



UNIONE EUROPEA



REPUBBLICA ITALIANA



REGIONE AUTÒNOMA DE SARDIGNA
REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA

Giants' tomb of Thomes

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ The village of Tiscali: an important archaeological and natural context

In 1833, Vittorio Angius¹ referring to the ancient items known from the area of Oliena wrote that "*Within the boundaries of the Oliena area, there are four places where remains of ancient houses have been seen, which are in Tuvaramele, S. Dilica Rughinas and Thiscali. The latter is on the mountain, and has already revealed many ancient items for the investigators. They can be found not far from the nuraghe that is called Duaviddas and concerns a belt.*"

The site of Tiscali (figs. 1, 2, 3) was discovered by chance by some miners who were clearing the area and part of the Lanaittu valley, on the border between Supramonte di Oliena and Supramonte di Dorgali. The rumours had spread as far as Oliena and had reached the ears of the Superintendency inspector Filippo Nissardi who, in turn, had spoken to the ancient historian Ettore Pais of an interesting discovery at the top of Monte Tiscali (500 metres above sea level) inside a sinkhole that originated after the part collapse of the ceiling of a cave. The first description of the ruins of two villages and small towers is by E. Pais who was amazed and moved to see the following on 25th September 1910, at mid-day, after five hours of riding and more than an hour's climb: «...*one of the fortresses where, during the Roman conquest, the most ancient dwellers of Sardinia had taken refuge. Tiscali is one of those hiding places where it could still be boasted for many centuries of never being dominated by the short sword of the Roman legion*». In 1933, the site was photographed and described by the archaeologist Antonio Taramelli as "*one of those sites where the native Sardinians, the Iliensi, took refuge when the Romans tried to take over the centre of the island*".

¹ In the Autumn of 1833 the first part of «*Dizionario geografico-storico-statistico-commerciale degli Stati di Sua Maestà il Re di Sardegna*», was published in Turin. It was a huge work in 28 volumes by the priest Goffredo Casalis together with the Sardinian priest Vittorio Angius who wrote most parts about Sardinia. The entries on Sardinia in the Dictionary offer a broad, indepth view of the geographical, economic and social situations on the island in the 19th century, its population, its habits and uses, its language, its traditions and its history. Today the "entries" (except for the one dedicated to Sardinia that takes up three large volumes) by Vittorio Angius are published with the title «*Città e villaggi della Sardegna dell'Ottocento*» by Luciano Carta.

Since then, decades of neglect and looting have significantly damaged the site which, nevertheless, remains a very suggestive place.

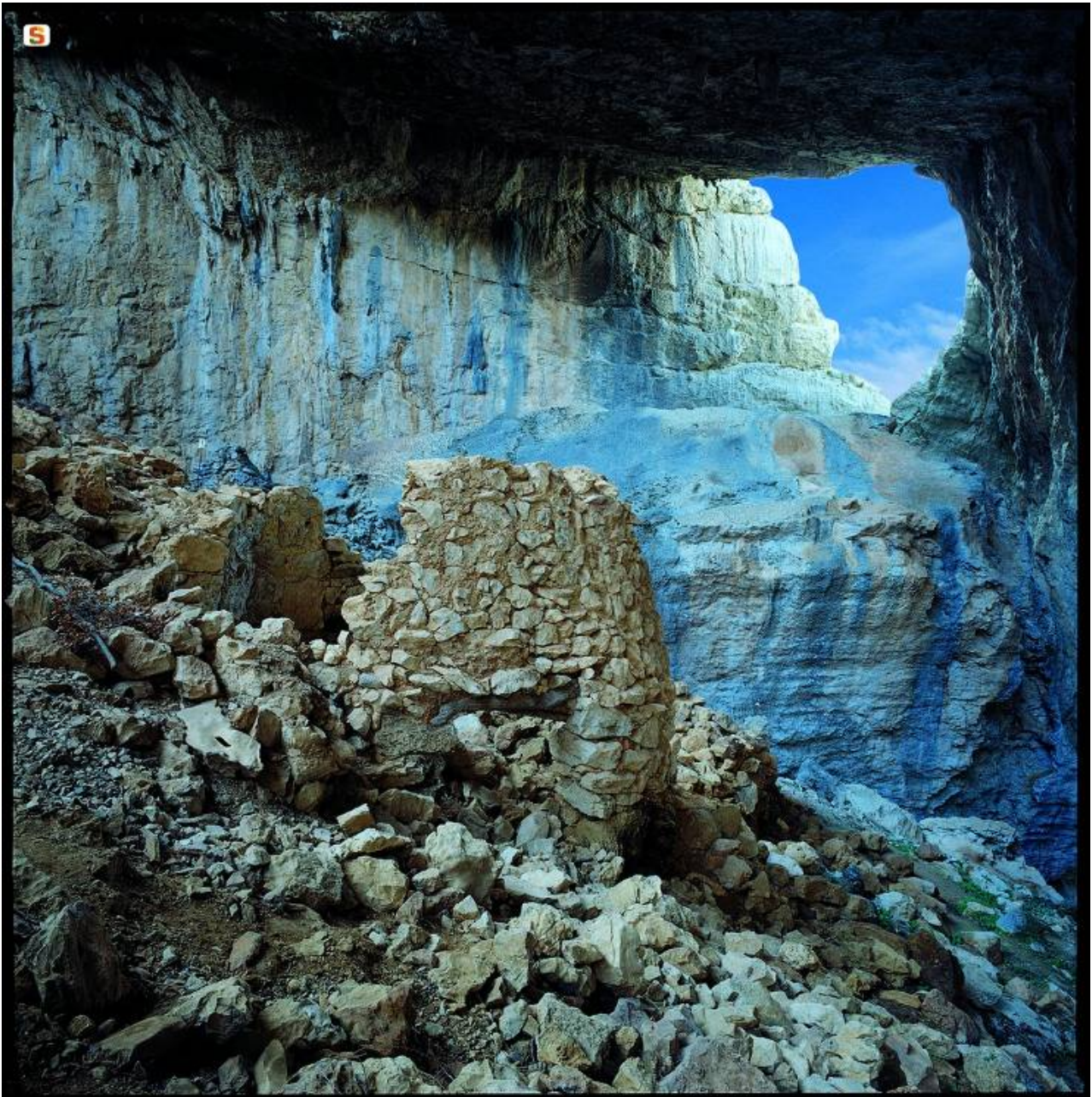


Fig. 1 - The Village of Tiscali

(from <http://www.sardegna.digitalibrary.it/index.php?xsl=615&s=17&v=9&c=4461&id=103013>).



Fig. 2 - Detail of the village of Tiscali (photo by Caterina Nieddu).

The first settlement was formed by about forty huts and is in the north sector of the hollow. The second is on the southwest side and comprises about thirty houses. The rooms, most of which have collapsed, are rectangular, square, circular or sub-elliptical. The walls are thin, often built using roughly-hewn local limestone and mortar made from a mix of clay and gravel, with the addition of organic inert matter, and adjusted by filling the holes between one stone and the next with the mortar; the mortar was smoothed on the outside by following the direction of the walls. There were often niches and holes in the internal walls. Some structures were of a truncated-conical shape with jutting walls, originally probably covered by a conical roof made of branches. One of these structures has a wooden architraved entrance (fig. 4).



Fig. 3 - Collapsed structures in the village of Tiscali (photo by Caterina Nieddu).



Fig. 4 - Hut with a wooden lintel entrance in the village of Tiscali (from MORAVETTI 2005, fig. 87, p. 102).

In this and other structures on the south side of the settlement, two separated building phases can be seen: the first, older phase, is identified by the wall base built with dry stone with medium and large stones; the second phase can be found in the wall above this, which is not as thick, made from medium and small sized stones that are cemented with mud mortar.

The digs by the Archaeological Superintendency (1999, 2003) and the collections on the surface allowed materials to be recovered from the Nuragic Age, regarding eras from the Middle Bronze Age, (XVI XIV century B.C.) to the Iron Age (IX-VI century B.C.), and the Roman Age (II- I century B.C.).

In general, the archaeological evidence allows us to interpret it as a civil settlement, consisting of housing facilities, warehouses, fencing for animals, etc., related to the exploitation of the agricultural-pastoral area (Lanaittu Valley, the plateaus and neighbouring clearings) built in a location which was naturally sheltered and protected both from bad weather and summer heat (fig. 5).



Fig. 5 - Hypothetical reconstruction of the sinkhole of Tiscali (from MORAVETTI 2005, fig. 89, p. 104).

■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Emanuela Atzeni

■ Bibliography

ANGIUS V. (a cura di CARTA L.), *Città e villaggi della Sardegna dell'Ottocento*, Nuoro 2006, p. 992.

DELUSSU F., *L'incontro tra Sardi e Romani in Barbagia: l'evidenza del sito di Tiscali*, in *Sardegna Mediterranea*, 25, 2009, pp. 69-72.

LO SCHIAVO F., *La voragine di Tiscali-Oliena*, in *Sardegna centro-orientale dal neolitico alla fine del mondo antico*, Sassari, 1978, pp. 95-96.

MORAVETTI A., *Serra Orrios e i monumenti archeologici di Dorgali*, *Sardegna Archeologica. Guide e itinerari*, 26, Sassari 1998, pp. 97-105.

MORAVETTI A. (a cura di), *Carbonia-Fonni*, in *La Sardegna. I Tesori dell'Archeologia*, La Biblioteca della Nuova Sardegna, vol. 3, Sassari 2011, pp. 98-103.

PAIS E., *Tiscali nel Nuorese*, in *Rivista d'Italia*, febbraio 1911, pp. 250-263.

TARAMELLI A., *Edizione archeologica della Carta d'Italia*, Foglio 208 (Dorgali), Firenze 1929, pp. 31-32, n. 1.

TARAMELLI A., *Dorgali (Nuoro) Esplorazioni archeologiche nel territorio del Comune*, in *Notizie degli Scavi*, IX, 1933, pp. 353-357.



UNIONE EUROPEA



REPUBBLICA ITALIANA



REGIONE AUTÒNOMA DE SARDIGNA
REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA

La Sardegna cresce con l'Europa



UNIONE EUROPEA

Progetto cofinanziato dall'Unione Europea
Programma Operativo FESR 2007-2013

FESR - Fondo Europeo di Sviluppo Regionale - Asse I, Linea di Attività 1.2.3.a