

the locals, the main study area, especially the Serra de l'Altmirant mountain, is a *distanced* and somehow isolated landscape. Of course, this does not mean in real terms actual extended distances – since such distances would be no greater than between a village and *cester* in the Famorca district – but it perhaps signifies more a mental factor which may have influenced the establishment of more solid or more permanent-looking structures in a given area.

When referring to location, general terms of pastoral site distribution are followed in both areas. These are:

- pastoral sites are always built outside of the main cultivated areas, although this need not mean the existence in many cases of a close relationship between a plot of land and a pastoral site. Location beyond cultivated areas rather responds to the need of avoiding crop damage by uncontrolled flocks or stray flock members.
- these were built according to specific land availability, linked to township/village territories and ownership of individual plots of land on which corrals sought to be placed.

However, some distinctions can be traced. Thus, in the Famorca district, a clear pattern of distribution linked to exposure to sunlight can be followed: i.e. winter sites – mainly corrals – will be placed in those areas with extended exposure to sunlight, whereas summer sites – *cesters* and *esbardals* – are located in more shaded points, to avoid the summer heat. The Serra de l'Altmirant corrals, used across the summer, are sites much exposed to sunlight (one slope zone is indeed termed *Solana* or 'sunny'). (On this see *Section 2.13.iii*). Perhaps this might be one of the reasons why local shepherds built corrals, with proper roofs, in order to gain shelter against the heat; if so, the need for unroofed structures is removed.

On the other hand, in examining detail, differences in corral location are also detectable. The needs of water, more dramatic in the Serra de l'Altmirant than in the Famorca district, meant the general construction of cisterns in association with corral sites. As the close geomorphological study carried out by Victoria Gil Senís has demonstrated (*Section 1.4*), the catchment systems employed were well thought and needed a very particular siting to take advantage of superficial waters running down the slopes. It is obvious that, ultimately, this

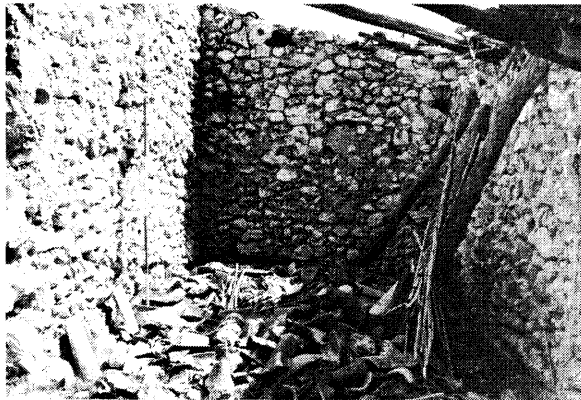
factor conditioned the location of some of the corral sites in the Serra de l'Altmirant and Plà de la Llacuna areas. Only one similar case was found in the Famorca district; otherwise there are no corrals associated with cisterns here, mainly because proximity to all year round springs across the zones used in the summer, solved the water supply problem for shepherds.

As a general conclusion for this section, it emerges that geographical proximity, geological equality and cultural uniformity, cannot avoid on the one hand, the idiosyncrasy of vernacular architecture, and on the other hand, the appearance of very specific ways of landscape exploitation. If anything, topographical particularities should have a powerful influence in defining these specific ways; precise but very important factors from a shepherding perspective such as water availability conditions are also essential. Finally, and perhaps less easy to discern, even in ethnographic contexts, landscape perception (for example, distance from main settlement point, isolation, harsh conditions, danger) may equally play a role.

## 2.12 Comparative Study: The Ethnoarchaeology of Corral Abandonment in the Famorca District (JS, OC)

In conjunction with the Serra de l'Altmirant survey work, a related ethnoarchaeological study was undertaken at Easter 1996 of 'abandoned' pastoral sites in the same Famorca region (fig.38; see *Section 2.11* above for landscape characteristics of district). The aims were two-fold: first, to assess the value of studying present-day pastoral abandonment processes as a comparison with site abandonment and formation processes in the archaeological record; and second, to gain an ethnographic understanding of seasonal environmental exploitation by shepherds in an area still employing traditional practices. Such studies have been pioneered in southern American and Pacific contexts, but are so far largely lacking for the Mediterranean, although a growing corpus of ethno-archaeological research in Greece (Chang 1992), Italy (Barker & Grant 1991) and now Spain (Beavitt *et al.* 1995; Seguí 1995; 1999) provides a valuable starting-point.

The study embodied a multi-stage approach, commencing with the structural recording of all known pastoral sites in the Famorca area and the detailed scrutiny of artifact distributions and compositions in and around each site; a second phase saw EDM planning of a selected 'typical' site, combined with grid-walked artefact collection; the third stage consisted of a structured programme of interviews with members of the local pastoral community, supplying information against which to compare 'archaeological interpretations' of the abandoned sites (for full analysis see Creighton & Seguí 1997; 1998).



*Pl.59: Corral decay - here, in Corral LL A, roof collapse has seen the accumulation of broken tile across the room floor. In some instances, complete tiles may have been removed for reuse following such abandonment*

### **(i) Landscape and Economy**

In socio-economic terms a high rate of rural emigration has ensured a fairly recent massive population decline; at present approximately 50 people only live in Famorca village, with the summer season heralding a short-term population increase. Agriculture has long been mainly concentrated upon almond and olive oil production, with a gradual abandonment of the least viable terraces. Mechanisation and fertilisers have greatly facilitated increased production, but the unpredictability of the harvest and of market structures in general has led young people to leave the village in search of more secure employment in the cities. Pastoral activity has consequently declined markedly, especially in terms of those practices managing only a limited number of animals. Indeed, presently there are only one or two (elderly) participants managing small flocks (of c. 30 animals).

These dramatic changes have all had an impact on the old structures of pastoralism – the corrals – most of which are now ruinous. The two elderly shepherds utilise two corrals on a seasonal basis, but with episodic supplementary usage of additional corrals. During Easter, however, a migrant shepherd with a large flock (over 200 sheep) now comes to the area from some 500km distance in a quest for economically viable pastures; his presence, albeit brief, is nonetheless witnessed in some of the corrals studied. A greater emphasis on olive and almond cultivation meanwhile, combined with mechanisation, has removed the role of many corrals, which were in any case often located so as to avoid areas of cultivation; some corrals have been used by agriculturalists to store some implements, or otherwise as shelters, and for herding activities. Ruinous corrals also now function as cover and shelter for hunters. Hunting retains an important role, for both food and sport. As a normally transient activity, the signals left by hunters fifty years ago were certainly less obvious than today, with the need to re-use cartridges previously ensuring systematic recollection after use, whereas discarded empty, modern cartridges and cartridge boxes abound at present within and around corrals.

As noted, a key aim of the study was to understand the varied modes of post-abandonment activity at the corrals (cf. pls.59-61). These can be summarised as follows:

- Some corrals were abandoned, left entirely unused and, through neglect, ruinous.
- Some abandoned corrals were used, almost immediately after their disuse, as herding sites, or as a source for building materials. Tiles and, in some cases, beams, were taken from corral roofs, and re-used in the village; in certain corrals these materials are piled up awaiting collection (= Re-use Type 1).
- Some corrals have been partially re-used as storage areas, normally for items of low value that owners would not keep in their houses in the village (= Type 2).
- Some corrals have been converted into garages (= Type 3).

### **(ii) Tiles and Artefacts**

For each pastoral structure recorded, the volume of tile was recorded, respectively in (i) the 'interior' or (previously) roofed area of the site,

(ii) the 'enclosure' area of the site (non-roofed areas of the sites bounded by walls), and (iii) the 'environs' of the site (encompassing an area within 20m of the edge of the structures). The collected materials could be further divided into (a) whole tiles, stacked or in storage, (b) whole tiles not stacked, (c) part tiles (the long axis being greater than 20cm), and (d) tile fragments (the long axis being less than 20cm). In addition the number of tiles in these various states still *in situ* on the roof was estimated, as was the original total number of tiles.

Other artefacts were collected in each of the three types of re-used corrals and in each of the three differentiated zones within these corrals (fig.42). The artefacts could be divided into the following categories:

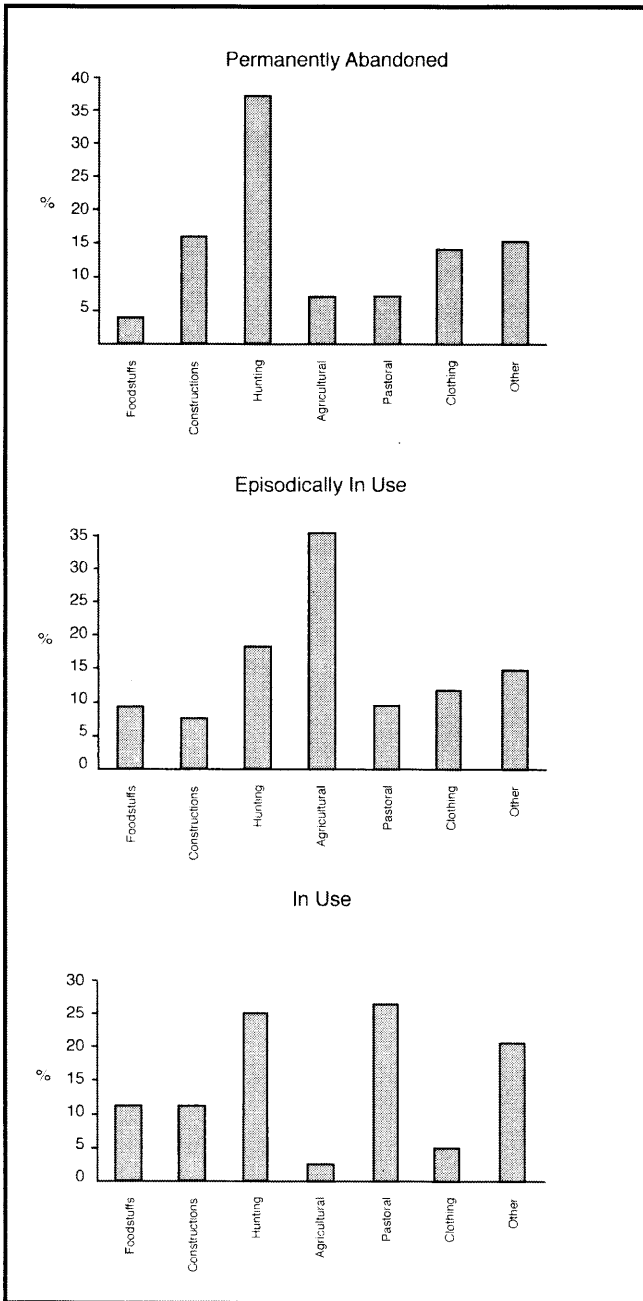
- *'Work' items*, subdivided into items used by shepherds, hunters and agriculturalists. Artefacts classified into these groups were either of industrial or hand-made origin, but originating in one of these areas of activity. Thus, for instance, a hoe was counted as an agricultural item, and a cartridge as a hunting item. In the case of shepherds, items used as fodder, such as olive branches or sacks of almond skin, were also counted.
- *Building materials*. This refers to any building material apart from tiles found on or near the site, comprising pieces of wall, or timbers spread on the floor. This was a difficult item to assess, because in some of the corrals the level of destruction is extremely high.
- *'Other'*, referring to any other item found on the site not related to any of the activities areas cited above – as, for instance, a cigarette packet or tuna tin.

It has been contended that the study of abandonment behaviour should focus less on the process *per se*, but more on the aspects of that behaviour relating to the composition of the material remains and their spatial patterning (Tomka & Stevenson 1993: 193). In this sense, the pattern and process of corral abandonment in the Famorca area are intimately related to the survival of the nucleated village as a settlement in the present landscape. The continuation of settlement at Famorca has played a role in the reception of materials from abandoned corrals, in addition to, conversely, being the source of a proportion of items found in the corrals. Notably, distance appears not to be a significant determinant of the assemblage of materials originating from corrals; thus tiles from corrals

a considerable distance from the village were used in its rebuilding. Certainly the presence of animals is an important factor, as they could readily reach corrals when good tracks or roads were not available. On the other hand, distance from the village appears to be an influential determinant of the selection of artefacts, which emanated from the village found in corrals. Additionally, distance is an important factor influencing the selection of corrals used as stores, or as places to leave unwanted items (although not 'unwanted' enough to be thrown away). Corrals situated near the village dump are correspondingly influenced in terms of their artefact assemblage characteristics, with items either bought intentionally to the corrals by shepherds, or transported by other factors, such as the wind or other people.

### (iii) Discussion

The 'abandonment' of corrals in the Famorca region emerges as a complex process. A continuum exists between the complete abandonment of a site in a single phase and the continuation of activity at corrals still in use. Between these two extremes come various modes of activity such as occasional or seasonal re-use of a site for pastoral functions. These processes of semi-abandonment activity – evident also in various of the Serra de l'Altmirant structures surveyed – are manifested in a number of ways. Although post-abandonment patterns of activity vary, a number of trends emerge: functionally, corrals can become places for the storage of a wide range of items; spatially, the structure of a corral can be altered in line with different modes of activity, often in the contraction of the roofed area; temporally, activity can become concentrated into a small number of days per year when the corral is used. Clearly, in order to understand these processes more coherently, the abandonment of an individual site must be related to the abandonment/ partial abandonment/ survival of other sites as well as to any nearby extant settlement(s). The picture is naturally complex and variable: as seen in the discussion of the Plà de la Llacuna, a single compact landscape can contain ruins, part-maintained ruins, active units within a largely ruinous whole, or, as in the case of Manolo's own corral, a combination of active and inactive space, with new units built rather than old restored (see *Section 2.4* above).



*Fig.42: Famorca district: percentages of artifact types recovered or identified in abandoned corrals (top), in part or episodically active corrals (middle), and in active corral contexts (bottom) (from Creighton & Seguí 1998)*

*Pl.60 (below): House VG1 viewed from the east showing partial decay but with modern breeze blocks in dump in foreground as indication of recent maintenance efforts in the western unit*

*Pl.61 (bottom left): Interior of western house of VG1 showing the rudimentary domestic debris indicating only episodic usage of the space for hunting/storage*

