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Past and Present - Built and Social

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EDITOR:  
Jitka Cirklová

EXECUTIVE PRODUCTION EDITOR:  
Amany Marey

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# THE CITADEL OF ROSES (SPAIN): A PROJECT OF SOCIALISATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

Author:

**MARC BOUZAS SABATER, LLUÍS PALAHÍ GRIMAL**

Affiliation:

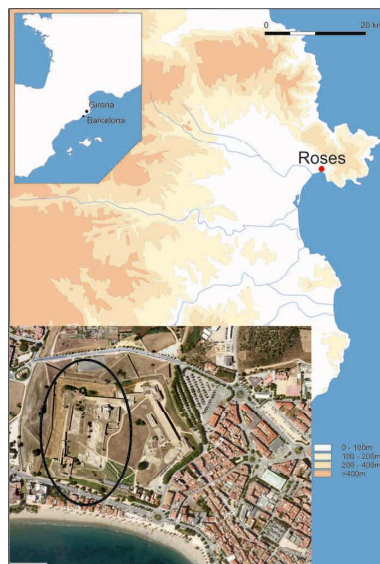
CÀTEDRA ROSES D'ARQUEOLOGIA I PATRIMONI ARQUEOLÒGIC, GIRONA UNIVERSITY, SPAIN

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## INTRODUCTION

The Bay of Roses is in the extreme northeast of the Iberian Peninsula, very close to the border with France. The bay is a privileged place that is protected from the main winds, which make sailing in this area difficult. This makes it an exceptional port of refuge and has marked much of the history of human occupation of the zone.

The fortress known as the Citadel is a bastioned fortification constructed in the middle of the sixteenth century whose function was to protect the Bay of Roses and its port. This was a space of great strategic value at the time, situated on the route that joined the Iberian Peninsula with the south of France and Italy.



*Figure 1. Location of the Ciutadella-Roses, Spain.*

Currently, the Citadel, which has lost its military function, has been converted into a first-class archaeological park. Within it, archaeological remains have been discovered that span from the foundation of the Greek colony of Rhode in the fourth century BCE practically up to the current time,

passing through the occupations of the Roman era, late antiquity, medieval and of course the modern era, when the fortress was in operation. All of this is framed within the walls that delimit and define the space.

In recent decades, important scientific work has been undertaken to study this historical past. At the same time, the Citadel has been made into a space that goes beyond an archaeological park to become a social area in which a large number of cultural and leisure activities take place.

### **BRIEF HISTORICAL EVOLUTION**

As mentioned, the topography of the Bay of Roses makes it a privileged space. As it is protected from the main winds, it was an ideal port of shelter for any boat that sailed in the area. One of the main topographic characteristics of the zone is the presence of various watercourses, which led to dramatic changes in the configuration of the space, with considerable displacement of the shoreline towards the south. A good example of this process can be seen in the fortress of the Citadel. Currently, this is situated around 150 m from the shoreline, but in the sixteenth century, boats moored directly beneath its walls. Other evidence of these dramatic changes in topography is the fact that what is now a small elevation situated practically in the middle of the fortress (with the monastery of Santa María on its upper part) was a small peninsula surrounded by the sea when the Greek colony of Rhode was founded in the fourth century BCE.<sup>1</sup>

This combination of a protected port and a space that could easily be defended contributed to the decision to establish on this site one of the two only Greek colonies (along with Empúries) that existed on the Iberian peninsula. This commercial centre was also an important producer of ceramic products.<sup>2</sup> When the Greek colony was abandoned at the start of the second century BCE, during the occupation of the peninsula by Roman armies, the bay continued to be an anchorage frequented by boats passing through the area. Apparently, it was not until the second century CE that a Roman settlement, probably an *uicus*, was established in the same space. This settlement continued in Late Antiquity. In this period, a small Christian basilica was constructed that occupied the upper part of a small elevation; the same elevation where the first settlement of the Greek colonial population had been established eight centuries earlier. Around the basilica, an important necropolis was established that would continue to be in use even when the settlement was abandoned at the start of the seventh century.<sup>3</sup>

In the tenth century, the monastery of Santa María was founded that used, reconstructed and extended the old Paleochristian basilica. From the eleventh century, probably coinciding with a process of expansion of the monastery that included a new church, a small urban centre was formed that constituted the seed of the medieval town of Roses. Initially situated on the western slope of the hill of Santa María, over the following centuries the settlement grew to the south and to the east, to reach the beach where an active port area and fishermen's neighbourhood was established. Although the original town probably already had walls from an early stage, from the fourteenth century new defences were constructed that surrounded all of the urban perimeter except for the port area and the fishermen's neighbourhood.<sup>4</sup>

In the sixteenth century, as part of a policy to protect the coasts of his territory, King Carlos I ordered the fortification of the bay. The project included the construction of a network of coastal watchtowers, the building of a castle that would "close" the bay to the north and the construction of a new walled enclosure to protect the port.<sup>5</sup> This new enclosure had to be adapted to the new military needs of the period, which were centred on the increasing role of gunpowder as a weapon. The result was the construction of a pentagonal fortress following the military standards of the period that surrounded the town inside it, except for the port and fishermen's neighbourhood that were largely destroyed.

A civil population and military garrison coexisted for a century, but during what was known as the Reapers' War (1640-1652), the fortress was besieged (1645) and occupied by French troops (1645-1660). The population, which had abandoned the town during the siege, could not return to their houses and ended up creating a new urban centre to the north of the bay, which gave rise to the current town of Roses. At this time, a new stage began in which the space became completely militarised.



*Figure 2. Orthophoto Ciutadella-Roses*

After playing an important role in various military conflicts, the fortress was occupied between 1808 and 1814 by Napoleonic troops. When they withdrew, they destroyed part of the defences, which were already obsolete, marking the end of the military role of the fortress.<sup>6</sup>

The fortress was barely used throughout the nineteenth century. From the start of the twentieth century, a process of demilitarisation started, with various urban projects that considered demolishing the walls and the urban development of the area. During this time, the space continued to be used for various activities. After the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) it was used for horticulture, but a modest football field was also constructed within it, and some half-ruined military buildings were used as stables, stores or even as dwellings.

### **From military space to public space**

In 1915, the Ministry of the Armed Forces authorised the cession of the land of the Citadel for urban development. From this point, two processes began. On the one hand, during the following decades, various urban development projects were presented and certain elements began to be destroyed, such as parts of the wall to the south and east, and one of the bastions.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, interest in the archaeological study of the zone began. Initially, most studies were focused on the search for remains of the Greek colony of Rhode, but with the passing of time these studies were also used as an argument to defend the historical value of the space and prevent its destruction and urban development.

In 1961, the enclosure was catalogued as a National Historical and Artistic Site. From this point, the space was protected and some timid attempts at heritage recovery began. In 1965, the archaeologist Wattenberg drew up a first project to adapt the space that was not fruitful.<sup>8</sup>

In 1986, Roses Town Council purchased the plot and a new phase of recognition of the value and use of the space began. In 1991, a project was drawn up to create a route around the enclosure with

defined paths and signposting. However, it was in 1993 with the creation of the “Master Plan for the Citadel” that the recovery of the space gained momentum.<sup>9</sup>

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECTS

As mentioned above, various archaeological studies have been carried out in the Citadel since the start of the twentieth century. Most have been limited to surveys carried out in areas of the site to search, above all, for evidence to document the Greek colony. From the 1960s, the discovery of a neighbourhood from the Greek period led to the undertaking of the first campaigns that were really extensive, which revealed part of the aforementioned neighbourhood and a large commercial building from the Roman period.<sup>10</sup>

After these studies, great progress was made in quality of the research in 1993. As a result of the “Master Plan”, a programme of archaeological studies was started that covered the various spaces and periods systematically. This project was directed archaeologically by Anna Maria Puig. It continued until 2011 and enabled delimitation of the walled space of the medieval town and the excavation of part of one of its neighbourhoods, among other aspects. After some years of impasse, studies began again with impetus in 2018, with the creation of the Roses Chair of Archaeology and Archaeological Heritage (University of Girona and Roses City Council).<sup>11</sup>

### The current project. Archaeology and patrimonialisation

The current project is focused on the recovery and study of the medieval town, with the restoration of the urban fabric and an analysis of its evolution. In this research project, work is carried out in parallel on the patrimonialisation of the space, so that new areas that are excavated can be immediately incorporated into the visitor circuit.

In recent years (2018-2023), intense work has been undertaken to excavate and highlight the value of an important part of the medieval town – specifically the eastern sector – where a surface area of close to 5000 m<sup>2</sup> has been excavated. The project has as some of its objectives the recovery of the medieval town, the study of the urban fabric and the evolution of various spaces, from their construction until their abandonment or conversion from the seventeenth century onwards, when the town was abandoned and the space was militarised definitively.



Figure 3. Medieval village. Excavations until 2018 and in 2022

At all times, the scientific project considers the heritage value of the space and its integration within the archaeological park. For this reason, the tasks are divided into different stages. The first consists of excavating the various streets and buildings and going down to the circulation level. This enables

the final appearance of the urban fabric to be clearly defined and allows the rapid integration of new structures and elements that are found into the visitor circuits, so that the results of the archaeological research are made available to the public. In a second phase, the excavation of the spaces is completed to determine their evolution.

Through publications, guided visits, conferences and open days, the project reports on the results of the work and involves the local population in knowledge of its heritage. However, it is clearly the rapid integration of studied elements into visitor circuits that makes the research dynamic and facilitates social involvement in the project. In this respect, the plan is to use the old medieval streets as elements for the circulation of visitors. This favours a much more immersive experience. Historically, it is much more real, given that the paths of the visitor circuit that have been used to date in the area do not reflect the real organisation of the space in the medieval period.



Figure 4. Restitution of the urban planning of the medieval town

### THE CITADEL: A HERITAGE, SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL SPACE

From the moment that the Citadel was bought by the town council in 1986, the objectives for this space were diverse. On the one hand, work had to be done to study and present the archaeological remains, to make the space into an archaeological park in which its over twenty-five centuries of history would be visible and understandable. On the other hand, this space that was closed, half-abandoned and in ruins had to be reintegrated into the local community as an element of value for the population.

Once the first archaeological studies and the most urgent works established in the Master Plan had been undertaken, in 2001 a “Basic project for planning and rehabilitating the interior of the Citadel” was drawn up by landscape architect Martirià Figueras. In it, a schedule was established for the various tasks to be carried out. Even though it was only partially executed, it set the bases to convert the site into a visitable space.

In 2007, the site was opened to the public. Initially managed by the Fundació Roses Història i Natura (Roses History and Nature Foundation), in 2009 the management was taken over directly by the town council.



The Citadel has a visitor reception space where there is an exhibition that summarises the history of the site and presents the materials obtained in archaeological excavations. In addition, this space is completed with an area dedicated to underwater finds, which are the result of the aforementioned value of the Bay of Roses as a port of shelter, and its use for over 2,500 years.

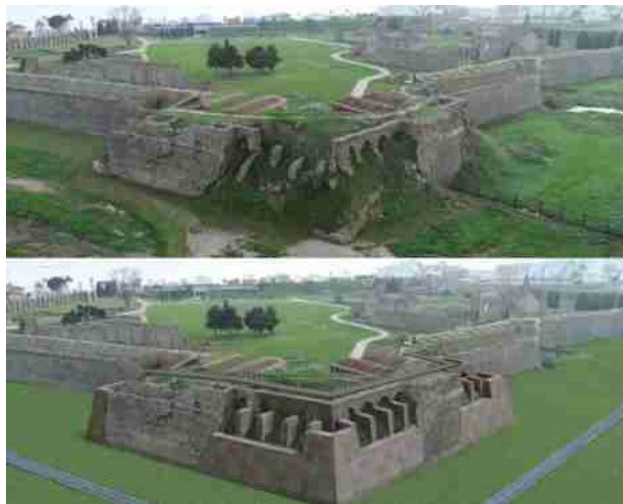


Figure 5. Reconstruction of one of the bastions of the fortress

From the time of its opening, the Citadel Cultural Centre was conceived not only as an archaeological area, but also as a social and cultural space. This can be seen in the document “Estudio de criterios y objetivos para la dinamización del uso ciudadano y turístico de la Ciutadella de Roses” (Study of criteria and objectives to encourage citizen and tourist use of the Citadel of Roses). Some of the measures described in this study are currently applied. Its main proposal was to integrate the site into the social reality of the municipality, by opening it up to the population. The local population has free access to the site, which has made it into a large urban public park.



Figure 6. Use of space for music festivals.

The availability of the space and the ideal context provided by the fortification and the archaeological elements have served to promote the Citadel as a place for holding a wide range of cultural events, especially during the summer months.<sup>12</sup> In it, concert cycles are organised (for example, “Sóns del Món” [Sounds of the World]), cinema (“Cinema a la fresca” [outdoor cinema]) and sports events (Transpyrenae). For these activities, the large spaces that have not yet been the object of

archaeological studies are used, as well as some of the buildings that remain on the site such as the church of the monastery of Santa María, where concerts and small format shows are held. The site reflects the integration between the monument and the population, as it is a common setting for weddings and other celebrations.



Figure 7. Concerts in the church of the monastery of Santa Maria

Another aspect to highlight regarding the use of the Citadel is its value as a didactic, educational element. The fact that in a perfectly delimited space it is possible to travel through 25 centuries of history of the population opens up some very important educational perspectives. For this reason, dramatized visits are organised and workshops for schools in the region and families who visit the site. One of the main educational values of the Citadel is that almost all the history of the territory can be explained in it. Usually, an archaeological site enables various aspects of a certain society to be identified, such as its economy, religion, daily life and production. In the case of Roses, these aspects can be analysed diachronically. Greek religion can be compared with Christianity, commerce in the Roman era with that in the Medieval period, and armies in Late Antiquity with those of the modern era, among other aspects.



Figure 8. The space has an essential educational use.

**CONCLUSION. MORE THAN AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK: A CULTURAL AND SOCIAL SPACE.**

The great value of the Citadel of Roses site is the creation of a scientifically active archaeological park, where visitors can follow almost instantaneously the evolution of studies and the results. However, the value of the site has also always been the conversion of the plot into a public space that is perfectly integrated into the social and cultural life of the population. The undertaking of activities that go beyond science to include leisure, culture and sports has enabled this space to be considered by all the local population – especially that which is not particularly interested in history or heritage – as a place of their own that must be protected and strengthened. Without a doubt, this use as a social space has facilitated its conservation. It should not be overlooked that this is a plot of large dimensions (over 9,500 m<sup>2</sup>) that requires continuous attention in terms of gardening and maintenance. The maximum use of this space indirectly facilitates the investments made in its conservation and maintenance.

The Citadel shows that archaeological sites can be more than simple fossilised spaces for scholars. Instead, they can become a considerable source of value for local populations, promoting their development and enhancing their identity.



*Figure 9. La Ciutadella constitutes a cultural space, but also a social space.*

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Carles Roqué, “La paleotopografia i el paisatge que acollirà la fundació”, in *La colònia grega de Rhode (Roses, Alt Empordà)*, edited by Anna Maria Puig and Aurora Martín (Girona: Museu Arqueologia de Catalunya-Girona, 2006), 32.
- <sup>2</sup> Anna Maria Puig and Aurora Martín (coord.). *La colònia grega de Rhode (Roses, Alt Empordà)* (Girona: Museu d’Arqueologia de Catalunya-Girona, 2006).
- <sup>3</sup> Eduard Canal, and Josep Maria Nolla. “La cella memoriae de Roses”, in *L’església vella de Santa Cristina d’Aro. Del monument tardoantic a l’església medieval* edited by Francesc Aicart, Josep Maria Nolla and Lluís Palahí, (Santa Cristina d’Aro: Ajuntament de Santa Cristina, 2008), 93-105.
- <sup>4</sup> Lluís Palahí, Marcel Pujol and Xavier Aguelo. “Les muralles del monestir de Santa Maria i la vila de Roses a l’Edat Mitjana”. *RODIS. Journal of Medieval and Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 5 (2022): 125-150.
- <sup>5</sup> Pablo De la Fuente. *Les fortificacions reials del golf de Roses en l’època moderna*, (Roses: Ajuntament, 1998).
- <sup>6</sup> Pablo De la Fuente, *Les fortificacions reials del golf de Roses en l’època moderna*, (Roses: Ajuntament, 1998).179-180
- <sup>7</sup> It is the bastion of Santa María that was located in the southeast corner. The walls and part of the other bastions have been later restored, but not the bastion of Santa María..
- <sup>8</sup> “Rosas. Recinto de la Ciudadela. Parque arqueológico. Museo Naval”.
- <sup>9</sup> Toni Martínez, *La Ciutadella de Roses, 30 anys de titularitat municipal*, (Roses, 2016), 68.
- <sup>10</sup> Aurora Martín, “Història de la investigació.” in *La colònia grega de Rhode (Roses, Alt Empordà)*, edited by Anna Maria Puig and Aurora Martín (Girona: Museu Arqueologia de Catalunya-Girona, 2006) 11-20.
- <sup>11</sup> Josep Burch and Lluís Palahí. “La Càtedra Roses d’Arqueologia I Patrimoni Arqueològic”, *Festa Major Roses*, 2018, 35-41.
- <sup>12</sup> Eva Duran “La Ciutadella de Roses, un passeig per la historia”, in *Museus, jaciments, festes i fires. La posada en escena del món romà al NE de Catalunya*, edited by Josep Buch and Gabriel Alcalde (Girona: Documenta Universitaria, 2016), 105-112,.

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