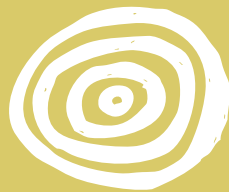




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THE TALAYOT SETTLEMENT OF S'ILLOT

THE TALAYOT CULTURE

The Talayot Culture (850 cal BC - 550 cal BC)

All societies have left their footprint on the territory, although the prehistoric cultures perhaps more than others. This is particularly true of the Talayot culture, whose constructions were so majestic that still today they make up a unique landscape.

These new structures were built at the same time as a change was coming about in the social and economic system that ushered in the final and richest stage in the prehistory of the Balearic Islands. The most characteristic feature of the period is its cyclopean architecture, diverse structures built with huge stone blocks that are evidence of a complex social organisation within the community.

An example of this culture is the Talayot settlement of S'Illo.

THE TALAYOT SETTLEMENT OF S'ILLOT VISITORS CENTRE

The Visitors Centre provides an introduction to and complements the tour of the archaeological site. It takes you into the prehistoric world and the Talayot culture and shows you what the people who lived in Mallorca at that time were like, how they lived, their customs and other characteristics.

AT THE CENTRE YOU CAN LEARN ABOUT:

The Talayot culture

The post-Talayot culture

The Talayot settlement of S'Illo from a scale model of the whole village

What life was like at S'Illo

See a virtual theatre scene of daily life in a village house

We recommend seeing the S'Illo Visitors Centre first as it will help you understand what you are looking at when you tour the site.



THE TALAYOT SETTLEMENT OF S'ILLOT

The settlement of S'Illo is one of the most important archaeological sites from the Talayot and post-Talayot cultures (850-123 BC), both because of its monumental variety and its long and complex historical evolution. It is made up of different complexes in which we find communal buildings surrounded by the houses in which the people lived. We can still see a large section of the wall that must have originally surrounded the whole settlement.

The site of S'Illo was occupied for more than a thousand years, during which it grew into the structure that remains today. The oldest remains date from the end of the Bronze Age (1100-850 BC) and those we see today were built over them. The most intensive period of occupation was from around 900 BC to approximately the first century BC, although the site was still inhabited to a lesser extent until the Islamic conquest.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ITINERARY

The itinerary is circular and can be started at any of the numbered points (see the attached plan).

POINTS OF INTEREST

1. A group of kidney-shaped dwellings
2. Kidney-shaped dwelling. Talayot house
3. Central stepped tower-shaped structure
4. Exterior talayot
5. Settlement walls
6. Interior talayot and adjoining dwellings
7. Shrines or important buildings

COMPLEX OF KIDNEY-SHAPED DWELLINGS ADJOINING A CENTRAL TOWER-SHAPED STRUCTURE (550-123 BC)

Life in the Talayot village was organised around two spheres, one communal or social and the other domestic. The large cyclopean buildings would have been used for communal or social activities, while the adjoining dwellings were for domestic and family activities.

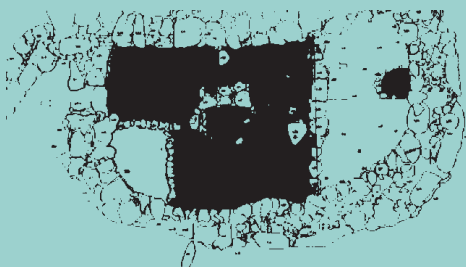
Although the houses varied in size, they would have been occupied by between 5 and 9 people. Their internal distribution shows us that there were areas for sleeping and for preparing food around a hearth. Meat, mainly from sheep, goats, pigs and oxen, was the main part of their diet, complemented by cereals, tubers and fruit.



2

KIDNEY-SHAPED DWELLING. TALAYOT HOUSE

This is one of the few houses in the settlement of S'Illo that has been excavated by archaeologists. This dwelling has a side entrance and was divided into three areas: a small one to the right of the entrance, a second, much larger one, in the middle of which there was a hearth for cooking, and, at the end of the house, a third room in which another hearth was found.



This room was used as the model for the virtual theatre.

3

CENTRAL STEPPED TOWER-SHAPED STRUCTURE

This is the oldest area of the settlement of S'Illo and the stepped tower-shaped structure was built over the remains of the Late Bronze Age buildings (1100-900 BC).

From this vantage point you can see the whole of the settlement of S'Illo and all its structures. You are standing on top of a stepped tumulus, a solid and highly symbolic building used for communal activities. A series of dwellings was built around this tower-shaped structure. Those nearest to it can be dated to between 850 and 550 BC, whereas those farther away were built after 550 BC.



4

EXTERIOR TALAYOT

From this area you can see three of the complexes that make up the settlement of S'Ililot. The first is located to the left. It is a talayot with an adjoining dwelling. Talayots are tower-shaped structures that can either be circular or square. They can have many functions, depending on their location inside the settlement, either in areas of control or in ceremonial gathering places. They are always linked to communal activities, such as control of the territory, ceremonies or the distribution of food.



5

THE WALL

To the right, at the end of the settlement, you can see the remains of the wall that possibly surrounded the whole complex. It was built with large slabs of limestone, some of which weigh more than a ton. It had both a defensive and a symbolic function as a demonstration of the power of the community that was capable of building it.



6

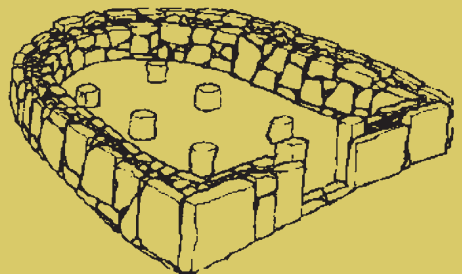
THE INTERIOR TALAYOT AND ITS ADJOINING DWELLINGS

In the background you can see another group of buildings consisting of a circular talayot with a series of adjoining houses. The talayot would have been used for communal activities, such as food distribution and different types of ceremony, while the families of the settlement would have lived in the adjoining rooms.

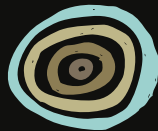
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IMPORTANT BUILDINGS OR SHRINES

In the foreground you can see two apse-shaped buildings, one of which still has a column base in it. Because of their shape they have been interpreted as shrines or important buildings in the settlement. They were probably built after 600 BC.



Sketch of a Talayot shrine



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AJUNTAMENT DE SANT LLORENÇ DES CARDASSAR
www.santlorenc.es

C/ Llebeig, 3 s'Illot Tel. 971811475

www.talaiotsillot.com