

## From Trading Post to Town in the Phoenician-Punic World

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IN THE IBERIAN PENINSULA, the transitional phase between the Phoenician period (eighth to sixth century BC) and the Punic period (fifth to third century BC) poses numerous questions as to whether there was continuity, a break and/or economic and social crisis in the colonial systems that arose from the Phoenician diaspora into the Mediterranean. Like any transitional period, the sixth century BC is characterized by profound transformations in the ambit of Phoenician colonial society, including, among other aspects, the passage from the ancient or colonial horizon to the Punic or Carthaginian horizon (Moscati 1993), the cessation of contacts between the colonies in the West and Tyre (Aubet 1993, 273–6) and, in certain cases, the transformation of the trading centres of the ancient period into genuine urban centres. Various events, like the fall of Tyre into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar in 573 BC, the consequent hegemony of Carthage, which in some territories of the west-central Mediterranean was to assume control of the former colonial enclaves of Tyre (cf. Whittaker 1978), the crisis in Tartessos resulting from the interruption of the trade in precious metals between Iberia and the East, and the intrusion of Phocaeen trade from 550 BC on, often considered as factors triggering the so-called ‘crisis’ of the sixth century, the nature and actual scope of which, nevertheless, are yet to be determined.

The theoretical and methodological ideas put forward so far as a way of approaching this period are inadequate nowadays, and in the present circumstances, the lack of data in the archaeological record of some of the significant Phoenician settlements, like Gadir, prevents the construction of a coherent overall model to explain the sixth century transformations in the Phoenician-Punic world.

Nor is a simple comparison with the transition that is evident in other areas of Phoenician colonization in the Mediterranean at all relevant —

areas like Sicily and Sardinia, where recent archaeological finds support a relatively clear picture as far as the sixth century transition is concerned. Indeed, according to the classical tradition, after a series of victories in Sicily, General Malco invaded Sardinia in 545–535 BC, and a little before the year 509 — the date of the first treaty between Rome and Carthage, in which Sardinia already figures as a territory under Carthaginian dominion — Carthage sent a new force under the leadership of the Magonides, which culminated in the island being unconditionally annexed (Bartoloni 1987, 81; Tronchetti 1988, 90–4; Moscati 1993, 211). Archaeology seems to confirm these events and reflects profound changes in various Phoenician centres during the second half of the sixth century: Mozia was fortified, Monte Sirai was destroyed (Bondi 1985, 76), Bithia was partially abandoned, Sulcis — the main centre of the silver trade — entered an economic recession and new centres arose, of Carthaginian foundation, like Neapolis in the Tharros region, and Monte Adranone and Lilibeo in Sicily (Moscati 1986, 130–5; 1993, 212–13; Di Stefano 1993). The most revealing example is that of Cuccureddus, a small Phoenician trading centre in the extreme south-east of the island of Sardinia, founded in the middle of the seventh century, which was destroyed as a result of Carthaginian intervention on the island (Marras, Bartoloni and Moscati 1989) and was succeeded at the end of the sixth century by Cagliari which, from then on, became the main political centre of the region, in accordance with the foreign policy of Carthage, which favoured the political development of a few centres — Cagliari and Tharros — at the expense of the autonomy of the ancient Phoenician enclaves.

Thus in the central Mediterranean, and especially in Sardinia, the sixth century transition to the Punic horizon is synonymous with territorial annexation on the part of Carthage, loss of autonomy by the old Phoenician mercantile enclaves and the consequent development of large urban agglomerations like Cagliari and Tharros. In other words, the metal trade which had favoured the economic growth of certain centres like Sulcis, gave way to a rigid political and territorial control of the island by those Punic cities which, by their strategic position, combined the conditions for developing large-scale agricultural production in the interests of Carthage.

In the case of the Iberian peninsula, too, the sixth century transition supposes a change in the settlement pattern, which would culminate in the concentration of the Phoenician population in a few urban centres. But, unlike Sardinia, this would not be a direct consequence of Carthaginian intervention. Our aim here is to try and define the most significant and distinctive aspects of the transition in Iberia on the basis of the data in the archaeological records of three groups of sites — the Gadir region, the Bay of Malaga and the island of Ibiza — which, in our opinion, offer

the most archaeological information concerning development in the sixth century BC. Analysis of the process, after a description of the ancient horizon of the eighth and seventh centuries, will help us to define the main elements of what was probably a complete change in the economic system within the ambit of the Phoenician colonies in the West, with all its political and social consequences.

### **The trading posts (eighth and seventh centuries BC)**

From the middle of the eighth century, there arose countless Phoenician trading centres along the Andalucían coastline, situated at the mouth of the principal rivers of the region and dominating the head of important communication routes to the interior (Figure 2). The aims of Tyre's commercial expansion were very complex and undoubtedly its role as the main supplier of raw materials — chiefly metals — to the Eastern states was a determining factor in the transformation of the Phoenician colonies in the West into a genuine periphery of the Eastern 'world system' (cf. Frankenstein 1979; Aubet 1993, 50–76).

Although indirectly, the archaeological record shows the vital importance of Cádiz for Phoenician commercial strategy in the western Mediterranean (Figure 1). Considered the most important Phoenician colony after Carthage, its position on an ancient island controlling access to the lower Guadalquivir — ancient Tartessos — gave it a significant economic and political role in the framework of the silver trade in the Atlantic region of Huelva and the valley of the Guadalquivir. Although archaeological investigation in Cádiz is faced with serious difficulties due to the coincidence of the modern city's location with the site of the ancient colony, we are relatively well informed about its historical evolution through the site of Castillo de Doña Blanca, situated a few kilometres away, which probably constituted a small mainland port, dependent on the Gaditanian metropolis (Ruiz Mata 1986). In general, from the eighth century on, intense minero-metallurgical activity can be observed in the region of Huelva, with the object of obtaining silver ore on a large scale; once processed, this was shipped from the port of Gadir bound for the East. For once archaeology confirms the assessment of the classical sources (cf. Diodorus 5:35, 4–5; Strabo 3:2, 9–11), which refer to the importance of silver to Phoenician trade in the West.

Along the Mediterranean coastline of Andalucía, that is to say, in the coastal region of the modern provinces of Málaga, Granada and Almería, archaeological investigation identified some time ago the presence of an important concentration of ancient Phoenician centres, set up at the mouth of river valleys and oriented towards trade with the indigenous communi-

ties of the interior. From West to East the best known are Cerro del Prado (mouth of the Guadarranque), Montilla (mouth of the Guadiaro), Cerro del Villar (in the Guadalhorce), Malaka (in the Guadalmedina), Toscanos (in the Vélez), Morro de Mezquitilla (in the Algarrobo), Chorreras, Almuñécar-Sexi (in the river Seco), Abdera (in the river Adra) and Baria-Villaricos (in the Almanzora).

These ancient Phoenician centres are notable above all for their urban structure, revealing the presence of a highly complex colonial society in the far West. Excavations on the most ancient sites of Morro de Mezquitilla, Chorreras, Toscanos and Castillo de Doña Blanca have disclosed domestic architecture characterized, from the middle of the eighth century, by the construction of large and luxurious dwellings reaching as much as 15 m in length (Olmo-Aubet 1986, 18–22). The uniform orientation of the houses, arranged along a regular pattern of streets, as well as the size and shape of certain residential structures in Chorreras and Doña Blanca reveal a marked increase in the Eastern population in the second half of the eighth century and a careful organization of the inhabited space. This invalidates the firmly rooted hypothesis according to which the first generation of Phoenician colonists arriving in the far west of the Mediterranean would have consisted of simple groups of adventurous merchants and sailors. On the contrary, both the initial town planning of the colonies and the contents of the most ancient Phoenician cemeteries — Almuñécar, for example (Pellicer 1962) — argue in favour of a relatively important contingent of initial population, well organized and socially heterogeneous, in which the initiative would have been in the hands of a specialized mercantile bourgeoisie, which, in some cases, opted to delimit the occupied area by means of systems of fortification (cf. Ruiz Mata 1993, 46–8).

Around 700 BC a first urban restructuring can be seen, when some of the establishments, like Chorreras and Montilla, are seen to be abandoned in favour of others which would experience a notable demographic and spatial growth (cf. Aubet, Maass-Lindemann and Schubart 1974, 156; Schubart 1988, 146–7). In the seventh century — the golden age of Phoenician trade in the West — there was considerable economic growth in all these centres, which would explain, in Toscanos for example, the building of a great central edifice which probably served as the main repository for merchandise (Niemeyer 1990, 480–3). Other centres, like Cerro del Villar or Morro de Mezquitilla, surrounded themselves with an ‘industrial belt’ on the periphery, devoted to industrial activities (metallurgy, pottery) (Aubet 1991, 35–45). The sharp contrasts to be seen as to quality, category and finish of the dwellings surrounding, for example, the ‘storehouse’ at Toscanos, suggest a clear division of work and the presence of artisans and probably slaves in the Phoenician colonies of Andalucía.

The geographical position, distribution and internal organization of these Phoenician centres follow a well-defined settlement pattern which seems to correspond to the category of small commercial colonies, trading posts or 'comptoirs'. From the intense debate that arose a few years ago as to the category and function of these establishments — cities, *poleis*, emporia, trading posts, colonies or *apoikiai* — the one thing that has remained clear is that we are not dealing with ports-of-trade, according to the traditional terminology of Polanyi, insofar as they do not combine the conditions peculiar to a free port — that is, neutral ports inhabited by a population of international composition. Nor do we appear to be dealing with genuine colonies in the classic sense — except perhaps Cádiz — since we do not find in them the existence of any real control of the territory, *chora* or immediate hinterland (cf. Niemeyer 1990, 485; 1991, 54; Aubet 1993, 279).

Although some authors have chosen to classify these settlements as mere ports of call or craft centres, or even as 'cities' (Ruiz Mata 1993, 45), what is certain is that, in the ancient period, only Carthage shows the layout and socio-economic, territorial and administrative set up appropriate to a city or a territorial state in the West (Lancel 1992). During the eighth to seventh centuries BC, the North African city attained an area of 55 ha (Rakob 1989, 165), whereas the enclaves in southern Spain are of much more modest dimensions: Toscanos initially covered an area of 2.5 ha, extending to 12 ha at the end of the seventh century with an estimated population of some 1000 inhabitants; Morro de Mezquitilla occupied 2 ha, Chorreras some 3 ha, Cerro del Villar 5 ha, Castillo de Doña Blanca 5 ha and Gadir 8 ha (Ruiz Mata 1993, 45; Niemeyer 1990, 483–4; Aubet 1992, 71).

The period between 650 and 600 BC corresponds to the era of greatest expansion of Phoenician trade through the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. It is the period when Gadir founded its own trading posts in Atlantic Morocco, like Mogador and possibly Lixus (Jodin 1966), on the coast of Portugal, like Abul (Mayet and Tavares da Silva 1993), in the Straits of Gibraltar, like Cerro del Prado (Rouillard 1978; Ulreich, Negrete, Puch and Perdigones 1990), in the region of Alicante (González Prats 1993) and on the island of Ibiza (Ramón 1991), and Phoenician trade reached as far as the Ebro valley and the Golfe du Lion. And so, paradoxically, the 'crisis' occurred at a time of full economic, demographic and urban expansion of the trading posts in southern Spain (cf. Niemeyer, Briese and Bahnemann 1988).

In general, the architectural, funerary, cultural and economic manifestations of the ancient Phoenician trading posts in Andalucía are very homogeneous, a reflection probably of an organization that was centralized and pivoting around Gadir. Proof of this is the fact that during the sixth

century the commercial activity of all these centres ceased simultaneously and the trading circuits on which all the management of their ports and merchandise depended were interrupted. Given the geographical extent and the simultaneous nature of these changes in the sixth century, many authors have chosen to explain them on the basis of external factors.

### **The sixth century transition in the sphere of influence of Gadir**

On the basis of classical texts (Justinus 44, 5, 2–4 and Polybius II 1, 5) that allude to a Carthaginian presence in Spain at an unspecified moment, many specialists have claimed that Carthaginian armies penetrated the Iberian peninsula to bring relief to Gadir as a result of the collapse of Tartessos in the sixth century BC. After the fall of Tyre, Carthage would have become the commercial heir of the Phoenician metropolis and would have reorganized its political strategy in an expansionist direction, so as to counteract the new situation created in the western Mediterranean: excessive autonomy of the Phoenician colonies, invasion of Graeco-oriental trade, etc. The debate on these questions has been sharpened in recent years, some authors defending the existence of exclusively internal factors — they do not tell us exactly which — as the origin of the sixth century changes, which would have had negative repercussions on ancient Phoenician trade (cf. Alvar 1991, 25; López Castro 1991, 77).

This hypothesis suggests in essence that the decline of ancient Phoenician trade in the West would have preceded the fall of Tyre, and yet the archaeological record seems to reflect quite the opposite, that is to say, that the run-down of the Phoenician colonies occurred no earlier than the middle of the sixth century BC. As we shall see, the dynamic of the sixth century transition was much more complex than it appears. For the area of Gaditanian influence — Tartessos and other Atlantic territories — the archaeological evidence establishes the following stages:

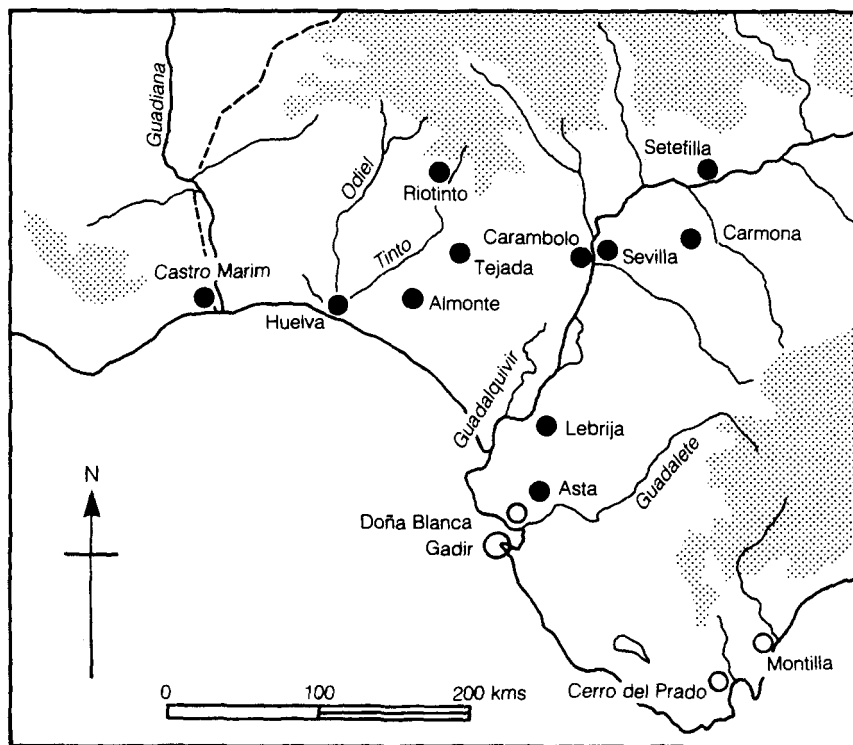
1 The absence of archaeological data for ancient Cádiz does not allow us to determine the extent of the changes that occurred during the sixth century in the immediate area around the Phoenician colony. In nearby Castillo de Doña Blanca, absolute continuity can be seen up to the middle of the sixth century BC, the moment when changes in the morphology of the settlement's pottery are observed, foreshadowing the classic Iberian shapes of the fifth to fourth centuries BC, but there are no clear indications of Carthaginian influence (Ruiz Mata 1993, 64–9). The key moment for determining whether there was continuity or a break in the diachronic sequence of the settlement, the second half of the sixth century, is not well enough defined. Nevertheless, both in Doña Blanca and in Cádiz a profound restructuring appears to take place at the beginning of the fifth

century BC, accompanied by very significant structural changes: the Gaditanian necropolis now yields hundreds or thousands of burials — all of them inhumations — the city experiences major urban expansion and an industrial area grows up in the bay, devoted to salting fish and producing garum on a large scale. Furthermore, from the fifth century on, the city's trading circuits are directed towards the ambit of Massalia, Athens and Corinth, judging by the distribution of Greek and Gaditanian Punic amphorae in those territories (Ruiz Mata 1986, 107–9; Ruiz Gil 1991, 1211–12), at the expense of the interregional and Atlantic trade of the preceding periods.

2 At the same time, in the hinterland of Gadir and in its sphere of economic influence, a clear regression can be seen from the sixth century. The collapse of Tartessos produced a drastic reduction in long-distance exchanges in the Guadalquivir valley, a decline in imports of merchandise and prestige goods of Phoenician origin in the middle of the sixth century, the disappearance of the Tartessian 'princely' tombs and the progressive concentration from the end of the sixth century of economic activities in a few indigenous settlements which, like Carmona, were transformed during the fifth century into genuine fortified oppida.

The Tartessian crisis was still more serious in the mining and metallurgical centres of the Huelva region, which had built their economy around the production of and trade in silver from the mines at Río Tinto and Aznalcóllar (Figure 1). Already at the end of the seventh century, silver production had been considerably reduced inland and some metallurgical townships, like San Bartolomé de Almonte, had been abandoned (Ruiz Mata and Fernández Jurado 1986). During this period, the first Greek imports arrived in the settlements of Huelva and Tejada la Vieja, which some authors attribute to an intrusion of Phocaeen trade, favoured by their powerful warships and by the apparent weakness of Phoenician trade (Olmos 1982; Cabrera 1988–1989). The crisis would have culminated in the second half of the sixth century BC: at that time the rhythm of construction slowed in the Tartessian port of Huelva, the urban space in the city was reduced, a demographic decline began and imports ceased (Fernández Jurado 1988–1989).

In Tejada, a Tartessian centre that controlled the silver mining and metallurgy of the interior from the eighth century, the archaeological record provides evidence of a restructuring of the habitat from the middle of the sixth century: the city was remodelled, the first wall was reinforced and the population turned for the first time to agriculture (Fernández Jurado 1987, 182–3). All the data point unanimously to a profound crisis in silver production, attributable not to the exhaustion of the silver-bearing veins — in Roman times the Río Tinto mines were being exploited again —



**Figure 1.** Map of the location of Gadir and of the metal-rich region of Huelva. The open circles represent Phoenician colonies, the black are other settlements.

but probably to a technical inability to exploit the mineral seams (Fernández Jurado 1988–1989, 177–214), and to geostrategic factors — difficulties of access from Tejada to the port of Gadir due to expansion of the marshes.

In general, the hypotheses which tried to explain the crisis in Tartessos as a response to the fall of Tyre, to the exhaustion of the Huelva silver mines or to the hostility of the indigenous populations have not succeeded in finding scientific confirmation in the archaeological record. Between 550 and 500 BC, there is evidence of decline in both the mining in Huelva, the main foundation of the Gaditanian economy, and in the Tartessian settlements in the Guadalquívir valley. All this coincided with a move of the main indigenous centres of political decision towards the periphery which, as in the case of the upper Guadalquívir, would soon see the appearance of the first true Iberian states (Ruiz and Molinos 1993, 113–22).

**3** The interregional trade of Cádiz was seriously affected in the middle of the sixth century, as can be seen from the situation in its trading posts



on the Atlantic. In this respect, it is significant that the only Atlantic trading posts that have been well studied in archaeological terms, like Mogador (Morocco) and Abul (Portugal), founded by Cádiz in the middle of the seventh century, were finally abandoned in the middle of the sixth century BC (Jodin 1966; Mayet and Tavares da Silva 1993). Various indications suggest that between the end of the sixth century and the fifth century BC, Carthage embarked on a strategy in this zone designed to take over the ancient Gaditanian redistribution circuits, setting up new trading posts and colonies in Africa (López Pardo 1991; Domínguez Monejero in press).

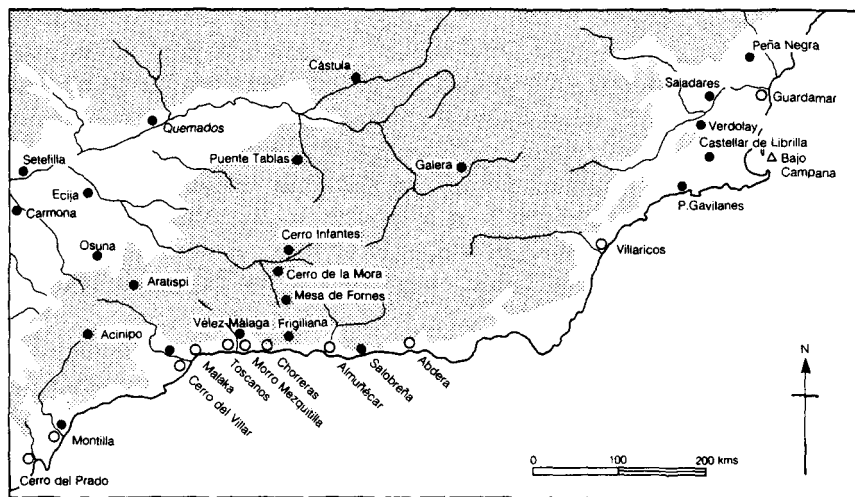
To sum up, we can say that around 550, the change that can be observed in the ambit of the Phoenician colonies is a response to various directly interrelated circumstances: (1) interruption of Phoenician trade from Cádiz with Tartessos and the Atlantic area; (2) a crisis hitting the Tartessian silver mines with adverse effects on the economy of the Huelva region; (3) decline of the Tartessian centres in the Guadalquivir valley; (4) increase of demographic concentration and gradual rise of the first oppida and Ibero-Turdetanian states in the upper Guadalquivir.

As to the causes of these changes, everything leads us to think that significant variations occurred both in the demand for precious metals and in the demand for raw materials and subsistence goods in the Mediterranean and the East in the second half of the seventh century, changes sufficient to force Gadir to broaden and diversify its radius of exchange and to extend its trading circuits into regions unknown until then — Portugal, Atlantic Morocco, the Balearics, the Golfe du Lion. Later, the formation of the Iberian states in the sixth century would have obliged the mechanisms of interregional exchange to be further restructured and, as in Sardinia, to orient mercantile activity towards trading circuits more and more integrated into the sphere of influence of Carthage.

In any case, the archaeological data from regions some distance from the Atlantic area, like the bay of Málaga or the Balearic islands, which we shall look at next, show that the geographic scope of the changes taking place in the sixth century could have been much greater than the archaeological evidence focused on Gadir-Tartessos might suggest.

### **The bay of Málaga: from Cerro del Villar to Malaka**

In the bay of Málaga, the principal Phoenician establishment is Cerro del Villar, in the mouth of the river Guadalhorce, founded at the end of the eighth century BC (Figure 2). The resumption of excavations on the site, from 1987 on, has shown clearly the existence of an ancient settlement on a small island in the centre of the delta, from which the Phoenicians



**Figure 2.** The Mediterranean coast of Andalucía during the Phoenician colonization (eighth-sixth centuries BC). The open circles represent Phoenician towns, the black are indigenous settlements.

controlled access to one of the principal communication routes to the highlands of the Málaga region and the farmlands of the Guadalquivir (Aubet 1991; 1992).

The archaeological record documents a relatively extensive Phoenician colony showing a regular town plan from the oldest levels, formed by large residential buildings separated by streets and by industrial sectors specializing in the production of large containers and amphorae. Judging by the distribution of Phoenician pottery and amphorae in the territories of the interior, we may speak of intensive exchange relationships with the indigenous communities during the whole of the seventh and part of the sixth centuries. In the second half of the seventh century, a big industrial zone arose on the highest part of the island, devoted to the production of large containers, pithoi and commercial amphorae, in kilns situated on the exterior of a big central edifice. This was formed by two large rectangular buildings, and the finds recorded in the interior as well as on the exterior suggest the existence of a manufacturing sector, where separate areas were differentiated for the preparation and working of the clay, and the turning, the finishing and the firing of the pots in huge circular kilns set up in open spaces or patios around the central installation. At the foot of the industrial zone and close to the landing stages, we find a vast residential area of rectangular houses equipped with domestic ovens and wells.

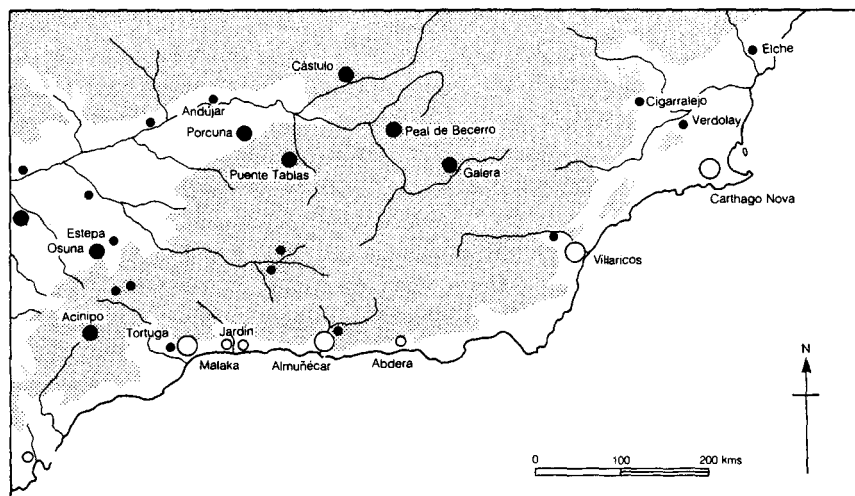
The imported pottery found in the occupation level associated with

this industrial zone — Ionian cups, Samian ware, Etruscan amphorae and bucchero — places the final, and apparently rapid, abandonment of the island a little before 550 BC. The site would not be occupied again until the beginning of the fifth century BC when it was already transformed into a coastal promontory dependent on neighbouring Malaka and forming an industrial suburb specializing in the production of pottery.

The immediate causes of the abandonment of the Phoenician colony can be inferred from the presence of various deposits of alluvium identified on the site, which indicate that, at the beginning of the sixth century, the Phoenician settlement suffered violent floods as a consequence of the progressive silting up of the old mouth of the river Guadalhorce, which was ultimately converted into a flat area of mud and river sediments. Consequently it was not an economic and social crisis that forced the Phoenicians to move to a safer place — Malaka — at the beginning of the sixth century but the erosion of the valley, produced by intensive use of the soil and of the forest resources on the part of the colonial centre. The degradation of the environment, perfectly documented through pollen analyses, and the gradual alluvial flooding of the ancient inlet finally interfered with the commercial and shipping activities of the colonial centre which was flourishing and expanding its production.

Cerro del Villar is a clear example of the degradation of a territory as a consequence of the activities of a system of colonial production. But the ecological crisis on its own is not a sufficient reason when it comes to determining the causes of the foundation, at the same time, of Malaka, a few kilometres from the ancient Phoenician colony. Because, although it was the Punic successor to Cerro del Villar, Malaka was created from the outset to function as a capital and a centre for political and harbour control. And it so happens that the moment of transition from a Phoenician commercial enclave to the Punic city coincides with significant changes in the geostrategic and socio-political conditions of the Phoenician-Punic world.

Indeed, in terms of strategy and naval control, the site of ancient Malaka was much better suited to sheltering a shipping centre than Cerro del Villar. Protected by the mountains that surround the city and dominating the mouth of the river Guadalmedina, the cove at Málaga combines a series of conditions that make it into an ideal site for controlling all the maritime traffic east of the Straits of Gibraltar (Figure 3). And there is every appearance that Malaka arose not only as the successor to Cerro del Villar but as a major port designed to exercise a more effective control over the shipping route to the Straits. In any case, the archaeological documentation suggests that the new Punic centre was transformed from the fifth century BC into a genuine city, endowed with a hierarchical urban



**Figure 3.** The Mediterranean coast of Andalucía during Punic times (sixth-third centuries BC).

layout — reflecting social differences — and articulated around a harbour establishment dominated by a high town or acropolis on the Alcazaba hill (Gran Aymerich 1991, 9 and 168). Punic Málaga, which soon covered an area of 16 ha, very soon entered into regular relations with Carthage, Caere, Corinth and Athens and became a prosperous city, thanks to its famous salting industry and fisheries, to the point of being referred to in classical texts as the most important of all the Punic towns of Mediterranean Andalucía.

In the bay of Málaga, then, the sixth century coincided with an unequivocal process of demographic concentration and with the definitive transformation into a Punic city, a city oriented towards the orbit of Carthage in accordance with a commerce and production aimed basically at an export market, in marked contrast to the Phoenician period in Cerro del Villar, oriented fundamentally towards the hinterland.

All this does not mean that the origin of the Punic towns necessarily followed the same dynamic that we have observed in the bay of Málaga. On the contrary, various archaeological indications suggest that some Phoenician trading posts on the Málaga coastline, like Cerro del Prado in the river Guadarranque (Rouillard 1978, 153 and 160; Ulreich *et al.* 1990, 221 and 232) and Castillo de Fuengirola (Recio 1993, 132), continued functioning until the fifth century BC. Others underwent a profound restructuring in the first half of the sixth century, like Toscanos, when its trade with the regions of the interior went into full decline from the sixth to fourth centuries BC (Lindemann, Niemeyer and Schubart 1972; Maass-Lindem-

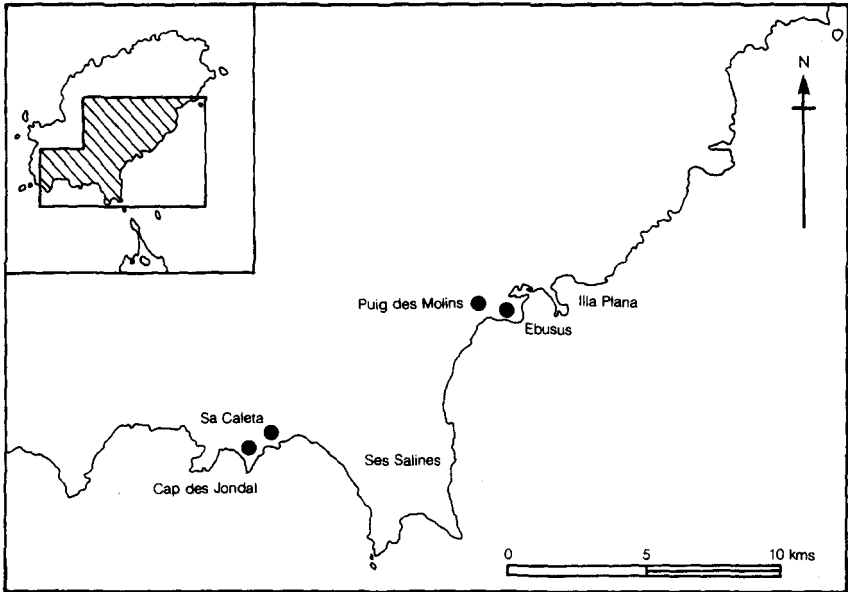
ann and Schubart 1975; Schubart 1977; Arteaga 1981a; 1981b, 118; Maass-Lindemann 1982; Niemeyer, Briese and Bahnemann 1988).

Everything indicates a change in the geopolitical conditions of the region in the sixth century. The appearance of great port cities like Malaka, Sexi or Villaricos reflects a clear tendency towards concentration of the Phoenician-Punic population in a few port centres, more and more oriented towards external trade. And the fact is that the situation of the indigenous communities of the interior had also changed, adopting from the sixth century a system of territorial organization based on the oppidum or hill fort, which kept control of the territory, as in the case of Silla del Moro in Acinipo (Ronda), which, in the sixth century, came to control one of the principal centres of communication between the Guadalquivir valley and the Mediterranean (Carrilero 1991, 136-7; Aguayo *et al.* 1991). Everything seems to indicate that these indigenous centres were no longer in a position of commercial dependence on the Punic centres on the coast, as had been the case in the eighth and seventh centuries, to the extent that during the fifth to third centuries BC trade with the coast would be of practically no importance for the territories of the interior (cf. Chapa, Pereira and Madrigal 1993).

Finally, the crisis in the ancient Phoenician trade of the Málaga region does not appear to be linked in any way with the collapse of Tartessos or the decline of silver mining in Huelva. The cultural and economic transformations that took place in this zone in the sixth century — changes in the settlement pattern, replacement of inhumation by cremation, the disappearance of Phoenician pottery in the oriental tradition, the adoption of the cult of Tanit, the adoption of new pottery forms — are similar to those we have observed in Sardinia and invariably hint at the interests of the city of Carthage, more inclined to underpin and concentrate economic activities in a few political centres than to have to deal with a host of autonomous commercial installations (cf. Aubet 1986, 616). In any case, the boom in Punic Malaka, more open to the sea and to the trading circuits of the Mediterranean, coincided with the decline of the ancient trading posts that looked more to the interior and to the sphere of Gadir.

### **Ibiza: from Sa Caleta to Iboshim**

We do not know the degree to which the crisis in the Phoenician trading posts affected other regions of the Mediterranean coast of the Iberian peninsula. The archaeological evidence does no more than show a drastic decrease in the volume of Phoenician imports in the middle of the sixth century, in the territories of the south-east and Levante, which in some



**Figure 4.** Map of Ibiza showing the principal Phoenician-Punic sites (after Costa y Fernández 1986, 87).

cases is accompanied by signs of destruction and fire (cf. González Prats 1993, 152).

Be that as it may, the presence of Phoenician trade in these zones depended to a great extent on Phoenician-Punic Ibiza, the development of which shows many elements in common with what we have seen in the bay of Málaga. In general, in Ibiza three clearly differentiated stages in the Phoenician-Punic occupation of the island have been documented (cf. Ramón 1992, 472–8); these are summarized next (Figure 4):

**1** Arrival of the earliest Phoenician colonists from Andalucía around 630 BC and founding of a trading post at Sa Caleta on the south-west coast of the island (Ramón 1991). This first trading post, covering some 4 ha, was made up of big buildings with a regular plan, arranged around streets and was oriented from the outset towards recovering and processing metals — silver-bearing galena, lead, iron — originating in the island or in the Levante region, the Ebro valley and the Golfe du Lion, at the same time maintaining regular contact with the Phoenician centres in the central Mediterranean. The archaeological record documents a rapid and peaceful abandonment of the site at the beginning of the sixth century.

**2** Founding of a new centre in the bay of Ibiza — the future Ebusus — at the beginning of the sixth century and its rapid transformation into an urban centre. Unlike the earlier period, in the founding of Ibiza the

Phoenicians would have had other considerations in mind, such as the existence of a well-protected natural port and of a strategic upper area in Puig de Vila — where the present shell of the town lies — dominating the whole bay and the surrounding countryside with its huge agricultural potential (Fernández, Gómez Bellard and Gurrea 1984; Gómez Bellard 1984; 1993; Costa, Fernández and Gómez Bellard 1991; Costa and Fernández 1993). Like Málaga, Ibiza was created for purposes of stability and with a perfectly defined function: control of the naval traffic and trade across the Balearics towards the south of the peninsula and towards the Golfe du Lion.

3 In the second half of the sixth century, Ibiza was transformed into a prosperous city, reaching its maximum development between 450 and 300 BC. Its 4000 hypogea in the necropolis of Puig des Molins, one of the most spectacular funerary ensembles in the western Mediterranean, date from this period (Fernández 1992); its magnitude suggests that the appearance of the Punic city might be linked to the arrival of new contingents of Semitic population, probably from North Africa. The city, which was the only urban centre on the island, adopted Carthaginian styles in architecture, religion and craftsmanship, as can be inferred from its sanctuaries, the importance of the cult of Tanit and the form and content of the necropolis (Tarradell and Font 1975). In short, the archaeological evidence suggests that at some moment in the sixth century, and coinciding with a striking demographic growth in the urban population, ancient Iboshim was integrated into the sphere of influence of Carthage. Perhaps the urban transformation of the city — the Punic town with the most Carthaginian features of any in Iberia — was yet again a consequence of the geostrategic interests of Carthage. In this respect, the historical development of Phoenician-Punic Ibiza shows a surprising similarity to that of the Cagliari region.

### Conclusions

From what has been said we may deduce that the transition from the Phoenician world to the Punic world in Iberia corresponds to the dissolution of an economic system based on trade — fundamentally with the interior and the Atlantic — and on decentralized production and dispersal of certain products and precious metals, and the move to a much more centralized economic system, but based on more diversified trade and production which brought into circulation merchandise of less value in a much broader and fundamentally Mediterranean geographic compass. In short, it supposes the move from trade possessing the elements characteristic of a trading post to city trade. Although not identical, the change is similar in other parts of the Mediterranean, where the sixth century repre-

sents the final move from trade in items of value to trade in subsistence goods, which everywhere coincides with a notable increase in the volume of interregional traffic (cf. Sherratt and Sherratt 1993, 369–74).

The sixth century transition coincides, moreover, with fundamental changes in the environment of the Phoenician colonies, which must, no doubt, have impinged on and accelerated the economic and social transformations that culminated in the appearance of the Punic towns. The crisis in Tartessos, now satisfactorily explained, and the formation of the Iberian states in the hinterland of the colonies must have implied a change of strategy for the Phoenician trade with indigenous communities that were growing ever more self-sufficient and capable of coordinating their own trading networks. On the other hand, the entry of Carthage on to the scene and the conflict of interests that arose in the western Mediterranean between Phocaeans, Greeks, Etruscans and Carthaginians made it advisable to concentrate forces and to centralize trade and production in a few centres — Gadir, Malaka, Ebusus — which operated as genuine nucleating factors in society and the economy.

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**From trading post to town in the Phoenician-Punic world**

As early as the eighth to seventh centuries BC, Phoenician settlements on the south coast of Iberia, although relatively small in size, displayed certain features associated with towns: the inhabited space was organized, with houses reflecting differing social strata arranged along streets; in some instances separate 'industrial zones' existed. The settlements were usually sited at the mouths of rivers which gave access to the interior and their function was primarily trade. In the sixth century, the settlement pattern changed, due to a number of interrelated factors, including the fall of Tyre, the increasing influence of Carthage and changes in both the environment and the societies of the interior. Many, though not all, of the existing settlements were abandoned and the population became concentrated in much larger towns, such as Malaka and Ebusus, which functioned as genuine capital cities in their areas.

**De núcleo comercial a ciudad en el mundo fenicio-púnico**

Ya desde los siglos VIII-VII a.C., los asentamientos fenicios de la costa Sur de la Península Ibérica, aunque de un tamaño relativamente reducido, mostraban ciertas características asociadas a las ciudades: el espacio habitado estaba organizado, con casas dispuestas a lo largo de las calles reflejando distintos estamentos sociales; en algunos casos, existían zonas industriales separadas. Los asentamientos generalmente se situaban en las desembocaduras de los ríos, que permitían un acceso directo hacía el interior, y su función principal era el comercio. En el siglo VI, el patrón de asentamiento se modificó, debido a una serie de factores interrelacionados, incluida la caída de Tiro, la creciente influencia de Cartago y cambios tanto en el entorno como en las sociedades del interior. Muchos de los asentamientos existentes, aunque no todos, fueron abandonados y la población se concentró en ciudades de mayor tamaño tales como Malaka y Ebusus, que ejercían las funciones de genuinas capitales en sus respectivas áreas.