

Church of Saint'Anastasio

The church dedicated to Saint Anastasius, a saint of Byzantine origin, is located in the upper part of the village, at the intersection of steep, narrow alleys. Built in the 12th century, the church seems to have been made by local workers due to the construction techniques used. It was erected on a large granite rock, quite visible on the south side, at the base of which there is a small natural cave.

The extremely simple façade is surmounted by a small bell gable under which there is a rectangular window and the central portal framed by red trachyte elements. On the sides there are buttresses to support the walls, made of non-angular stones.

The interior consists of a single nave marked by four round arches in trachyte and surmounted by a wicker-woven thatched roof supported by wooden beams. The floor made of red, black and sand-coloured cement tiles is quite distinctive.

The presbytery, with a cross vault, at the crossing point has a hanging gem in light-coloured trachyte with a floral decoration; the altar below, also in stone, was made quite recently.

The apse houses the valuable *Retable of the Madonna and Child*, known until recently as the *Retable of the Holy Family*.

In the 90s, the work was extensively restored by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage of Sassari that brought its original layout to light: in the central part, we can see the Virgin Mary with the Child on her lap, but St. Joseph, which had previously been present next to her, is no longer there.

It has been hypothesized that the saint had been added arbitrarily during a restoration that took place in the 19th century, so it was decided to restore it to the appearance it most likely had when it was painted in the school of Stampace. The author is probably Antioco Mainas, due to the stylistic affinities that the work has with the *Retable of the Virgin* present in the church of San Francesco in Iglesias by the same author.

In the other parts of the retable, structured as per the scheme of a double triptych, the following figures appear: at the top in the centre, the Crucifixion of Christ with the kneeling Madonna, and Mary Magdalene and St. John on the two sides. Also in the upper panel, on the left is emperor Saint Constantine, and Saint Helena is on the right.

On both sides of the Madonna and Child, Saint Anastasius is shown on the left, and Saint Stephen on the right.

On the predella, from left to right, there are: Saint Blaise, Saint Peter the Apostle, the Resurrection of Christ, Saint Maurus, and Saint Liberatore.

The church is opened on Holy Thursday and for the feast dedicated to Saint Anastasi-
us which is on January 22nd.

Text by Laura Melis with the contribution of Lidia Siotto

