



# Necropolis of Sant'Andrea Priu

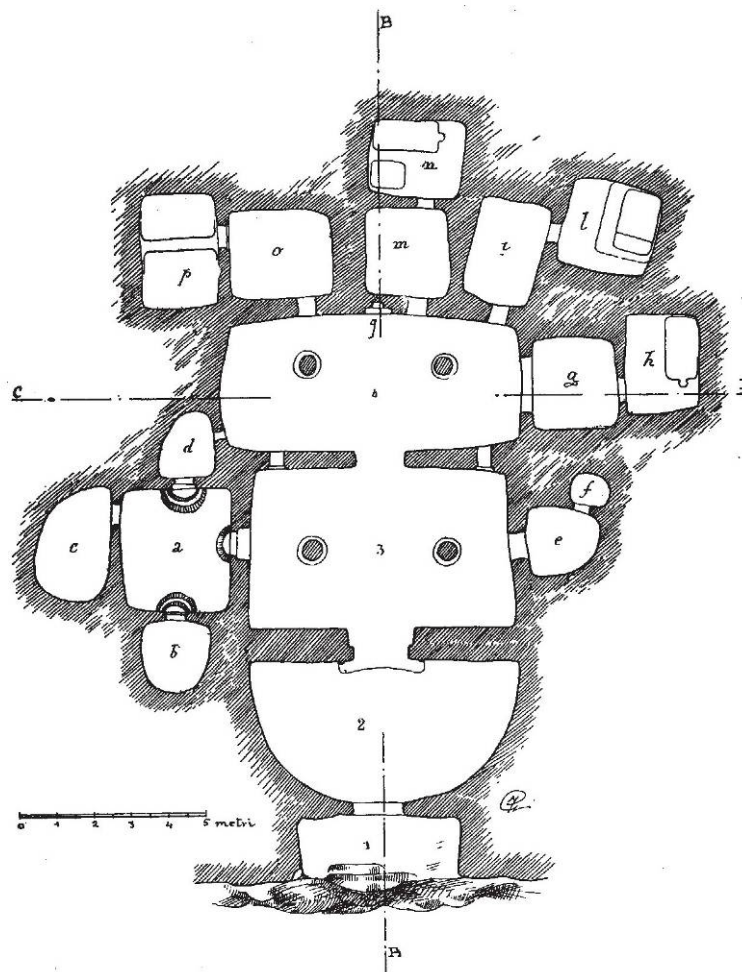
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## ■ The “Tomba del Capo” (VI)

The most interesting *domus de janas* of the Sant’Andrea Priu hypogeum necropolis is the so-called “Tomba del Capo”, divided into eighteen rooms around a central area, which forms an almost labyrinth, with an overall size of 250 square metres.

The first three rooms (a-c) are the oldest, central area of the multi-cell tomb; the other rooms were added at later times (fig. 1).



**Fig. 1** - Map of the “Tomba del Capo” (by Taramelli 1919, fig. 39, page 91).

From the rectangular atrium *a*, with its flat ceiling, access is given to the semi-circular ante-cell *b* (sizes: 7.10 m diameter x 4 m height).

The ceiling, sloping towards the entrance, copies the wooden beams that supported the roof in prehistoric huts (fig. 2).



**Fig. 2** - The ceiling of the ante-cell (photo Unicity S.p.A.).

The architectural details (decorated ceilings, relief work, lesenes, skirting) and the layout of the hypogeum provide useful indications for the reconstruction of the “house of the living” (fig. 3).





**Fig. 3** - Reconstruction hypothesis of a pre-Nuragic hut made on the basis of the *domus de janas data*. "Tomba dei Vasi Tetrapodi" in the Santu Pedru hypogeum necropolis- Alghero (by Corni 2001).

There is still residue of red paint under the line of the ceiling, presumably ochre, a pigment of intense symbolic value tied to the regeneration of the deceased and the colour of blood.

There are several hollows dug into the rock floor, in a circular shape, that were used for ritual libations in honour of the deceased (fig. 4).



**Fig. 4** - The hollows in the ante-cell floor (photo Unicity S.p.A.).

The two main cells, aligned with each other lengthways, are both rectangular, with a flat ceiling supported by columns. That narrow towards the top. Smaller cells are arranged around them, with straight and curved walls.

The tomb was constructed in the pre-Nuragic age around the 4th millennium - 3rd millennium B.C. In Roman and High Medieval times, the tomb was transformed into a place of Christian worship with the name of the church of Sant'Andrea. The change brought about renovation and re-adaptation work for the rooms and the decoration on the walls, with several Christian frescoes appearing.

## ■ Credits

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