

The area of the Cornus basilicas

Patrimonio culturale
SARDEGNA Virtual Archaeology



■ Altar of the main basilica

The episcopal complex including the main basilica, with the bishop's altar and that of the baptistery (fig. 1) rise on the southern area of Columbaris. In the central nave of the first a table altar (fig. 2) can still be seen, with a base made of limestone blocks and stone walls, with a light grey basalt slab placed on top of it. The altar measures 1.41x1.85 metres, with two stone wings of 0.85 metres each; underneath there was a ditch for relics filled with earth and covered with a mosaic panel. In the same longitudinal direction of the ara there are two plinths, that correspond with a similar pair placed 1.85 metres distance from one another: the ciborium canopy was supported by four columns. The *tegurium* was decommissioned when the central nave was narrowed; when, most likely around the VI century, the floor was raised. The non-central position of the table and structures brought about the hypothesis that the two elements refer to two different phases: the bases of the first ciborium were hidden by the new floor. Another element found in one of the side naves was interpreted as a second altar by Ovidio Addis, who directed two digs in the 1960s and who brought it to light. The altar is inspired by the Jewish religion place of sacrifice, but in Catholic liturgy, it is the table of the last supper and the sacrifice of Christ in the Eucharist. Its place in paleo-Christian basilicas is usually in the presbytery centrally, although sometimes it is in the middle of the middle nave, allowing the priest to officiate in front of the people.



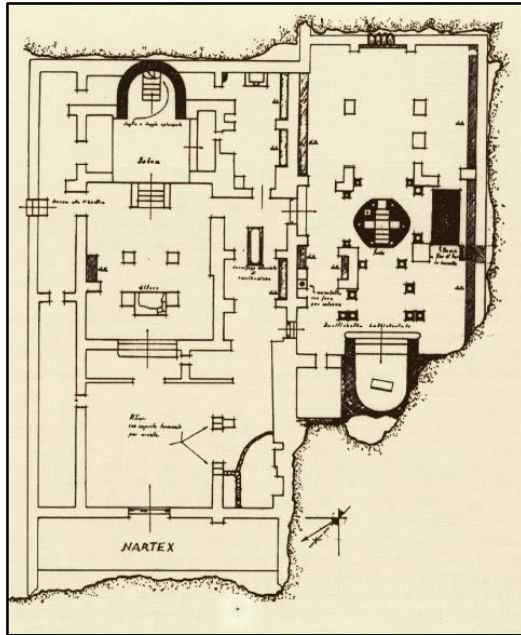


Fig. 1 - Episcopal basilica (from FARRIS 1993, p. 100, Tab. 5).

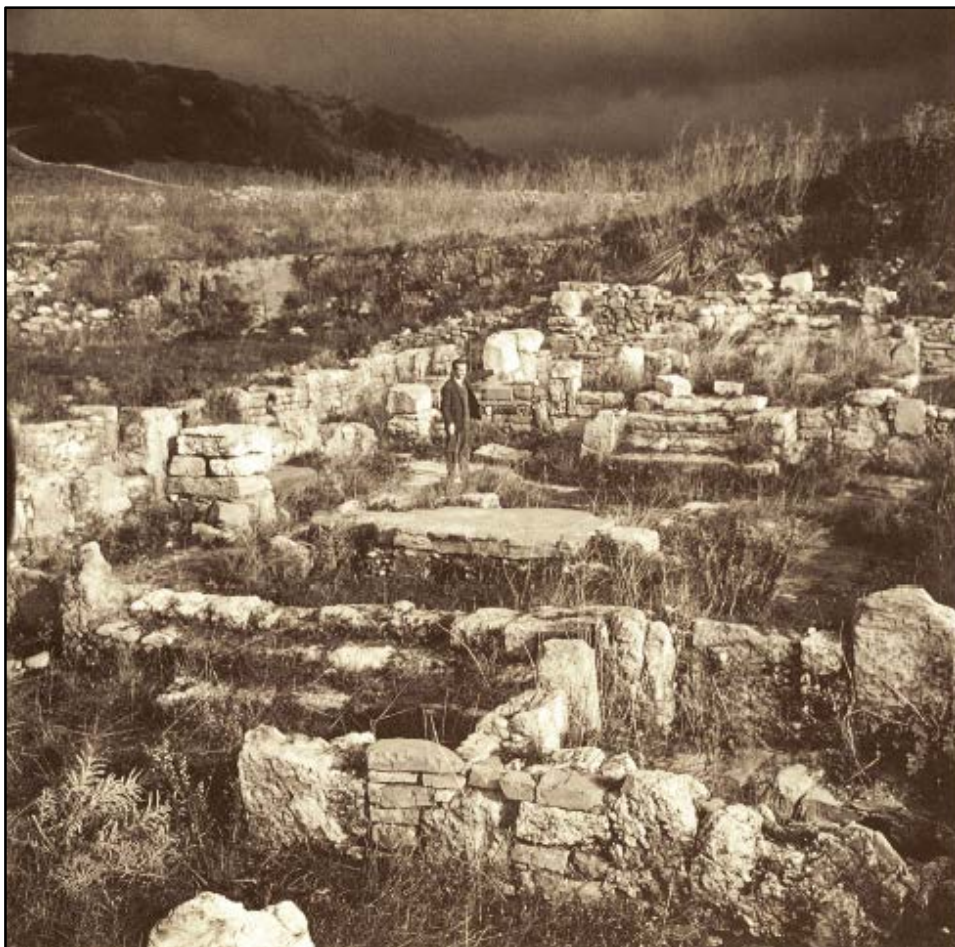


Fig. 2 - Main basilica: the altar base in grey basalt in the centre (from FARRIS 1993, p. 86).

■ Credits

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