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EVOLUCION DE LA GRICULTURA Y DE LA PROPIEDAD RURAL EN LA ISLA DE MENORCA

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...Unlike Majorca there does not exist a register of the distribution of lands and royal concessions have to be recovered from chancery documents of the time. Today we are aware of many documents ceding houses, principally in Ciutadella that must have been of interest to merchants and artesans and some of the concessions of farmsteads or alquerias as the documents call them. In 1287 Ramòn de Mozòn was awarded a farmstead called Tobilla (possibly Torellò) which to judge by its boundaries was vast, occupying the area to the South West of the current municipality of Mahòn. This farm could have been the predecessor of the Caballeria of Torellò already documented in 1390 and whose approximate boundaries can be seen in the map of the caballerias. Another farmstead awarded in 1290 was that of Alfuri, possibly the predecessor of the caballeria of Algaiarens documented in the 17th Century, awarded to a certain Mercader de Luca (merchant from Lucca ?) and finally in 1287 was given to Felipe of Chiamonte, an antonine friar, the farmstead of Biniçoida and the hamlet of Binisataf, possibly Binisaida and Biniatap today in the commune of Villacarlos, farms which at least in the 16th Century formed part of caballeria or fief.

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... As far as the ownership of land is concerned, A. ramis only gives very fragmentary details except when he refers to noble holdings represented by caballerias and fiefs. The former were sixteen in number according to A. Ramis who based this on the mentioned census and which were made up of 67 farmsteads although some were also feudal in part. Also included in the caballerias were houses in towns, smallholdings of land and vineyards and it is curious to note that the virtually barren "Illa de Colom" was part of one of them. The entities making up a caballeria were by no means always contiguous. According to a very interesting document unearthed by Riudavets there even existed a caballeria with no lands and his owner received a pension from the Crown of 25 Pounds in exchange for its title and military obligations. This document presented to the English authorities in the 18th Century was a copy of the census of 1600 with a recital of the caballerias and fiefs of the island in which was moreover listed the owners of same and the farms which made up each of them. IN great part the extract of this document published by Riudavets corresponds with the census published by A. ramis. If the owners of the caballerias given by Riudavets coincided as it seems with those of 1600 we would have an important point of departure to know the feudal class of landowners of the island. According to the version quoted by Riudavets the 16 caballerias belonged to only 12 owners, one of whom was sra. Margarita Oloves y Quart who held three, being Algayarens, Binifabini and Binicorràs which together must have constituted 3,000 ha. Another knight of similar name, Jaime Olives, held the caballerias of Binidonaire and Tirant with an extent of over 2,000 ha. Finally the knight Jaime Ximenes owned the caballerias of Binixabò and Torellò with an extent of 1,000-2,000 ha. The remaining caballerias belonged each to a different knight. The homonymy of the names of these knights with present important landowners and the coincidence of the caballerias with some of the extensive properties today leads one to presume a strong continuity in the social and agrarian history of the island over the last four centuries and that the latifundia of today is rooted in the 16th Century.

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... The knights received the style of "Mossen" and who gained the military privilege was called "Cavaller" and their descendants "Donzell". The title of knight was only transmissible in the male line.