



UNIONE EUROPEA



REPUBBLICA ITALIANA



REGIONE AUTÒNOMA DE SARDIGNA  
REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA

# Castle of Monreale

Patrimonio culturale  
**SARDEGNA** Virtual Archaeology



## ■ The courtyards

To enter the keep in Monreale castle it was necessary to come through a gate and a port-cullis, situated one after the other, in the south-west corner of the building (fig. 1).



**Fig. 1** - The entrance to the keep seen from inside (photo by Unicity S.p.A.).

From here, up some steps, a visitor entered the first space, perhaps covered by a canopy in ancient times, with an "L" shaped stone seat against the walls and a stone-slab floor with square trachyte blocks laid in interlocking fashion (fig. 2). Under the floor is a large rectangular cistern, divided into two parts. In the collapsed stonework removed during the archaeological digs, shaped ashlar were found from the doorways and arches that finished the communicating spaces to the courtyard and corridor<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> UCCHEDDU 2004, p. 198-199.

All the areas in the keep opened onto the inner courtyard, divided into various sectors arrange upwards to follow the shape of the hill (fig. 2)<sup>2</sup>. After the entrance area, moving inwards, there is a first courtyard, also with a stone floor, where a small counter can be seen against the wall south of the kappa room. A channel for water to enter the cistern in the entrance and a communicating well with the latter are also still visible.



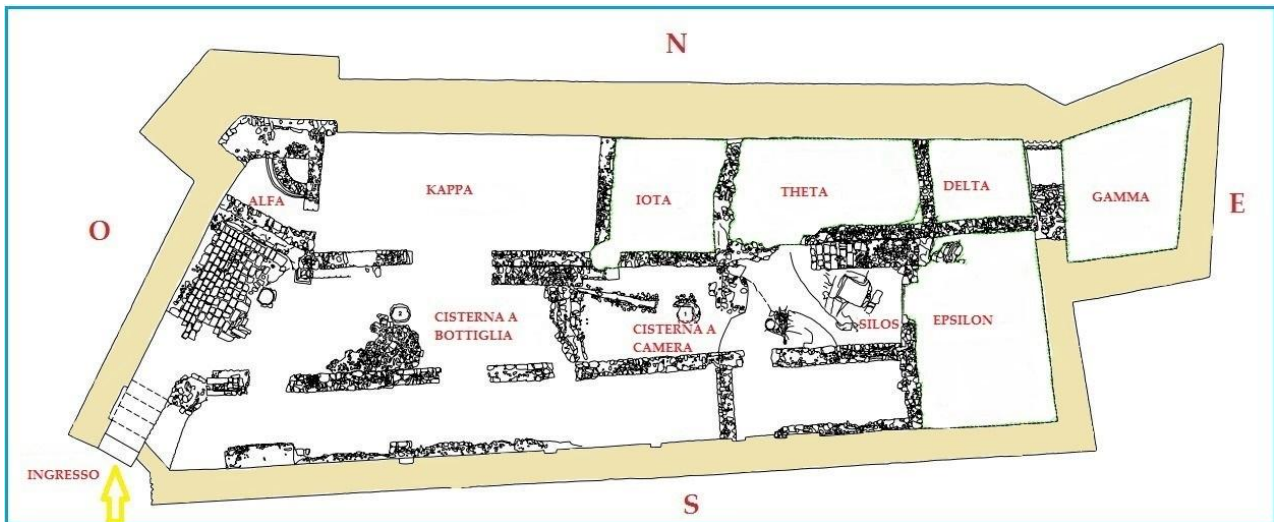
**Fig. 2** – The keep courtyards (reproduction by M. G. Arru, photo by Unicity S.p.A.).

Concrete steps led to the second courtyards, where the rectangular opening of another cistern, which was waterproofed inside and with a vaulted ceiling, is located. Another “bottle” tank is inside the walls that divided the kappa room from the iota room (fig. 3). This water reserve filled up with rainwater that was collected from the roofs in a series of drainpipes built into the walls<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> SPANU 2003, p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> STASOLLA 2010, p. 53.



**Fig. 3** – Plan of the keep (reconstruction by M.G Arru from SPANU 2003, p. 58)

The third courtyard is entered up a steep ramp carved out of the rock. Here there is a hypogeum structure with a square opening and internal flask structure, interpreted as a warehouse or storeroom, with a wooden closure made to cover it at floor level of the courtyard (fig. 3)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 47.

## ■ Credits

Deepening card edited by Dr. Maria Grazia Arru.

Preliminary research by Dr. Valeria Paretta and Dr. Daniele Corda.

## ■ Bibliography

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