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# Tradition and memory. Use and reuse of the hypogea in the Recent Prehistory of the West Mediterranean islands

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## Abstract

In some Western Mediterranean islands, the use of funerary hypogea during the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age is a phenomenon that has been often underestimated. In fact, in Recent Prehistory, the occurrence of use and reuse hypogea is not attenuated but rather renewed even with particular and distinct forms compared to those of the earliest prehistory. In the context of hypogeal monuments, distinctive indicators of chronology can be peculiar planimetry and also representations of architectural details, or/and symbolic and artistic elements. In other cases, the most difficult to distinguish, it is only the archaeological context that can connote the use in a given period, so without an excavation survey, such cases remain almost impossible to determine.

The question of establishing the chronology of monuments -due to the frequent perspective of *longue durée* that characterizes them- is a difficult problem to solve. For the different areas, the importance to determine the features that connect hypogea to recent prehistory influences our capability to understand important cultural aspects of ancient societies.

The option of using hypogea at the same time as other more widespread tomb types, as is in Sardinia the collective megalithic tombs, presupposes complex dynamics that can be related to forms of social differentiation or ideologies strongly anchored to the cult of ancestors and the memory of the past.

**Keywords:** hypogea, Recent Prehistory, Mediterranean Islands, cult, ancestors

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