
The dawn of the funerary hypogea in Neolithic Sardinia, reconsidered

Carlo Luglie*†¹

¹LASP - Laboratory of Sardinian Antiquities and Paleoethnology, Department of Humanities, Languages and Cultural Heritage — University of Cagliari Piazza Arsenale 1 - 09124 Cagliari, Italy –
Italie

Résumé

For a long time, the early and sudden appearance of the artificial hypogea in prehistoric Sardinia has been considered among the innovative characteristics of this island in the wider Western Mediterranean basin. In this paper I will discuss the problem of the origins of the funerary behavior linked to the introduction of carved chamber graves in Middle Neolithic Sardinia, in the light of the most updated archaeological evidence. Traditionally, this topic has been approached more on the ground of the typological evolution of both the ritual and the funerary structures, than about the correlated socio-economic meaning involved in this innovation. The first appearance of the concept of necropolis will be placed here in the frame of the process of Sardinia neolithization, which in turn is linked to the origin and growing of social wealth and inequality. All the available data (chronological, ritual, and contextual) will be considered and treated by a diachronic perspective. According to the symbolic value of the grave set from the few published and affordable excavations, the discontinuity and reappraisal of the hypogea in late Neolithic funerary tradition of Sardinia will get a more extended discussion. This high variability of symbolic and coactive practices is considered and evaluated in the background of the increasing interregional connections that concerned the advanced farming societies of the island and that caused the introduction of innovative and sometimes ephemeral practices.

Mots-Clés: funerary hypogea, Neolithic, Sardinia

*Intervenant

†Auteur correspondant: luglie@unica.ir