

# Phoenician Toscanos as a Settlement Model? Its Urbanistic Character in the Context of Phoenician Expansion and Iberian Acculturation

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THE TITLE OF MY PAPER intentionally raises two questions: first, does the site I am about to consider really show features of urban character? And second: is it representative, and if so how representative, of Phoenician settlement in the West or elsewhere in the Mediterranean, to the extent that it could be used as a settlement model? In the context of our colloquium, this implies a third question: if accepted as a settlement model, could it have exerted any influence on the development of Iberian urbanism?

Adolf Schulten, who must be honoured as the first explorer of the site (Figure 1), was convinced that he had discovered Phocaeen Mainake. He visualized it as an imposing, and even large, hillside town extending over the Cerro del Peñón, where, in 'El Torín' (an old limestone quarry), he thought he recognized the monumental gateway of the Greek colony (Schulten 1943, 24–30, fig. 6). The author's field survey in 1961 (Niemeyer 1964), sought the archaic Greek settlement. It was focused on the small, narrow mound immediately to the east of the Cerro del Peñón, called Cortijo de los Toscanos, and was inspired by the idea that the site was akin to early Smyrna at Bayrakli. As the dig proceeded the site, which had meanwhile proved to be Phoenician, was shown to be of a quite considerable extent and it was only by comparison with other Phoenician settlements like Carthage (*v. infra*), that its true proportions became clear (for a full bibliography see Niemeyer 1986).

Comparing Toscanos to archaic Carthage, I have, elsewhere, tried to demonstrate that even simple criteria, such as the size of a given settlement, can be of some value in rating urban character and function

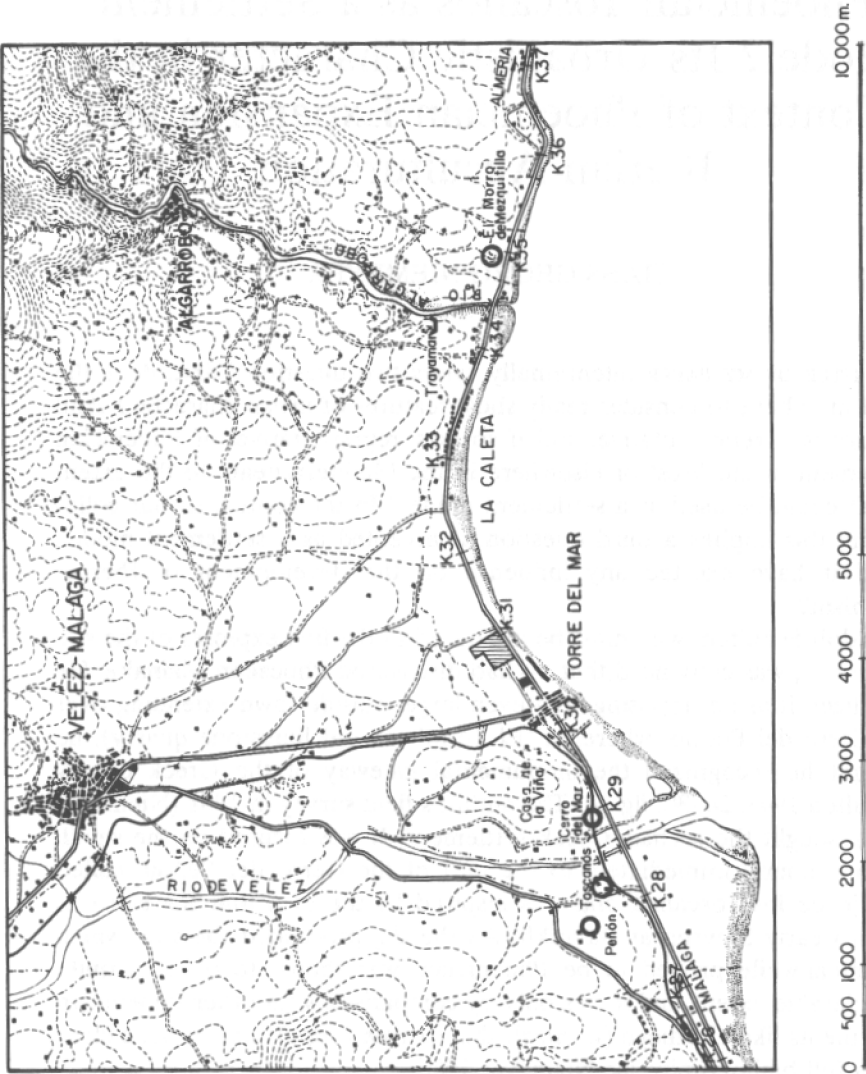
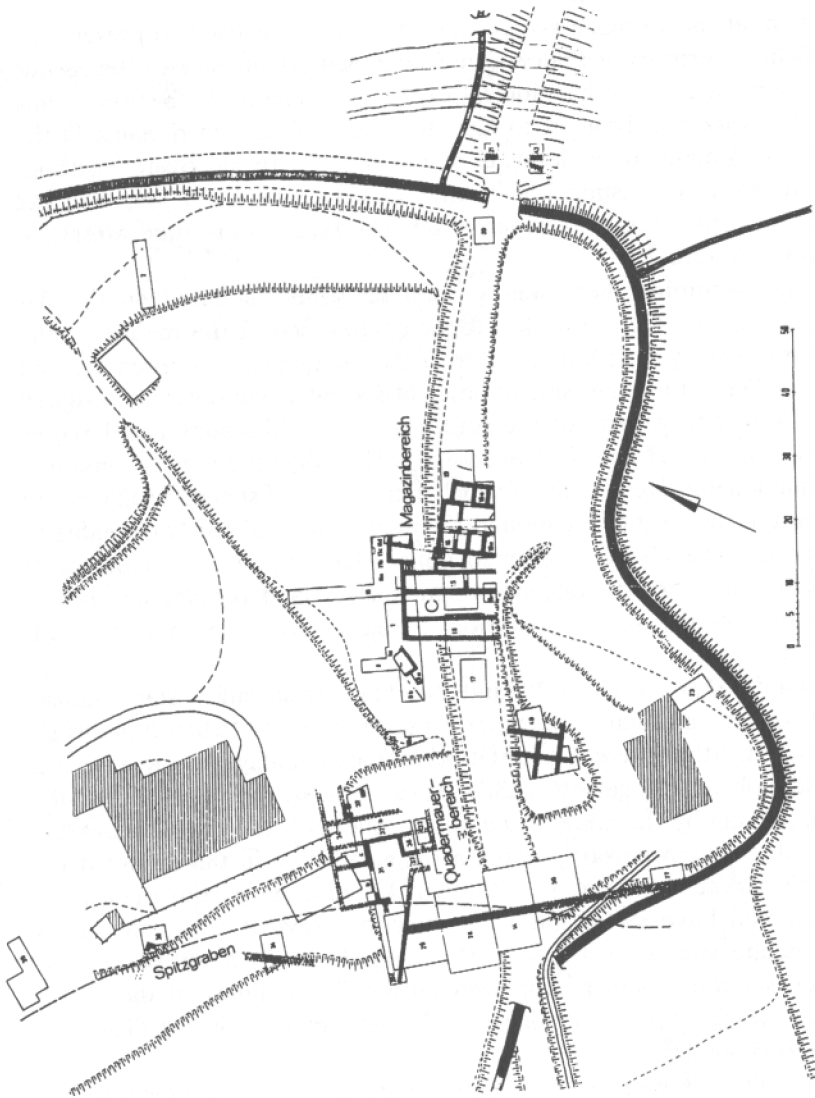


Figure 1. Map of the lower Río de Vélez region, province of Málaga (after Niemeyer and Schubart 1969).

(Niemeyer 1989, 28–31; 1990a, 103–4; 1993). This type of argument is even more helpful in a broader context (Niemeyer 1990b). However, before continuing such an approach it may be useful to review our state of knowledge about the site.

When, at the Cologne symposium in 1979, I first tried to present the urban characteristics of Phoenician Toscanos, I could refer to the results of six campaigns of archaeological excavation (Figure 2). Between 1964 and 1978 work had brought to light the essentials of the remains of the archaic settlement, or at least as much as could be uncovered without doing damage to existing houses and gardens and given financial and manpower constraints (Niemeyer 1982). The results were then presented as follows (Figure 2):

- at the beginning there was a small settlement situated on the flat mound of the Cortijo de los Toscanos, founded in the middle of the eighth century BC; house A (with its enlargement of room B) and house D (on the other side of an eight-foot wide lane) can be assigned to the first fifty years of the settlement's life (Toscanos I and II), as well as houses H and K (Toscanos II). The inhabited area is contained within a defensive system, of which a ditch with V-shaped profile is still extant to the west of the mound ('Spitzgraben') and partly traceable to the east. The above mentioned houses have more or less the same orientation, perhaps following some sort of land register laid out at the time of the site's foundation. Nevertheless, open space was left between them.
- Around 700 BC a relatively large building, the so called 'staple house' or magazine building C, was being inserted into this urban framework, with a slightly different orientation taking advantage of the available building land ('Magazinbereich'). Its function was apparently commercial, judging by the numerous amphora sherds found in and around it. This does not necessarily imply a radical change in the intended use of this particular area of the settlement because the existing open space could well have served the same function. Several huts built in the immediate vicinity to the west (buildings E, F, G) could perhaps be called servants' dwellings or even offices. The building of the 'staple house' designates a new phase of the settlement's history (Toscanos III, Toscanos IV).
- About a hundred years later, at the beginning of the sixth century BC, the central area of the settlement had been reorganized to serve entirely new purposes (Toscanos V). What exactly happened at this time is still unclear largely because the structures of Toscanos V had been heavily interfered with during later Roman occupation of the site (Niemeyer 1982, 196–7). It can be assumed, however, that the defensive



**Figure 2.** Toscanos, centre of the settlement (after Niemeyer 1989).

ditch mentioned above had been abandoned by this time and backfilled. Above it a still-enigmatic building had been erected in high quality ashlar masonry ('Quadermauerbereich').

- The surrounding slopes of Cerro del Peñón and Cerro del Alarcón formed part of the settlement at that time (Figure 14) presumably serving as an industrial and residential area. A forward defensive wall is attested on the crest of the Cerro del Alarcón, which probably also surrounded part of the Cerro del Peñón. It was dated to the second half of the seventh century BC (Niemeyer 1982, 189–90; Schubart 1988b).
- Finally, it has been shown that the site was uninhabited between the early sixth century and early Imperial times (see also Niemeyer 1980).

Further excavation, and above all investigations on the eastern slope of Cerro del Peñón and the summit of Cerro del Alarcón in 1984, have confirmed or only slightly modified this picture (Schubart 1988a). In spite of heavy erosion, the remains of installations for ironworking were uncovered on the slope of the Cerro del Peñón (Keesmann, in Schubart 1988a, 171ff.; Niemeyer *et al.* 1988, 158–63), as well as some remains of a stratigraphy, at certain points along the slope, possibly belonging to a habitation. At the same time a fragment of an alabaster urn was recovered as a surface find, indicating the existence of another of those burials the existence of which had already been inferred from the famous thymiaterion found at the beginning of the century (Niemeyer and Schubart 1965; Niemeyer 1970).

Investigation on the Cerro del Alarcón, in continuation of earlier work, revealed the existence of sporadic buildings on the hilltop originating in the first half of the seventh century BC. One of them, located near the crest, may perhaps be interpreted as a tower or stronghold (Schubart 1988b, 180–1). The first stone wall enclosing almost half of the Alarcón (and presumably also the Peñón!), dates from around 600 BC. It was superseded in the following century by another wall of less careful construction.

These results, arising from the campaigns prior to 1984, had been taken as showing a significant expansion of settlement after a first phase of consolidation within the limits of the mound of Cortijo de los Toscanos. So they do, but one has to admit that in what I would call 'the outskirts' of Toscanos the archaeological evidence testifies only to scattered dwellings (Schubart 1988b) and is dominated rather by industrial installations of the kind one would expect to find in the periphery of a settlement. For any evaluation of urban character it is the nucleus of the settlement on the Cortijo de los Toscanos which deserves investigation and comparison.

Within a larger topographical framework of industrial and other secondary occupation (Figure 14), there is good reason to imagine an urban

nucleus with a more or less densely tilled suburban area (Figure 2). Several narrow streets running south-west to north-east must have crossed the built-up area. The one well-preserved example has a minimum width of 2.31 m between houses A and D (Niemeyer and Schubart 1968, 82, fig. 4). It is worth noting that it does not remain completely straight in all phases. When the magazine was built it was set obliquely, leaving room B of house A jutting out into the street, thus forming a 'salient corner'. Between houses A and C a very narrow lane and a staircase connected either with the next parallel street to the south or an open space downhill.

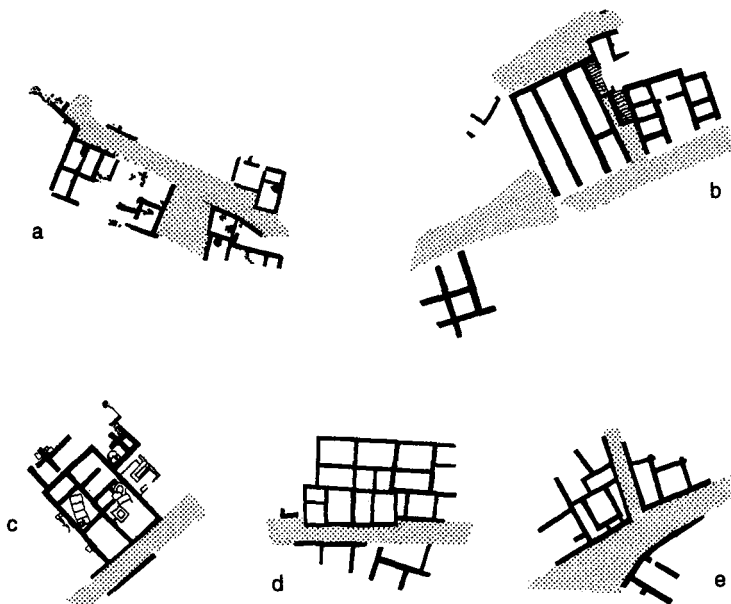
Houses with a floor space averaging between 70–110 sq m stand 'dos à dos', as do the houses A and H, forming the corner of a small *insula*. One must, of course, admit that the plan of phase IV of Toscanos reflects a considerable length of time and is the result of a number of building activities. Equally it has to be born in mind that to the east no trace of a building adjoining house 'H' has been found. As a consequence, the existence of more houses further to the east of the mound may reasonably be excluded. Nonetheless, judging by the architectural remains, certain features of urban topography and commerce, such as 'magazine building 'C' and the narrow lane and stairs leading downhill beside the building, may be detected in what is otherwise only a very small sample of the settlement's nucleus.

This urban face of Toscanos, which has emerged gradually from intensified analysis and interpretation, has led us to attempt a general evaluation of the site in relation to other urban systems and townscapes in antiquity (Niemeyer 1986). The discussion has profited from Max Weber's famous article about the city in general and also from other more recent studies about the city in antiquity (Weber 1921; see Kolb 1984 for a bibliography). In applying Weber's arguments, I reached the conclusion that, in some aspects, Toscanos does correspond to an urban settlement model, but in others it does not. There is plentiful evidence of unity in topography, reflecting administration, and also division of labour echoing social stratification. The population, estimated to be around some thousand individuals, may have reached the minimum number sufficient to support an urban lifestyle. A degree of architectural variety within the townscape may also be inferred from the surviving remains. But it remains doubtful if this is really sufficient evidence that an 'urban lifestyle' had developed. In the final analysis the main argument against the classification of the site as an urban settlement in all its aspects, is the lack of evidence for Toscanos having functioned as the economic (and political?) centre of a hinterland — a *chora*. This concept is valid in the present context, even though it was especially developed for Greek colonization. Influenced by the new evidence from Carthage, and in the light of Weber's fourth and fifth

criteria, one has to admit certain deficiencies in the urban appearance of a site like Toscanos. Weber's criteria are archaeological and concern the organization of, and the building within, the available space. They reflect tangible structural and constructional evidence as well as quantitative problems like the absolute extent of the settled area.

Before extending the horizon beyond the Iberian Peninsula it is necessary to consider the better known among the other Phoenician settlements on the Andalucían coastline (Figure 3), focusing exclusively on the organization of urban space and settled area. Unfortunately, not all of the sites in question have yet yielded sufficient archaeological evidence, and several of them, completely overbuilt in modern times or even deliberately destroyed by recent tourist developments, will never do so. Consequently, some of the following arguments will remain more or less conjectural, much like attempts to reconstruct a corrupt manuscript.

In looking at the organization of urban space, the settlement on the Morro de Mezquitilla comes to mind after Toscanos. Here the Phoenicians settled on a chalcolithic site early in the eighth century BC (Schubart 1983, 130-1). The two building phases revealed there (Figure 3d, e), belonging to the eighth and seventh centuries respectively, show entirely different street plans. Even so some characteristic common features can be made



**Figure 3.** Streets and houses in western Phoenician settlements: a Chorreras; b Toscanos; c Carthage, the Hamburg excavation, phase IVb (sixth century BC); d, e Morro de Mezquitilla, phases 1 and 2. Scale 1:1000.

out, such as well defined streets or lanes with open gutters, and 'salient corners' which affect the width of the public space and therefore perhaps are to be interpreted as a token of the strong individual rights of the house owners. The dimensions of single rooms in phase I are on the same scale as those at Toscanos, while phase II shows a more spacious organization.

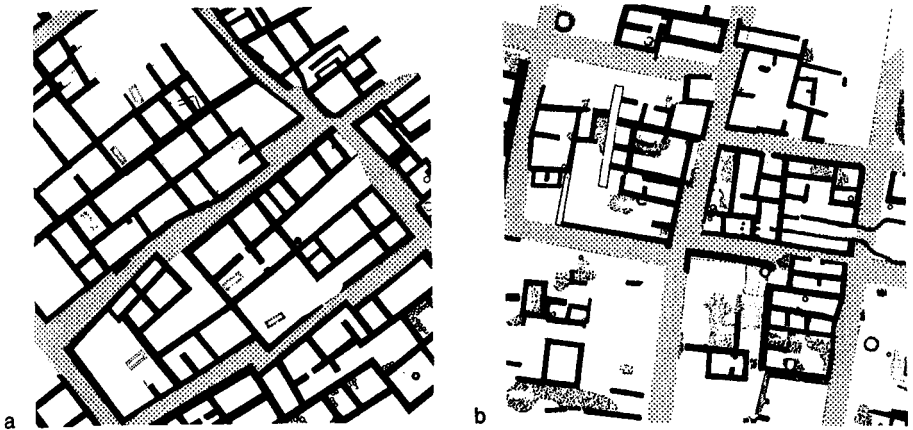
Chorreras, only some 800 m east of the Morro, offers a picture which differs only slightly (Aubet *et al.* 1975). The house units are aligned along a well defined, but somewhat irregular lane, and are separated from each other by open spaces of varying size. The characteristic 'salient corners' occur as well while individual rooms are quite small (Figure 3a).

Apart from these three sites — Toscanos, Morro de Mezquitilla and Chorreras — only the Phoenician settlement on the *Cerro del Villar*, sited on what was once a small island in the alluvial plain at the mouth of Río Guadalhorce (Aubet Semmler 1991) (Figure 12), has been investigated on a sufficient scale. Here a more or less complete house has been unearthed, dating from the seventh century BC. According to the excavator, it was freestanding on all sides — an unusual feature for that late date, judging by the few known parallels. Yet, electromagnetic survey is reported to have shown this type of spatial organization to be representative of a larger area (Aubet Semmler 1991, 45).

After this rapid, and by no means exhaustive, survey of the material evidence for early organization of 'urban space' in Phoenician settlements in the far West one has to admit that the evidence is indeed scarce. Nevertheless some common features can be discerned (see also Schubart 1982), even if there seems to be a certain difference between port-sites (Toscanos, El Villar and others) and hillside-sites (Chorreras, Morro de Mezquitilla, Abdera). It is tempting, and of course necessary, to look to the central and eastern Mediterranean for possible comparisons.

Carthage has only reluctantly yielded the secrets of its archaic urbanism. While the mission of the German Archaeological Institute has apparently brought to light what could prove to be the corner of an archaic temple (Rakob 1991), the excavation led by the Hamburg University has discovered an archaic residential quarter where several houses, apparently organized in some sort of insula, had been built wall to wall between parallel streets or lanes as early as the late eighth century BC (Figure 3c). One of them is almost completely preserved and its structural development can be traced from the late eighth to at least the early fourth century BC (Niemeyer and Docter 1993). From the very beginning there seems to have existed a kind of land register and it is remarkable — even if a typical urban feature — how the boundaries of the property as well as the street grid had been maintained for centuries. The houses display strict rectangularity and, from the second half of the seventh century BC, solid





**Figure 4.** Streets and houses in a Al Mina, b Megiddo. Scale 1:1000.

construction in pier-and-rubble masonry. They are orientated along a street or lane, already rubble-paved by the seventh century BC, with a channel for the gutter running down the middle. This unique ensemble of private urban architecture from archaic times may be paralleled in house types found in Palestine and at other sites on the Levantine coast.

One could easily imagine a house like this Carthaginian example standing in one of the streets of Tyre, Megiddo or Al Mina from where we have comparable plans (Figure 4a, b, see Riis 1982). Such a comparison, however, makes it clear that the houses at Chorreras or on the Morro de Mezquitilla do not, apparently, reach the same professional quality in technique and architectural design as that achieved by the Syrian, Phoenician and Palestinian architects in the East. Even so, individual features of western houses, like the 'salient corner', may be easily detected in the Oriental cities as well.

Another criterion to be considered is the sheer size of the townscapes in question. Upon closer inspection the evidence raises two issues. It is true that in the far West huge urban units, like Enkomi, Tyre itself (Figure 5) or Ekron (Figure 6), are unknown. But the difference between East and West is more complex since there are many urban sites in the East that are of similar dimensions to those in the West. The well-known Iron Age sites of Megiddo (Figure 7a), Tell Kazel (Figure 7b) and Tall Sukas (Figure 7c) may serve as examples. But at the same time it should be stressed that west of Cyprus, where Phoenician Kition stands out as being particularly large (Figure 8), it is only Carthage (Figure 9) that, from very early in its history, approached in urban area the dimensions of the mother city, Tyre. From the archaeological evidence from Toscanos and other sites on the Mediterranean shores of the Iberian Peninsula, it will be evident

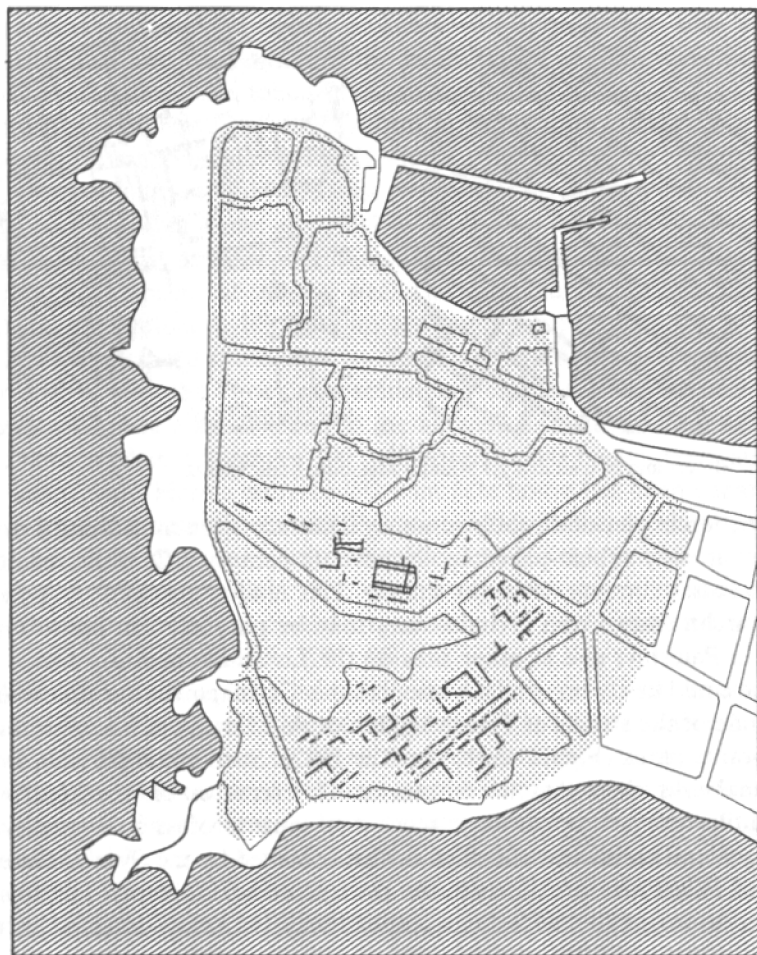


Figure 5. Tyre. Map of estimated urban development. Scale 1:10000.

that the simple *extent* of the *urban fabric* differs from site to site. I believe that this will turn out to be of some significance.

At this point in the argument it would, of course, be helpful to have more information about the urban structure of the oldest, the most famous, and probably the most important Phoenician foundation in the far West. The lack of sufficient tangible architectural evidence from ancient Gadir, modern Cádiz, where so far only the later necropoleis have been partially excavated, remains a most deplorable gap. Nonetheless some hope lies in the fact that recent investigation has made it possible at least to guess the situation, and perhaps the circumference, of the original Phoenician township beneath the medieval city centre (Escacena 1986; see Figure 10).

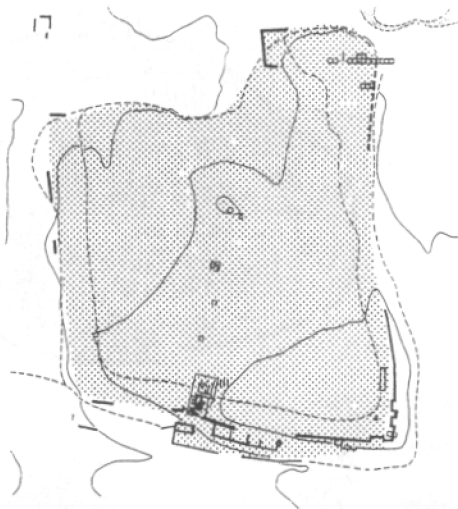
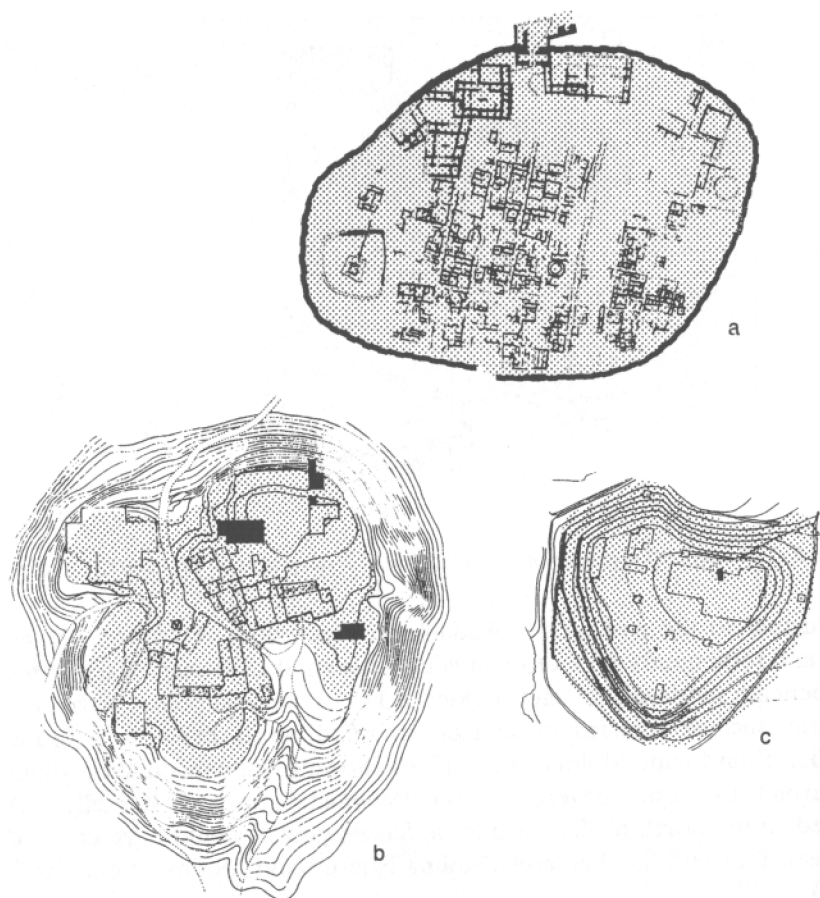


Figure 6. Tell Miqne/Ekron. Map of estimated urban development. Scale 1:10000.

Further to the east on the Andalucían coast, there are better known sites and settlements. One of them is Phoenician Sks (Roman Sexi), which lies beneath modern Almuñécar (Figure 11). At several points within the historic nucleus remains of archaic stratified levels have been found (Molina Fajardo and Molina Ocaña 1986) allowing some speculation about the urban area once covered by the Phoenician town. If it really was limited to the north of the Castillo de San Miguel, it could have covered between four and five hectares (Molina Fajardo and Molina Ocaña 1986, fig. 1).

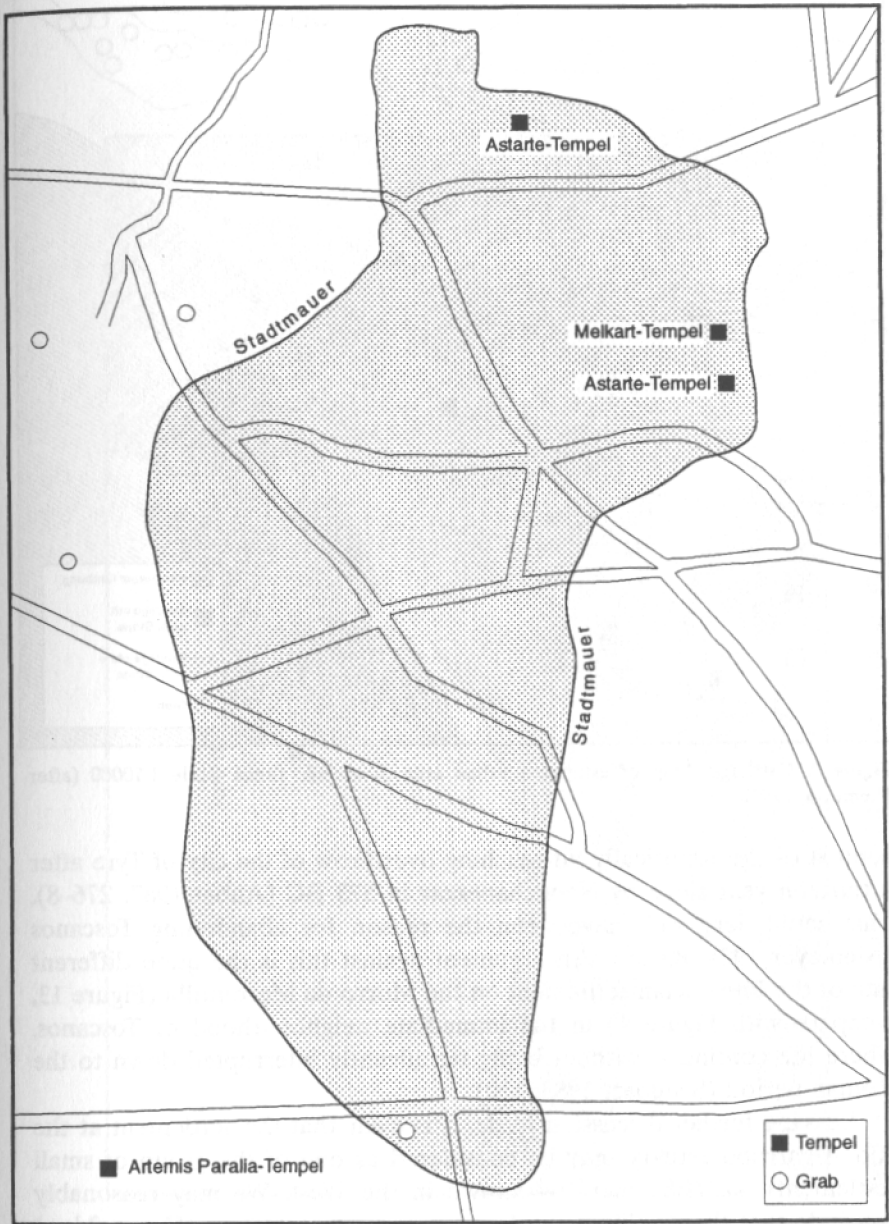
On the Cerro de Monte Cristo (ancient Abdera) remains of the archaic settlement have recently been unearthed during a rescue programme (Suarez *et al.* 1989) but are not yet sufficient to define the area once covered. It is equally true of Málaga/Malaka, where conspicuous remains have been brought to light at a few scattered points within the centre of the modern town (Gran-Aymerich 1991), though apparently without much structural context. It thus remains advisable, for the moment, to refrain from guessing the city's extent in archaic times. The situation in Malaka might be even more complex when it is remembered that the settlement on the small island of the Cerro del Villar (Figure 12) seems to have been the predecessor to the settlement on the mainland (Aubet Semmler 1991).

This small island settlement, covering only about two and a half square hectares, located on a former estuary that is today's alluvial delta of the Río Guadalhorce, sits low on the size scale of Phoenician settlements in the western Mediterranean. In the historical context of Phoenician expan-



**Figure 7.** Presumed extent of archaic settlement areas in the Levant. a Megiddo; b Tell Kazel; c Tall Sukas. Scale 1:10000.

sion it is a typical example of the small group of settlements which, having been founded in the eighth century BC and lived through a precocious prime in the seventh century BC, were abandoned at the beginning of the sixth century BC (Niemeyer 1994, 342). The reasons remain speculative. In the case of the settlement on the Cerro del Villar the lack of further building space on the small island and the more attractive site of Málaga, at least in respect of trade, could have been critical, as they proved to be for the change from the Cape of Chorreras to the Morro de Mezquitilla immediately east above the Río Algarrobo (Figure 13). An alternative explanation could be a widespread political and economic crisis among the western Phoenician settlements during the first half of the sixth century BC — an explanation often evoked in recent research mainly in the



**Figure 8.** Kition/Cyprus. Map of estimated extent of urban development in the Early Iron Age. Scale 1:10000.

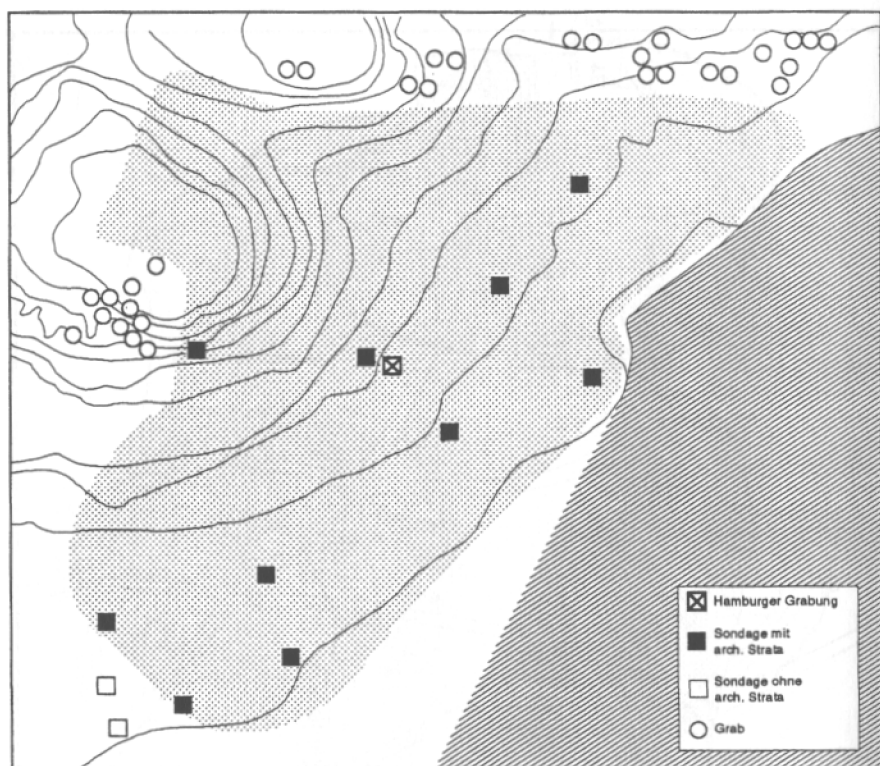
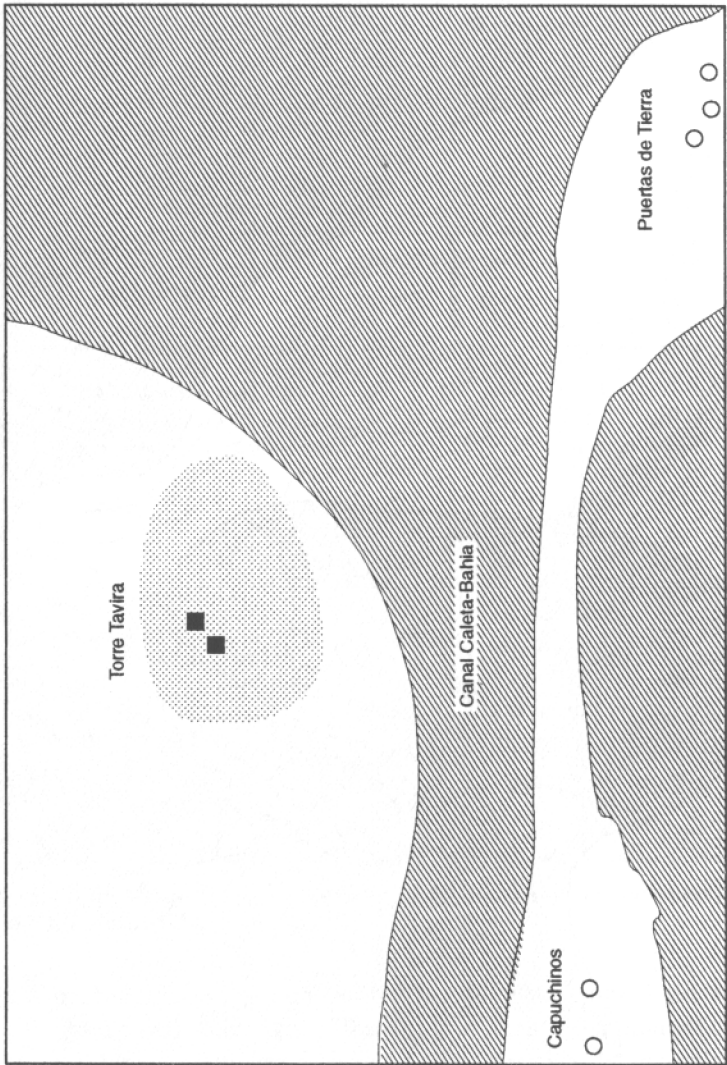


Figure 9. Carthage. Map of estimated urban area in archaic times. Scale 1:10000 (after Niemeyer 1989).

context of the historically far-reaching overthrow of the city of Tyre after a thirteen year siege by Nebuchanezzar in 573 BC (Aubet 1987, 276–8). This could very well have been the reason for abandoning Toscanos (Niemeyer 1984, 89–90). An argument against this is the quite different fate of the Phoenician settlement on the Morro de Mezquitilla (Figure 13, compare with Figure 1) in the immediate neighbourhood of Toscanos, where life continued without being significantly interrupted down to the Roman period (Schubart 1983, 130).

Leaving further discussion aside, it is clear that the settlement at the Río Algarrobo estuary may be considered as one of the group of small settlements — ‘*Faktoreien*’ — known in the West. We may reasonably conclude that the dwellings displayed urban concentration (Figure 3d, e) only in the centre. The map showing an extended settlement, often published in preliminary reports (e.g. Schubart 1977, 35), is based only on a mapping of surface finds made during an intensive field survey. The extent of the urban core within the defined area (Figure 13) remains unknown.



**Figure 10.** Cadiz. Presumed location of the archaic settlement (after Escacena). Scale 1:10000.

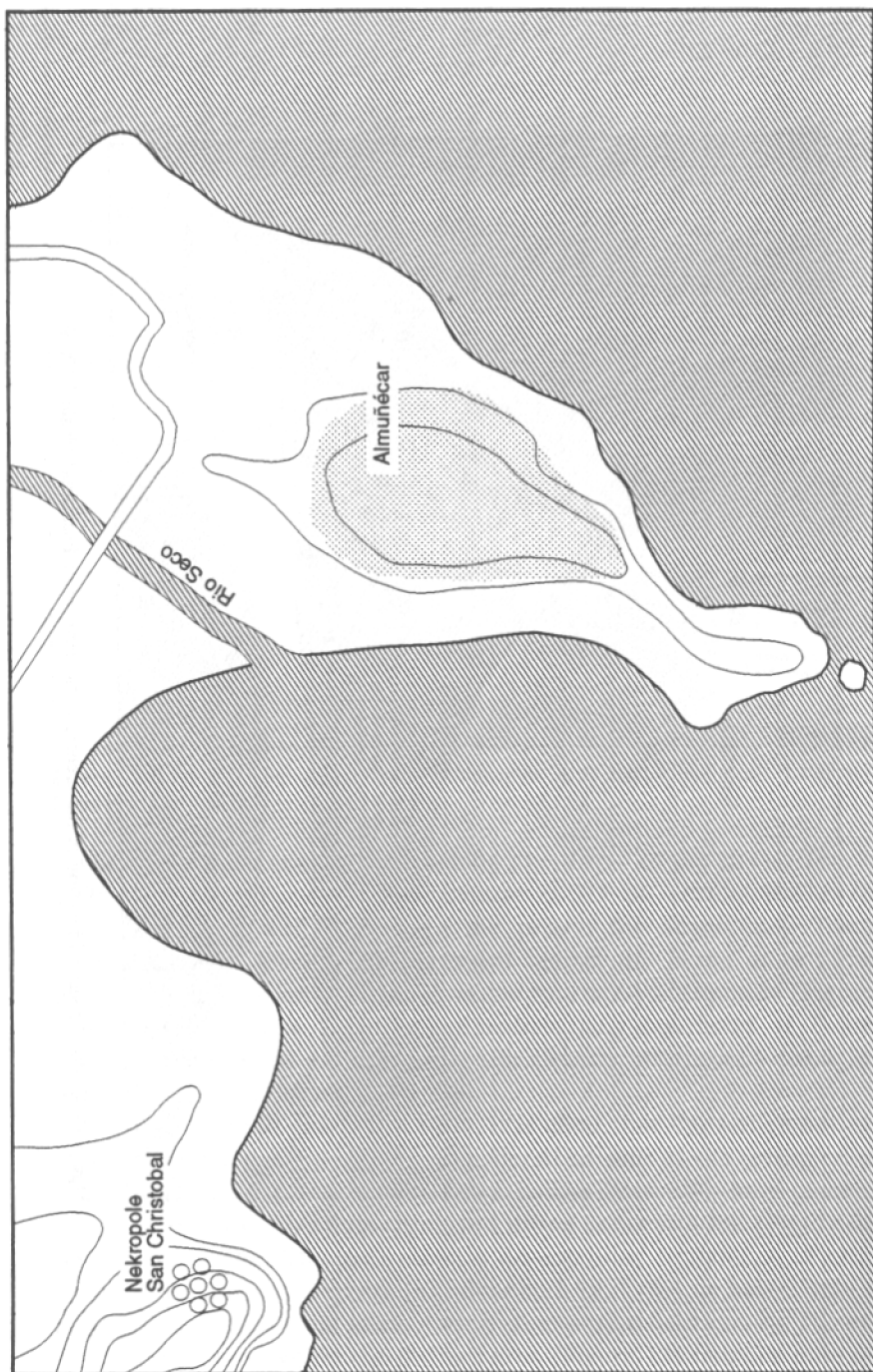
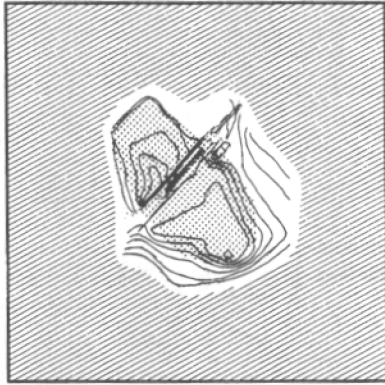
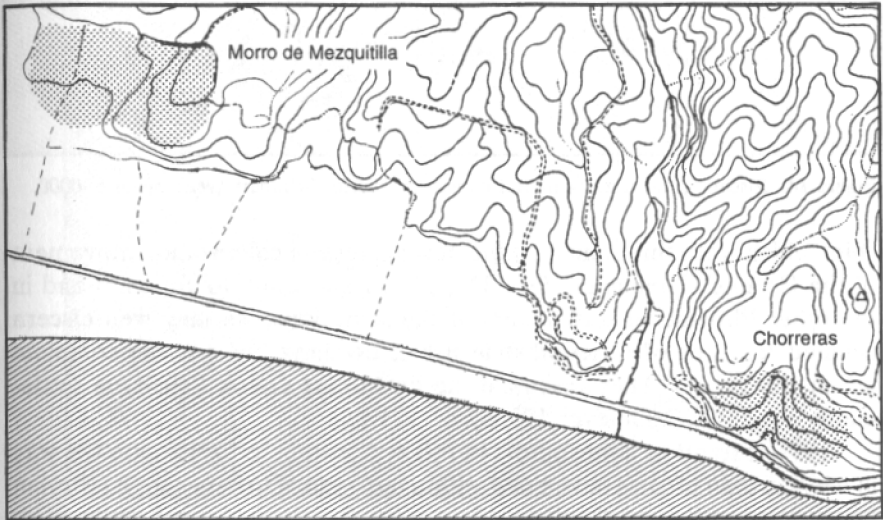


Figure 11. Almuñécar. Presumed extent of the archaic settlement (after Molina Fajardo). Scale 1:10000



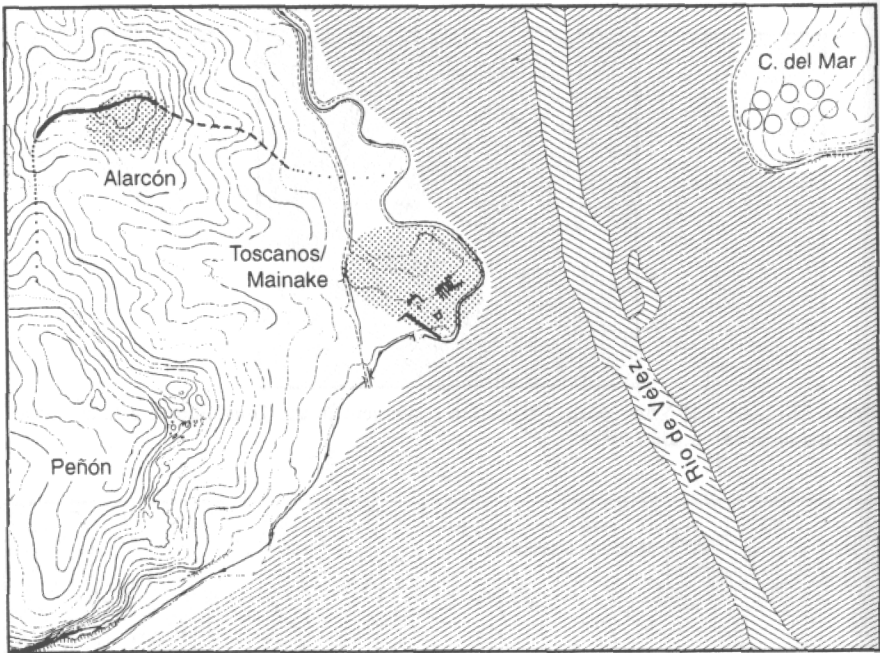


**Figure 12.** Cerro del Villar, early Phoenician settlement in the Guadalhorce estuary (after Aubet *et al.* 1975). Scale 1:10000.



**Figure 13.** Morro de Mezquitilla and Chorreras. Estimated area of the settlements (after Schubart 1977). Scale 1:10000.

We are probably dealing here with a settlement of the kind whose function — based on finds from Toscanos — has been analysed and described elsewhere (Niemeyer 1986). As I have reiterated recently, 'We must conclude that Phoenician settlements of the Toscanos type cannot be considered urban foundations right from the beginning, as were the Greek colonies in the West, but were rather factories or commercial agencies having trading and industrial functions. . . . were planned and established in order to consolidate and secure the earlier trade relation-

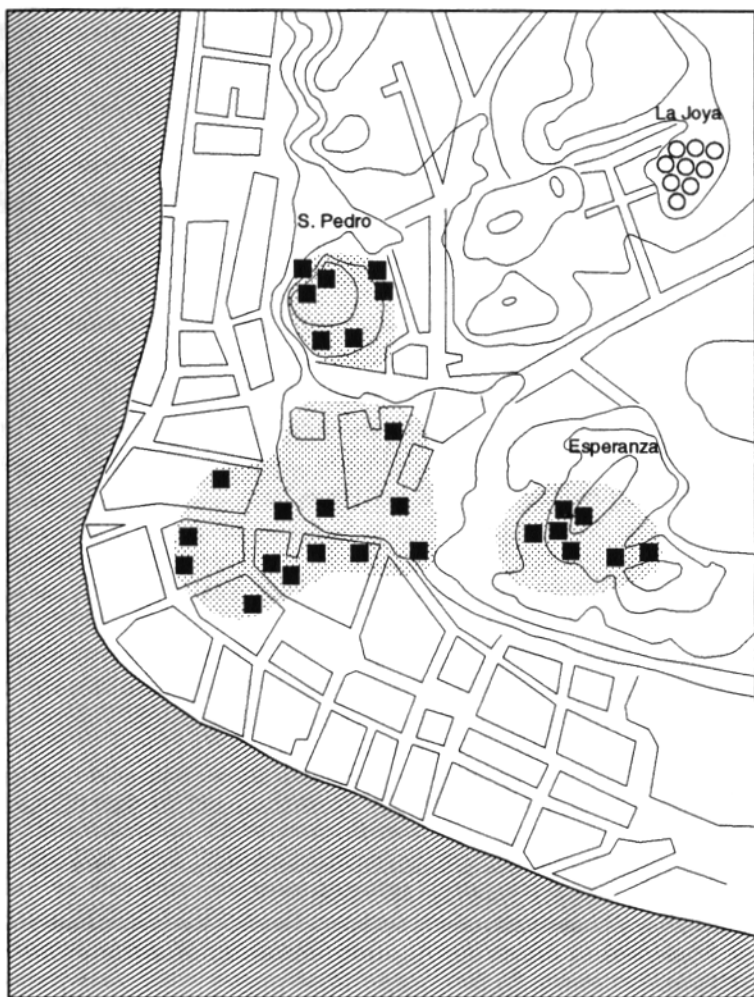


**Figure 14.** Toscanos, the settlement and its outskirts (after Schubart 1988). Scale 1:10000.

ships which were threatened by the new aggressive colonization movement of the Greeks' (Niemeyer 1993, 337, 341). As a result, in Toscanos and in the other Phoenician settlements of the same type, we may well discern isolated features of Oriental-style urban dwelling but not the complete urban city model. They resemble the developed Greek Polis-type settlements even less (Niemeyer 1990b).

It is left to other contributors in this symposium to focus upon the way in which urban life has developed within indigenous societies in the Iberian Peninsula and how models and ideas from the exotic coastal settlements spread to, and were adapted by, the communities of the hinterland. Gadir still remains unknown to us though the unusual richness of the cemeteries suggest that it may have been an exception when compared to the settlements east of Gibraltar.

A brief comment on the zone of contact may finally be offered. It, too, could very well have formed in the coast region, in the area where the indigenous population, or rather the aristocracy, developed a vital interest in transmediterranean trade with distant countries and cities even before the founding of the settlements in the eighth century BC. In this context, the protourban settlement of Tejada la Vieja in the province of Huelva, located at an important communication node between the mining areas



**Figure 15.** Huelva, the indigenous settlements on the hills S.Pedro and Esperanza and the 'port of trade' region in the modern port area (after Fernández Jurado). Scale 1:10000.

and the coast, will probably have played an important role (Fernández Jurado 1987). If not mistaken, a similar case can be observed in Huelva (Figure 15), which is undoubtedly a natural trading post for ores from western Andalucía — a role it has played down to this century. Because of the special circumstances constricting excavations (Fernández Jurado 1990), only few relevant urban features have been recognized, for example the occurrence of masonry in the characteristic pier-and-rubble technique known from Carthage and the East. It is no less significant that the same style is testified also in neighbouring Niebla (Belén-Escacena 1990, 235). In

Huelva, indigenous 'Tartessian' dwellings are recorded on the strategically dominant Cerro de la Esperanza and Cerro de San Pedro. In the low-lying area of today's harbour — where sensational finds of imported Greek pottery have provoked such interest (Niemeyer 1992, 281, with bibl.) we may eventually be able to recognize a different type of settlement which has not so far been observed in the Phoenician settlement horizon east of Gibraltar, that is, a 'port-of-trade'.

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**Phoenician Toscanos as a settlement model? Its urbanistic character in the context of Phoenician expansion and Iberian acculturation**

The main physical characteristics of the Phoenician colony of Toscanos are described with special reference to its topography. Narrow parallel streets, rectilinear building plans and 'salient corners' are among its principal features. Toscanos is compared in form with the southern Iberian coastal sites of Morro de Mezquitilla, Chorreras, and Cerro del Villar and this group is then considered in relation to the Phoenician settlements at Carthage and in the eastern Mediterranean on Cyprus and along the coast of the Levant. Similar constructional characteristics are identified. The question of the relative sizes of the 'urban' core is then considered. Most of the Iberian 'colonies' are small by comparison to the others though the problem of the extent of Phoenician Cádiz remains unresolved: Cádiz may prove to be an exception. Finally the effects of the model of the 'colonies' on indigenous settlement is briefly considered at the proto-urban settlement of Tejada la Vieja and at Huelva which may prove to be a classic port-of-trade.

**La fenicia Toscanos como modelo de asentamiento? Su carácter urbanístico en el contexto de la expansión fenicia y la aculturación ibérica**

Se describen aquí las principales características físicas de la colonia fenicia de Toscanos con una referencia especial a su topografía. Destacan entre sus principales características la presencia de estrechas calles paralelas, plantas de edificios rectangulares y 'esquinas salientes'. Toscanos es comparable en forma con los asentamientos costeros del Sur de Iberia como Morro de Mezquitilla, Chorreras y Cerro del Villar y este grupo es considerado así en relación con los asentamientos de Cartago y del Mediterráneo Oriental tanto de Chipre como los situados a lo largo de costa del Levante. Se han identificado similares características constructivas. También se considera la cuestión sobre el tamaño relativo de los centros. La mayoría de las colonias ibéricas son pequeñas en comparación con otras, aunque el problema de la extensión de la Cádiz fenicia está sin resolver todavía: Cádiz podría ser una excepción. Finalmente, se consideran los efectos del modelo de las colonias sobre los asentamientos indígenas en el asentamiento proto-urbano de Tejada la Vieja y Huelva, que puede ser un ejemplo clásico de un puerto de comercio.