

# From local groups to early states: the development of complexity in protohistoric Catalonia

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While research on Catalan Proto-history had traditionally been rooted in Culture History, the work in the last twenty-five years has begun to throw some light on the crucial matters of social change and early state formation. This paper is an overview of the present state of research on these issues. Particular attention is paid to demographic growth as a crucial cause of social change, but the possible roles of migration and colonial trade are also considered.

## KEY WORDS

CATALONIA, PROTO-HISTORY, IBERIAN CULTURE, SOCIAL CHANGE, MIGRATION, COLONIAL TRADE, WORLD SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE.

La recerca sobre la protohistòria de Catalunya s'ha fonamentat tradicionalment en la història cultural, però el treball dels darrers vint-i-cinc anys ha començat a donar llum sobre aspectes crucials com el canvi social i la formació de l'Estat arcaic. Aquest article és una visió general sobre aquests temes. S'hi analitza particularment el paper del creixement demogràfic com a element crucial del canvi social, però també s'hi té en compte el paper que eventualment hi hagin pogut tenir els moviments de població i el comerç colonial.

## PARAULES CLAU

CATALUNYA, PROTOHISTÒRIA, CULTURA IBÈRICA, CANVI SOCIAL, MIGRACIÓ, COMERÇ COLONIAL, SISTEMA MUNDIAL.

## 1. Introduction

Archaeological research on Catalan Proto-history has undergone important development in the last twenty-five years. Most of the basic questions on chronology and typology were answered during the seventies, owing to a radical improvement in excavation methodology and considerable progress in knowledge on imported Greek, Phoenician and Punic ceramics had already experienced by then. In this regard, the *Simposi Internacional: Els orígens del món ibèric* (*International Symposium: The Origins of the Iberian World*) (Barcelona, 1976) (Ripoll, Llongueras and Sanmartí-Grego, 1976-1978) was a significant turning point on Iberian studies, as the problems concerning the dating of the Early Iberian Period (a matter of bitter discussion not long before that date) were solved definitely. In sharp contrast, beyond the vague concept of acculturation under Greek and Phoenician influence, the social and economic processes that led to the upsurge of the Iberian culture remained in a kind of diffuse limbo.

However, we must also acknowledge that by the end of the seventies, only a few sites had been widely excavated —mostly in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—, in general with not strictly stratigraphical methods, and very little, usually non-systematic, field survey had been performed. It goes without saying that some valuable work had already been or was being done at some sites, like *Penya del Moro* (Sant Just Desvern, Barcelonès) (Barberà, Morral and Sanmartí-Grego, 1979; Barberà, Morral and Sanmartí-Grego, 1982), *Puig Castellet* (Lloret de Mar, La Selva) (Pons, Toledo and Llorens, 1981), among others. However, on the whole, the evidence available was scarce and sparse, at least if it were meant to provide answers to the questions that lie at the heart of any approach to complexity, namely regional population density and measures of socio-political integration and division of labor. In addition, the imported material was conceived basically as a dating tool, and, to some extent, as an evidence of foreign relations and trade. Not all the imported pottery had been collected in old excavations (amphorae, most of all, were frequently not preserved) and the number of imports that were found in the (by then) modern stratigraphic sampling excavations was relatively small. These circumstances discouraged any serious attempt to quantify and perform a sounder evaluation of this evidence from an economical and social point of view.

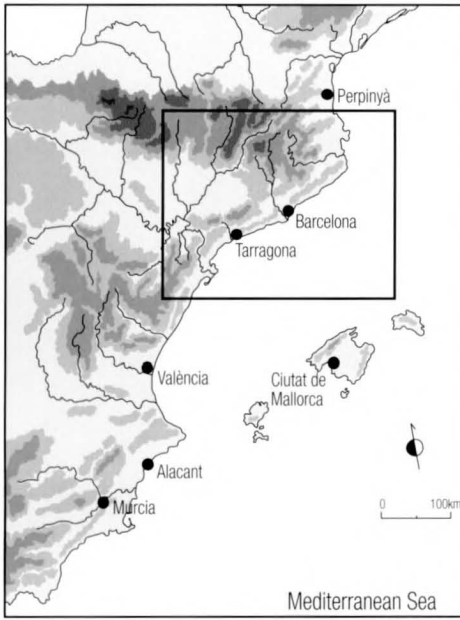
Most of the work carried out during the last twenty-five years has followed quite distinct approaches. On the one hand, several systematic field-surveys in the coastal areas of Catalonia and the lower Ebro river valley have revealed distinct settlement patterns and an overall tendency towards complexity and demographic increase (Carreté, Keay and Millett, 1996; Sanmartí and Santacana, 1986; Miret, Sanmartí and Santacana, 1991; Noguera, 1999, 2002; Martín and Plana, 2001; Plana and Martín, 2000; Picazo *et al.*, 1999). On the other hand, some sites, including many necropolises, have been extensively excavated, thus allowing a much better understanding of their social and func-

tional diversity<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, extensive excavations have provided large ensembles of imported pottery that provide a solid basis for quantitative analyses and the study of the differential distribution of this material following social criteria. Social variability within both regions and individual settlements, levels of inequality in status, wealth, and power are thus progressively coming to light.

However, this is not to say that the work accomplished has provided full evidence for the reconstruction of the pre-Iberian and Iberian social systems and their evolution. For example, the relative chronological insensitivity of archaeological surveys leaves considerable fields of doubt when reconstructing settlement patterns. It is also true that the excavation effort has been devoted mainly to small sites, not only because little information was available on these when, during the eighties, extensive stratigraphical excavation began, but also because their size made full investigation projects more easily affordable. Consequently, our knowledge on the largest Iberian towns—that is, the centers of power and administration—is still incomplete, except Ullastret (although most of it was excavated in the fifties following the methodology that was then in fashion) and Castellet de Banyoles (Tivissa, Ribera d'Ebre), where extensive excavation has been performed in recent years.

Despite these limitations, the new archaeological information that has been brought to light in the last twenty-five years make it pertinent to review our understanding of long-term social change in North-eastern Iberia. Three distinct but clearly interrelated issues deserve attention: 1) the internal development of the indigenous society from small-scale forms of organization to archaic-state type territorial polities; 2) the putative role of immigration in the formation of the Iberian culture in Catalonia; 3) the processes of economic interdependence between indigenous and colonial Greek and Phoenician societies.

1. As regards the Pre-Iberian Period, the most prominent are probably Sant Jaume-Mas d'en Serrà (Garcia Rubert, forthcoming), Barranc de Gàfols (Sanmartí *et al.*, 2000), Moleta del Remei (Gracia, Munilla, Garcia, 2000), Aldovesta (Mascort, Sanmartí and Santacana, 1991), Genó (Maya, Cuesta and López-Cachero, 1998) and the necropolis of Coll del Moro de Gandesa (Rafel, 1989, 1991). As for the Iberian period, a lot of fresh information has been yielded by the habitat sites of Alorda Park (Sanmartí and Santacana, 1992; Asensio, Morer and Pou, 2003), Castellet de Banyoles (Asensio, Miró and Sanmartí, 2002), Castellet de la Roca Roja (Belarte, Noguera and Sanmartí, 2002), Les Guàrdies (Morer and Rigo, 1999), Fondo del Roig (Ferrer *et alii*, 2003), Puig Castellar (Ferrer and Rigo, 2003), Can Xercavins (Francès and Carlús, 1995), Turó de ca n'Olivé (Asensio *et al.*, 2000-2001), Mas Castellar (Pons, 2002) and Ullastret (Martín, 2000; Martín *et al.*, 1999). As regards the funerary record, the excavations at Cabrera de Mar (Garcia Roselló, 1993) and Puig de Serra (Martín and Genís, 1993) are particularly important and have shown the strict relationship of the necropolises of the Middle Iberian period to the largest urban settlements (Burriac and Ullastret respectively).



1. Agullana
2. Sant Martí d'Empúries
3. Vilanera (necropolis)
4. Puig de Serra (necropolis)
5. Illa d'en Reixac and Puig de Sant Andreu (Ullastret)
6. Anglès (necropolis)
7. Puig Castellet
8. Burriac
9. Cabrera de Mar (necropolis)
10. Puig Castellar
11. Turó de ca n'Olivé
12. Montjuïc
13. Penya del Moro
14. Olèrdola
15. Timba de Santa Bàrbara
16. Fondo del Roig
17. Alorda Park
18. Les Guàrdies
19. El Catllar
20. Tarragona
21. La Mussara
22. El Puig Roig
23. El Calvari del Molar
24. El Castellet de Banyoles
25. Barranc de Gàfols
26. Barranc de Sant Antoni
27. Aldovesta
28. Castellet de la Roca Roja
29. Sant Jaume-Mas d'en Serrà
30. La Ferradura
31. Moleta del Remei
32. Coll del Moro de Gandesa
33. Genó
34. Minferri
35. Els Vilars d'Arbeca
36. Tossal de les Tenalles
37. Tossal del Molinet
38. Molí d'Espigol

Fig. 1a. Location map of the area involved in this study.

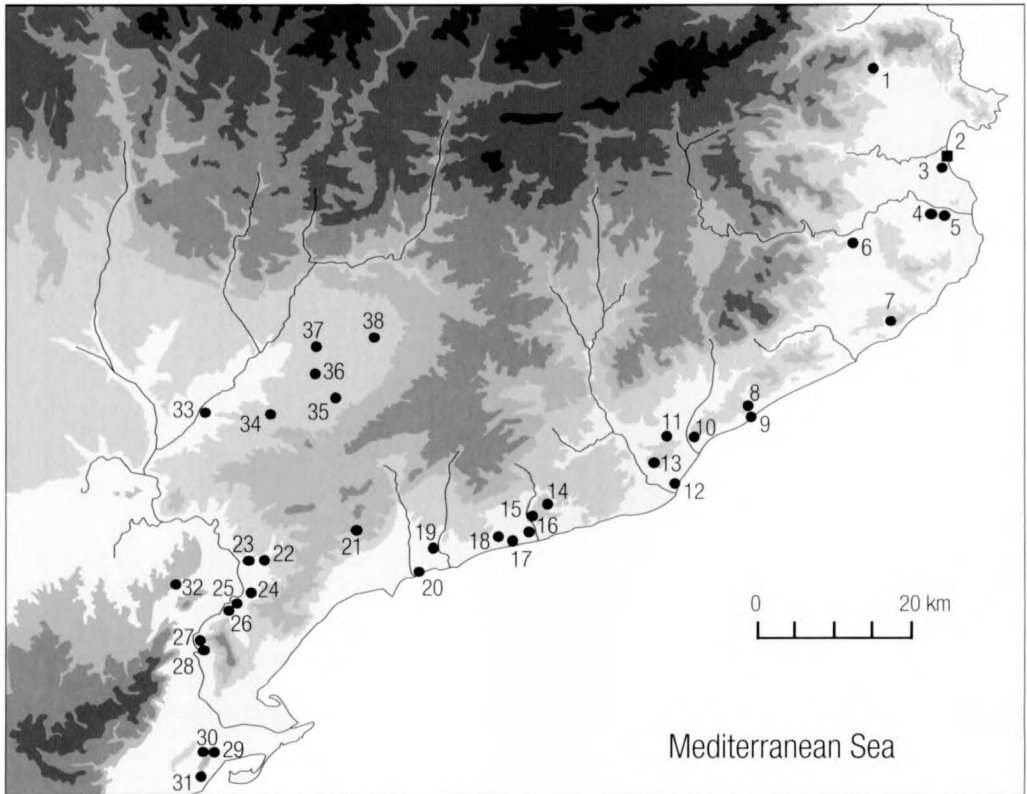


Fig. 1b. Location map of the sites mentioned in this study.

## 2. Social change in North–eastern Iberia

### 2.1. The end of Prehistory: The last small-scale societies in North-eastern Iberia

The social development of communities in the North–eastern area of the Iberian Peninsula before the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC was irregular. In the Western plains of Catalonia a scattered settlement pattern, with isolated dwellings, small clusters of houses and even the occupation of caves, is well attested from the Neolithic period (Junyent, Lafuente and López, 1994, 74-75) until the last centuries of the second millennium BC. The best known of these sites during the Bronze Age is Minferri (Alonso and López, 2000), which has been dated late in the first half of the second millennium BC. Traces of occupation covering a total surface of about 10 ha have been found at Minferri, but the excavated areas show few houses, which were not clustered. These findings have been interpreted as evidence of the simultaneous existence of «semi-dependent farms», probably of family size, about 100 meters away from each other. Thus, regardless of the size of the site, its occupation density was actually very low. Furthermore, it was probably inhabited discontinuously over several centuries, so that various dwellings were progressively juxtaposed and superimposed. Its large surface would therefore have been the result not only of low population density, but also, and even primarily, of a palimpsest occupation pattern. On the whole, population density in this area seems to have been extremely low and there is no indication prior to the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC of anything similar to permanent hamlets, constituted by a relatively large number of families.

Similar evidence has been found along the coast of Catalonia and in the lower Ebro River valley, where it still appears as late as the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. In the Móra d'Ebre region, for example, recent work has identified a settlement pattern, dated from the 10<sup>th</sup> to mid-7<sup>th</sup> century BC, which is characterized by isolated or very small groups of generally large rectangular houses, intermittently built during this period on the same sites. Some of these houses have been found at the site Barranc de Gàfols (Sanmartí *et al.*, 2000) and Barranc de Sant Antoni (Asensio *et al.*, 1994-1996). The absence of large food storage means indicates that competition for vital resources was low. We may thus conclude that population density was very low and that communities of family size, or at most constituted by just a few families, moved periodically to new locations within a limited territory as the agricultural output decreased. This would provide a reasonable explanation for the intermittent occupation of sites, which is proved by the frequent superposition of houses and the overall continuity of the main aspects of the material culture found. In addition, stone tools collected in field-walk surveys at these sites attest even earlier occupations, probably dating back to the Middle and Early Bronze Age. Although no evidence of any buildings connected with this material is available, it is reasonable to assume that

the populations in this area led a similar way of life from the second millennium BC to the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC.

A similar picture is given further North along the littoral of Catalonia, particularly the agriculturally rich lowlands of the Penedès (Mestres, Senabre and Socias, 1994-1996), Baix Llobregat (Rovira and Petit, 1997), Vallès (González, Martín and Mora, 1999) and Empordà (Pons, 1977, 1994; Martín and Sanmartí-Grego, 1978). Similar evidence has also been reported near Tarragona, at El Catllar (Molera *et al.*, 1999, 2000). Habitat sites in these areas were typically constituted by isolated or small groups of oval or roughly circular huts, usually associated with small silos. The number of settlements was very high, and the mean distance between them was only 1 km, thus suggesting once again that small family groups moved periodically over the same territories. At several of these sites, similar Neolithic (mainly in the Penedès) and Early Bronze Age (mainly in the Vallès) huts and silos have been found, again indicating the way of life was similar from the Neolithic to the Early Iron Age.

Moreover, other finds point to the existence of specialized shepherd settlements, most particularly in mountainous areas, for example at La Mussara (Rovira and Santacana, 1982b) and Olèrdola (Mestres, Senabre and Socias, 1994-1995), where traces of enclosures, probably intended for flocks, have been found. Similar structures have been reported at sites near the lowlands, like Timba de Santa Bàrbara, which possibly reflects the seasonal movement of flocks to the best pastures.

To summarize, archaeological evidence indicates that during most of the second millennium in Western Catalonia, and even as late as the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC in the coastal areas, low demographic density facilitated a nearly autarchic economical behavior of family groups. The most important characteristic of this behavior was the extensive exploitation of the territories through gathering—collection of dry fruit is attested as an important activity at Barranc de Gàfols in the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC (Cubero, 2000; Juan-Tresserras, 2000a)—, shepherding—the main economic activity of some particular groups—and *swidden systems* agriculture. On the contrary, faunal remains show that hunting no longer made a significant economic contribution to the subsistence economy (Albizuri and Nadal, 2000). The means of production were seemingly simple: iron was already known in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, but it was not used for the production of agricultural implements. As regards bronze tools, axes have been found quite frequently and could have been used for agricultural activities, but the overall impression is that most agricultural tools were made of wood. In addition, the absence of large storage receptacles, like silos and huge ceramic containers or granary buildings, also suggests that surplus production and competition for food between family groups were low.

During the last centuries of the second millennium BC, the archaeological record of Western Catalonia shows that local communities were developing in this area, probably as a consequence of population growth. Extensive excavation at the site of Genó (Maya, Cuesta and López-Cachero, 1998) has afforded the best evidence for this. Genó is a small settlement (about 1037 m<sup>2</sup>) of roughly oval shape. It was built early in the Late Bronze

Age on top of a relatively low but steeply sloped—and thus naturally fortified—promontory near the Segre River. It has been well preserved because of the sudden abandonment of the site not many years after its construction and the fact that it was never occupied again. The settlement consisted of eighteen houses that shared a single rear wall and opened onto an open-air central area, and was accessible from the exterior only through a single narrow gate. This lay-out gives the impression of a sensibly planned settlement: the choice of the site and the architectural structure indicate great concern regarding security. If, as we may assume, each architectural unit housed one family only, we estimate the total size of this community at about 70-90 individuals.

Genó is the best-known early example of this kind of small-nucleated settlement, but the type has been reported in several parts of Western Catalonia and Aragon during the Late Bronze Age (López-Cachero, 1999). Despite their small size, these settlements are frequently denoted as «proto-urban», because, for the first time, a planned and controlled use of space is clearly observed. As regards social development, the most salient trait revealed by this kind of site is that the primary subsistence group was constituted by a comparatively large number of families that shared common interests and formed a neatly defined political unit. Furthermore, settlement planning, and the considerable effort required for building are indicative of a sedentary lifestyle, although some of these sites—like Genó—were inhabited only for a short period.

Demographic factors may have led to this social development. Indeed, the number of settlements—and thus, probably, also population—increased markedly in this area during the second half of the second millennium BC (Alonso *et al.*, 1998: 367). This hypothesis is also supported by the archaeo-botanical record, which shows traces of deforestation by the middle of the second millennium BC (Alonso, 1999a: 284, 1999b).<sup>2</sup> Some scholars uphold that population growth was also due to immigration of people from beyond the Pyrenees who imported some of the most typical elements of the so-called «Urnfield Culture» (Puche, 1993: 53-54). This possibility should not be dismissed and deserves a close analysis of the archaeological evidence. However, present knowledge is insufficient to support this notion.

Consistent population growth may have enhanced the need for cooperation between families in order to prevent production risk and to defend increasingly scarce resources, circumstances that would have favored the benefits of violent seizure (Johnson and Earle, 1987). This explanation would account for the nucleation of the habitat, for the location of the settlements on easily defensible hilltops—thus allowing control over fertile lowlands—and their structure, which was protected by the continuous rear wall of the houses and, in some cases, also by towers and ditches (Junyent, 1991). Excavations at Genó have yielded many large storage pottery containers, indicating the need to gather as much food as possible and to protect it within the settlement (Maya, Cuesta and López-Cachero, 1998). Clearly, the finding of these receptacles does not imply that large surpluses were obtained (beyond a reasonable security margin). In fact, no signs of technological improvement make it possible to support the notion of large food surpluses.

During the first centuries of the first millennium BC, this kind of small settlement expanded progressively in Western Catalonia from the most fertile areas, near the main river courses, to the less favored ones. This settlement pattern remained basically unchanged until the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC (Junyent, Lafuente and López, 1994: 80-81). Of the excavations to date, particular mention must be given to the fortified settlement of Els Vilars (Arbeca, Les Garrigues), which was built by the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. Here, extensive excavation has revealed a comparatively small site (about 2000 m<sup>2</sup>), which is well protected by a thick circuit wall, massive towers, a ditch and even *cheveaux de frise*, thus indicating a great concern for security on the part of the inhabitants (Alonso *et al.*, 1998). Although the excavation of Els Vilars is not yet completed, there were probably around forty houses, which allows a population estimate of about 160-200 persons.

A similar development has been observed along the littoral of Catalonia, but as mentioned above, this did not happen in this area until the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. The reasons for this five-century long chronological gap are unclear, but the developmental sequence is apparently the same and can also be explained, at least to a certain extent, by the same demographical reasons. Although the findings of many recent excavations remain unpublished, funerary evidence is a good indicator of demographical growth in this area during the first centuries of the first millennium. Indeed, data show that the number of tombs per year increased regularly from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, to decrease rapidly thereafter for reasons that are discussed below.

Proto-urban sites in eastern Catalonia were also small settlements (from 450 m<sup>2</sup> to 5000 m<sup>2</sup>), again organized around one street or a wider open-air area. A single rear wall shared by all the houses provided an effective, if simple, fortification. The topographical factor frequently enhanced settlement protection, since most were placed on easily defensible hilltops. The number of houses ranges from eight (Barranc de Gàfols) to twenty-five (El Puig Roig),<sup>3</sup> which implies reasonable population estimates of about 32-40 to 100-125. Most of these proto-urban sites are situated in the lower Ebro river valley, but recently evidence of similar settlements has also been reported further North: at El Catllar, near Tarragona (Molera *et al.*, 1999, 2000), and at Sant Martí d'Empúries (Aquilué *et al.*, 1999, 2000), later to become the site of the Phocaeen settlement of *Emporion*. We may also suspect that other proto-urban sites in the coastal region that extends from Tarragona to Empúries were destroyed by later construction during the Iberian period, since pottery of the 7<sup>th</sup> and early 6<sup>th</sup> century is frequently found there, although in small amounts. In spite of these proto-urban settlements, isolated huts or small groups of huts, and cave occupation did not necessarily disappear in this area (Martín and Plana, 2001: 41-45), but we believe that there was a strong trend towards greater social integration and the formation of local communities composed by a substantial number of families.

2. Palynological data from Genó suggest an open landscape, with few trees, as well as cereal production (Burjachs, 1998; Alonso, 1998).
3. Probably a few more at El Calvari (El Molar), considering its relatively large surface (about 3000 m<sup>2</sup>).





Fig. 2. Number of tombs per year in the area involved in this study.

As regards social organization, the absence of any relevant settlement hierarchy suggests the lack of a centralized authority that ruled over a substantial territory. Nor does the evidence on domestic architecture and necropolises provide support of marked social stratification. With a single exception (Aldovesta, described in detail below), all known houses consisted of one room only, which was all-purpose, except for storage, for which an upper floor was built (at least at Barranc de Gàfols and at Sant Jaume-Mas d'en Serrà). In addition, the mean surface areas of these houses was about 15-20 m<sup>2</sup>, the largest being only 40 m<sup>2</sup> (Belarte, 1997). None may therefore be considered as large and complex dwellings. This being said, some differences in status may be inferred from «fine-grained» excavations, particularly at Barranc de Gàfols, where several singular traits distinguish houses 1 and 2. Not only were these the only dwellings that had elaborately painted decoration on their inner walls, but they were also unique in that they held presumably ritual objects (*thymiateria*) and (wine?) jugs and vases (including one Phoenician-type *oinochoe*), and the only culinary oven at this small site. Given that these two houses were the first that were built, it is reasonable to assume that they were the dwellings of the settlement founders and were probably always inhabited by the elders of the group (Sanmartí *et al.*, 2000). Thus, signs of status and inequality were probably linked to age differences.

The analysis of necropolises, on the other hand, leads to similar conclusions: as a rule, the tomb contents are quite similar in number and in «quality», and no seemingly obvious signs of coercive power or marked inequality (like weapons or particularly elaborated funerary monuments) are usually found. Age and sex differences that are suggestive of some differences in hierarchy probably account for minor variation in the funerary record. It is also worth noting that the number of tombs is very high (fig. 2), which probably indi-

icates the absence of discrimination as to the kind of ritual. In summary, the material evidence available matches what we would expect from small-scale societies, which lack institutionalized political roles and social stratification, although personal prestige was probably reflected in formal status categories.

It is also important to point out that one of the usual means to acquire prestige—and, consequently, authority—in traditional societies is generous distribution of alcoholic drinks, which is often made in the context of hospitality and other communal ceremonies. Among the latter, work-party feasts are an important mean of mobilizing labor (Dietler, 1990, 1999). In this regard, micro-residue analyses have proven that some large and medium-sized vases from the site of Genó, which is dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century BC, contained a fermented beverage made from cereal (Juan-Tresserras, 1998). Furthermore, a consistent number of micro-residue analyses in 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC Iberian amphorae found in Catalonia also indicate that this kind of non-vinous drink was produced throughout the Proto-historic period, at least in Northern Iberia (Juan-Tresserras, 2000). Other residues identified as honey have been detected in vases from Genó and the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC settlement of Puig Castellar (Santa Coloma de Gramenet). These finds suggest the possibility that a beverage similar to what is known as hydromel in classical written sources was also known in Iberia. Therefore, we may conclude that indigenous cultures consumed alcoholic drinks from, at least, the Late Bronze Age. Although we do not know the nature of drinking patterns in these specific contexts, ethnographic studies indicate that alcohol consumption was essentially linked to hospitality and work-party feasts.

However, some archaeological evidence suggests that inequality was increasing by the late 7<sup>th</sup>-early 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. The site of Aldovesta (Mascort, Sanmartí and Santacana 1991a, 1991b) constitutes a striking example of these trends. This was quite a small settlement (about 250 m<sup>2</sup>) near the Ebro River (about 25 km from its ancient mouth), with only one, large, dwelling area (and therefore only one family living in it) and with a large storage capacity. This differs considerably from that of «normal» contemporary sites, which are composed of several (seven to twenty) much smaller houses. Another important feature of Aldovesta is the large number of Phoenician amphorae. This site has yielded traces of about one hundred individuals, which amount to 57 % of the total number of vases found there. There is also strong evidence for the melting of used bronze items in order to obtain ingots, which indicates that metal was one—and probably the most important—of the interests of Phoenician traders in this area. On the basis of this evidence, we may presume that Aldovesta was the dwelling of an important lineage chief who established a privileged relationship with Phoenician merchants. This hypothesis is also consistent with the large number of Phoenician imports found at many other sites in this area, since the political power of lineage chiefs in pre-state societies (very limited indeed) depends mainly on their personal initiative and generosity as leaders, able to distribute a range of goods. Among the latter, imported Phoenician wine may have been highly prized.

As regards other cultural fields, the burial record also points to high social status linked to the possession of imported items. Particularly, recent work at the necropolis of Vilanera

has revealed a group of tombs that are clearly distinguished from the others by the size of the grave marker (large tumulus), and by a large number of grave goods, which include Phoenician imports (Agustí *et al.*, forthcoming; Santos, 2002). In the same region, the necropolises of Agullana —where tomb 184 is particularly rich and has yielded several vases that resemble Phoenician types— (Palol, 1958) and Anglès (Oliva and Riuró 1968) have provided similar, if less impressive, finds. It was also at this time when a few iron weapons (swords and spearheads) began to appear in tombs (Pons, 1984). As a whole, this funerary evidence, datable to the late 7<sup>th</sup>-early 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, is indicative of the development of a social hierarchy, of which there was no trace in earlier necropolises.

Of interest is that imported Phoenician pottery appears to be constantly linked to status symbols. Most of this material is constituted by amphorae of a quite distinctive type (Ramon T-10.1.1.1. and T-10.1.2.1), made in the colonial settlements of coastal Andalusia and, maybe, Northwestern Africa (Ramon, 1995a: 229-231), along with some other large containers and tripod mortars. On contrast, Phoenician traders did not distribute table service ware —neither Phoenician, Greek or Etruscan— among the indigenous populations, at least in significant amounts.

Information on the contents of these Phoenician amphorae is still very scarce. However, it is well-established that wine was one of the most important commodities in ancient colonial trade, and it is reasonable to assume that many or even most of the Phoenician amphorae that were traded to coastal Catalonia transported this product. Confirmation that wine was their basic content has been afforded by recent work at Alt de Benimaquia, in South-eastern Spain (Gómez-Bellard and Guérin, 1994, 1999). Here, and for the first time, the production of wine is well attested in an indigenous context, dated to the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. This wine was stored in locally made amphorae, which, quite significantly, imitate the characteristic archaic Phoenician shape. In addition, paleocarpological analyses have shown the presence of many vine seeds in two Phoenician settlements in coastal Andalusia (Cerro del Villar and Castillo de Doña Blanca) (Catalá, 1999; Aubet and Buxó, 1999).

It is pertinent at this point to mention another factor that may be of relevance regarding the role of Phoenician wine imports among indigenous societies. Reliable quantitative data show that, after an initial contact period in which imported pottery was seemingly quite rare, the bulk of Phoenician amphorae grew rapidly to a point that would never again be reached in Iberian Proto-history (fig. 3). Moreover, the imported amphorae were widely distributed in indigenous sites. Most settlements dated around 600 BC have yielded a considerable number of Phoenician sherds, and, where quantitative data are available, this material accounts for a large, if variable, percentage of the ceramic vases —57 % (!) at Aldovesta (Mascort, Sanmartí and Santacana, 1991a; 1991b); 15.6 % at Moleta del Remei (Gracia, 2001); 17.9 % at Sant Jaume-Mas d'en Serrà (Gracia, 2001); 24 % at La Ferradura (Gracia, 2001); 9 % at Barranc de Gàfols (Sanmartí *et al.*, 1995); about 10 % at Sant Martí d'Empúries (Aquilué *et al.* 2000: 288).<sup>4</sup> Therefore, a large amount of Phoenician

4. For recent general distribution maps see also Gracia, 2001.

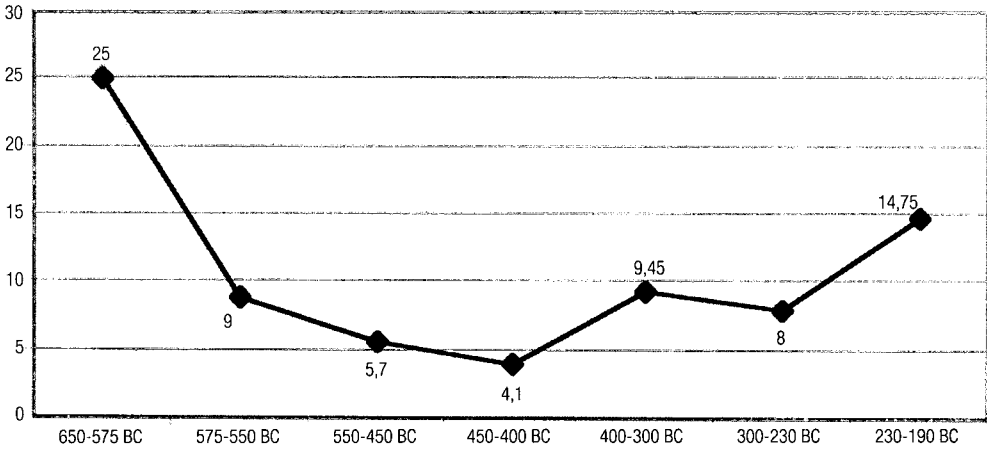


Fig. 3. Quantitative development of Mediterranean imports from the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC to ca 200 BC.

wine may have been acquired and redistributed during this period. It should be noted that at Sant Martí d'Empúries Etruscan wine amphorae and drinking vases have also been found. These finds may be explained because of the direct agency of Etruscan (or Greek?) traders, who, by the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, started an important activity along the Mediterranean coast of Gaul (Gras, 2000; Bats, 2000). Northern Catalonia was therefore placed at the intersection of two main zones of colonial influence. However, it appears that only Phoenician traders visited most of the Iberian coast, where they also distributed a very limited amount of Etruscan pottery.

On the basis of material evidence, we propose that lineage leaders, who obtained wine from Phoenician traders, used this product lavishly (assuming that this was the true content of Phoenician amphorae) in a strictly traditional way, namely to gain prestige and power through redistribution —Phoenician amphorae are frequent finds on contemporary settlements of all kinds— and hospitality, and to mobilize labor through work-party feasts. In other words, by converting surplus into prestige they gained political capital, which in turn they could use to increase their control over the production of surplus, and so on (Kim, 2001: 462). The lack of findings of imported table-service ware (at least in any significant amount) also supports this hypothesis: local lineage leaders were not trying to imitate the Phoenician customs regarding wine consumption, but simply incorporated a new type of drink, with particular qualities, to their own system of alcohol consumption. Wine would thus have been used in the same way as indigenous alcoholic beverages had previously been, but to a greater scale. If this analysis is correct, proximity to the resources sought by Phoenician traders and favorable position in the communication networks would have been particularly important strategic advantages for lineage leaders in order to gain a dominant position. This would

probably explain sites like Aldovesta and the use of imported material as status symbols in tombs.

Iron metallurgy is another important innovation that appeared in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. Whether this knowledge was introduced by Phoenicians traders (Ruiz Zapatero, 1985, 1992) or was diffused from beyond the Pyrenees (Pons, 1984; Junyent, 1992) is still a matter of discussion. Nevertheless, at this early stage of the introduction of the new technology iron was used almost exclusively for personal objects and ornaments—knives, razors and rings—, which have been found mostly in graves presumed to belong to the ruling members of the society (Ruiz Zapatero, 1985: 852). Iron may have been used mainly as prestige goods, which, like the control over the acquisition and distribution of Phoenician wine, increased the rulers' political capital and consequently facilitated the reproduction of their interests. As recently highlighted by J. Kim in a paper on the interests of elite groups in technological innovation (2001), this was probably so because the costs and risks of mass iron production intended to increase surplus were estimated too high.

In summary, we may assume that by the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BC social hierarchy and stratification were developing as a result of:

- a) Demographic increase and stress on productive resources, which would have enhanced the development of political economy and consequently the formation and reproduction of a hereditary elite.
- b) The opportunities given by Phoenician trade to some particularly well-placed lineage heads in order to gain a dominant position by increasing their prestige-authoritarian power.<sup>5</sup> To a certain extent, this could also have been the case for those who controlled the production of objects made of iron, which were considered mostly as prestige goods.

The many signs of violence that, at least in some areas, characterized the final decades of this period, may be ascribed to the process of elite formation. This is particularly clear in the lower Ebro River area, where most of the known settlements—including all those abovementioned, like Aldovesta, Barranc de Gàfols, Moleta del Remei or Sant Jaume-Mas d'en Serrà— were destroyed violently and were abandoned forever before the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. This implied a change in settlement patterns, which was probably linked to the growth of regional centralized polities.

On this basis of the present state of research, it is not possible to establish whether this climate of extreme violence was also usual at that time further north, in the littoral of Catalonia, since most of the evidence from settlements has been erased by successive occupation during the Second Iron Age. As for central and Western Catalonia, evidence is

5. We use this expression in the sense given to it by J. Kim (2001: 466), that is «...power (that) stems from and is exercised through manipulation of ideology and symbols, exclusive rights to use and display of prestige items, control of information flow, and so on».

generally still too scarce to allow any general conclusion. The settlement at Els Vilars (Arbeca, Les Garrigues) appears to have been occupied continuously until the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century BC. Similar, but far less clear, evidence has been found at sites like Molí d'Espígol (Tornabous, Urgell), Tossal de les Tenalles (Sidamon, Segrià) and Tossal del Molinet (Poal, La Noguera) (Garcés *et al.*, 1993: 50). Thus, these findings point to continuity, but the poor quality of the evidence must be kept in mind.

## 2.2. The Early Iberian Period (ca. 550-400 BC). The formation of territorial polities

Data on this period is comparatively poor, and mostly founded on funerary remains. The main reason for this is that most settlements continued to be inhabited into the Middle Iberian Period (*ca.* 400-200 BC), when a continuous and extensive building activity obliterated many older structures. Consequently, it is usually impossible to decipher the overall plan of settlements and even of single houses. Despite this, the analysis of settlement structure at the macro level, mainly founded on the evaluation of site sizes, indicates the existence of several regional polities.

In fact, at least one large settlement (about 3 ha) already existed at Ullastret by the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, and some evidence indicates that, no later than the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, Tarragona was also a large and important town. Furthermore, an impressive defensive wall, for which there are no precedents in this area, whose building would have required a considerable collective effort, was erected at Ullastret in the last quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC (Martín, 1995: 425; Martín, 2000: 110-113). The existence of large towns cannot be interpreted simply as a trend towards nucleation, since small and middle-sized settlements also existed. Among the former we may cite Alorda Park (Asensio, Morer and Pou, 2003) and Vilars d'Arbeca (Alonso *et al.*, 1998), both of which belong to the old settlement type organized around a central open space or street. Their surface may be respectively estimated at about 0.3 ha and 0.2 ha respectively. The best known middle-sized settlement is Turó de Ca n'Olivé (Cerdanyola) (Asensio *et al.*, 2000-2001), which probably covered 1.3 ha. Although a large scattered population cannot be affirmed, a few isolated pottery-finds in the Empordà area indicate that some farms or rural houses were already active by that time (Pons, 2002; Martín and Plana, 2001). However, we must acknowledge that most of the sites mentioned above belong to distinct areas and that, on the whole, our knowledge on the Early Iberian Period patterns of settlement is still extremely poor. Nevertheless, the information available reveals a qualitative and quantitative change as compared to the previous period. The relatively complex settlement pattern now loosely perceived is suggestive of demographical growth, functional specialization and political hierarchy, possibly with two, or even three, administrative levels. Consequently, we may presume the existence of several relatively extensive territorial polities that were headed

by comparatively large urban settlements (several hectares) and were possibly inhabited by a considerable population (probably in the thousands and even tens of thousands).

As mentioned, we have scarce information on the internal organization of settlements and the characteristics of domestic architecture. This is a seriously limiting factor to our understanding of social organization, but the burial record provides evidence of some lineages that were neatly separated from the rest of the population. The clearest archaeological indicator that favors this interpretation is the great decrease in the number of tombs during this period of demographical expansion (fig. 2). Given that the tomb type was at this time basically the same as that during the preceding periods, the reduction in number was not likely to be due to differential preservation. Therefore, complex—and archaeologically recognizable—funerary rituals were most probably restricted to a smaller segment of the population. These individuals were probably assumed to have shared a distinct nature from commoners and, consequently, a particular way of life in the next world that would legitimize their privileged position. We must also note that most of the tombs held iron weapons—an item that was nearly absent in the necropolises of the precedent periods—and other metal items, mainly personal objects and ornaments that were mostly made of bronze (Maluquer de Motes, 1984; 1987). It is reasonable to assume that this material was symbolic of the prestige and power of the deceased. If this analysis is correct, by the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC social stratification may have already developed, along with an ideology intended to legitimate hereditary inequality and the false conscience of the common people, probably through the identification of the ruling class with the supernatural.

The evidence afforded by the imported material can also be interpreted along these lines. One important point is that the ratio (but not necessarily the total number) of Mediterranean imports decreased drastically during the period after 575 BC to the lowest point of Iberian Proto-history (under 6 % of the total number of vases) (fig. 3). Other substantial changes are also perceived in the provenience and nature of the imported material. Table service ware accounted a that time for most of the imported ceramic. Moreover, and in sharp contrast to the preceding period, the material came from several geographical and cultural areas: Punic *Ebusus*, the old Phoenician cities in the Straits of Gibraltar area, Etruria and, most specially, from several points of the Greek world (Eastern Greece, Corinth, Attica, Massalia and, possibly, the central Mediterranean area). In fact, Greek imports were at this time largely dominant, but there does not seem to be a specific area within the Hellenic world that may be considered a particularly large supplier. (Sanmartí, Asensio and Martín, 2002). In summary, the situation in this period differed considerably from that of the previous one, when amphorae—and only amphorae—made in one specific area (the region around the Straits of Gibraltar) constituted almost all the imports. We therefore conclude that this period was marked by a distinct kind of colonial trade, compared to the activity developed by Phoenician merchants before the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.

Why did the nature and relative amount of imported material change so drastically during the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC? The answer may not lie simply in the fact that the Phocaeans

—whose reputation as traders was well established in the ancient world (Morel, 1990)—had already settled in Massalia by 600 BC. In fact, their *emporion* at Sant Martí d'Empúries, in north-eastern Catalonia—later to become a true *polis* with this name—, was founded a short time before the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC (Aquilué *et al.*, 1999, 2000: 28). By then, Phoenician trade had already collapsed, probably because of the local production of wine in the proto-iberian world, which, as already mentioned, is well attested at Alt de Benimaquia. Therefore, the reasons for the change must be sought in the local conditions of the Iberian world. Although wine could still be considered a prestige good, its local production probably diminished its importance as such. In addition, the emerging hereditary elite may have underlined its prominent position by restricting the distribution of the imported material and by raising its status. As J. Kim recently put it, «...accumulating prestige capital is by its nature a matter of quality. Successful accumulation of prestige capital can be achieved better by raising the quality of prestige capital rather than increasing the quantity of prestige goods. In order to maintain the values of prestige capital and to secure exclusive access to prestige capital the supply and distribution of prestige goods should be restricted». This point of view clearly matches the archaeological evidence. On the one hand, because the number of imports was comparatively low, and, on the other, because the wine-drinking vessels (which includes jars and craters intended to mix wine with water) that constituted the main bulk of the imports was probably used in the Hellenic manner—or, at least, was assumed to be so—, thus contributing to emphasize the distinct nature of the upper social class, and its links with the foreign world. If this interpretation is correct, this would represent a significant qualitative change, since the Phoenician imports of the preceding period were used in quite a traditional way within the indigenous society.

Another important point is related to the nature and number of iron items. These are quite usual in tombs and are mostly constituted by weapons (mostly spearheads). On the contrary, only a few iron agricultural tools have been discovered to date. This is a difficult evidence to evaluate, since, as already mentioned, only a few well-preserved settlements—the kind of archaeological site where tools and agricultural implements are most likely to be found—have so far been excavated. Even so, the scarcity of iron tools is striking. In addition, the few attested implements are quite simple types (axes and mattocks); no ploughs or other sophisticated tools have so far been found in levels that may be dated before the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC (Rovira, 1999). Thus, the elite may have restricted iron metallurgy to the production of prestige items, mainly weapons, while it was not considered necessary to improve agricultural productivity beyond the needs created by population increase. The comparatively small number and low capacity of silos dated to this period also indicate that the production of large agricultural surplus may not have been among the basic aims of the elite. Therefore, we can assume that iron objects, like the imported ceramic vases, were used mainly by the elite in a strategy of prestige accumulation in order to strengthen its prestige-authoritarian power, which in turn was probably based on an ideological system that linked the upper class to the supernatural and the foreign.



### 2.3. The Middle Iberian Period (*ca.* 400-200 BC). The rise of the archaic states

The archaeological evidence for this period is particularly rich, because many sites were abandoned or destroyed in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC and, most particularly, in the years around 200 BC, as a consequence of the Second Punic War and the repression of the Iberian rebellions against the Roman rule in 206-205 BC and 197-196 BC. During the last twenty-five years, several of these sites have been widely excavated, thus providing a sound, if still insufficient, basis to understand the diversity of Iberian settlements from a functional and social point of view. In addition, Mediterranean pottery imports greatly increased during this period, which implies that the chronology of sites may be much more easily established, even on the basis of superficial finds only.

As regards territorial organization, the most important sites now became much larger, from about 9 ha (Burriac, Tarragona) to 15 or even 18 ha (Ullastret). These urban settlements were central places and political capitals of substantial territorial polities (Sanmartí, 2001; 2002; Ruiz and Sanmartí, 2003) (fig. 4). There were also a few smaller nucleated settlements, of about 2 to 4 ha, which probably had specialized administrative, political and economic functions within these polities, and a substantial number of villages of about 0.5 ha to 1 ha. At least three administrative levels may therefore be perceived, a trait that has frequently been taken as indicative of state-like structures (Wright and Johnson, 1975: 267; Marcus and Feinman, 1998: 8-9; Flannery, 1998: 17, 55). Interestingly, the polities defined through the Thiessen polygons analysis are basically coincident with the territories that can be attributed to the most important Iberian ethnic groups mentioned in the written sources (fig. 4) (Sanmartí, 2001; 2002), whose names are also recognized in the Iberian coinage of the 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> century BC.

Extensive excavation of some of the nucleated sites has also revealed significant differences that may be interpreted as indicative of social inequality and coercive power. This is quite clear as regards domestic and military architecture: extremely large (up to 350 m<sup>2</sup>) and structurally complex houses, usually organized around a central courtyard, are exclusive of the largest settlements, like Ullastret and Castellet de Banyoles (Maluquer and Picazo, 1992; Martín, 2000; Asensio, Miró and Sanmartí, 2002). These were also protected by large walls, usually provided with towers and relatively complex systems for the protection of gates.<sup>6</sup> Simpler, but still large (usually about 60-80 m<sup>2</sup>, although some of them measured about 250 m<sup>2</sup>) and relatively complex dwellings are attested at Alorda Park, a small site (about 2500 m<sup>2</sup>), which was nonetheless well protected by a relatively complex fortification wall and was probably occupied by a few aristocratic families (Asensio, Morer and Pou, 2003). At other sites (for example in most of the above mentioned third

6. Complex fortification walls were probably erected —sometimes imitating Greek models— for their prestige value rather than as a response to real defensive needs against sophisticated poliorcetic methods (Moret, 2001; Quesada, 2001; *contra*, Gracia, 2001).

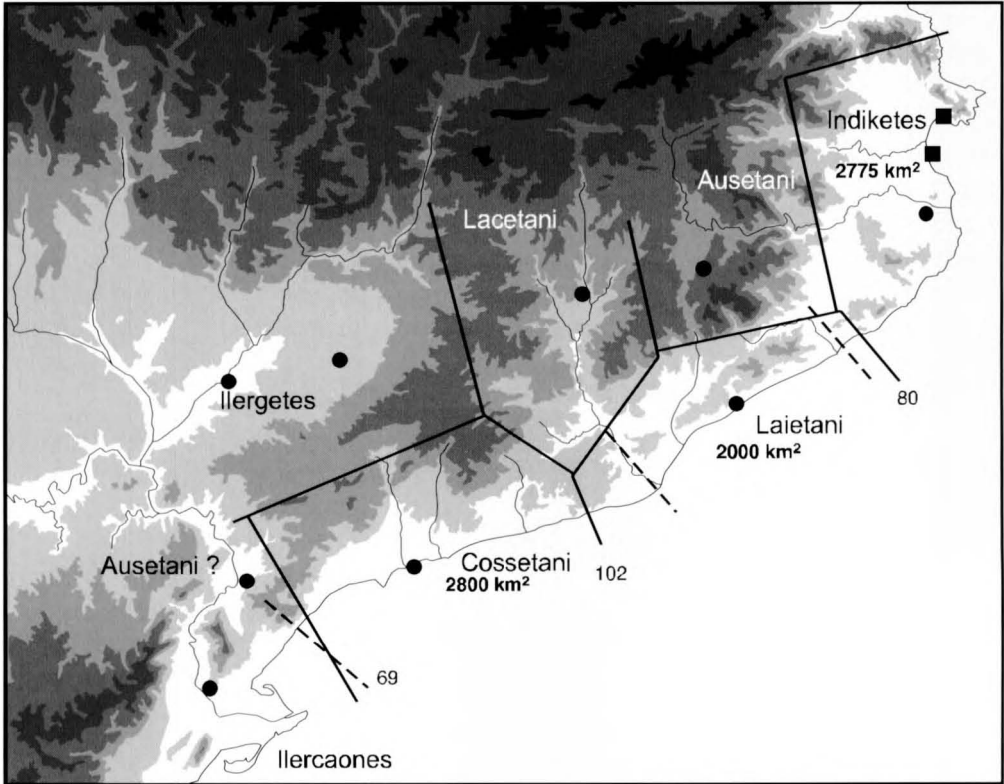


Fig. 4. Map of the main Iberian polities in Iberian Catalonia as reconstructed through Thiessen Polygons analysis and information contained in the written sources (dotted lines).

order villages), houses were generally small (about 20-40 m<sup>2</sup>) and quite simple (usually one or two rooms), while fortifications were constituted by the continuous rear wall of the peripheral houses and generally lacked towers or any other sophisticated defensive devices.<sup>7</sup> Thus, there is considerable correspondence between site size and architectural complexity, which indicates considerable social complexity.

At the bottom of the settlement hierarchy, there was a dense net of small, dispersed agricultural sites scattered throughout the lowlands, as well as strongholds —like Alorda Park— and economically specialized sites. Only a few of the small rural sites have been excavated, mostly in the Penedès area —like Fondo del Roig (Cunit) o Les Guàrdies (El Vendrell)—, and many appear to have been seriously affected by subsequent agricultural work, but evidence suggests that there were different types of sites, from isolated houses

7. On Iberian fortification, see Moret, 1996.

to large and complex farms. It is clear that, for the first time, the whole territory was densely occupied and that population increased still further, undoubtedly to a point that had never been reached previously in the Iberian area (Sanmartí, 2001b).

This is an important point. Both archaeological evidence and some loose information in the written sources point to a population density (about 15 hab/km<sup>2</sup>) within the range that is attested in Catalonia in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, or even higher (Sanmartí, 2001; Ruiz and Sanmartí, 2003). A demographic expansion of this nature could not have been possible without economic intensification, of which we have several signs. The most readily apparent is the settlement pattern itself, since the whole countryside seems to have been filled and effectively exploited. Furthermore, the number and variety of iron agricultural tools greatly increased, and there is much evidence of iron ploughs, an implement whose widespread use is usually associated with the expansion of the Eurasian model of agriculture (Alonso, 1999; Rovira, 2000). Finally, the great increase in the number and capacity of silos provides further evidence of intensification (Asensio, Francès and Pons, 2002). These storage structures became numerous in central and northeastern Catalonia and in Languedoc. They were frequently grouped in large numbers, forming what is usually referred to as «silo fields». These groupings were frequently far away from large settlements and, at least in some cases, appear to have been protected by some kind of fortification, as well as by their topographical situation. These silo fields may be considered large capital reserves that were controlled and managed by the elite.

Quite significantly, it was also during this period that a local writing system was developed and became widely used. Although the Iberian language still remains undeciphered, there is general consensus that the longest and most complex Iberian texts (which are written on lead sheets) address administrative or economic matters (De Hoz, 1993, 1994; Sanmartí, 2001a, 2002). These texts, together with the complexity of the settlement structure and the economy, point to the existence of a relatively well developed political and administrative system, probably of an archaic-state like type.

The information available suggests that along the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC the traditional prestige-authoritarian power of the elite was progressively complemented by administrative power, that is «the direct control of a variety of sources of power through formal organization and hierarchies, including taxation, military force, law, bureaucracies, and coercive sanctions» (Kim, 2001: 466). This may have been the response of the elite to the crucial need to intensify direct control over society as it grew in size, since the prestige-authoritarian power, which was mainly based on ideology, was probably becoming insufficient to preserve social stability. Given that the establishment of an administrative system is a complex and expensive process, it is understandable that the Iberian elite promoted the production of large surpluses far beyond subsistence requirements—which is well attested by the proliferation of silos—and, consequently, the use of iron metallurgy for the production of sophisticated agricultural tools. Despite its presumably high initial cost, the Iberian administrative power system expanded and worked efficiently during two centuries, until it was substituted by (or subsumed into) the Roman colonial administration.

It should, however be stressed that since prestige-authoritarian and administrative power are not reciprocally exclusive, but complementary and a precondition for one another, the expansion of the former does not imply that the latter was no longer active from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC onwards, but rather that its importance in the preservation of the elite's privileged position was comparatively lower. This may be reflected by a great increase in the amount of material imported during this period (up to 15 % of the total number of vases by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC), although it did not reach the point that was attained in immediate pre-Iberian times. This increase in imports may be expected in a situation of strong and well-established administrative power, since it may not have been necessary to restrict so strictly the distribution of foreign goods in order to preserve their prestige value.

Moreover, not only the proportional number of imported items changed during this period, but some significant shifts are also perceived in their nature and origin. Imported amphorae were mostly of Ebusitan Punic and, to a much lesser extent, Massaliote origin (although other Greek and Punic containers are also occasionally found; Carthaginian amphorae are common in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC). In addition, Greek and Punic cooking pots and (possibly) their local imitations were used for the first time in indigenous contexts. Most of these pots were found in late 3<sup>rd</sup> century levels, but there is also evidence of their use during the preceding century. Regarding the nature of the table-service ware (which is mostly of Greek origin), the wine-drinking vessels were now accompanied by many pieces intended for solid food consumption.

How are these changes in number and nature to be interpreted? On the one hand, the observation that the bulk of imported material increased and that these items have been usually found —although in unequal amounts— in every Iberian site of this age indicates that these goods were more easily accessible for the members of the lower levels of the elite, perhaps even for common people. This may be explained through a situation of instability due to competition for arable land. Although we cannot affirm the extent to which hostilities dominated local interaction, we know from literary sources that there were «traditional» enmities and conflicts between ethnic groups (for example, between Suessetani and Lacetani, after Livi 34,20), which may also be deduced from extensive settlement fortification. A growing population would have led to increasing competition between polities for arable land and, thus, to the need to enhance social cohesion and internal stability. The increasing number of foreign goods that were widely distributed to all Iberian sites at this time may have been one of the means to maintain social stability in this particular historical context. This hypothesis is also supported by the finding that the proportional number of imports reached its highest point in the last decades of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, when, due to the Second Punic War, instability was particularly intense.

However, it should not be assumed that imported items lost their prestige status. On the contrary, a closer analysis of their distribution shows that it follows a pattern of inequality that matches the social hierarchy that may be inferred from other, independent, archaeological evidence. In other words, more and «better» imported vases (e.g., amphorae, red-

figured attic vases, unusual items, etc.) were usually found at sites where other traits of material culture suggest a strong presence of the Iberian elite, regardless of their geographical position and proximity to communications. Let us consider, for example, some settlements on the Catalan littoral: Puig Castellar (Ferrer and Rigo, 2003), Montjuïc, Turó de Ca n'Olivé (Asensio *et al.*, 2000-2001), Alorda Park (Asensio, Morer and Pou, 2003) and Castellot de la Roca Roja (Belarte, Noguera and Sanmartí 2002). These are all coastal settlements, except the last one, which is nevertheless situated on the course of the Ebro River, a very important thoroughfare for communication between the Mediterranean and the interior of the Iberian Peninsula. It is reasonable to assume that these settlements had equal access to imported goods traded by Punic, Greek or Italic merchants. However, the percentage of imported pottery differs markedly between sites. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, it ranged from just 3 % at Castellot de la Roca Roja to 13 % at Montjuïc. Similar percentages were also found in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC: from 3,3 % at Puig Castellar to 20,8 % at Alorda Park.

Consequently, the elite's strategy as regards imported goods during the Middle Iberian Period may have been based on widening the social sectors that had access to *some* foreign items, while changing the sources and even the nature of some of the most prized ones, which probably continued to be exclusive of the privileged. This would explain, for example, the upsurge of Ebusitan amphorae imports, and the presence of imported cooking pots. These two items, both novelties, have been found mostly at sites where the presence of an elite may be reasonably assumed. These new products and new ways of cooking, equally linked to the external world, would have probably been —along with the best Greek table-service vases— the symbols that distinguished the elite from the commoners during this period.

### 3. Migration reconsidered

The discussion above shows that, when only demography and functional aspects of culture are taken into account, internal development, caused by demographical growth, and social conflict between distinct interest groups, are suffice to explain social change towards complexity in north-eastern Iberia. Nevertheless, some linguistic evidence and as some normative aspects of the material culture (relating to problems of cultural transmission), suggest that migrations *could* also have contributed to this process during the early stages of the Iberian period.

This issue was raised by P. Bosch Gimpera in the twenties (Bosch, 1919, 1932) and later again by M. Tarradell forty years ago. Tarradell observed that the cultural substrata in the area occupied by the Iberian culture were extremely diverse, while the material culture of the Early Iberian period was essentially one. Since formative steps of the Iberian culture were not discernible in Catalonia, he concluded that it had originated elsewhere,

probably in southern Spain (Tarradell, 1962: 265-268). More recently, J. Padró and E. Sanmartí-Grego (1992: 186-187) also upheld that the «iberization» of the area to the north of the Ebro river can be explained to some extent by a migration of southern origin, which was possibly enhanced by the Greeks. This would also explain the name *Misgetes* («mixed») with which Hekataios designated the indigenous people of this area.

In addition, J. de Hoz stressed that the personal names attested in northern Iberian sites, like Ullastret and Azaila, were only partially Iberian, while all the personal names in the area of València (Valencia) and Alacant (Alicante) (designated as *Contestania* in the written sources) are unmistakably Iberian. He concludes that the Iberian language was only proper to the latter area, from which it would have expanded north and northeastwards (De Hoz, 1993, 1994). However, in De Hoz's opinion, this does not imply migration, but expansion of the Iberian language through a commercial agreement between the Phocaeans and the Iberians. What is more, this tongue would never have replaced the indigenous languages of Catalonia and Western Languedoc, except as the usual written language, mostly used in trade. This trading activity, in turn, would have led to the massive adoption in Catalonia of the Iberian material culture from *Contestania*. However, this hypothesis has some weak points. On the one hand, there is no parallel for this behavior among ancient Greek traders, and why would the Phocaeans —traders *par excellence*— have delegated their commercial activity to the indigenous people? In addition, if we assumed that they did, and that this trading activity was intense enough to cause the rapid adoption of Iberian material culture in Catalonia, we should expect to find written Iberian documents relating to trade or economy in the 6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century BC. But these are not attested until the last years of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.

Therefore, is migration after all not a plausible explanation for the expansion of the Iberian language and material culture? Archaeological evidence indicates —after several centuries of fluid continuity— a rupture in cultural transmission, which also hints at this possibility. For example, most early Iberian necropolises in Catalonia are radically new, with no tomb that date to the First Iron Age. There are few exceptions, but then the Iberian tombs were a comparatively small number (unless deleted by later activity) (Rafel, 1994-1996). It is also striking that wheel-made Iberian pottery appeared in abundance and abruptly on the littoral of Catalonia by the mid 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, while, in sharp contrast to Southern and South-Eastern Spain, no formation phase or transition has been identified. An example is at Illa d'en Reixac, where Iberian wheel-made pottery *aparece ahora fulminantemente*,<sup>8</sup> whereas there is a *brutal disminución de la cerámica a mano*<sup>9</sup> (Martín and Sanmartí-Grego, 1976-1978, 445). Similarly, Iberian wheel-made pottery accounts for up to 85 % of the pottery finds in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC levels at Castellot de la Roca Roja (Benifallet, Baix Ebre). In contrast, no evidence of local production of this kind of pottery at sites in the same area can be dated to the second quarter of the same

8. «appears now suddenly».

9. «very great diminution of free-hand formed pottery».

century. None of these observations necessarily imply population movement, but all of them could be the consequence of such an historical process. Therefore, how are they to be interpreted?

The lack of a coherent theory on migrations, the simplistic (and, sometimes, racist) use of this kind of explanations by culture history, and, most of all, the influence on Spanish scholars of processual archaeology and of some specific, unilineal evolutionist forms of Marxist thought have long discredited, probably beyond what is reasonable, any explanation that involves population movement. However, migrations have undoubtedly contributed to social change in historical times, and may also have done so in Prehistory. In fact, from the beginning of the nineties, several scholars have attempted to build a coherent theory on migrations, drawing on History, Geography and Sociology (Anthony, 1990; 1992; Härke, 1998; Burmeister, 2000). The aim is to define on a solid theoretical basis the archaeological indicators that could help to establish the real existence of population movements. These include, for example, the analysis of the demographical composition of the supposed migrant population—young males are expected to predominate—, a close study on the relative chronology of settlements—migrations usually develop through different waves, the first of which may concentrate on very few nuclei—, on particular conditions that might favor migration in both the home and recipient regions, on the existence of previous contacts, on population increase in the recipient area, etc.

An analysis of this nature is not in the scope of this paper, but it is worth noting that indicators of this kind are present in archaeological records from Catalonia in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. For example, previous contacts with the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula are well attested: wheel-made pottery exported from this area after the collapse of Phoenician trade is quite common in late First Iron Age settlements of Southern Catalonia. Migration, on the other hand, could also have contributed to the demographic growth during this period.

In summary, on the basis of linguistic and archaeological data, the possible effective role of migration in social change during the Early Iberian Period in Catalonia and, *a fortiori*, in Languedoc, should not be dismissed. The present state of research does not provide definitive answers on this point, which deserves close unbiased attention. Moreover, migration is not an exclusive alternative to internal processes of change: to hold that migration effectively took place is not to deny the capacity for change of the indigenous societies in the recipient area. The two processes may have occurred simultaneously and been fed reciprocally. Finally, migration does not necessarily imply radical immediate or whole substitution of populations or cultures. Therefore, particular settlements or necropolises may not have been affected by this demographic movement, at least in the short term. A general overview of large territories is therefore necessary in order to evaluate the likelihood of a supposed migration.

## 4. Indigenous societies and colonial trade. Was there any world-system?

As mentioned in section 2, quantitative studies on imported material provide, for the first time, some objective —if still somewhat loose— measure about the scale of colonial trade in Iberia, its evolution and the role and relative importance of the distinct colonial agents in the Western Mediterranean. In the last decades, an important issue related to the study of ancient colonization has been the extent to which the application of a world-system perspective —which was initially built to explain modern interregional linkages— could also be applied usefully to pre-industrial societies.<sup>10</sup> The danger with this kind of discussion is, as P.N. Peregrine has pointed out, «to conflate the world-system perspective with one particular theory of world-system process (usually that of the capitalist world economy)».<sup>11</sup> This has been the origin of long controversy as to whether the modern world-system was particular to the last five centuries (Wallerstein, 1991) or, on the contrary, was rooted in the Bronze Age (Frank, 1993). The application of a world-system perspective in archaeological studies has been useful in that it has stimulated fresh analysis of the material record, including quantification to estimate the scale of interrelation. Also, it has encouraged the trend to place particular evidence in a wider geographical and historical context and, in the end, to appraise how and the extent to which relations *between* societies may have contributed to the economy and social relations *within* societies. That being said, it is also true that this debate devolves easily into an exercise of typological classification, in which the tendency to force the archaeological evidence to «fit» a particular theory —and, consequently, to distort it in some way— is not easy to avoid.

Our purpose here is not to insist on whether or not the system of economic, social and political relations between the indigenous cultures of Catalonia and Greek and Phoenician colonists may be fully understood under the modern-era world system theory. Rather, we wish to clarify the processes of economic interdependence in order to evaluate their contribution to shaping *both* indigenous and colonial societies. This is an important point, since our archaeology has traditionally put emphasis on how colonial trade and culture «influenced» indigenous societies, while the reverse has generally not been addressed.

As mentioned in section 1, a large amount of Phoenician amphorae, mainly from the area of the Straits of Gibraltar, was imported to Catalonia between *ca.* 650 and 575 BC. The social reasons for which these particular items may have been so highly prized in the recipient area have already been discussed in the same section. However, it is important to stress that this indigenous demand had important consequences on the economic structure of the Phoenician colonies in southern Spain, given that this commercial flow does not only imply agricultural colonization, the importance of which has already been

10. For a recent overview, see Ratnagar, 2001 and the comments to it in the same volume.

11. Comments in Ratnagar, 2001: 370.



recognized by other scholars (Wagner and Alvar, 1989, 2003), but even a certain specialization of production. We may presume an economic strategy founded on large investments in agriculture, fishing and pottery production, which could be profitable only in the long term. These decisions were presumably taken only because the social conditions of the recipient areas gave reasonable guarantees of business. Thus, we may assume that the large-scale production of wine by the Phoenician cities was a direct consequence of the indigenous social structure: it was the indigenous demand that, to some extent, shaped the colonizers' economy.

If this analysis is correct, changes in the indigenous economy and society in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, particularly the local production of wine, may have been one of the main causes of the crisis of the Phoenician settlements in the Straits of Gibraltar area (Aubet, 1987: 276-278). In our opinion, this is a more reasonable explanation for the abandonment (not always definitive) of several Phoenician sites in the Mediterranean coast of Andalusia than the crisis generated by the interruption of the production of silver at Ríotinto—which probably affected large cities like Gadir (Cadix) more seriously—or the conquest of the Phoenician cities in the Levant by the Babylonian Empire. Concomitantly, the establishment of a hereditary elite in the Iberian area may have led to a further ideological manipulation of the imported items, thereby resulting in a restriction of the imports and a shift in their character and origin in order to strengthen their prestige value. The foundation of the Phocaean *emporion* at Sant Martí d'Empúries a short time before 550 BC (Aquilué *et al.*, 1999, 2000: 28) and its rapid development thereafter can be easily understood from this point of view. On the other hand, the Phocaeans' particular position in archaic Mediterranean trade, in which they acted as specialized middlemen, probably fitted better the new conditions of the Iberian market than the «production plus distribution» model of the Phoenicians in the Straits of Gibraltar.

As mentioned, from the late 5<sup>th</sup> century onwards Ebusitan Punic material (mostly amphorae, with a certain amount of «plain» and table-service ware) was largely dominant in the Iberian area, at least as far as amphorae are concerned, to the point that most of the Mediterranean littoral of the Iberian Peninsula was an area under predominant Ebusitan commercial influence. It has been proposed that this was the consequence of the rural colonization of the Island of Eivissa (Ibiza, ancient *Ebusus*) during the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC (Gómez Bellard, 2003). The crucial question is why the Ebusitan, who had founded their city on the island by 600 BC (Ramon, 1995b), did not start its intensive agricultural exploitation until 150 years later. This delay may have been because there was no large market for specialized agricultural products in Iberia. Demographic expansion in the Iberian world, and the need for the Iberian elites to diversify the sources of prestige goods, while at the same time intensifying redistribution, may explain the agricultural colonization of Punic *Ebusus*. If this was so, once again the indigenous «colonized» society had an active role in shaping the economy and social relations within the Punic «colonist» society.

Our discussion shows that an integrated system was present in the Western Mediterranean that played an important role in shaping indigenous and colonist popula-

tions. On the basis of this point of view, we may consider the presence of a world-system in this area that linked differently structured and unequally developed societies and was one of the main causes of their particular long-term change.

## 5. Final remarks

The emergence of social complexity and hereditary inequality is an important area of modern archaeological research, and one for which the available evidence in the Iberian area is beginning to be significant. At least, this is what this paper attempts to demonstrate. The most important aspect is the emergence during the Iberian period of discontinuous classes in settlement size, as well as in domestic and defensive architecture, the burial record and the distribution of imported material. The fact that some of these putative indicators of inequality frequently concur at the same sites is also a convincing argument for the existence of a sharp social stratification at this time.

However, despite the success of recent advances, the usable fraction of archaeological knowledge is still only a small proportion of the preserved remains. In particular, our knowledge of the largest Iberian settlements, the centers of power, is, as already said, still very poor. Only Ullastret has afforded important evidence (but not always easy to interpret), while the excavations at Castellet de Banyoles are just beginning. Other central sites, like Burriac, are almost totally unknown. The situation is even worse when second-order towns are taken into account. Therefore, our knowledge of Iberian settlements derives mainly from the minor ones, thus giving the impression of a village culture, which it certainly was not. Future progress in this field should centre on extensive excavation of central and second-order administrative and political sites.

On the whole, then, the balance of this relatively long period of research is quite positive, but time has come for a shift in the direction of research. Otherwise, the risk of stagnation is high.

## Resum

# Dels grups locals a l'estat arcaic: el desenvolupament de la complexitat a la Catalunya protohistòrica

## 1. Introducció

Una vegada resolta, en els anys setanta, els problemes de datació i caracterització de la cultura ibèrica i els seus antecedents immediats, la recerca desenvolupada durant els últims vint-i-cinc anys en l'àmbit de la protohistòria de Catalunya ha portat a superar els enfocaments de la Història Cultural gràcies a una notable intensitat dels treballs d'excavació en extensió i de les prospeccions sistemàtiques. Això ha permès caracteritzar des d'un punt de vista social i funcional els diferents tipus d'assentaments i, a més, recuperar amplis conjunts de materials, que han permès començar a quantificar la distribució diferencial de les importacions en el temps i en l'espai, és a dir, en els diferents tipus de jaciments. En definitiva, i encara amb moltes limitacions, comencem a tenir els instruments per detectar la variabilitat social i els nivells de desigualtat a escala local i territorial.

La major part d'aquest treball està dedicada a analitzar els processos de desenvolupament intern, en particular el creixement demogràfic, que es troben en la base del desenvolupament de la complexitat, però també s'hi considera la possibilitat que la iberització de Catalunya estigués relacionada amb algun moviment de població, així com el paper del comerç exterior en la configuració tant del món indígena com de les societats colonials.

## 2. Els processos de canvi social al nord-est d'Ibèria

### 2.1. El final de la Prehistòria. Les últimes societats de petita escala

Els assentaments documentats a la plana occidental catalana fins al segle XI aC. i a la Catalunya

oriental fins mitjan segle VII aC. semblen correspondre a grups familiars aïllats o a petites agrupacions d'aquests. La baixa densitat demogràfica permet un ús extensiu del territori, basat en la recol·lecció, l'agricultura d'artiga i formes diverses de ramaderia. El creixement demogràfic és lent, però sembla clarament demostrat tant per la proliferació dels assentaments com —en el primer mil·lenni— pel nombre creixent de sepultures.

L'aparició de nuclis de poblament plenament sedentari, que concentren un nombre relativament important de famílies —fins a una quarantena— és possiblement conseqüència de l'escassetat relativa de recursos provocada pel creixement de la població, que feia impossible una explotació extensiva del territori i forçava els grups a familiars a cooperar per l'explotació i defensa d'uns recursos progressivament més escassos. Ara bé, tot i l'existència d'alguns signes d'estatus —possiblement indicatius de diferències d'edat— en hàbitats i necròpolis, el creixement de l'economia política no sembla manifestar-se en l'existència de formes complexes d'organització política o social, ni de poder coercitiu o hereditari.

Cal dir, amb tot, que en les darreries del segle VII aC. les diferències d'estatus semblen incrementar-se i apareixen alguns signes de desigualtat. Aquest procés es va dinamitzar amb la introducció d'un nou producte, el vi, per part dels comerciants fenicis, ja que els caps de llinatge més ben situats per a la seva obtenció devien obtenir un avantatge important per a la mobilització d'obra i l'adquisició de capital polític. Els nombrosos signes de violència documentats en aquesta època, sobretot a la regió de l'Ebre, possiblement tenen també a veure amb aquest procés.

## 2.2. El període ibèric antic. La formació de les entitats polítiques territorials

Tot i que la informació disponible sobre aquest període és reduïda, sobretot pel que fa als hàbitats, és possible afirmar que, per primera vegada es documenta una clara jerarquia en la grandària dels assentaments i una certa complexitat dels patrons d'ocupació del territori. La disminució brutal del nombre de sepultures suggereix a més que el ritual funerari arqueològicament reconeixible va quedar limitat a un sector de la població, que sovint s'enterrava amb signes evidents d'estatus i poder. Tot això suggereix l'aparició d'una elit de caràcter hereditari, el poder de la qual es devia fonamentar en la manipulació simbòlica i ideològica de les relacions socials. El fet que el volum proporcional d'importacions es redueixi ara dràsticament i que es tracti sobretot de vaixella grega (presumiblement utilitzada a la manera hel·lènica) abonaria també aquesta idea. El mateix es pot dir de la metal·lúrgia del ferro, que sembla en gran part destinada a la producció de l'armament que es recupera a les tombes.

## 2.3. El període ibèric ple. La formació dels estats arcaics

La documentació disponible per a aquest període és particularment rica i permet reconèixer l'existència de patrons de poblament complexos, que defineixen entitats polítiques territorials amb tres o més nivells administratius, la qual cosa és generalment considerada com un indicatiu de l'existència d'estructures estatals. Aquests territoris polítics semblen coincidir a més amb les principals unitats ètniques que ens són conegudes a través de les fonts escrites. El creixement demogràfic és ara molt evident, tant per l'augment de grandària de les principals poblacions com per la notable expansió de l'hàbitat rural dispers. Això, juntament amb la proliferació i diversificació de

l'utilatge agrícola de ferro i amb la multiplicació del nombre de sitges fa pensar en una notable intensificació agrícola basada en l'expansió del model agrícola eurasiàtic.

## 3. Cal reconsiderar les migracions?

Alguns elements lingüístics, especialment en l'antroponímia, suggereixen que l'ibèric es va superposar al nord-est peninsular a altres llengües. Per una altra part, hi ha indicis de ruptura de la transmissió cultural en el moment de la iberització que podrien ser conseqüència d'un moviment de població, la qual cosa no suposa una alternativa exclusiva als processos interns de canvi. En aquest article es defensa la necessitat d'estudiar aquesta qüestió sense prejudicis i utilitzant els plantejaments teòrics i metodològics més recents sobre els processos migratoris.

## 4. Les societats indígenes i el comerç colonial: un sistema món?

No és el nostre objectiu insistir sobre l'aplicabilitat o no a la nostra protohistòria del model de relacions colonials formulat per I. Wallerstein per a l'estudi del món modern, sinó valorar la mesura en què els tràfics comercials entre els pobles indígenes i els centres colonials fenicio-púnics i hel·lènics va contribuir a la configuració i evolució d'aquestes societats. En particular, es posa de manifest que no solament el comerç colonial va proporcionar en cada moment elements útils per a les formes de control i manipulació ideològica de les elits indígenes, sinó que la demanda d'aquestes i la seva evolució va ser decisiva en fenòmens històrics tan importants com la colonització agrícola de la costa andalusa per part dels fenicis, la crisi que s'observa en aquesta zona en la primera meitat del segle VI a.C., el desenvolupament de l'emporium focca o la colonització agrícola d'Eivissa.

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