

## COLLECTING AND HERITAGE: THE SAINZ DE LA CUESTA COLLECTION

**R**afael Sainz de la Cuesta (Madrid, 1896-1961) first visited Ibiza in 1931 and thereafter spent most of his holidays on the island. A great archaeology enthusiast, he started his collection with gifts and pieces acquired from country folk, which unfortunately means that the provenance of many of the objects is unknown. However, the bulk of the collection corresponds to the lot that Sainz de la Cuesta purchased in 1945 from the heirs of Juan Román i Calbet, the director and sponsor of the Sociedad Arqueológica Ebusitana [Ebusitana Archaeological Society], whose pieces had been published in works such as *Los nombres e importancia arqueológica de las islas Pythiusas* [Names and Archaeological Importance of the Pityusa Islands] (1906) and *Antigüedades Ebusitanas* [Ebusitan Antiquities] (1913). Today, we can admire this collection—a compendium of all Punic-Roman archaeology on the island of Ibiza—thanks to the donation made to the state in 1965 by Sainz de la Cuesta's heirs with the express desire that it be exhibited in this city.

### SHRINES AND NECROPOLIS

The collection comprises material from three of the main shrines of Punic Ibiza—Es Culleram, Illa Plana and Puig d'en Valls—which confirm the existence on the island of organised religion with acts of worship governed by a group of priests. For example, the shrine at Es Culleram has yielded a large set of terracotta ex-votos in the form of female figurines—many of them broken—representing the goddess Tanit. From Illa Plana there are three incomplete recumbent figures that were found outside a votive pit (*bothros*) which also yielded 35 schematic figures with heavily pronounced sexual characteristics. Two of these figures are male and oval-shaped, while the other is female and has a bell-shaped body. The artefacts from Puig d'en Valls include torsos, heads and feet of figurines, two miniature ram's heads and two Arab oil lamps.

The collection also features a representative selection of typical Punic funerary objects, the majority from the necropolis at Puig des Molins, used in the different stages of the funerary ritual: preparing, enshrouding, and protecting the corpse for the journey to the afterlife. Jewellery and personal ornaments, again from the necropolis, are also well represented in the collection and include vitreous paste beads, semi-precious stones, rings and bracelets made of bronze and gold.

In his passion for collecting, Sainz de la Cuesta managed to assemble an extraordinarily diverse array of fine materials and the collection therefore boasts a considerable number of pieces made of bone, metal and glass. The bone objects include items related to textile activities (needles, spindles and weights), pieces used to decorate the wooden coffins, a fascinating set of tusks from the Suidae family, which were used for protection, and miscellaneous objects for personal adornment such as hair pins. Many of the metal pieces—most of them made of iron or bronze—are related to the dead person's craft and include ploughing instruments and fishing hooks. There are also pieces associated with the home, such



as scissors and knives, and sacred objects like *obeloi*—originally, bronze spits for roasting meat—which are frequently found as offerings in shrines but may also have had a monetary value.

The collection includes relatively few glass objects but some of them are particularly exquisite, such as various containers and a small spindle whorl for spinning. From the Early Roman period there is a selection of characteristic unguentaria, and the fragments of Roman mosaic glass are particularly interesting because they are the only such items that have been found on the island to date.

The numismatics section boasts equally interesting pieces from the Punic period, most of them struck at the local mint and bearing the image of the god Bes. Another important lot corresponds to the Roman period and includes several Antoninianus coins from the third century BC and numerous examples of Early Roman bronzes. There are also a few *doblers*, *sous* and *cinquenas* minted by the University of Ibiza between the reigns of Charles I and Philip VII.

Objects associated with games make up another fascinating section of the collection. There is only one example of children's toys: a Punic doll that must have had articulated arms. However, there are numerous vitreous paste *calculi*—tokens that were moved around a board according to a set of rules which determined whether the player won or lost the game in question. Another highlight of the collection is a very rare incomplete bone die from the Roman period. The vitreous paste *astragali* on display were also used for playing games but, like the bone variety, sometimes for divination purposes as well.

The sculpture section is principally made up of terracotta figures from the Punic period, with characteristic pieces like the one of Tanit on her throne. A splendid head of Bacchus, which was found at Can Fita and probably formed part of the villa's decorative repertoire, is a fine example of Roman sculpture.

Finally, the collection contains a large and varied assortment of pottery objects. The Punic period is represented by locally-made pieces, such as cooking pots and tableware with their characteristic engobe coating, as well imported Greek and Hellenistic pieces. The Roman period is superbly represented by "thin-walled" vases and terra sigillata ware. Rounding out the section are two important medieval pieces: an oil lamp from Al-Andalus, the period of Islamic domination, and a 15th-century jug or decanter.