



Zooarchaeology at Sanisera: classifying the domestic fauna of a classical Roman Mediterranean port (Menorca, Balearic Islands, Spain)

1. General information

In 2008 the Sanisera Archaeology Institute for International Field Schools began offering courses in classical archaeology on the Mediterranean island of Menorca. Since then, **more than 3,400 students from some twenty countries**, most of them from universities in the United States and Canada, have come to excavate and to train in archaeology and bioanthropology. We recommend this course to students interested in **zooarchaeology, comparative osteology, ancient economy, archaeology and anthropology/bioarchaeology** in general.

Sanisera lies on the coast of Sanitja, at the northern tip of the island. It began as a **military camp after the Roman conquest of 123 BC** and grew into a Roman port that lived off the livestock and agriculture of its hinterland. Between the 4th and 7th centuries its inhabitants built an **Early Christian basilica** and buried their dead in several necropolises, until the site was abandoned in the 7th century.

The bones recovered at Sanisera are the clearest evidence of what this community lived on. **More than half of the remains belong to sheep and goats**, and the rest is shared almost equally between cattle and pigs, with smaller numbers of horses, dogs, rabbits, chickens and pigeons. Sheep and goats were slaughtered young, at the age of best meat yield, and are represented mainly by jaws, teeth and the meatiest limb bones; cattle were butchered in the port itself, and pigs, killed very early, are recognised almost only by their teeth. Classifying these remains is especially valuable today because **the excavation focuses on the basilica and its cemetery of the 4th to 7th centuries**, where animal bones appear alongside the tombs and it is necessary to tell apart what was food and what formed part of a funerary rite.

2. What you will learn

2.1. In the Laboratory

- Be able to distinguish the major skeletal elements of the major vertebrate taxonomic classes and apply those skills to an archaeological assemblage of faunal remains.
- Understanding of the processes by which zooarchaeologists recover and analyse their data.

- Utilisation of anatomical terminology to describe and discuss skeletal elements.
- Identifying fragmented bones.
- Identifying butchery types in faunal remains.
- Recording zooarchaeological information on complex forms.

2.2. Theory

- Understand how the methods used by zooarchaeologists provide context to the Sanisera site through the examination of past and present cultural and funerary practices.
- Create explanatory narratives around the zooarchaeological assemblage you analysed through an interdisciplinary approach.
- Challenges in reconstructing animal husbandry and diet from faunal remains.

3. Directed at

This course does not include excavation: it centres exclusively on the study and teaching of zooarchaeology using the animal bones recovered at the Sanisera site. It is intended for **students and graduates in archaeology, anthropology, biology, veterinary science or related disciplines** who wish to learn how to classify archaeological fauna, and also for those with no previous experience who want an introduction to comparative osteology with real material. No prior knowledge of zooarchaeology is required. As laboratory work demands individual attention, the course is limited to six participants per session.

4. Field School life & language

The work takes place in the institute's laboratory in Ciutadella de Menorca, in **5.5-hour working days** devoted to the analysis of faunal remains, combined with lectures and the use of reference atlases and manuals. There is no travel to the site. For every seven course days there are two days off. **The course is taught in English.**

5. Certificates

At the end of the course students receive a certificate of participation stating the hours and the activities completed. Participants with outstanding performance may request a letter of recommendation from the organisation.

6. Sessions & Cost

Sessions	Dates	Cost
Session #1	2027 July 14 – July 29	\$ 2300
Session #2	2027 August 01 – August 16	\$ 2300

7. Course fee

The course fee includes:

- Course tuition.
- Accident insurance in the laboratory.
- Certificate of participation.
- Accommodation in the Student Residence in Ciutadella. Rooms separated by sex, provided with air conditioning for the summer season and heat pump for the autumn and winter months.
- Scrupulous daily cleaning of the entire residence by professionals.
- In case of needing to process a Schengen visa, the mandatory letter of invitation will be written so you can travel.

Airfare not included from the student home to/from Menorca (Spain).

Meals are not included, although we will recommend some cafés and restaurants that do not exceed the average of 23 € /day in meals.

** If you sign up for two sessions in a row (32 days) that take place in Menorca, the days between sessions (3 or 4 days) you will have the accommodation for free.*

8. Spaces available

The course is limited to **6 participants per session**. Reservations are only effective once payment of the registration fee is received. If for any reason the course is cancelled, the amount is refunded in accordance with the field school's refund policy.

9. Information and reservations

For more information, contact:

Email: info@archaeology.institute

Web page: www.archaeology.institute