014, p. 50).

Up until 2003, about 800 were catalogued, mainly concentrated in the central and western areas of the island, between the Gulf of Orosei and southern Planargia.

This type of funerary architecture, deriving from Dolmen, summarises the evolution of the covered corridor tombs, the so-called *alleè couverte*. They consist of a long body with a final apse, and a curved facade which extends laterally into two flanking walls which

surround a ceremonial area called exedra. The monument has its maximum height at the centre of the exedra and this gradually decreases both toward the ends of its apse. In central-northern Sardinia, during the Middle Bronze Age II (1400-1300 B.C.), another type of tomb, in addition to the orthostat tombs with arched stelae (fig. 2) appeared, built with an isodomic or polygonal block technique, without stelae, and with an entrance mounted by an architrave (figs. 3-4).



Fig. 2 - Giants' tomb of Li Lolghi-Arzachena (from MORAVETTI 2014, p.53).



Figs. 3, 4 - Giants tombs II-III of Madau-Fonni (from MORAVETTI 2014, pp. 58-59).

There could be niches in the burial areas and benches, fireplaces, pits to store libations and bethels occur along the entire exedra, evidence of the funeral rites which took place near the entrance.

There is still discussion concerning the function of the ashlar "dentil block", a rectangular or truncated pyramid shape architectural element hypothetically placed at the centre of the exedra in line with the entrance, which is documented in about fifty isodomic tombs with masonry exedra, characterised by three recesses between four dentils (fig. 5).

This block is interpreted as an element linked to an opening and closing system for the burial chamber when burying the deceased, in order to be able to lower the body from the top.

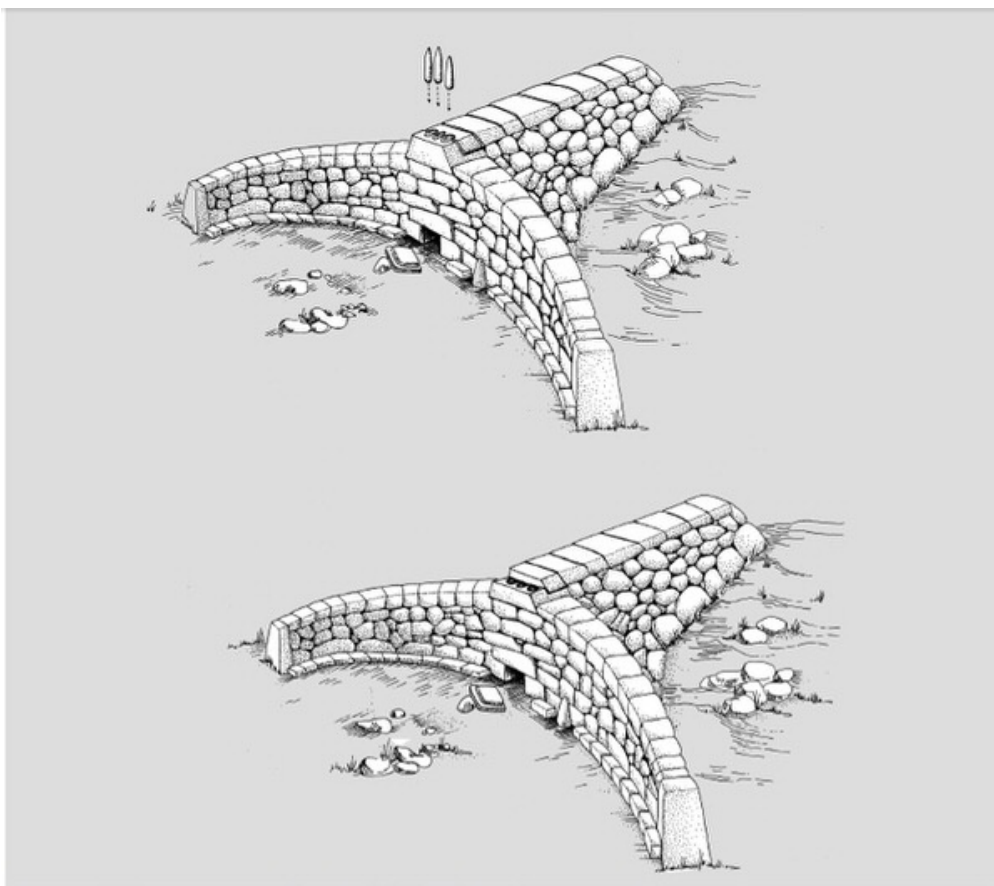


Fig. 5 - Reconstruction of an isodomic type of giants' tomb (from MORAVETTI 2014, p. 63).

Giants' tombs are usually closely located to the Nuraghe and/or the village; typically they are isolated or grouped serving several settlements in the surrounding area, more or less close to the same burial sites.

■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Emanuela Atzeni

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