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REGIONE AUTONOMA DE SARDIGNA
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Necropolis of Sant'Andrea Priu

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ Traces of wall decoration in the endonarthex and exonarthex

Tomb VI in the *domus de janas* necropolis in Sant'Andrea Priu known as the “Tomba del Capo”, was reused for Christian worship in two different eras, reaching the present day as a church dedicated to Sant'Andrea.

The tomb has eighteen rooms, the three biggest of which stand along a longitudinal axis (fig. 1) and which have undergone several changes during the Paleo-Christian, Byzantine and Medieval eras, acting as narthex, room and presbytery (bimah).

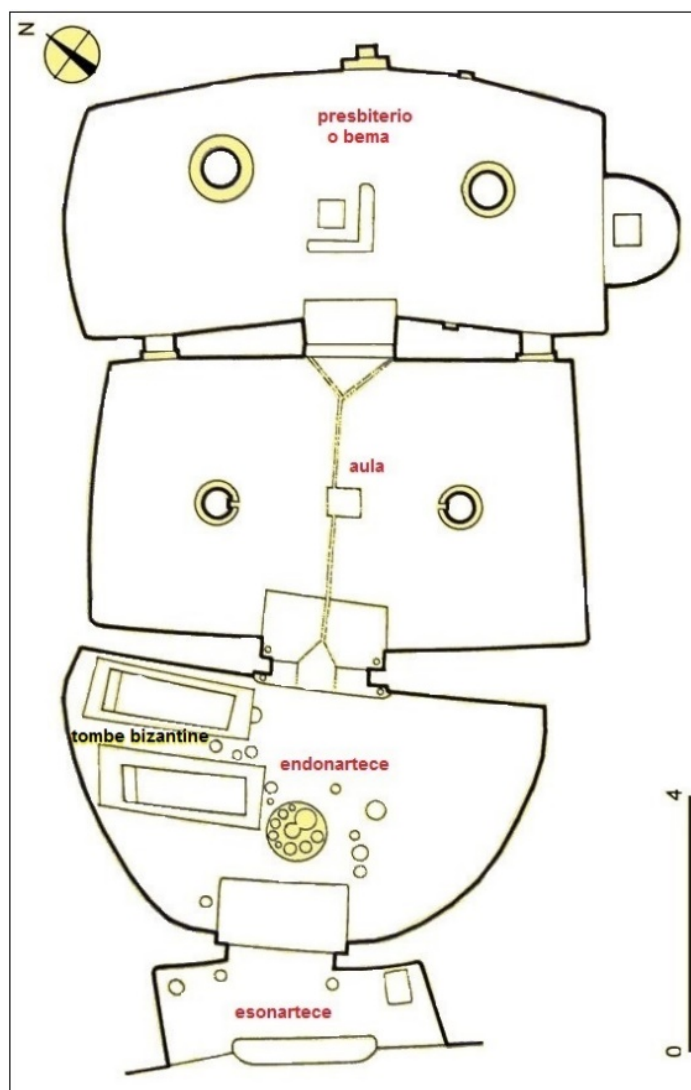


Fig. 1 - Tomba del Capo, Byzantine phase (from Caprara 1986, page 46).

The entrance room (exo-narthex or external narthex) was created from the original pre-historic ante-cell. It is sub-rectangular, 4.20 metres wide, and 1.50 metres deep, with an average height of 2.10 metres. A door with an architrave leads into a semi-circular room (endo-narthex or internal narthex) with a 7 metre diameter, where the floor contains several hollows concentrated around a circle and two tombs from a Byzantine Age (fig 2).



Fig. 2 - Byzantine tombs (photo Unicity S.p.A.).

The endonarthex ceiling reproduces the ceiling of pre-Nuragic age huts: it is a little hollowed, in the shape of a shell, decorated with radial grooves that start from a semi-circular relief work (fig. 3).





Fig. 3 - The endonarthex ceiling (photo Unicity S.p.A.)

A door 2 metres high and 1.45 metres wide, topped by a visible architrave, leads from the narthex to the room (figs. 4-5).





Fig. 4 - The door that leads from the narthex to the room (photo Unicity S.p.A.).



Fig. 5 - Detail of the architrave (photo Unicity S.p.A.).

When the burial site was converted to a church, these two areas (exonarthex and endonarthex) kept their original details from the Prehistoric Age. The only transformation is on the digging of two tombs in the floor of the endonarthex during the phase of use in the Byzantine Age. The traces of red ochre (fig 6) found on the ceiling are from a prehistoric age, while traces of plaster above the architrave are attributed to the reuse of the room during the Middle Ages.





Fig. 6 - Traces of red ochre found on the ceiling of the endo-narthex (photo Unicity S.p.A.).



■ Credits

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