



The archaeological complex of **S'Arcu 'es Forros (Villagrande Strisaili)**, located at about 1000 m above sea level, on the mountains which stretch to the east of the massif of the Gennargentu, is characterized by different kinds of constructions that had an use mainly linked to the religious cult. The nuragic settlement is situated on the top and on the sides of a hill surrounded by two torrential streams, " rio Bacu Alleri" in the west and " rio Abbatrula" in the east, both affluents of the Flumendosa river. The landscape shows the traces of the deforestation started in 1700, but the underwood typical of the mountainous

areas, still remain. In the nearness you can see flocks and herds of cattle grazing while in the background you can notice the natural lime stone tower of Perdaliana, symbol of the mountainous **Ogliastra**. The vast complex includes two imposing **megaron temples** and a wide village, object of recent excavations. In the surroundings a monotower nuraghe, a corridor nuraghe and a giants' tomb rise as demonstration of the strategic importance of the site location near **Corre Boi pass**, main passage that links Barbagia to Ogliastra.

A **big megaron temple (A)** was built at the end of the Bronze Age inside a pre-existent settlement. It presents a rectangular plant with the prolongation of the long sides in the front and on the back (doubly *in antis*) with a double pitched covering. Its majesty and its interior divided in four rooms, make it unique in the Sardinian archaeological context. The rites linked to the worship of water, took place in a wide fencing (*temenos*) provided with a bench used to welcome the believers who arrived to the temple to leave the offerings (bronzes and precious objects) to the divinities.

The wide sanctuary village includes an unusual construction constituted by the joining of two small conical shaped trunked towers that have been interpreted as a **furnace** for metals melting. Tools and metal drosses testify the presence of smitheries and the sacred importance of metallurgic activity.





Recent excavations have brought to light a **second megaron temple (B)** contemporary to the first one (A) constituted by three rooms lined up with the entrance facing south east; the last one is apse shaped. Here it has been built an extraordinary **stone altar** made up of horizontal basaltic and volcanic rocks rows wrought by a stone chisel placed so as to create a refined duotone (two colors reproduction). On the top a fireplace reproduces the nuraghe balustrade emphasizing the blending of the front where there are two basaltic blocks on which some zoomorphic figures are represented, maybe ram protomes, sacred animals for Mediterranean cultures. Big river stones located at the altar base in the temenos in front of the temple strongly recall the divine element Water.



Downriver, the **village** is constituted by wide blocks of huts (insulae) overlooking a central courtyard according to a typical Iron Age plan. The structures and the discovered finds underline the presence of handcraft laboratories linked to metals work highlighting the close relationship between the sacred and metallurgy.



In S'Arcu 'es Forros, in the inland Ogliastra between the Middle Bronze Age (XV- XIII cent. B.C.) and the Iron Age (VIII cent. B.C.) the nuragic civilization has been able to express and hand down the echo of a dynamic international context and of a vital local socioeconomic structure.