

The Serra de Tramuntana of Mallorca. Physical and human landscape¹

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Translated from Catalan by Mary Black

Abstract

The Serra de Tramuntana covers 1,041 km² distributed into eighteen municipalities, covering more than a quarter of the area of the island of Mallorca. It is the most rugged part of the island due to the asymmetric thrust faults whose edges from the Jurassic are frequently higher than 1,000 metres in altitude. The limestone formation explains the rich variety of karst forms and leads to a peculiar water circulation route. Most of the numerous endemic plants of the Balearic Islands are concentrated in this mountainous region. The olive tree, one of the products (along with wheat and grapevines) within the Mediterranean trilogy cited by V. Mut in the 17th century, was brought to the mountain range in large estates. The oil trade, which was very active until the 19th century, was the economic mainstay of these estates. The strategic aspect of the mountain range takes specific shape in the “castells roquers” or castles built on cliffs and in an episode in 1594 which planned the deportation of “useless” people to mountain shelters. The Serra’s role as a place of spiritual refuge has led to several sites, such as the Lluc sanctuary. This paper analyses two coastal towns along with three other towns which resulted from the merger of several smaller nuclei.

Key words: Mallorca, mountain, olive growing, settlement, defence

¹ Professor Vicenç M. Rosselló gave this lecture at the Societat Catalana de Geografia on the 1st of October 2013 on the occasion of a planned outing to the Serra de Tramuntana organised by the Department of Geography of the Universitat Autònoma.

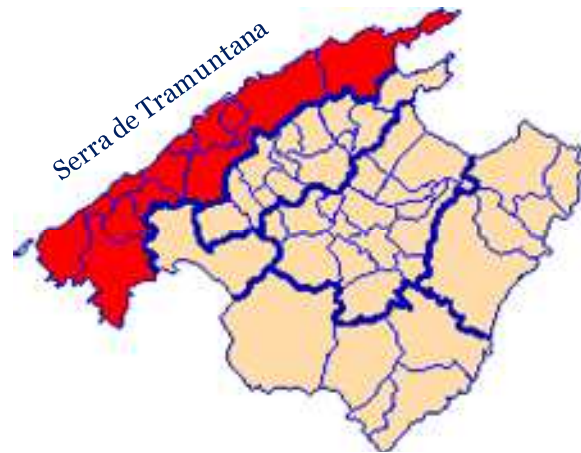
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Serra de Tramuntana of Mallorca: Geographical location

CATALAN COUNTRIES



MALLORCA



1. The name and the scope

There are no *comarques* or counties on Mallorca. What do remain are the 19th-century judicial divisions (Muntanya, with Inca as its capital; Migjorn, with Palma as its capital; and Llevant, with Manacor as its capital) or a more realistic duality of City/*Part Forana* (outer regions, or everything but the city of Palma) which politicians use more often. In 1964, the author divided the island into five physiographic regions to justify the topic of his doctoral thesis, the Migjorn. There was Muntanya and Raiguer,² an invention or resurrection that prospered, but not through any merit of his own.

The *ÿuz' al-ÿibāl* of al-Andalus did not encompass anything other than the core region of '*les muntanyes*' (the mountains), approximately the current township of Escorca. The other *aiÿzā* were called by the toponym of their most important city: Bunyula, Muço, Sulyar, Isburlas. The mediaeval division into Muntanya, Pla and Marina (Mountain, Plain and Marine) is often oversimplified into Mountain and Plain, encompassing the mountains of the Llevant and the centre of the island. I think that the personality of the Serra de Tramuntana has conferred a specific, contrasting features on its landscape which no one disputes. This is a reredos of our little world which tends to be seen with the mythologizing eyes of a city-dweller like poet Joan Alcover.³

²We could debate whether it should be written Reguer – fossilised in a marquisate; Raiguer, more similar to the etymon RADICARIUM; or Raiguer, which is also used in the geomorphological vocabulary in the sense of “piedmont” or “glacis” (Termcat). Today there is a Mancomunitat del Raiguer (1981).

³*“Qui me duu l'estrofa plena de perfums,
abella brunzenta de la soledat?
Quan de ma finestra, a encesa de llums,
estenc la mirada per damunt Ciutat
i l'ànima mia s'enfonsa, llunyana,
dins la serra immensa
que l'illa travessa, que l'illa defensa
de la tramuntana...” (La Serra, 1905)*

The 18 townships into which the Serra is divided have widely divergent sizes and populations. Historically, there were no more than half a dozen of them, but they were further subdivided in the 20th century. In figures, they cover a total area of 1,041 km², or 28.6% of the island.

2. The physical landscape

2.1. Structure and forms

The rugged terrain of the Serra includes fourteen or fifteen peaks more than 1,000 metres tall, including Puig Major d'en Torrella (1,443), Puig Major de Maçanella (1,348), Tomir (1,102) and L'Ofra (1,090), etc. The tectonic setting includes diverse terrains from the Permian–Triassic to the Miocene, but the most common is limestone and Mesozoic dolomite, especially from the Jurassic, which accounts for most of the prominent edges. The great geologist Paul Fallot turned *La Sierra de Majorque* (the title of his doctoral thesis) into the scientific paradigm of alpine reliefs by postulating three tectonic series of thrust folds on a gypsum base which favoured the overthrust. Series II shows the highest heights, and just like the others it is strongly asymmetrical, the reason behind the appearance of the petrous waves of the SE-facing thrust faults. All of this would fall within the internal Prebaetic, which includes the Balearic promontory.

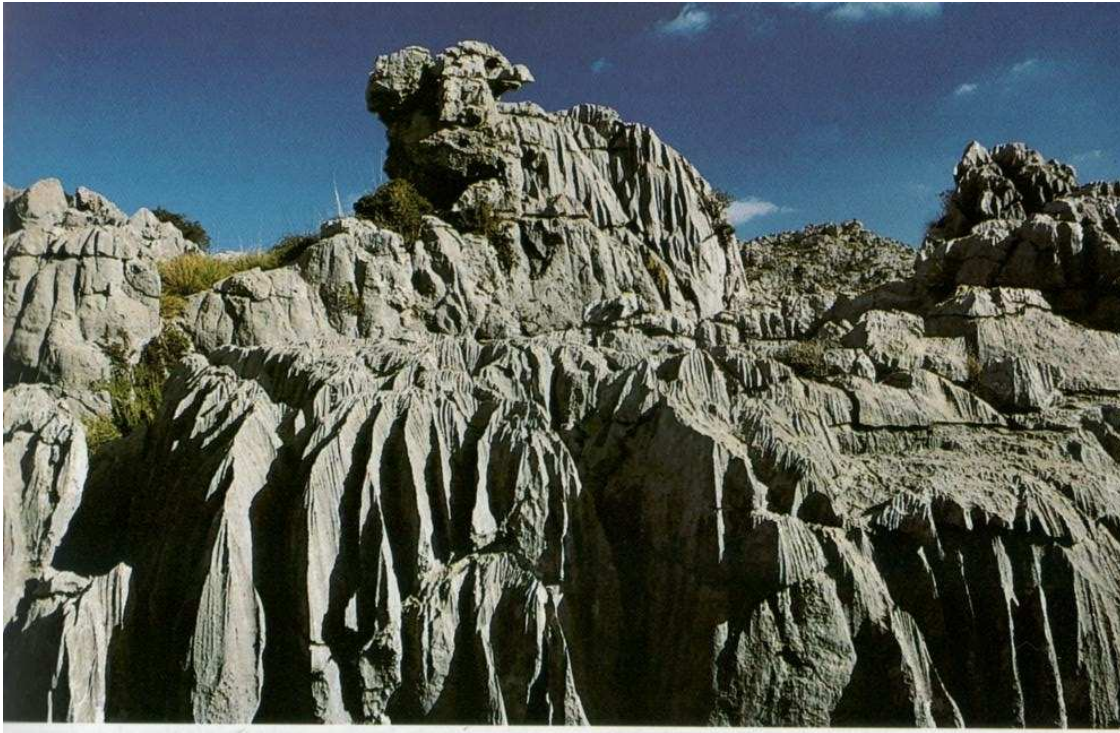
After overcoming the gravitational tectonic model of the 1970s, modern authors have revisited Fallot's scheme and subdivided the overlapping and folded sheets into five units, which are stacked and piggyback-thrusted facing NW with a contraction of almost 20 km between them.

A series of longitudinal valleys (including Calvià-Valldurgent, Orient, El Pla de Cúber and Vall d'en Marc) separate the dominant peaks and often include poljes and dolines. In contrast, the crosswise pathways of the river courses (Sa Riera, Vall d'Esporles-Canet, the Sóller depression, S'Estorell, the large canyon of Torrent de Pareis) have been cut off.

There is no dearth of words for the karst which has been intensely and extensively developed over the predominant Mesozoic carbonate rock formations, especially from the Jurassic. Over and beneath the group, there are hundreds of these phenomena. Sometimes karren is the most conspicuous exokarstic form: on Mallorca, it is known as *esquetjar*, *rellar* or *rascler*, while it is called *Rillenkarr* in the international terminology (Figure 1). I would dare to claim that the Serra is a paradise. There is no dearth of considerable poljes (such as Son Torrella) and dolines (such as Clot de Mortitx), along with respectable canyons such as the classic Torrent de Pareis stream. Regarding the endokarst, the chasms from dissolution are quite notable: the one on Puig Caragoler is 318 metres deep, Cove de Sa Campana is 304 metres deep, and the chasm in Escorca measures 139 metres deep. We should also mention the chasms carved by snowmelt, such as the one on the peak of Puig de Maçanella. There are multiple notable caves in the vadose (not saturated) zone, such as the collapsed one in Son Pou.⁴

⁴In the township of Escorca alone, the catalogue of caves and chasms includes 220 items.

Figure 1. Rillenkarrren. Es Camell de Lluç is a frequently visited example of what is locally called *esquetjar*, *rellar* or *rascler*, a form of dissolution that affects the Mesozoic limestone in the Serra.



Photography by Joan J. Fornós

2.2. A castle of water

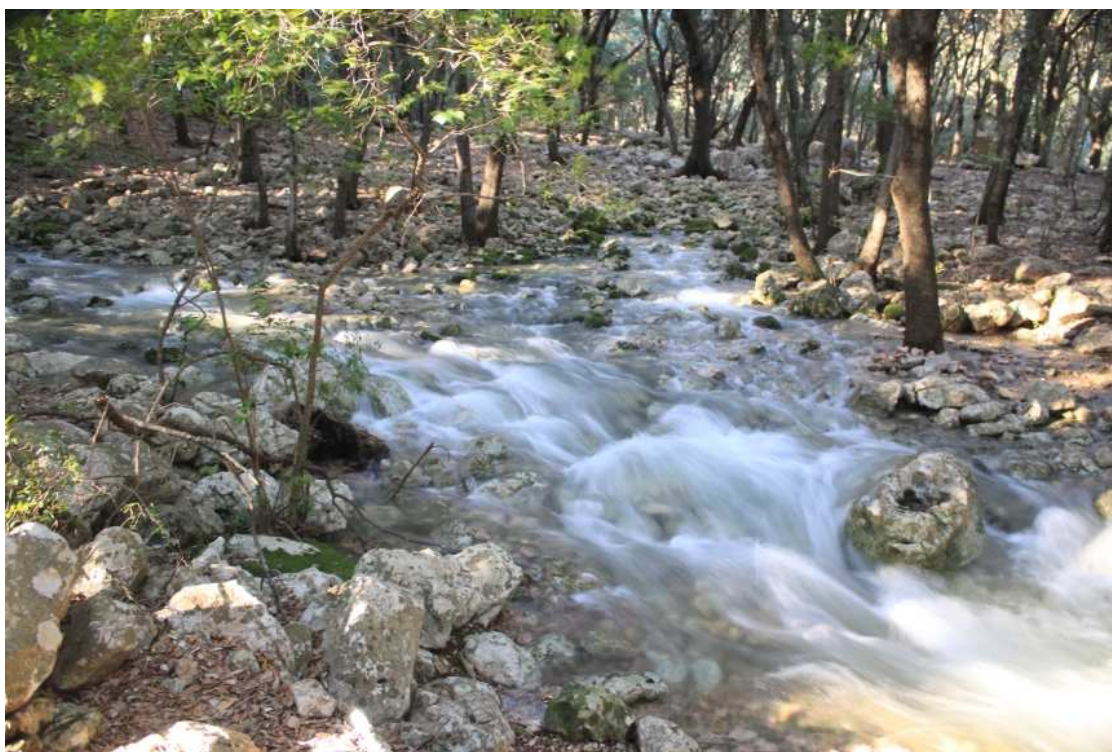
The shadow of the Serra protects the island from northerly winds and explains its famous calm, in contrast to Menorca. What is noteworthy in the Serra is the rainfall in the southeast and west, with warm and cold fronts, and especially the rainfall in the northwest with heavy downpours from cold fronts and gusts of the mistral wind. The northeast, however, favours the region of Pollença, where summer rains are common. The Serra's meso-climate has annual rainfall of over 600 mm, which reaches an annual average of 1,400 mm in several places, making it the water reservoir for Mallorca as a whole. The average temperatures are 4 or 5 degrees lower than in El Raiguer or El Pla, but the altitudinal gradation and asymmetry is accentuated in terms of precipitation. The screen effect and local topography can explain figures like the 1,500 mm average rainfall in Mortitx. The frequency of solid precipitation – which was more common in the past – explains the proliferation of “*cases de neu*” (snow houses) at altitudes of more than 950 metres.

The hydrographic network on Mallorca is modest because of the small size of the basins and because the omnipresent carbonate rock formations favour underground water circulation. Right now we can only observe fleeting or sporadic water circulation conditioned by rounds of rain of more than 60 mm, but we cannot forget that the over-exploitation of the aquifers has led the phreatic level to drop considerably, or that flash floods – some of them tragic – are likely to recur every 50 to 75 years.

When making a centrifugal, dextrorotatory survey, we begin by noting the brief streams in the Andratx basin (in Santa Ponça and Son Vic) and the equally brief – yet quite steep – streams in the Costa Brava (in Sóller and the Torrent de Pareis). In the Pollença basin we only need to mention the Sant [Son] Jordi stream, which collects water from Vall d'en Marc, while two of the most important streams on the island whose sources are in the Serra flow into the Alcúdia basin: the Muro stream receives the mountain off-flows from Solleric, Almedrà and Inca, while the Sant Miquel basin is fed from the Maçanella, Comafreda and Maçana branches. Finally, the basin of Palma contains Torrent Gros (Esporles-Orient), Bàrbara and Sa Riera streams, which originate in Puigpunyent.

The largest springs are obviously in the Serra. I shall limit myself to mentioning the Font de la Vila which used to burble in the capital city for centuries; S'Olla and Es Verger springs in Sóller; and the spectacular phenomenon of the Fonts Ufanes in Gabellí (Figure 2), which are nothing other than a huge vauclysian spring not far from the caves of Campanet.

Figure 2. The Fonts Ufanes springs. A spectacular vauclysian spring that burbles up around eight to ten days after the intense rainfall common in Campanet.



Photography by Antonio Rodríguez Perea

The only somewhat important Mallorcan reservoirs have taken advantage of the geomorphic conditions and rainfall of the Serra. Gorg Blau was a natural pond which was turned into a small hydroelectric power plant in 1906. A bit further up, a reservoir to supply the capital was built on the lands of Almaliug in 1971, and the Cúber reservoir was added the following year. The respective

heads of the reservoirs are at 613 and 750 metres in altitude, and the total capacity of the system does not exceed 11 hm³.

2.3. The geobotanists' "Balearic zone"

Without abdicating Mallorca's overwhelmingly Mediterranean personality (Bolòs, 1996), modulated by the climate of dry summers, I will strive to summarise the physiognomic profile of the plant landscape. Small islands tend to be poor in the number of species they harbour, but their unique evolution or role as a refuge compensate their interest with the counterweight of endemic species. The isolation that occurred between the Pliocene and the Pleistocene interrupted the natural colonisation from the Baetic promontory – botanists prefer to call it the *Dianic* promontory. After the second millennium BC, men and livestock contributed to its impoverishment: one of the most lamentable episodes was the installation of military radar on the peak of Puig Major d'en Torrella in the late 1960s, which led to the destruction of the most unique community in the Serra (Sáez and Vicens, 1997).

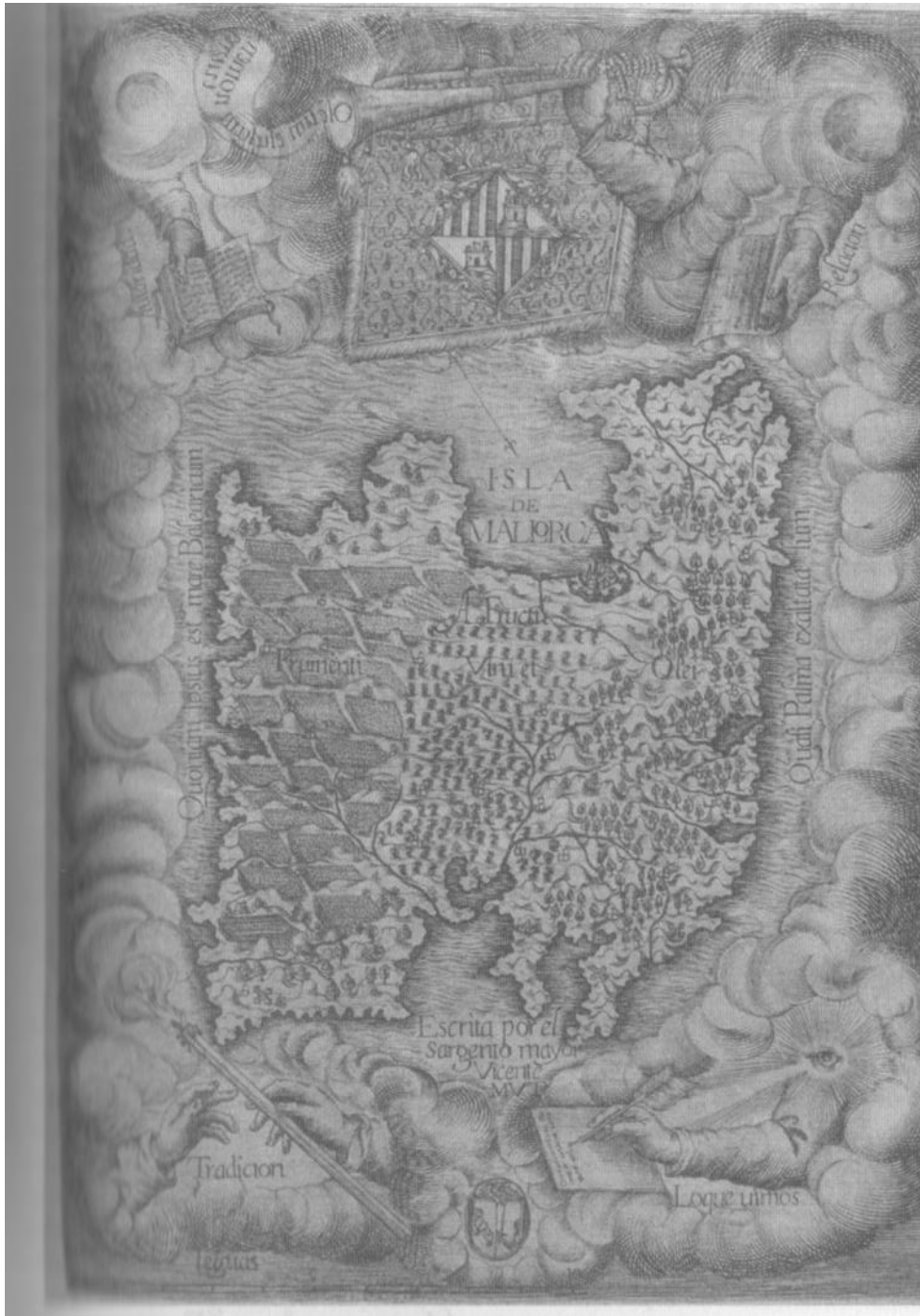
The peaks that surpass 1,100 metres above sea level are the domain of *Teucrietum subspinosi*, characterised by *Genista tricuspidata* and by the more specific germander (*Teucrium subspinosum*) and other scrublands with cat thyme. This is what Knoche called the "Balearic zone", which is shaped by endemic features like karren, quarries (or screes) and cliffs. Many of the 400 endemic species live there; the majority are Pyrenean while others, survivors such as those from the Pre-Quaternary Tyrrhenian group, take refuge in the limestone cliffs. The most representative species in the quarries is glossy parsnip (*Pastinaca lucida*), but the most physiognomically widespread is Mauritania grass (*Ampelodesmos mauritanica*). Below this culminal level, as it is called now, there remain vestiges of deciduous plants like Italian maple (*Acer opalus*), European yew – there is one on Puig des Teix – and boxwood, at the upper boundary of the holm oak forests.

The holm oak forest (*Quercetum ilicis galloprovinciale*) occupies a zone spanning between 800 and 1,200 metres in altitude. More specifically, in *Quercetum ilicis* which, according to Knoche (1921), "was the vocation of the Balearic Islands", can be identified with the holm oak forest. The Serra harbours the most beautiful holm oaks on the island, especially on the mistral windward side starting at 300 or 400 metres in altitude, and on the Pollença side, almost at sea level. Indeed, the boundary is the isohyet at 600 mm. Many pine groves and garrigue scrublands are the result of the degradation of the climatic holm oak grove with the participation not only of humans – pasturage and charcoal-making – but also climatic oscillation.

3. The cultural landscape

Vicenç Mut, an astronomer and cartographer from the 17th century, opened a volume in his history of Mallorca (Figure 3) with a three-part symbolic map: wheat, grapevines and olive trees, imitating a biblical quotation: "*A fructu frumenti, vini et olei, quasi Palma exaltata sum*". Grain cultivation by the sea, vineyards on the plains and olive orchards in the mountain is precisely the "Mediterranean trilogy" invented by Francophone human geographers.

Figure 3. Vicenç Mut's map. As the opening of his *Historia de Mallorca* (1659), this engraving (with SW at the top) plays with the biblical quotation, "A fructu frumenti, vini et olei" to identify the grain-growing region of the Migjorn, the vineyard region of El Pla and the olive orchards of the Serra.



Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya

3.1. The olive estates

The mountains are harsh. Areas with soil that can be farmed are few and far between, and they are often built up. People must struggle not only against

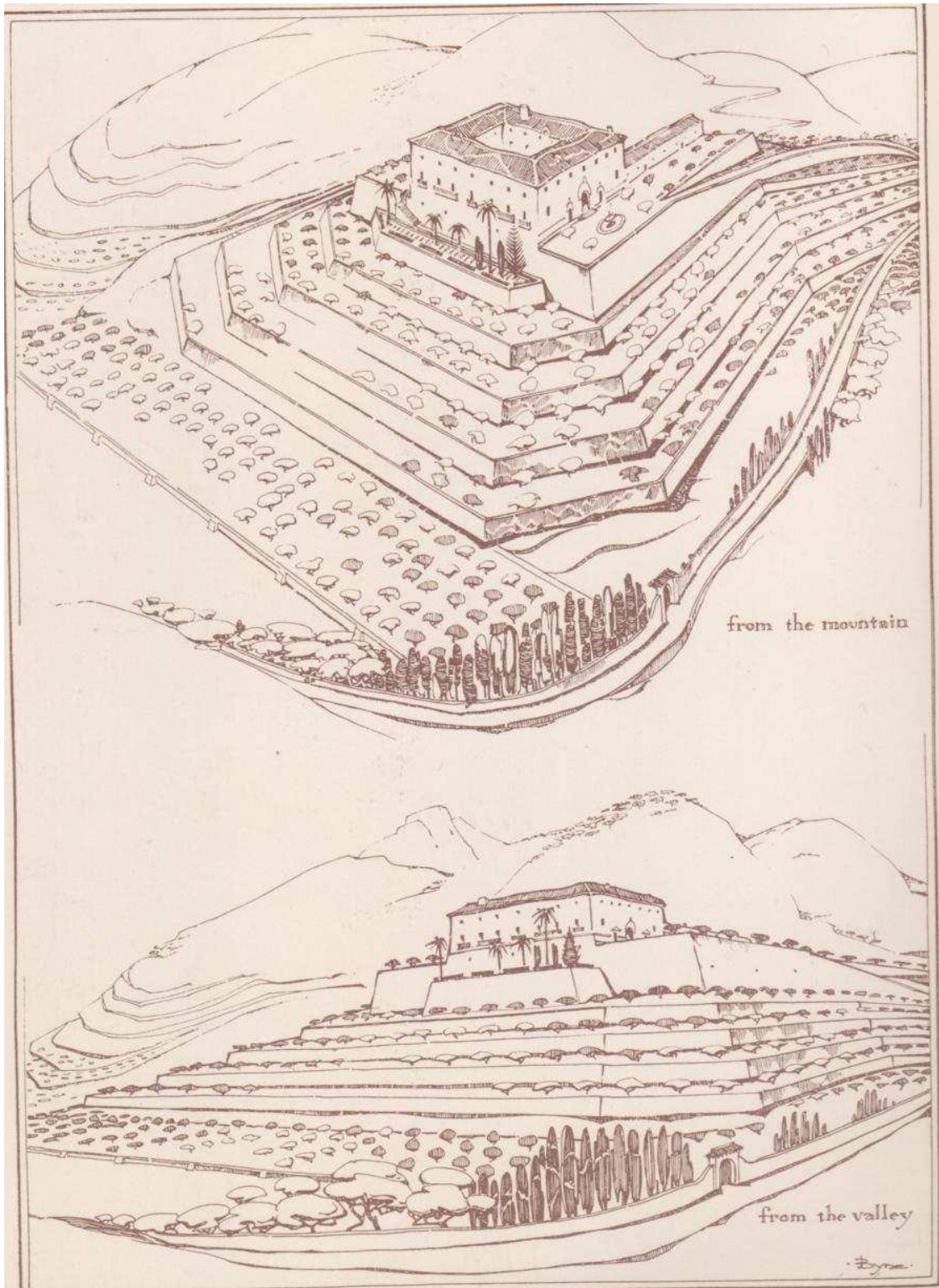
erosion but also to conquer the lands, some of them economically marginal. The scarcity of land is exacerbated on an island, and farm work is undervalued during times of recession. A *rota* (breckland) was a resource – albeit a precarious one – against hunger. The terracing – with thousands of kilometres of dry wall that transformed unfarmable slopes into terraces – made wooded areas profitable with an enormous investment in labour; 52% of the Serra was actually farmed. However, the Serra has long had a tendency to be divided into large estates, at least large on the island scale, like all economic magnitudes.

The *possessió* (estate), a name that came after the Muslim *alqueria* (farmstead), *rafal* (shed) or *mas* (farmhouse), gained ground in the 16th century as the cadastral unit and farming system characterised by an outside workforce called the *missatges* (farmworkers). This word *possessió* – a Latinism – must have been introduced into the deeds and land registries by the “Bolognese” jurists or the humanists from the royal curia in the late Renaissance. The names of many but not all of these estates begin with *Son* or *So Na* followed by the surname or nickname. One idiosyncratic feature that characterises the estates in the eyes of the people is that they are associated with a certain prestige.

It was not unusual to find mountain estates more than 500 hectares large owned by aristocratic citizens even as late as the 20th century. This land included forests and scrubland in a rugged terrain where the land could be cultivated thanks to terracing. Grimalt and Blázquez (1998) calculated 167 km² of these lands (16% of the area of the Serra), divided between the southeast part in the clearing in Calvià, Andratx and Puigpunyent; the central part in Esporles, Bunyola, Alaró and Escorca; and the far northeast part in Pollença. The seafront still shows the imposing tiers in Estellencs, Banyalbufar, Valldemossa and Sóller. However, we should not forget that *margin* and *marginal* have the same etymology (terracing is *amarjament* in Catalan) and that maintaining the patches of land was an arduous, expensive job.

The purpose of “*ses cases*”, or the houses on the estate, was to serve as the homes of the farming family, the *amos* or tenant farmers (sharecroppers, farm managers) and the salaried *missatges* (farmworkers). Very often some of the harvest was set aside for the absent landowner. The mountain estates (Alfàbia, Almedrà, Biniatzar, Colonya, Honor, Pastoritx, etc.) had spectacular *tafones* (oil mills) as an indispensable adjunct. The houses tended to be built on rocky, prominent places in order to not use farmable land, to find solid foundations and to foster oversight without marring the beauty of the landscape and the climatic advantages. The wonderful location of Son Fortesa comes from its splendid view, both active and passive (Figure 4). A spring (such as Galatzó, Sa Granja or Raixa) may have been a decisive factor in the site chosen, but cisterns filled with rainwater – very prestigious among the islanders – collected the reserves needed: water was rarely in short supply.

Figure 4. Son Fortesa. Two drawings by Arthur Byne (1928) of an interesting estate in Puigpunyent surrounded by terraces and splendid active and passive views.



Majorcan Houses and Gardens

The typology of buildings on the estates is difficult to outline here and now, since they encompass everything from Gothic to neoclassical and show

diverse models, including block houses or houses with pitched roofs – which have nothing to do with the Catalan farmhouse – and buildings constructed around a cloister which became particularly popular after the 17th century in the late Baroque with an Italianate neoclassicism. The list of estates could be quite long (there are more than 50 in the Serra) and includes Son Pacs and Pastoritx (Valldemossa), Son Dameto (Esporles), Coma-sema (Bunyola), Solleric (Alaró) and Son Torrella⁵ (Santa Maria).

The gardens were used for the owners' leisure activities, as Byne observed in his wonderful book *Majorcan Houses and Gardens* (1928). The Alfàbia and Raixa⁶ gardens are notable in Bunyola; so are the Sa Granja gardens at the monastery of La Real and later the Fortunys in Esporles, with the celebrated spout; the Romantic garden-vegetable patch in Son Vic de Superna in Puigpunyent; and the Gabellí Gran in Campanet, while Galatzó (Calvià) had a more utilitarian garden.

Livestock farming used to be one of the prime ways to earn a living in the mountains, based on small-scale transhumance in which the animals were moved along pathways known as *camins de muntanya*, or mountain trails, dotted with ponds, drinking troughs and rest areas. For example, the Maçanella estate was linked to Sa Vall (in Santanyí) and the Es Teix estate was connected to Sa Torre d'en Vilallonga (Llucmajor). However, the large estates, which resulted from the “peasant dispossession” in the 16th century by the nobles and/or merchants, relegated livestock to a second tier and they instead turned to olive trees, 80% of which were in the mountain and 11% in Raiguer (Jover and Morey, 2003). The oil yielded was not very high quality and it was mainly used to make soap. Nonetheless, this product became the most important source of market wealth on Mallorca between the 18th and 19th centuries (Bisson, 1977), which the aristocracy and bourgeoisie understood by consecrating the agricultural dogma of the olive tree as a mountain tree. Indeed, it was never found less than 300 metres in altitude and climbed as high as 1,200 metres.

Olive cultivation was so important that the Mallorcan tax system was seriously harmed by the addition of one zero in the 18th century: two million *arroves* (10.4 kg each) of olive oil instead of the 200,000 which could have been taxed. Extortion has been going on for some time now! Casimir Urech devoted a valuable statistical study to it to demonstrate this huge oversight.

The oil fever, when wild olive trees⁷ were still being grafted and the oil trade was far more than a modest farming activity, dwindled for some time. Maintaining the terraces, the impossible mechanisation of harvesting and the difficult roads explain the frequent return of spontaneous vegetation in many old olive orchards. What remain today are “thousand-year old” olive trees for gape-mouthed tourists.

Two anecdotes will suffice to point out an aspect that has nothing to do with agriculture: Mallorca's mountains were used more than once as a shelter for resisters and contemplatives.

⁵Built by the Cotoners, great masters of the Order of Malta, 1670.

⁶Owned by the Counts of Montenegro and completed by Cardinal Despuig.

⁷This is reminiscent of the *Oleo-ceratonion* alliance of geobotanists.

Of the three “*castells roquers*” (castles built on cliffs) which probably have Roman or Byzantine roots, and surely predate Islam, Ibn ‘Amīra (ca. 1260) called the one in Alaró “the castle of the rūm” after the Christians who resisted there for eight years and five months after the invasion of al-Andalus. Enscorced at the peak of a cliff 822 metres over sea level in the centre of the Serra, the supporters of the independent kingdom of Mallorca also gathered there until 1343. It still boasts quite noteworthy features (Figure 5).

Figure 5. The Alaró castle. Current entrance to one of the castles built on cliffs with at least Byzantine if not Roman roots. It has served as a refuge for numerous resisters.



Photography by V.M.R.

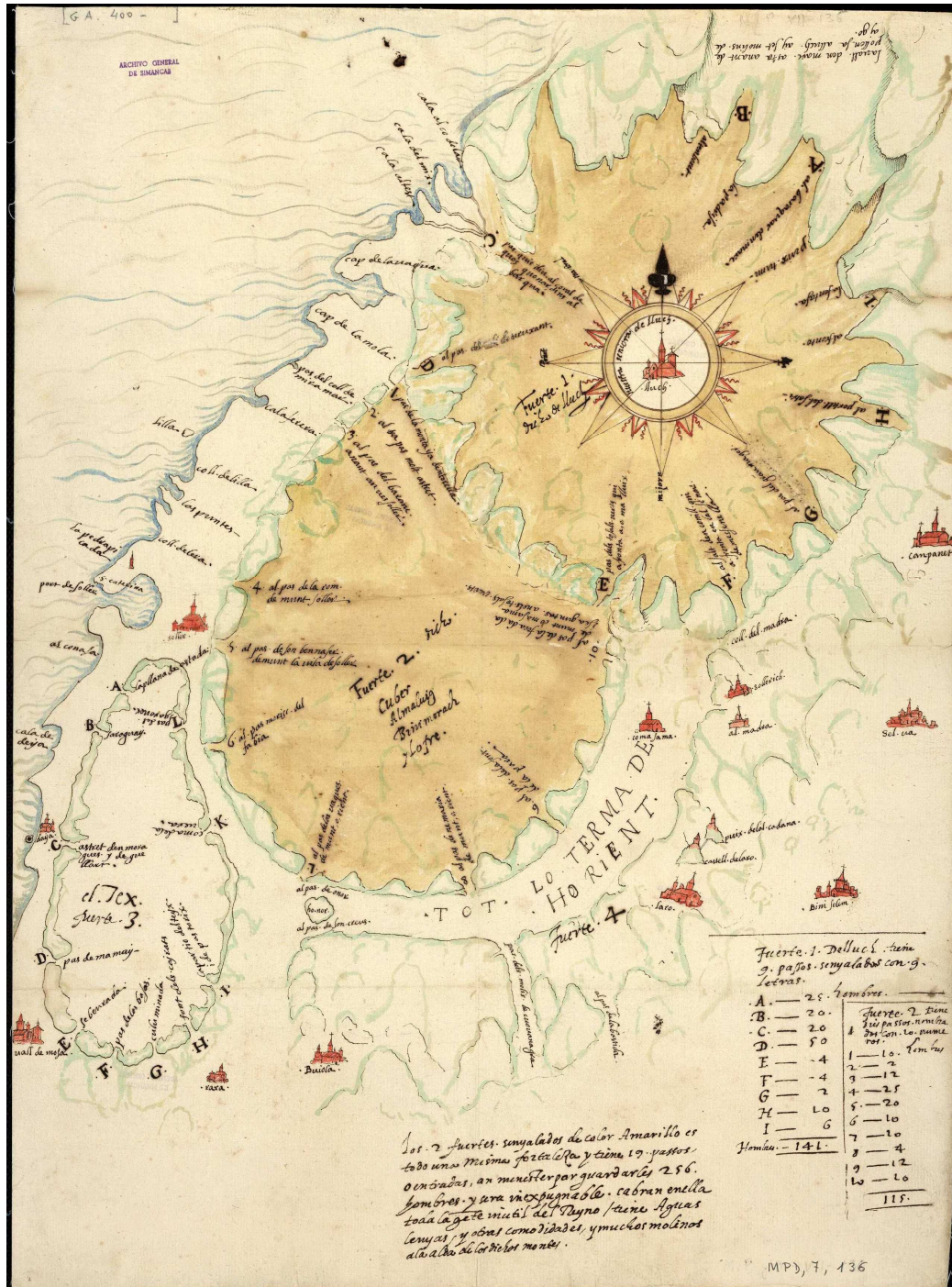
The *ḥiṣn Bulānsa* or castle of the King, however, was the refuge of the Islamic “judge of the mountains” until 1231, thanks to the assistance that came by sea from Menorca. Supported by the Triassic cliffs of Cornavaques, which stand at 492 metres over sea level, it is equally inaccessible by sea and by land.⁸ It was used as a coastal lookout point as well as a hideout in 1243 by the last rebels against Peter the Ceremonious.

In 1594, the viceroy of Mallorca received a warning from his colleague in Sicily about the threat of a large Turkish armada. The administrative machinery of the most Christian King Philip II, obsessed by the risk of piracy that had affected our coastline more than once, was set into motion. The Simancas

⁸Even more so because it had been included within the March family’s Ternelles estate.

Archive conserves the file and a map – more like a “mental” sketch (Figure 6) – of the Serra at a scale of approximately 1:60,000. Someone thought to squeeze 70,000 people into a few mountain forts, that is, “all the useless people” (women, children and men over the age of 60) in one or several redoubts whose passes or accesses were to be defended by 256 armed men (Rosselló, at press).

Figure 6. A map from 1594. The Turkish threat forced the authorities from the Spanish monarchy to plan for a possible “deportation” of the civilian population to the mountains. Antoni Verger drew up this map of possible refuges and their defence after a painstaking survey.



The document was the outcome of an official survey of the Serra conducted by the knights Ramon Cós and Joanot Desbrull and the expert Antoni Verger, “a sculptor of the art of angles”, that is, a topographer. On the map he put the three most easily defended redoubts: 1) the fort of Lluc, between Tomir, Caragoler, Roig and Maçanella hills, with their corresponding longitudinal valleys; 2) the fort of Cúber, Almalluig, L’Ofra and Tossals Verds; 3) Teix hill, which was more distant and further southwest. There was also an addition place which was harder to control in the Orient valley. The compass rose on the map centred on *Nostra Senyora de Lluc*, which staved off the sweeping deportation.

The three female hermits which were established on Puig de Can Sales in Pollença in 1362 – at the far northeast end of the Serra – were the original nucleus of Puig de Maria convent. In 1577, obeying the provisions of the Council of Trent without much conviction, these Augustine nuns moved to Puig del Sitjar inside the walls of Palma. Likewise, the Franciscan nuns, who had been established in L’Olivar (Esporles) in 1515, soon abandoned their convent, a part of which remains: S’Esgleieta or the little church. In 1549 a new convent was built in Vila d’Amunt in what is today L’Olivar market on the site of the convent that was torn down in 1837 in the ecclesiastic confiscation.

In the township of Escorca, in the heart of the Serra at 525 metres in altitude, in a holm oak forest called *Lucus*, perhaps a ‘sacred forest’, a sanctuary devoted to the Mare de Déu (Virgin Mary) was founded in the 13th century, evoking the mythical discovery of an image that surely cannot be the one we see today. The Islamic supply routes from Inca to Pollença and Sóller crossed this forest. During the next century, an island Montserrat began to form which actually usurped the role as parish church previously held by the tiny primitive church in Sant Pere d’Escorca, which had been built in 1239.

In 1456, a college of five priests was formed, the seed of the sanctuary and the choir (1536) when the brotherhood of Nostra Dona de Lluc had already spread to the majority of villages, sparking regular pilgrimages. As its model, Lluc had its “book of miracles” (17th century) and a register of votive offerings which reflected a rising acceptance and frequentation.⁹ In 1884, bishop P. J. Campins crowned the image of the Virgin of Lluc and gave the congregation of the Missioners dels Sagrats Cors stewardship over the sanctuary, which in the 20th century became the centre of Christian spirituality in the diocese. A geographer from the 1970s “discovered” a demographic anomaly in such a dispersed municipality that did not even have an urbanised centre: there was no information on the proportions of religious men and women at the time of the sanctuary’s peak.¹⁰

Despite its turn away from Christianity, Lluc is still a cultural attraction – museum, nature interpretation centre (Ca S’Amitger), civic initiative – aided by its peerless natural setting.

⁹The fascinating Porxets in Plaça dels Pelegrins date from this period, and they became the Sunday inn of the visitors from the estates around it.

¹⁰Around 60% of the population is disperse and 44% works in the tertiary sector.

4. The towns and villages

We shall now examine five settlements which can serve as an example of how human habitation has been focused, shaped by farming, the roadway network and the cultural heritage.

4.1. Sóller

This is the most populous town and the one with the most accentuated personality, along with the most influential in the lands of the Serra as a whole, with the exception of Palma. Founded on the eastern banks of Torrent Major stream, and perhaps originally protected by a ramshackle enclosure and the fortified parish church, by the 17th century it had three bridges that connected the two parts of the town, *vila deçà* and *vila dellà*, which allowed it to expand towards the convent one century later. The establishment of the port (1744),¹¹ which specialised in exports of oranges, signalled the town's upsurge. Merchants of *fruits et primeurs* from Sóller spread all around Western Europe, and upon their return they built sumptuous, neat, modernist houses. The city developed around the pathways and L'Horta. In 1912, the railway crossed the Serra and linked up with a tram in the port which today has become the victim of tourism (just like L'Horta, it has plentiful water). At the turn of the century, another tunnel made it possible to avoid the twists and turns on the old Es Coll road.

4.2. Pollença

This village dominates at one end of the Serra where the endemic isolation leads not only to a clear anthropological conservatism but also to a different form of language. This is another town from al-Andalus – despite the Latin toponym – which did not even have a straight street in the 18th century, except those added to the southeast and the appendixes to the two neighbourhoods around the convents. Since the start of the conquest, it had been the realm of the Templars and later the Hospitallers. Sant Domingo convent – in the southern expansion – dates from the late 16th century, and Montis-sion convent (Jesuits) was built to the north at the foot of the spectacular Calvari staircase in the late 17th century. The more contemporary growth spread onto the plain thanks to a select tourist tradition which emerged when L'Horta came to be populated with artists, the bourgeoisie and aristocrats after the 1930s.

4.3. Three composite villages

We shall conclude with an examination of three towns that developed in a mountainous region around farmsteads or hamlets from al-Andalus assigned during the distribution of properties in the 13th century.

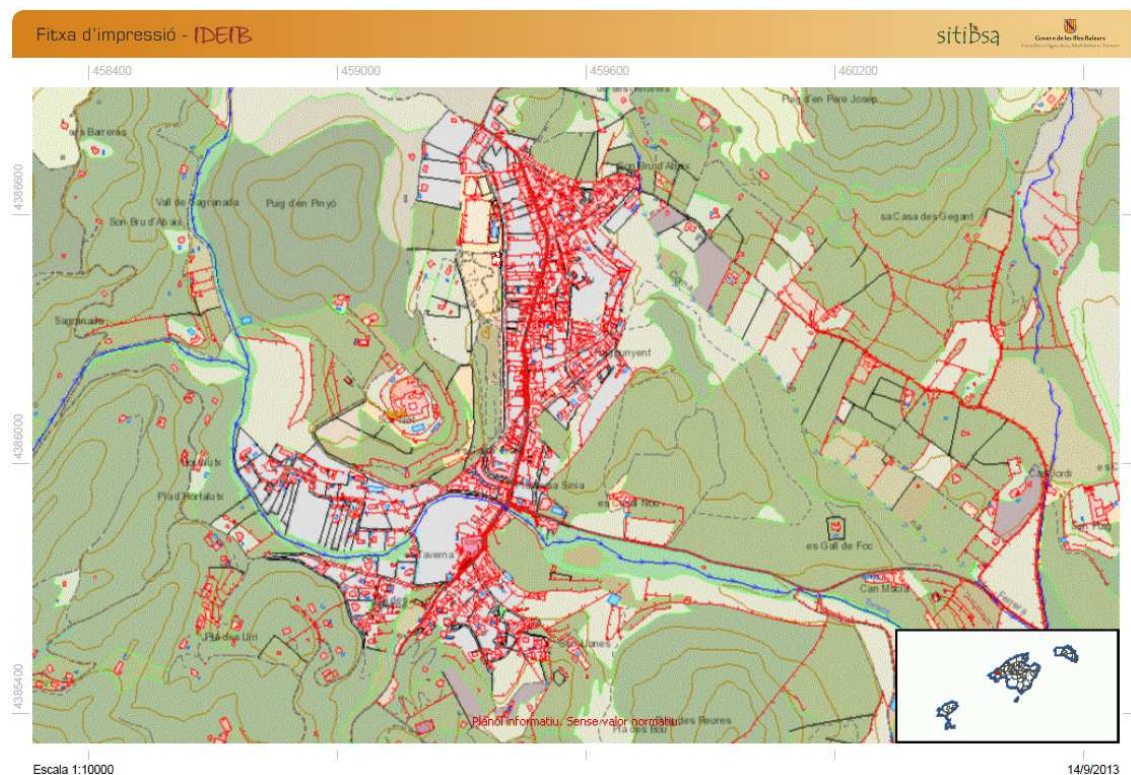
Esporles is a clear example of synoecism along Torrent de Sant Pere – which runs from the northernmost part of the township – and road that goes from S'Esgleietà to Estellencs. The township belonged to the realm of the Cistercians' La Real which still own La Granja, and in 1858 its entire extension

¹¹Previously, it had been quite active in coastal shipping on the island.

measured 35.27 km², distributed into just 140 plots of land, which explains the indigence of the majority of Esporles residents. At the beginning of the past century, the town had three or four individual nuclei: Vilavella to the north of the crossing of Son Simonet and Sa Granja streams; Sa Vileta near the new church (1904) on the right bank of Torrent de Sant Pere; Vilanova on the far south end; and even today Es Balladors on the eastern side, an expansion connected with a certain rise in the blanket or mantle industry. In the 18th century, there were only 12 houses on Camí de Banyalbufar (the church site in the 19th century) and 79 on Meridian Street (Berard, 1789).

Puigpunyent (Figure 7) still has the twofold identity of being a village watched over by Son Nét, between *la Vila* (the town), which is separated from Son Bru a 950-metre stretch. The former only supplies the church, the nearby rectory and another house. The rest, dispersed in the late 18th century, has gradually coalesced around Son Bru in a road pattern on the way to Esporles.

Figure 7. Puigpunyent. In the lee of Puig de Galatzó, which lends the town its name, this village still shows its twofold status of having two nuclei “watched over” from Turó de Son Nét: *la vila* (the town, with the church, town hall and a few houses) and Son Bru (roadside village).



In Alaró, the duality between *los d'Amunt* (upper town) and *los d'Avall* (lower town) still exists. The Oloron farmstead was the nucleus of the former, in a *roquissar* or rocky place which served as the location of the first church back when Jaume II (1300) was striving to concentrate the hamlets; this is the first mention of a *vila* (town). The old town is separated from the larger town

(*d'avall*) to the southeast by the lands Son Danús. Over time it stretched down to Cases Noves, which is laid out in an orthogonal pattern.

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