

SA NITJA MANAGEMENT OF THE MEDITERRANEAN HERITAGE, *Results from the surveys carried out at the Roman City of Sanisera (Es Mercadal – Menorca)*¹

1. INTRODUCTION.

As a result of the project for the Re-evaluation of the Historical- Archaeological Heritage of the Roman Cities of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands funded by the Fundació "la Caixa" in 1992, the prize was awarded to the "Proyecto de Investigación Sa Nitja" which was presented by the non-profit organization Sa Nitja Gestión del Patrimonio Mediterráneo whose aim is to analyse the feasibility of the Roman city of Sanisera from a historical – archaeological standpoint and also to find ways of spreading the knowledge of what has been discovered there².

In the three years from 1993 – 95, we focused the project in two different ways: first, we undertook a series of extensive archaeological surveys in the town/settlement and for the second phase of the project, we created an Ecomuseum at Cavallería, the heart of the territory where Sanisera was founded. From an archaeological standpoint, the reasons for carrying out the project at Sanisera were diverse:

1. The quality of the site itself. Taking into consideration that the town was strategically located in a natural port, we were given the possibility to study in depth the role that ports of call played in the distribution and redistribution of goods by sea.

2. By the mere fact that Sanisera was a town/city, we gained essential analytical information to help understand its process of "Romanization" and the level of indigenism of the islanders.

¹ Taken from *Annals de l' Institut d'Estudis Gironins*, Vol. XXXVIII, 1996 –97 Girona. Pp.1649-1668.

² To carry out this project, the commitment of several people and institutions were essential.

First of all we are indebted to all those members of the Association, researchers and experts from different fields, who have collaborated in the creation of an Ecomuseum in Cavallería based on the port of Sa Nitja. These people are: E. Busquets, A. Camps, X. Carlús, A. Casas, J. M. Castellví, C. Carreras, P. Izquierdo, A. López, J. Llinàs, J. L. Piñar, A. Rodríguez, A. Obrador y M. Vilas.

Next, we thank all those people who have taken part in different archaeological tasks just like any member of the association and who have provided material and infrastructure for us to develop our activities in the best conditions possible.

Third, our thanks go out to Joseph M. Olivar y Despujol, the owner of the Cavallería territory, for his willingness and concern over the past three years in developing this project.

Fourth, we should like to thank the public institutions most closely linked to the theme of our project; on the one hand a special mention for the work done by the Town Hall of Es Mercadal which has collaborated in the cleaning and protection of the site and for providing us with a temporary warehouse to store the initial finds. We also thank them for their help and concern in informing the local population about our project through a conference organised by Margarita Borrás, Councillor for Culture and presided over by the Mayor, Antoni Pons. Furthermore we should like to emphasize that the Consell Insular de Menorca has undertaken the restoration of the archaeological remains found at the site to this day and has shown willingness, at all times, in granting the permits needed to work the site for the duration of the project.

And finally, we thank the Fundació "La Caixa" for the trust they have placed in our Association during this first phase so as to be able to offer, at a later date, the archaeological wealth of the city/settlement to educational and tourist groups.

3. The visits we made to the site in the preliminary stages of the project revealed the existence of a considerably sized town with a history dating from the end of II century B.C. to the end of IV century A.D. Once the initial surveys were done, we found it very reasonable to carry out intensive work on the surface of the site because of the large quantity of relevant ceramic remains we found and also to the fact that the conditions of the land were ideal (land left untilled for many years, large uncultivated areas, low and sparse vegetation, etc.). Furthermore, the remains of the buildings could be seen on the surface.

4. Because it is the only Roman town in Menorca which has not been partially or totally covered by later building, we were able to carry out prospections and then intensive and extensive excavations both on land and underwater. All this implied the compiling of new data (hypotheses, theories and conclusions) pertaining to many factors: town planning, urban development, economics. With this information we can compare our own site to those of Iamo and Magón – which, unfortunately now lie buried under the modern cities of Ciudadella and Mahón respectively, as well as to other Roman sites on Mallorca or Ibiza or to other ports of a similar nature on the Mediterranean.

5. The scarce historical and archaeological awareness of Sanisera by researchers is due partly to the fact that reports from the preliminary surveys and the excavations have not been published outside the island and partly because there has been very limited archaeological activity on the site.

6. With the exception of a few essential papers used in congresses on Christian archaeology, we know relatively little about the impact of "Romanization" on the island of Menorca especially in the late Republican and high Imperial eras.

7. Finally, the archaeological work, both surveying and excavation, undertaken by C. Rita's team came to an end in the mid 80's through lack of subsidies.

2. OBJECTIVES

In order to calculate the archaeological potential of this Roman city we established the main work objectives and although they were ambitious and enthusiastic we knew that some of them would be sorted out at a later stage during the period of the site excavation.

The objectives were as follows:

1. To begin with, it was essential to gather all the information that had been published about Sanisera to know exactly how much research had already been carried out on the site.

2. At the next stage we decided to revise and analyse the most outstanding research carried out by the local archaeologists C. Rita and J. De Nicolás with a view to confirming their hypotheses, theories and results, but also to reach new conclusions.

3. We would attempt to recover as much archaeological material as possible originating from the port of Sanitja which had been found by passersby, had been looted or which was in private collections.

4. We would analyse the condition of the stratigraphy and indicate, on the one hand, agricultural activity in the area, animal farming, the impact of the plough, the changes undergone by improving work methods on the land, the transporting of earth from one place to another and the use of archaeological remains as building material for the modern homes of Es Mercadal and Fornells. On the other hand, we would point out the existence of unauthorized digging and "metal detector holes". Finally we would show what effect natural agents like water, wind and vegetation have had on the stratigraphy. As a result of this objective we will be aware which parts of the stratigraphy are most affected and where most deterioration is present so we can take all this into account when we are planning excavations in the future as to not further damage the strata.

5. Along with the previous objectives and with the results taken from the application of different survey techniques, a solid basis for research would be established and would be used to plan the strategy for excavating certain areas in accordance with our objectives, the interests of each and everyone of the members of the group, and the problems we could be faced with and our economic resources.

6. The chronological phases of the site would be outlined from its initial phase until its decline as a Roman stronghold, analysing its moments of "splendour" and "crisis" or, in other words, recording its economic behaviour from the very beginnings. Furthermore, we would observe and study how humans lived their lives at the port of Sanitja and in the territory of Cap de Cavallería from the earliest times to modern day.

7. We would define the character of the site itself, its functionality as a port of call, its influence on shipping, its relationship with the Iberian Peninsula, the other Mediterranean Islands, the coast of Gaul, the coast of North Africa and with Rome.

8. As Sanisera is a city which owes its existence to its strategic location within this territory, we would analyse its urban planning and development in a preliminary way and study how it is conditioned by the lay of the land. At the same time, we would outline the dwelling areas, the necropolis (cemetery), the areas of worship, entertainment, storage, the defences and the port area.

9. We would examine the questions arising from the foundation of the city. We would ascertain whether the city was newly founded by a Roman or Punic contingent or by the islanders themselves, or whether, in fact, it was the continuation of a Talayotic settlement, as some historians tend to think, and which was true of most Talayotic towns on the island which show evidence of habitation until the times of the Early Empire.

10. Alongside the previous objective, we would study the problems arising from classical sources since, apart from Pliny who cites Sanisera as a civitas,

there is no other mention of this site. It would be interesting to analyse whether or not Pliny identifies Sanisera as "town" or "nation" and, at the same time, raise the possibility of whether to consider to this city's legal title as similar to that of Iamo and Mago, in other words to define it as a municipium flavium.

11. The techniques of surveying used would be appraised and, if necessary criticised, so that other research teams might benefit from knowing the results we have obtained – good or bad - and the time and money we have invested into the project.

As we have already pointed out, we chose certain surveying techniques to achieve the objectives we had set ourselves. It was not our intention to begin the excavation work in extension and survey for three fundamental reasons:

- Due to the minimal knowledge we possessed of the site and of the "romanization" of the Balearics, we deemed it necessary to start off our work with a profound understanding of all the research that had been done earlier and, at the same time, analyse in a general manner the nature of the surface of the site. In this way we would be able to constitute an effective basis to plan a strategy of action using prospecting techniques.

- Methodological: solely through excavation work we could not achieve the main aim we had set ourselves – to understand the archaeological potential and the feasibility of the site – as this step would only serve to study in depth a small area and would not define the character of the city. Consequently, we would be running the risk of extrapolating the gathered information to the rest of the site which, evidence suggest, occupies between 18 and 19 hectares of land.

- Economic: the funding received from the Fundación "La Caixa" and support from other official Menorcan institutions could not guarantee the continuity of the project once finished. Carrying out a research project on an island like Menorca inflates a budget tremendously when we take into consideration the costs of organization, accommodation, travel and infrastructure.

If we were to add to the above all the costs of excavation, we would see the budget double in value. Add to this the post-excavation costs and the theoretical maintenance costs incurred from the conservation and custody of the finds because we know that Cap de Cavallería where the site is located has a steady passage of tourists through the summer months which contributes to the progressive deterioration of the site. Our team has also noticed an increased curiosity in the site but of a "clandestine" nature.

The planning of the exploration does not correspond to a "techniques handbook" but to the use of certain techniques which came up with the best results and ruled out those that implied a high cost and did not guarantee sufficient information to achieve our set goals.

At the same time, the exploration campaigns have been carried out in different stages leaving a time gap between each one so as to analyse the information gathered. This procedure helped us to choose the next technique to

be used according to the needs and allowed us to plan our course of action and to find the ideal technical crew and experts to carry out each activity.

3. LOCATION OF THE SITE

The archaeological site of Sanisera, which belongs to the farm of Santa Teresa is located on the north coast of the island of Menorca at the natural port of Sanitja, beside Cap de Cavallería, in the municipal borough of Es Mercadal.

Its exact map coordinates are latitude 40° 03' 10" and longitude 7° 45' 20" latitude east⁴.

Eroded by sea and wind, the north coast, with its rocky sea bed and difficult approach, is dangerous. Cap de Cavallería is one of the most rugged headlands and the port of Sanitja one of its most important inlets. Cap de Cavallería is the northernmost tip of Menorca. It is a peninsula which projects towards the north. Its easternmost point is known as Punta Levant. At the very end of the peninsula is a cliff 89 metres high with a lighthouse perched on top.

If we describe the port of Sanitja looking northwards, we see that the west coast of the port is an elongated peninsula, with sparse vegetation due to heavy erosion and strong winds, divided up into plots of land and at its NW end sits a watchtower which formed part of the defence system during the British occupation of the XVIII century. To the north of this coast and very close to it are two tiny, rocky islands which form a breakwater just outside the entrance to the port.

The east side of the port is the same as the west side. It has a fishermen's house called S'Almadrava which was built at the end of the XVIII century as a refuge for the fishermen of Fornells when the seas were rough or the "tramuntana" winds were pounding the coast. There have been cases, too, when S'Almadrava was used in emergencies by sailors who had to interrupt their voyage while sailing along the north coast towards the Iberian Peninsula or other destinations.

As we continue along the east side of the port towards the south, we come across a small jetty which is used by fishermen from Es Mercadal and nearby we find an old quarry of dolomite and a lime kiln of uncertain date although almost surely belonging to the XVIII or XIX century.

The port of Sanitja which works its way inland some 800 metres to the S-SE, and varies from 150 to 200 metres in width, is a strategic stronghold. The lay of the land around the port makes it a perfect haven for boats when the "tramuntana" blows. The entrance to the harbour is much easier than the one at Fornells.

The reasons why Sanitja port is better than Fornells are simple: the port of Sanitja is protected by the Isla de Porros (island of Porros) and the Cap de

⁴ Servicio Cartográfico del Ejército, page 618, I - II

Cavallería reef but also its access is rather wide whereas the access to Fornells is narrow and when a storm rises it is very easy for a boat to end up on one of the rocks or reefs that are so common in this area.

The archaeological site of Sanitja is split in two by a small stream which only carries abundant water after rains. Over the ages this stream has carried sediment to the harbour bay which, along with the accumulation of seaweed, has caused it to silt up considerably. It is fair to assume that without this silt, for example during the Roman occupation of the place, the port would have allowed access to larger vessels because the depth would have been substantially greater than it is today⁵.

Also, the silt did not reach the bay because it was deposited on the land around the stream thus creating new fertile land which is, in fact, the only land in the area that is cultivated.

Some three kilometres from the entrance to the port and surrounded by sea is the Isla de Porros or Sanitja which is the northernmost point of Menorca. It has an area of about 2 hectares, is between seven and eight metres high at its maximum point and as a result of excessive erosion there remains very little soil on its surface. Until the present, however, it has been used as pasture land.

From the port to the Isla de Porros there are virtually no threats from reefs. The perimeter of the island is clear on its SW, W and N sides but to its east and south there is a large rock 125 metres SE of the island's tip.⁶

4. HISTORY OF THE SITE

4.1 CLASSICAL SOURCES

The historical references found referring to the Roman city of Sanisera are scarce and are mainly limited to the description Pliny the Elder makes of the Balearic Islands in the middle of the I century AD in his work *Naturalis Historia*, III 77-78⁷.

This description is extremely important, not only because it quotes two cities on the island of Menorca, known from earlier texts as Iamo (Ciudadela) and Mago (Mahon), but for the first time it mentions another city: Sanisera.

⁵ Mascaró y Pasariás, J. *Geografía e Historia de Menorca*, p. 116-117

⁶ Instituto Hidrográfico de la Marina. *Derrotero de las costas del Mediterráneo que comprende las Islas Baleares...*, n.3, tom II, p.92

⁷ *...Las Baleares belicosas por la honda, llamáronlas los griegos "Gymnesiai". La Mayor de una longitud de 100.000 pasos y un contorno de 475.000 pasos; tiene las siguientes poblaciones: de ciudadanos romanos, Palma y Polentia; de ciudadanía latina, Cuio y Tucis y fue ciudad federada Bóccoro. De esta isla dista 30.000 pasos la Menor, de una longitud de 40.000 pasos y un contorno de 150.000 pasos; tiene las poblaciones de Iamo, Sanisera y Mago. De la Mayor dista en dirección a alta mar 12.000 pasos Capraria, traicionera para los naufragios, y en frente de la región de la ciudad de Palma están las Menarias y Ticuadra, también la pequeña de Haníbal.*

*La tierra de Ebuso hace que huyan las serpientes y la de Colubraria las cría, por lo que es peligrosísima para todos, menos para quienes llevan consigo tierra ebusitana. Ebuso tampoco cría conejos, alimañas que devastan las mieses de las Baleares" (Traducción de Schulten, A.; Maluquer de Motes, J. *Fontes Hispaniae Antiquae. Hispania Antigua según Pomponio Mela, Plinio el Viejo y Calusio Ptolomeo*, p.126).*

Sanisera has been identified as the port of Sanitja. Historians have come to this conclusion as a result of a toponymic study and because fragments of Roman pottery have been found at the port of Sanitja. The existence of an excellent natural port has helped immensely in supporting this hypothesis. In the waters around the port, amphorae and remains of sailing vessels are often found.

4.2. LEGENDS

Thanks to authors like F. Camps y Mercadal legends from Menorca have survived. It is in his book *Folklore menorquí de la pagesia* that the only legend about Sanitja appears: "La leyenda de Ses Vilotes"⁸.

These legends usually have their origin in historical facts. In this case, the survival of the memory of this city with its necropolis proves it.

4.3 EXISTING AUTHORS UNTIL 1978

In 1785, J. Ramis y Ramis suggested the similarity between the names of Sanitja and Sanisera, when he came across Pliny's famous text which was later used extensively by J. Vargas Ponce in his book *Descripciones de las Islas Pitiusas y Baleares*⁹.

The idea of identifying Sanitja with Sanisera would not be the initiative of J. Ramis y Ramis as, during the 19th century the Menorcans F. Oleo y Quadrado and the Archduke Luis Salvador also emphasize the similarity of the place names and believed that there was a possibility that the ruins of Sanitja were really those of Sanisera¹⁰.

We will find no more references about the location of Sanisera until the early 20th century. J. Cortina¹¹ believes that there is an ancient Roman town at Sanitja. In 1974, A. Garcia Bellido, in his commentaries on Pomponius Mela and Caius Plinius' texts referring to Hispania, expressed that "Sanisera is unknown"¹² and believed, just as Schulten¹³ did, that its location was in the county of Alaior.

⁸ "A sa part ponent des port de Sa Nitja, hi ha mostres - sa principal és el cementiri o carnatge - d'haver-hi existit una població. Es nom des rodol en fa esment: es diu Ses Vilotes. I diuen que en dies de bonança, an es fons de la mar, dins es port, se veuen cases.

Conten que sa població se deia Janissari; que a Janissari, en es punt dit s'Almadrava, hi havia una esglesieta, de sa que prevé sa imatge de la Verge del Carme, sa patrona de s'Oratori públic des proper casal de pàges de Santa Tresa sa imatge sembla verament molt antiga.

Junt a Ses Vilotes està es Canal de Sa Cadena, dit així perquè un Bisbe, lligat a una cadena, hi fou arrossegat, fins que morí. Seria un màrtir?

Persones compatívoles donaren sepultura an es cos des Bisbe en es Mitjà de ses Abelles, que està damunt una esquena que domina es Canal de Sa Cadena. Sabent-se acó per tradició, un día, llaurant dins es Canal, amb sa rella se va descolgar una cadena llarguíssima, la que, en cert modo, vingué a confirmar sa veu pública, a sa històrica cadena, que tothom diu que ha existit, no es sap de ningú que l' hagi vista." (F. Camps i Mercadal: *Folklore menorquí de la pagesia*, p.68)

⁹ Considerando que "ni menos he podido rastrear otra cosa tocante con este asunto sino que en el término de Mercadal a la parte Norte hay una bahía muy grande que se llama Sanitja cuyo nombre se parece bastante a Sanisera a que se le añade que en el fondo de la antidualce bahía hay un paraje inmediato al mar donde se descubren algunas ruinas antiguas, las que podrían ser de la expresada ciudad." (Ramis y Ramis, J. *Notas histórico-descriptivas*. Transcritas por J. Flaquer y Fábregues en la Revista de Menorca, p.126).

¹⁰ "La gran mella costera, donde se ubicara al parecer la antigua Sanisera, de la que podían apreciarse aún hasta hace poco sus viejos restos hoy englobados en la negra y voluminosa falda de la torre" (Austria, L. *La isla de Menorca*, p.42-43).

¹¹ Cortina, J. *Sobre las ruinas de Sanitja*, p. 83-86.

Later on, A. M. Muñoz, in his analysis of the Greek and Latin written sources that deal with the Balearic Islands, makes a reference to the city and mentions that "for Sanisera we possess no facts nor, to this date, know its exact location"¹⁴. It was not until 1974 that the underwater archaeological finds recovered by the Mahon Maritime Club and the D' Es Castell Sailing Club were handed over to the Museum of Mahon. The pieces surrendered were the necks of four Roman amphorae from North Africa dating the early Empire. Two of these pieces bear stamps. With all the prospecting work that has gone on at the port and the land around it, a large quantity of material has been recovered providing us with very interesting information about the wine and oil trade around the Western Mediterranean from the I to the IV centuries AD¹⁵.

In 1977 the first data based on the observation and analysis of the remains of cultural material found around the port of Sanitja were published¹⁶.

4.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERVENTION

During 1979, and after previous prospecting, the first excavation under C. Rita's direction began. A series of excavations in areas around Ses Vilotes continued until 1984.

Also during 1979 underwater exploration took place from which necks and rims of amphora Dressel 20 and 26 were recovered¹⁷.

To conclude, the results of the prospecting and excavation campaigns at Ses Vilotes, on the west coast of the port of Sanitja, date the initial phase of the city to the period of conquest or a little earlier and its growth lasted until the VI century AD. Three groups of cemeteries were discovered ("Sector A"¹⁸), "Area of Exterior Tombs" and ("Area of Interior Tombs"¹⁹), a building dating to the early Empire in

¹² García Bellido, A. *La España del siglo I de nuestra era* (según P. Mela y C. Plinio), p.245.

¹³ Tovar. *Iberische Landeskunden*, p. 276.

¹⁴ Muñoz, A. "Fuentes escritas griegas y romanas sobre las Baleares" *la Prehistoria y Arqueología de las Islas Baleares*", p.23

¹⁵ de Nicolás, J. "Epigrafía anforaria en Menorca" *Revista de Menorca*, p. 5-80

¹⁶ " A pesar de no haberse llevado a término, por el momento, una excavación sistemática en la zona, una detenida prospección superficial nos indica que el lugar ha sido habitado en épocas antiguas, al menos desde el siglo II d.C. dándose la circunstancia de que estos testimonios aparecen agrupados en zonas determinadas, de manera que puede adivinarse el núcleo más antiguo que está situado sobre un promontorio junto al mismo fondo del puerto de Sanitja, a la derecha del pequeño torrente que enlaza con el mar mirando hacia la boca del puerto. En este lugar aparecen las cerámicas más antiguas como fragmentos de canaaniense A, ánforas grecoitalicas y republicana, cerámica ibérica, de fabricación indígena, etc. Además tramos de muro ciclópeo [de época talayótica. " Ver texto de Nicolás, J. *Patrimoni històric d'Es Mercadal*, p.30].

"Por el contrario, a la izquierda del torrente pueden apreciarse innumerables fragmentos de sigillatas de todos los tipos y procedencias, con buena representación de las claras (s. II-III y IV) y estampadas, así como fragmentos de ánforas imperiales, fragmentos de tegulas, etc. A parte de lo dicho en zonas más apartadas de estos dos núcleos principales...pueden verse los cimientos de alguna casa romana y parte de una necrópolis." (de Nicolás, J. "Notas de actualización de los capítulos I y II correspondientes a Prehistoria y Protohistoria" a *Historia de Menorca, tomo I. De los orígenes al final de la Edad Media*, de M. L. Serra et alia, p. 120).

¹⁷ De Nicolás, J. *Epigrafía anfórica en Menorca*, p. 58.

¹⁸ Necrópolis de 21 tumbas, la mayoría en cista, donde destacan, por su nombre los fragmentos de *tegulae* y de *T.S. Sigillata* clara demostrando un paralelismo cronológico con el edificio C. (Rita, C. et alii; *Las excavaciones arqueológicas en el yacimiento de Sanitja (Menorca) hasta 1984*, p. 45-48) .

¹⁹ Se excavaron dos tumbas construidas con piedras clavadas en la tierra y cubiertas de losas o de *tegulae* (C. Rita et alii, *Las excavaciones...*,p.43).

the city ("Building C"²⁰) and an architectural structure that is interpreted as a possible lighthouse ("North Point"²¹). Finally, and taking into account that very little archaeological material from the Talayotic period has been found in this area, it is believed that the indigenous settlement which was located inland grew towards the edges of the port²².

Cristina Rita, having ended the excavations, came to the conclusion that this agricultural-farming and industrial society's most thriving period had to be from the moment of its conquest to the III century AD. After the crisis of the III century AD, Sanisera became a focal point of residual population²³.

5. THE STUDY OF A COLLECTION

To take over the archaeological work from where it had been left off and with nearly a decade of inactivity at the site, J. de Nicolás made available to us some of the material that had come from the port of Sanitja. In this way our first encounter with the site was not as difficult.

In studying this collection we attained a good idea of the ample chronology that the published research indicated. Furthermore, it allowed us to recognise the types of finds that would be present at this site and enable us to compare them with anything we would find in future prospectings.

A close analysis of this collection showed that the oldest piece, be it fine ceramic or amphorae, was a Punic amphora, a Maña C1/2, giving us an antequem of 350 to 250 BC. This dating seems to be reinforced by other existing pieces of Maña C and Punic Ebussitan pieces, which even though are not as old, share many similarities and also by a fragment of Campanian A and Iberian artefacts in the form of painted pottery or amphorae.

At the end of this chronological framework we find numerous pieces of Clares D pottery from the VII century AD of which the most recent is a Hayes 105. This dating is reinforced by the amphora of which the most recent one is a Keay LXI dating from 450 to 700 AD.

²⁰ El edificio "C" está formado por siete estancias de planta rectangular, donde se aprecian dos fases de construcción, ya que según C. Rita, diversas de las entradas de las habitaciones fueron cerradas. A partir de la excavación, los arqueólogos determinaron que el edificio podría tener doble función. En primer lugar, algunas habitaciones se usaron para el hábitat, mientras que el resto debían ser un almacén de ánforas con objetivos industriales. (Rita, C. et alii: *Las excavaciones...*, p.43).

²¹ El estudio realizado por H. Kirchner de este edificio ha demostrado que la estructura pertenece al momento de ocupación islámica, construida con bloques romanos reaprovechados y que la planta del edificio pertenece a una mezquita rural, probablemente asociada a una alquería. (Sa Nitja, *La ciudad romana de Sanisera: Memoria de investigación*, p. 959-978).

²² Rita, C. et alii: *Las excavaciones...*, p.42. Debemos apuntar que ni las estructuras que afloran a superficie ni la compilación del material arqueológico fruto de nuestras prospectaciones han evidenciado un asentamiento más antiguo que el tardo-republicano en el puerto de Sanitja. Posiblemente los arqueólogos han considerado hasta ahora que el poblado talayótico se encuentra en el litoral este del puerto porque se localizan estructuras de tipo ciclópeo en este margen. Nosotros interpretamos que se trata de estructuras construidas con la técnica típica del período republicano llamado *opus polygonal*, que lógicamente se relacionan con el material que se encuentra en sus inmediaciones.

²³ Rita, C. et alii: *Las excavaciones...*, p.48

As far as fine ceramic is concerned, more than half the finds (53.3%) are of African origin TS Clara A and D and African pots for cooking while amphorae of African origin consist of only 21.4% of the total.

6. NON SYSTEMATIC PROSPECTING

After studying this private collection we initiated the first systematic prospecting work which we defined as such because of the high level of contact we would be having with the surface of the site. We had to take into account that this was the first time we were analysing what this land had to offer.

Because the site covers a considerable area, we decided to divide it up into plots allowing us to work more efficiently. We drew up a plan showing all of the plots and numbered them in correlation.

We decided how to divide up these plots by taking into account both the natural and artificial limits which, in most cases, were marked by dry walls. From time to time we also used the road and the path which cross the site leading to the lighthouse and the Santa Teresa estate respectively, the pronounced differences in the relief of the land, the barriers made by vegetation and the coastline of the port.

To study the ancient material lying on the surface, we decided to collect the most significant fragments, choosing especially individual pieces (rims and bases) and all the others which, because of their decoration, varnish or type of clay they were made of, could give us the most information possible. We decided against collecting all the fragments lying on the surface because some areas had such large quantities we would have been unable to keep within our time frame.

The chronological analysis of the ceramics demonstrate that the oldest materials, just as they were in the above mentioned collection, are the Punic amphorae precisely the Maña C or the Punic Ebussitan (PE 14, PE 17). From the late Republican era we see a large quantity of Dressel 1 which represents 4% of everything found on the site (21% of all the amphorae).

As in the majority of Balearic sites, there is a progression in the presence of patterned clay products. First we see a slight presence of Italic material (2% of the total of the site), then it rises with the South Gallic material (3.5%) and then there is an impressive increase from material of African origin (6.3% of Clara A and 18.5% of Clara D). This progression is due not only to the increase in trade but also to the fact that the production techniques of fine ceramics were becoming more industrial.

In the case of the TS Clara A, the most frequent types are those we also find at other sites with the same characteristics as Sanisera (natural port of call; strategic point on a shipping route etc.) as we would find with the Hayes 3, 6, 9 or 14.

But it is evident that the variant of TS Clara D is the most numerous. We collected a total of 48 different types of which the most important are: The Hayes 91, 94, 99 and 104.

The most abundant African material is not fine ceramics but cooking pots which account for 21.6% of the total site. The reasons for this great presence are as follows: the longevity of the production, the fragility of the pieces and the existing relations with North Africa. The most representative variants we found are: Hayes 23, 185, 196 and 197.

The material of North African origin represents 57.5% of the site's total, a fact which confirmed by the study of the collection, corroborates the theory that there was direct commerce between the Balearic Islands and the North of Africa. This theory is not just because we have found large quantities of fine ceramics and amphorae but because of the geographical location of the islands in relation to the continent of Africa.

The second kind of material we found an abundance of was common, oxidised ceramic which represents 20% of the total. However, we can say very little about this material because as it lacks its own typography and there has been no petrologic testing carried out on it, we are unable to determine its origin. It could be local or imported.

As far as relations with the Iberian peninsula were concerned, these were not particularly important until "happy" wine was imported. This era also coincided with the new Imperial agricultural policy that endorsed provincial farming to the detriment of Italic farms around the year 1 AD. We found a lot of Tarragona amphorae – around 2.9% of the total material found yet on the other hand very little material dating prior to the year 1 AC was found.

We must also mention the presence of artefacts from Southern Spain which is logical if we bear in mind the important role that this province played in the commercial policy of the Empire. Material collected, including amphorae for preserving fish, Dressel 7/11 and Dressel 20, accounted for 1.2% of the total.

Another interesting point to emphasize concerning goods coming from Hispania is the virtual lack of patterned ceramics: we have only come across four fragments. The reason for this is that this product is mostly found inland and on the coast is replaced by patterned ceramics of African origin.

7. TOPOGRAPHY AND PLANIMETRY

During the months of February and March, 1994, we undertook the topographical and planimetric survey of the site at the port of Sanitja. Following the inspection of the surface carried out during the non-systematic exploration, we decided to carry out the topography of the area because the structures which are numerous on the surface might give the first clues to how the town was planned.

8. UNDERWATER EXPLORATION

From September 1 to 14, 1994, team members Marcel Pujol, Hamelink, Pere Izquierdo and Tugas carried out an underwater archaeological exploration campaign at the port of Sanitja. The campaign was an integral part of the proceedings of the survey of the Roman site at Sanitja.

There have been 47 dives spread over 15 shifts, of which 22 dives correspond to the archaeologists themselves and the remaining 25 to co-divers. We carried out a superficial exploration limiting ourselves to a visual inspection of the bed of the cove and the reef and to collecting visible samples and to the topographical location.

At different points where we observed the isolated presence of a group of amphorae, anchors or any other archaeological remains, we have identified them as the anchor sites of Sanitja interpreting "anchor" to mean the large area between the Isla de Porros, the west side of Cap de Cavallería, the entrance to the port of Sanitja and the tiny island to the west of it.

Inside the port, silt and the huge meadows of seaweed have covered over the archaeological remains that undoubtedly lie below. The area has been explored several times to no avail although the remains of a dry wall of considerable volume was located on the west coast below Ses Vilotes.

North of this wall and on the same shore, there are two small coves on both sides of the so-called Punta Norte which could have been the dry dock of the Roman city used for launching sailing vessels or for taking them out of the water.

In order to collect data which were homogeneous with the exploration carried out at the land site, significant material was gathered for classification and accounting for before being returned to their place of origin. Several pieces and samples were extracted as well as a patterned inkwell from South Gaul in the shape of Hermet 18²⁴.

Concurrently, a plan was drawn showing the accumulation of iron anchors found in front of the S'Almadrava bunker in 24 metres of water. Measurements were taken of each one of the pieces and a chunk was taken from a broken iron anchor to prevent it from being stolen.

Of the six anchors found in this sector, four seem to be from the Roman era, apparently from the high Empire and two corresponding to the Modern class, a type used from the Middle Ages to the present day although from their appearance they certainly do not seem particularly contemporary. All the anchors are very large and probably belonged to equally large vessels. The reason for the accumulation of so many anchors in such a small area (approximately 25 metres) is as much to do with the terrain of the seabed as with the coastline.

The anchors had accumulated at the end of a bed of earth and seaweed beside a huge rock some four or five metres high and with razor sharp edges which could easily cut through the cables so that it would have been difficult for a ship to retrieve an anchor that had been weighed, especially in a north-westerly sea. Also, ships that had to protect themselves against a north-western or western storm

²⁴ Una muestra que se ha sacado de la entrada del puerto de Sanitja: 2 fragmentos de ánfora púnico ebusitana, 1 fragmento de ánfora itálica de la Campaniana, 1 fragmento de Dressel 1 A del Laci, 3 fragmentos de ánfora tarraconense, 7 fragmentos de ánfora bética, probablemente Haltern 70, 1 fragmento de ánfora gala, 32 fragmentos de ánfora africana grande, 1 cuello de ánfora africana Keay IIC, 1 base de ánfora africana grande, 1 pivote rodado de ánfora africano grande y 3 fragmentos de pivote de ánfora africana grande.

must have had to manoeuvre with the anchor until it got stuck in this place because of the rocks. If the boat pitched too much, they would have had to cut the anchor to avoid shipwreck.

9. ANALISIS TOPONOMICO DE SANISERA

If we summarize J. S. Hernandez's place name study of Sanisera²⁵, it must be said that the etymological origin is uncertain and that from its morphological composition it is probably a long way off being of Latin origin.

No similar form within either Mediterranean or pre-Roman name has been found. In this section we will try to establish the presumed structure of this place name based on the comparison of its constituted elements with elements present in the formation of names in other languages.

Even so, we wish to make it perfectly clear that the ideas set out below are purely hypothetical as we are aware that unfortunately we do not have sufficient linguistic proof to confirm our theories.

The place name Sanisera could be made up of two elements: "SANI + SERA". We believe, in principle, that these elements are foreign to the Latin language and that one should seek a native or pre-Roman origin for the place name. If "Sani" makes up an element of the toponym, despite its lack of clarity, we think it could be considered because the element *sani-* appears in several epigraphs in Iberian²⁶. Accordingly, it could well be an Iberian anthroponymy. For this reason we can believe that this element, essential to Iberian anthroponymy, could be considered to explain the first element of the toponym Sanisera.

In the case of *-sera*, research has been much more difficult and has revealed little. Far from being considered an essential element in the Latin language, we have been unable to find any analogical evidence in pre-Roman languages. We have only found a hypothetical explanation: in Indo-European there exists a root **ser-/*sor* which means "flow, run" referring to fast, heavy flowing water²⁷.

This root has given rise to numerous names related to places and water²⁸. Despite its difficulty, we have chosen to use this Indo-European evidence since it is the only reference we have found which can be compared with the *-sera* of the Menorcan name.

For this interpretation, we do not want to ignore the geographical implication of the Sanisera settlement (a natural port in the North Central part of the island)

²⁵ Hernández, J. S. "Análisis del topónimo de Sanisera" en *Sanitja, La ciudad romana de Sanisera: Memorias de Estudio*, p. 1003-1008.

²⁶ 1) s.a.n.i. (Siles 1288) Tivissa. Pátera .2) s.a.n.e.r. (Siles 1372): El Solaig. Plomo. 3) *sani* [----] (Velaza 457) Pech Maho. Plomo. 4) *sanibar* (Velaza 458) Pech Maho. Plomo. 5) *sanibeira* (Velaza 459): Orley. Plomo. 6) *sanikeai* (Velaza 460): Orley. Plomo. 7) *sanibelser* (CIL I 709).

²⁷ Pokorny, J. *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Bern, p.909-910.

²⁸ Indio antiguo: *saráh* "eskorredor", *sará* "río, riachuelo"; latín: *serum* "serum"; tracio: *Germi-sera* "agua caliente". También en italiano encontramos hidrónimos con esta base idéntica: *sarius* en Lombarda (hoy.....), Sarca afluente del lago Garda, la *Sermenzai* afluente del Sesia en el Novarese y el *Sarnus* (*Verg. Aen. VII 738*), "Sarno" río del "Napoletano."

since the meaning of the Indo-European root could have influenced the second half of our name: a geographical occurrence by the sea.

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