

# URBANIZATION IN IBERIA AND MEDITERRANEAN GAUL IN THE FIRST MILLENNIUM BC

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TRAMA|7

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## VI • A CITY-STATE SYSTEM IN THE PRE-ROMAN WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN: THE IBERIAN CITIES OF EASTERN CATALONIA<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

Research into the Iberian culture has been particularly intensive in recent decades, with extensive surveys and a number of large-scale excavations. In the coastal area of present-day Catalonia surveys have attested the existence of complex settlement patterns with different categories of sites, while excavations have contributed to our understanding of their internal functioning and their position within settlement systems. The information available on the different settlement categories suggests that the largest sites acted as the capitals of polities corresponding to some of the ethnic territories mentioned in the ancient written sources. Their rather limited sizes and hierarchical settlement structures mean these territories must be considered as city-states, whereas other areas of the Iberian culture (such as inland Catalonia) were organized into less centralized, heterarchic forms, occasionally with large territorial states.

**Keywords:** Iberian culture, Catalonia, urbanization, state formation, settlement patterns, hierarchy

### Resum

La recerca sobre la cultura ibèrica ha estat especialment intensa en les últimes dècades, amb prospeccions extensives i diverses excavacions a gran escala. A la zona costanera de l'actual Catalunya les prospeccions han documentat l'existència de patrons de poblament complexos, amb diferents categories d'assentaments, mentre que les excavacions han contribuït a entendre'n el funcionament intern i la posició dins els sistemes d'ocupació del territori. La informació disponible sobre les diferents categories d'assentaments suggereix que els de dimensions més grans van jugar el paper de capitals dels territoris ètnics esmentats per les fonts clàssiques. Amb dimensions més aviat limitades i estructura de poblament jerarquitzada, aquests territoris han de ser considerats com a ciutats estat, mentre que altres àrees de la cultura ibèrica (com la Catalunya interior) es van organitzar en formes heteràrquiques, menys centralitzades, ocasionalment amb grans estats territorials.

**Paraules clau:** cultura ibèrica, Catalunya, urbanització, formació de l'estat, patrons d'assentament, jerarquia

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### 1. Introduction

Greek textual sources give the name “Iberia” to a region in the far western Mediterranean stretching between the present-day region of Murcia, in south-eastern Spain, and coastal western Languedoc in Mediterranean France (Fig. 1). This region coincides fairly precisely with the distribution area of the inscriptions in the writing system and the (still undeciphered) language that have been termed “Iberian” (precisely because of this spatial coincidence); these texts are dated between the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and, residually, the beginning of the early Roman empire. Consequently, we could assume that the Greeks gave the ethnonym *Iberes* to the populations that used a common language that was clearly different to their neighbours’ tongues. However, we cannot conclude from this that the speakers of the language we call “Iberian” would have called themselves that, or would even have been aware of the true entity of the linguistic area of which they were part; they probably did not even consider themselves a “people”. Indeed, the ancient sources attest considerable

fragmentation into ethnic and political entities of a much smaller, if variable, size, whose names and approximate locations are known, at least in part, from the Greek and Latin texts, as well as from inscriptions on coins. The study of the material culture of this large area began more than a century and a half ago. It has witnessed a remarkable diversity between the different areas, probably due to a number of factors of a varied nature: adaptive and economic, as well as ideological, political and cultural. In this regard, it is quite revealing that stone sculpture, one of the most notable and widely known features of what is generally called “Iberian culture”, is attested almost exclusively in the southern part of the area described above. Meanwhile, in the northern area, several features are documented that indicate a considerable familiarity with the neighbouring Celtic-speaking populations of southern Gaul.

Following the assumptions and methodology of cultural history, the first stage of the scientific study of the Iberians, mainly led by P. Bosch Gimpera (1932), focused on locating and archaeologically characterizing the different Iberian peo-

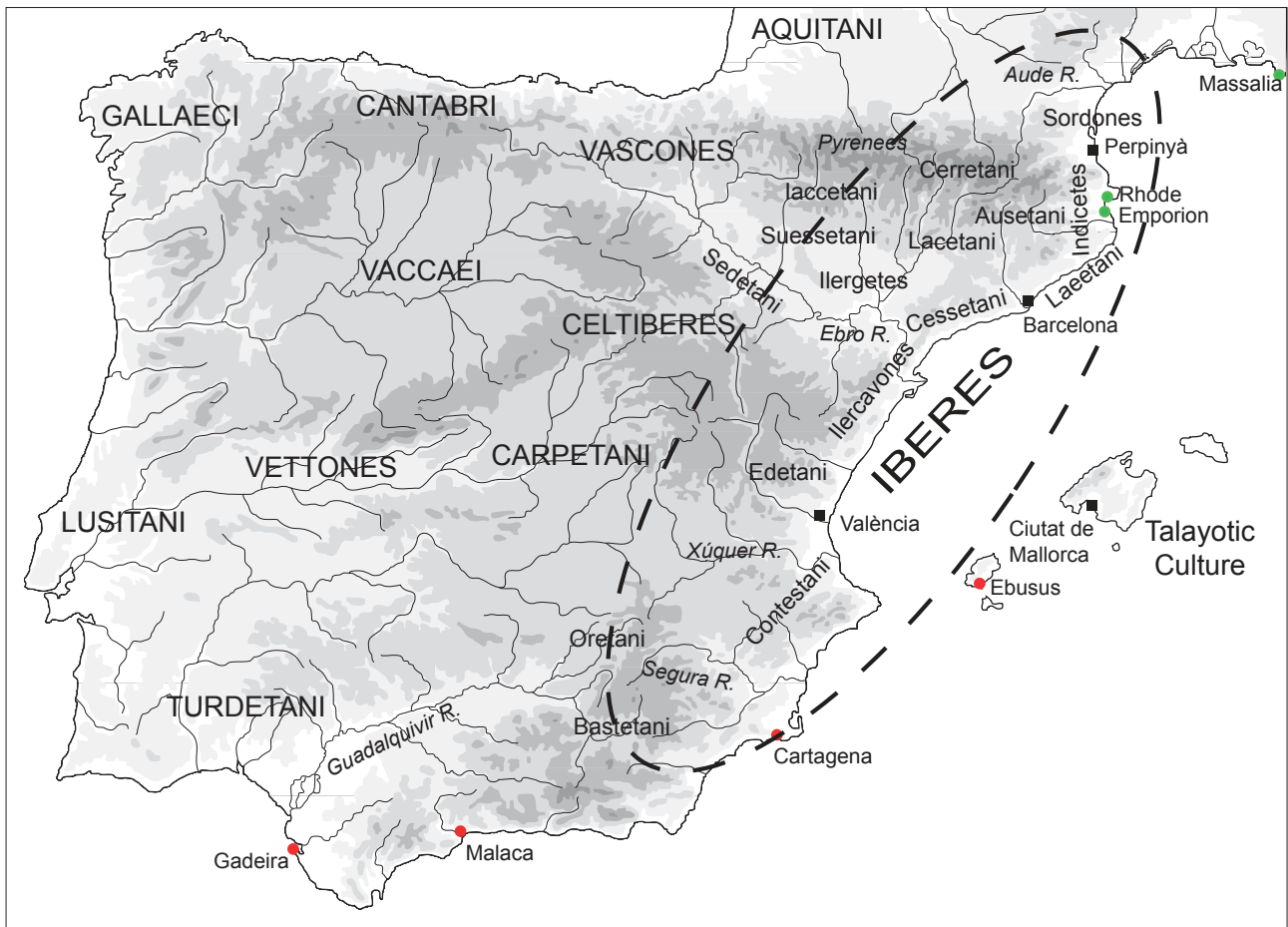


FIGURE 1. Palaeoethnological map (simplified) of the Iberian Peninsula indicating the approximate area occupied by the Iberians. Map background: C. Sánchez, Casa de Velázquez, 1995.

ples mentioned in the written sources. During the nineteen-sixties and seventies, typological studies and the establishment of reliable chronologies dominated archaeological research into the Iberian culture and achieved remarkable success. Under the more or less direct influence of processual archaeology, from the late seventies and early eighties, extensive surveys and large-scale excavations began. These have continued to date and have allowed the recognition of various settlement patterns, which probably correspond, in turn, to more or less differentiated forms of socio-political organization.

In this contribution, we present the state of knowledge of a specific region, the coastal area of present-day Catalonia, where a process of urbanization is attested that was linked, to a large extent but perhaps not exclusively, to the formation of the first states in the region. We begin with the definition of urbanism we proposed in Chapter II (page 16). This definition combines Louis Wirth's sociological characterizations with the functional aspects of the city in relation to the organization and exploitation of a larger territory (most recently, Smith 2007 and 2016, drawing on a long tradition of geographical literature that goes back to Christaller and von Thünen). Wirth defined the city as a place where a marked social distance between its inhabitants is combined with a high degree of residential proximity within a limited area (Wirth 1938, 8). M. Weber, on the other hand, stressed the absence of personal reciprocal acquaintance between significant parts of the city's population (1969 [1921], 3).

The logical consequence of this definition of the city is that urban functions alone –i.e. the control and exploitation of a territory– are not sufficient to characterize it, since they can be exercised by settlements of very different natures. Social diversity and impersonality are, in our view, essential features of the city, and they have obvious implications regarding its population size. A minimum number of inhabitants is necessary, below which we cannot speak of a “city”, even if there are urban functions. As indicated –and justified– in the aforementioned paper, we understand that this minimum figure should be around a thousand people. This obviously leads us to the problem of calculating the population of archaeological settlements, an issue that has long been discussed by a number of scholars, as indicated in page 16 of this volume. The most useful contribution in terms of this article is that of Moreno and Valor (2010), who calculated a population index of 26 m<sup>2</sup> per inhabitant for the Iberian town of Kelin. The population figures

given below for several Iberian sites were calculated using this index.

## 2. The characterization of the cities of the northern Iberian coast

In this section, we describe the characteristics of the urban centres in two areas with neatly differentiated settlement patterns and historical trajectories during the Iberian period. On the one hand, we have the Catalan coast between the Pyrenees in the north and the mountains of Prades, Serra de l'Argentera and Coll de Balaguer in the south, and on the other, the region around the lower course of the Ebro and, inland, the Móra depression (Fig. 2).

### 2.1. The north-central coast of Catalonia

The analysis of the settlement patterns in this area has proven the existence during the fourth and third centuries BC of three large areas with very similar characteristics, which probably indicates the same basic form of socio-political organization. The boundaries of these areas, as established with archaeological criteria (the median distance between the largest habitation sites of each territory), coincide with geographic features of some importance (in particular the Garraf Massif, on the central Catalan coast) and, as will be seen later, also with the respective locations the ancient sources (supported, at least in some measure, by numismatic data) indicate for three of the major Iberian ethnic groups: from north to south respectively, the Indiketes, Laetani and Cesse-tani.

The archaeological identification of these territories is mainly based on the existence of three large settlements, one in each. In the northern area (Girona province), we have Ullastret (probably the Iberian Indika) that, including the peripheral occupation or activity areas, covered some 18 ha and would have had a population of between 5,770 and 6,920 people. In the central area (Barcelona province), Burriac (probably the Iberian Ilturo) occupied around 10 hectares and would have had some 3,850 inhabitants. Finally, to the south, we have Tarragona (probably Iberian Cesse or Cosse and also, without doubt, Tarakon). This site is poorly known due to its historical continuity in Roman times and thereafter to the present day. However, the limited archaeological data available indicate that it occupied at least 9 ha in the lower part of the city and much more if it also included the upper part, which is a perfectly reasonable assumption. Its minimum population would



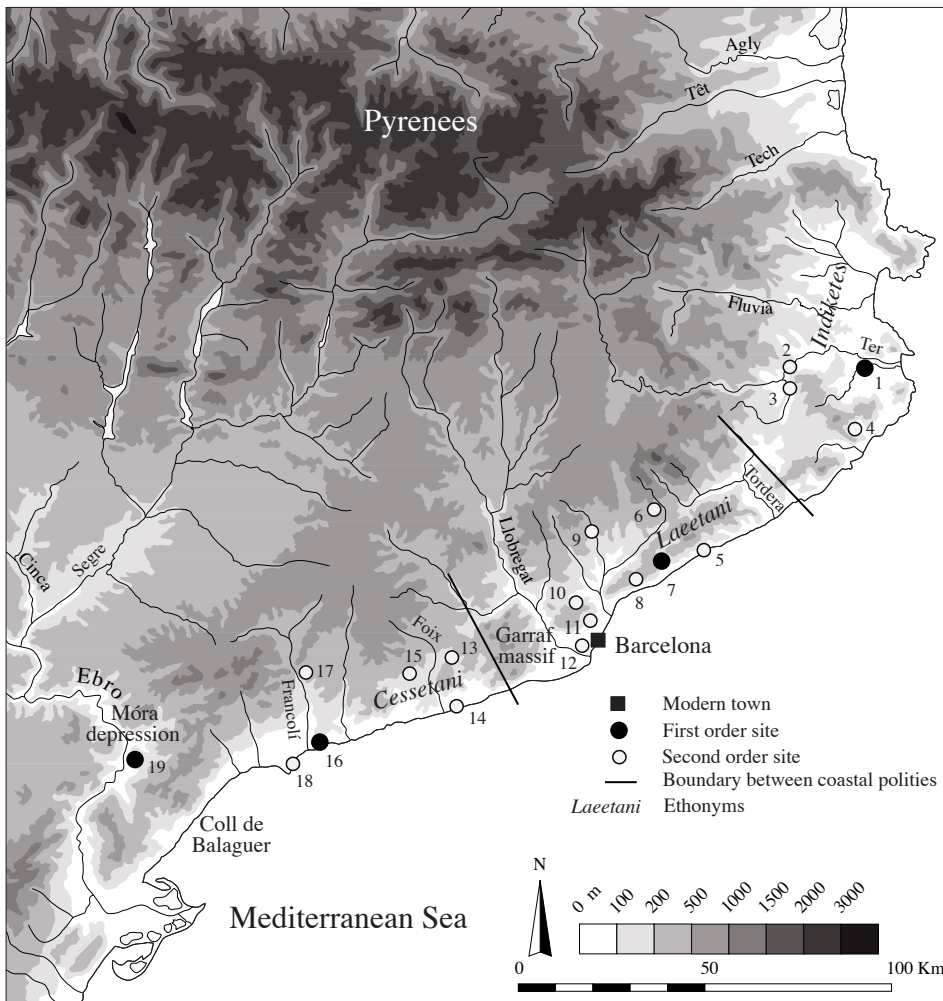


FIGURE 2. Study area indicating the main sites mentioned in the text and the putative boundaries between the political territories of the coastal area.

1. Ullastret
2. Sant Julià de Ramis
3. La Creueta
4. Castell Barri
5. Torre dels Encantats
6. Puig Castell
7. Burriac
8. Cadira del Bisbe
9. Torre Roja
10. Turó de ca n'Oliver
11. Turó de la Rovira
12. Montjuïc
13. Olèrdola
14. Darró
15. Masies de Sant Miquel
16. Taronk-Kese
17. Els Vilars
18. La Cella
19. Castellet de Banyoles

have been some 3,500 people. A limited number of second-order towns, with areas of between 2 and 4 ha, is also attested in each of these territories.<sup>8</sup> They include Sant Julià de Ramis, in the area controlled by Ullastret; Puig Castell (Fig. 3), Torre Roja, Cadira del Bisbe, and possibly Montjuïc in the Laetanian territory, centred on Burriac; Turó de ca n'Oliver (although rather smaller at 1.8 ha) (Fig. 4) and Turó de la Rovira (possibly about 2 ha) may be tentatively included in this group; Olèrdola, Darró, Masies de Sant Miquel (some 1,350 people), El Vilar de Valls and, possibly, La Cella in the southern region, around Tarragona. It is possible to group in a third order of magnitude the habitation sites with sizes ranging from approximately 0.5 to 1 ha. Many of these third-order sites would have been large villages closely linked to the exploitation of agricultural resources. However, there was probably a considerable diversity within this category. This is shown, for example,

by Alorda Park (Calafell, Tarragona province), a strongly fortified settlement composed of a small number of large houses in which a large amount of imported pottery, frequently of good quality, has been found, leading it to be considered as an aristocratic citadel (Asensio *et al.* 2005). Even below this third category of nucleated sites, a large number of small or very small dwelling places is attested in the three coastal areas; they indicate the existence of farms or other rural settlements such as hamlets or isolated houses scattered across the landscape, some of which have been excavated. This kind of site seems particularly common in the Cessetani territory.

The data set out in the preceding paragraph indicate the existence of highly hierarchical and centralized settlement systems, with three size levels of nucleated habitation sites that could reflect the three levels of decision-making that are typical of relatively well developed administrative

8. Taking into account the 26 m<sup>2</sup> index per inhabitant used in this contribution, the minimum surface area of urban centres should be around 2.5 ha. However, given the current state of research, it seems acceptable to allow a certain flexibility that permits the inclusion in this category of settlements of some 2 ha, particularly when they appear to be the second-order sites of a given territory.

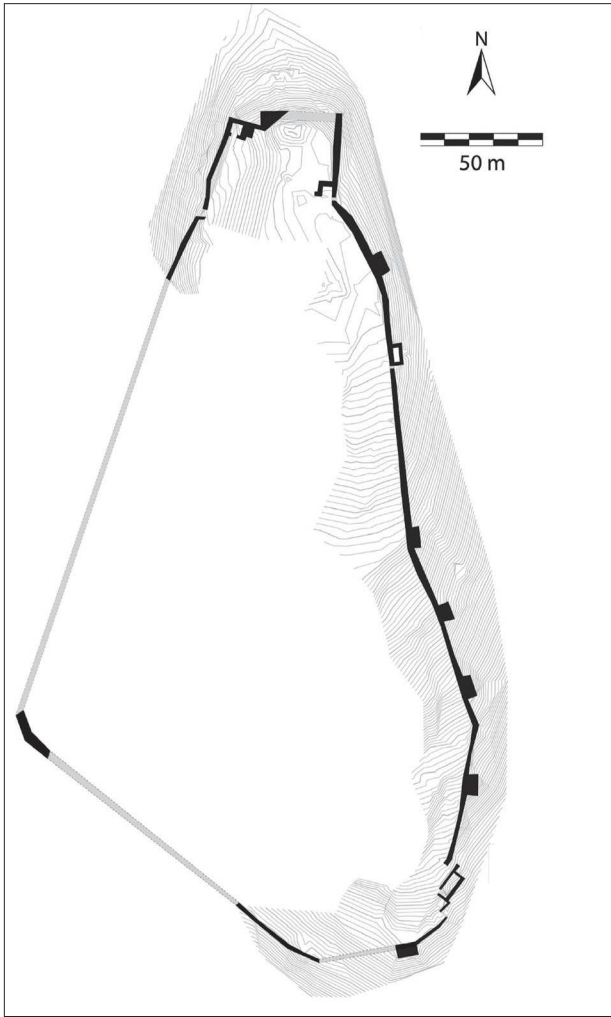


FIGURE 3. Plan of Puig Castell (Cànoves i Samalús) (after Guàrdia 2016, 877).

structures and, consequently, of state-like political organisations (Marcus and Feinman 1998, 8-9; Flannery 1998, 17, 55). Similar systems have been detected in Valencia, particularly (but not exclusively) in the case of the territories presided over by the first-order sites of Edeta (Sant Miquel de Lliria) (Bonet 1995) and Kelin (Los Villares, Caudete de las Fuentes) (Mata *et al.* 2001a, 2001b). Since the three largest sites on the Catalan coast presumably controlled, organized and exploited areas of a considerable size, ranging from 2,000 km<sup>2</sup> to 3,000 km<sup>2</sup>, their status as cities seems indisputable from a functional point of view (see pages 14-16 in this volume).

To all this, we may well add a strong symbolic dimension. This is revealed by the fact that, between the fifth and the third centuries BC, all the tombs attested in the Indikete and Laetanian territories (none has been found so far from this period in Cessetania) are located near the towns that presided over these territories, i.e. Ullastret and Burriac (Martin and Genís 1993; Garcia Roselló 1993). It is a logical assumption that these necropolises were the burial places of the elites of the respective territories, apparently the only social group that had the right to graves substantial enough to be archaeologically recognizable today). If this is so, the physical proximity between first-order habitation sites and the elite necropolises would confirm the central role of the former in the territories' political organization.

Beyond their size and proximity to the necropolises, the sociological traits of the large first-or-

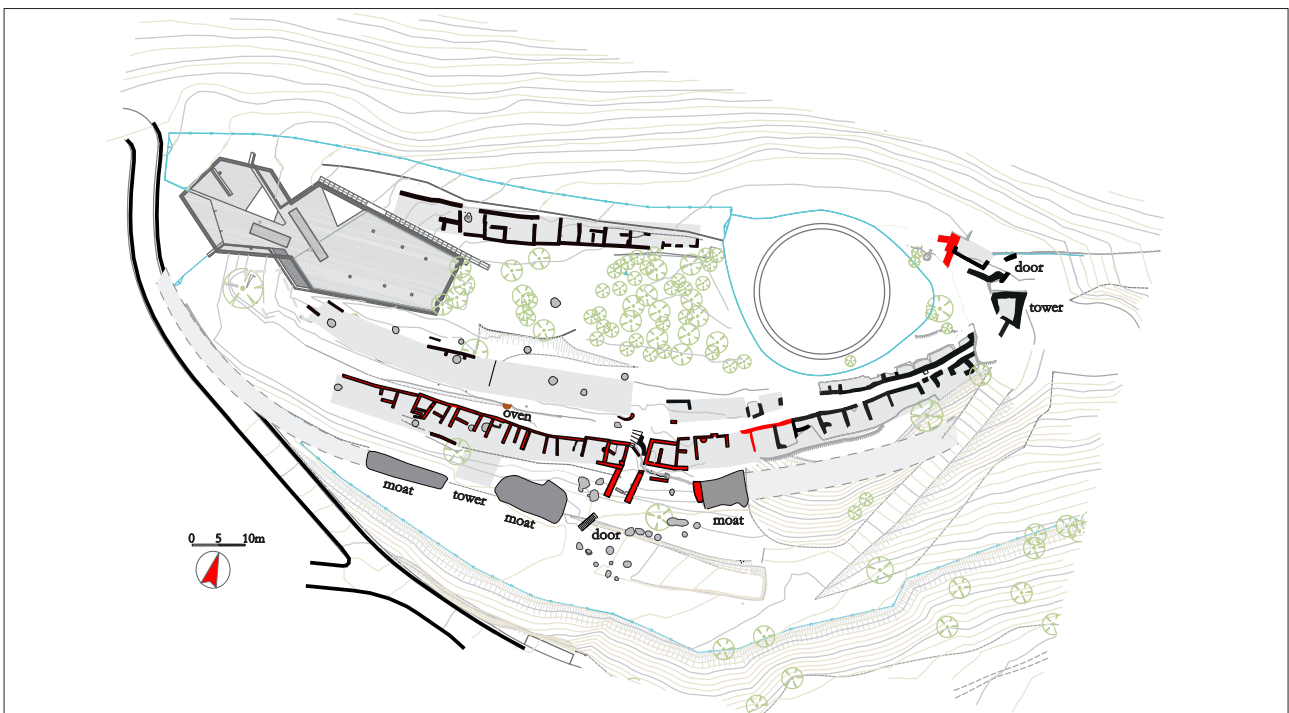


FIGURE 4. Plan of Turó de ca n'Oliver (Cerdanyola) (Museu de Cerdanyola, modified).



der settlements must necessarily be deduced from their internal organization. However, these are only known in any detail in the case of Ullastret, the only site of this size that has been excavated on a large scale. This is thanks mainly to the persevering work of M. Oliva Prat, who undertook numerous excavation campaigns between 1948 and 1977 (Oliva 1966; Oliva 1976). His work was later continued by J. Maluquer de Motes, M. A. Martín, F. Gracia and, more recently, G. de Prado and F. Codina (Maluquer de Motes and Picazo 1992; Gracia, García and Munilla 2000; Martín 2000; Martín *et al.* 2004; Martín *et al.* 2010; Codina, Plana-Mallart and Prado in this volume). The site is composed of two large habitation areas,

both protected by strong defensive walls (Fig. 5). Topographically, these nuclei are very different, as reflected by the names that designate them. Puig de Sant Andreu, located on the mainland, is on a relatively high hill (*puig* in Catalan), some 30 m above the surrounding terrain and bordered in some places by very steep slopes. Illa d'en Reixac, in contrast, was on a low island (*illa* in Catalan). It rose 13 m above the surface of Ullastret lake, a short distance from the shore. It had a flat surface and was therefore very different to Puig de Sant Andreu.

Most of the excavations have been carried out at Puig de Sant Andreu, where a large part of the defensive walls and extensive sectors of the urban

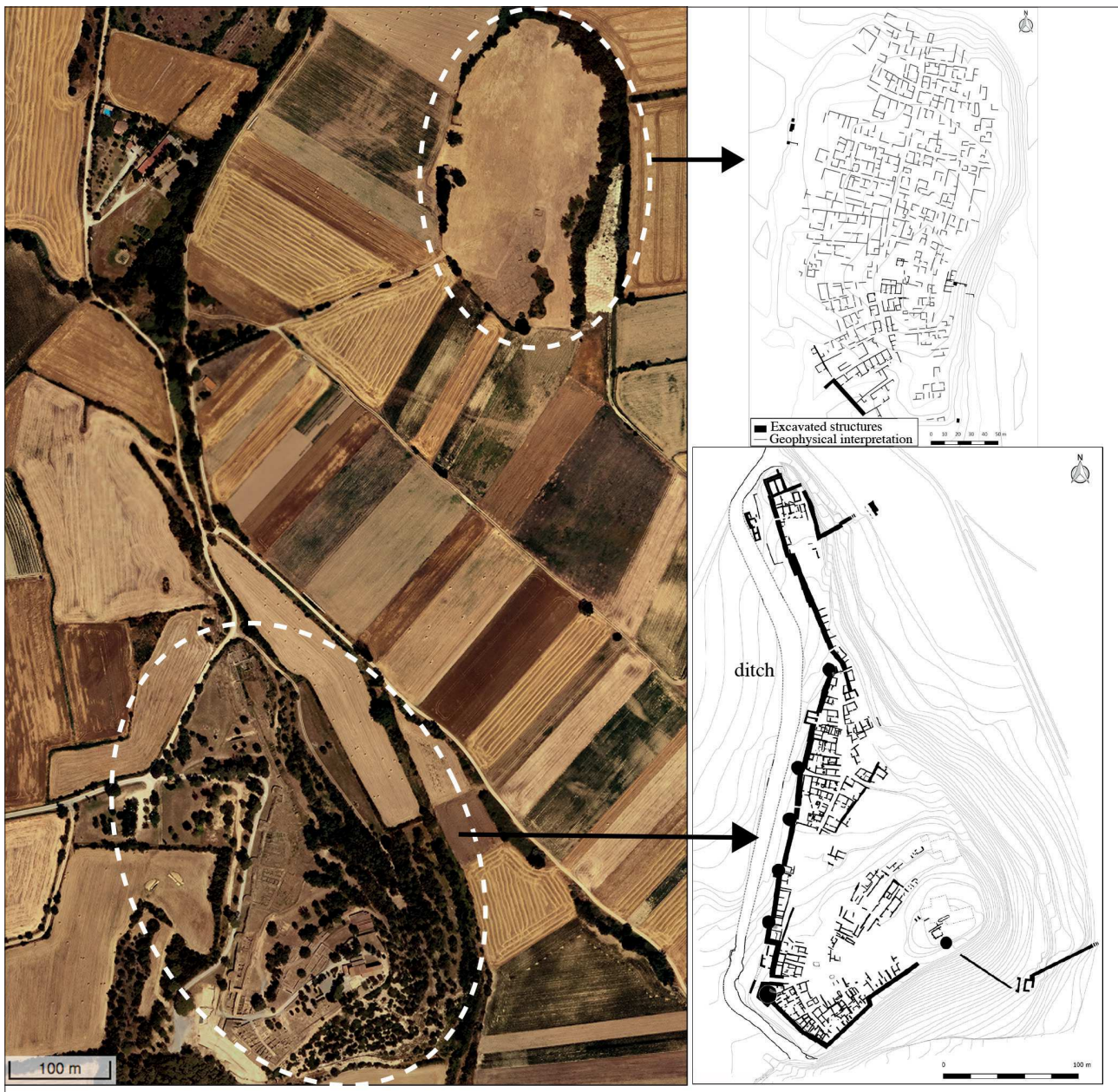


FIGURE 5. Location and plans of Puig de Sant Andreu and Illa d'en Reixac (Ullastret) (MAC-Ullastret, modified).



layout have been revealed. However, the geophysical survey carried out a few years ago on Illa d'en Reixac provided a very clear image of the site's urban structure (Codina *et al.* 2016). In chronological terms, the building of the first defensive wall at Puig de Sant Andreu, which protected an area of some three hectares, is dated to the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. The city was occupied until around 200 BC, when it was violently destroyed and abandoned, undoubtedly in connection with the Second Punic War or Consul Cato's punitive campaign against the Iberian uprising in 195 BC. Between these two dates, Puig de Sant Andreu underwent major growth towards the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, when the whole northern and eastern flank was incorporated into the walled enclosure, probably reflecting a sound demographic growth during the preceding decades.

As Ullastret is the subject of another contribution in this volume, here we will just point out some features that evidence the sociological diversity of its inhabitants, which can be linked to the multiplicity of functions carried out within the site. Perhaps the most obvious is the variety in the size and complexity of the houses documented at Illa d'en Reixac, where simple two- or three-roomed dwellings (Martin *et al.* 1999, 47-61) are found alongside large, complex mansions of some 700 m<sup>2</sup> (Martin, Mataró and Caravaca 1997). At Puig de Sant Andreu, however, complex houses seem to predominate, some of which were undoubtedly large aristocratic residences. This could suggest some kind of social difference in relation to Illa d'en Reixac. It is also worth mentioning that two temples of classical inspiration have been found on the highest point of Puig de Sant Andreu and are currently undergoing a complete re-study. A third large building a short distance away, on the hill's northern flank (Casas *et al.* 2005), has also been considered to be a temple, but could also be interpreted as a meeting hall with political-administrative functions. These exceptional buildings apparently do not have any equivalent either in Illa d'en Reixac (going by the results of the geophysical survey) or at any other Iberian site. This suggests that Puig de Sant Andreu was also an important religious and, probably, ceremonial centre, at least in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Furthermore, the two sites that make up this large settlement were protected by major fortifications that, apart from their purely defensive aspect, contributed to forming a landscape of power focusing on the city. The walls around Puig de Sant Andreu are much better known; they were defended by an impressive ditch discovered in recent years (Codina and Prado 2018). Finally, we should also mention a considerable peri-urban occupation, which ex-

tended hundreds of metres from the walled sites. This would have been largely rural in nature, but there are clear indications of an artisans' district of considerable size in the sector located to the north-west of Puig de Sant Andreu (the Camp d'Artigues and Gou-Batlle sectors) (Plana-Mallart and Martin 2012); it was devoted to metallurgical and pottery production, and a small sector of it has been excavated (Martin *et al.* 2008; Plana-Mallart and Martin 2012).

The information retrieved from Ullastret allows us to recognize a variety of activities and social aspects among its inhabitants that clearly correspond to the previously defined notion of a city. Information from the other two large towns (Burriac and Tarragona) is much scantier. In the former (Fig. 6), which has been much less excavated than Ullastret, the best documented archaeological features are the defensive wall and towers that are evidence of a major building effort. Domestic architecture is, however, virtually unknown. A relatively large building was labelled as "singular" by its discoverers, who considered it to be a meeting hall (Barberà and Pascual 1979-1980, 212-222; Gonzalo and Vila 1997; Vila 1994), although it is more likely to have been part of a large house (Zamora 2007). The Iberian-period remains found in Tarragona (Fig. 7) are extremely difficult to interpret, given their very limited number and fragmentary nature (Adserias *et al.* 1993; Diloli 2015). In the current state of research, Ullastret appears to be an exceptional site by reason of its complexity and the variety of the buildings attested. However, we must keep in mind that this could be due to the poor preservation and limited research of the other large Iberian cities in the study area. It is not unreasonable to believe that, in their essential aspects, Burriac and Tarragona would have been quite similar to the capital of the Indiketes, and in our opinion their urban nature is evident.

We know even less about the second-order towns, either due to conservation challenges or just to very limited or even a complete lack of research (or sometimes both). A good example is Sant Julià de Ramis in Indiketian territory, some 30 km to the east of Ullastret. Located on the top of the hill from which it takes its name, it is an elongated, winding elevation of about 3 ha in area. Only a small part has been investigated in two sectors, one in the centre and the other in the north-western corner. In the former, a defensive wall from the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC is attested, as well as a habitation area composed mainly of one-roomed houses; only one (House 1), at the southern end, is more complex, since it consists of at least seven different spaces (Burch *et al.* 2001, 35-

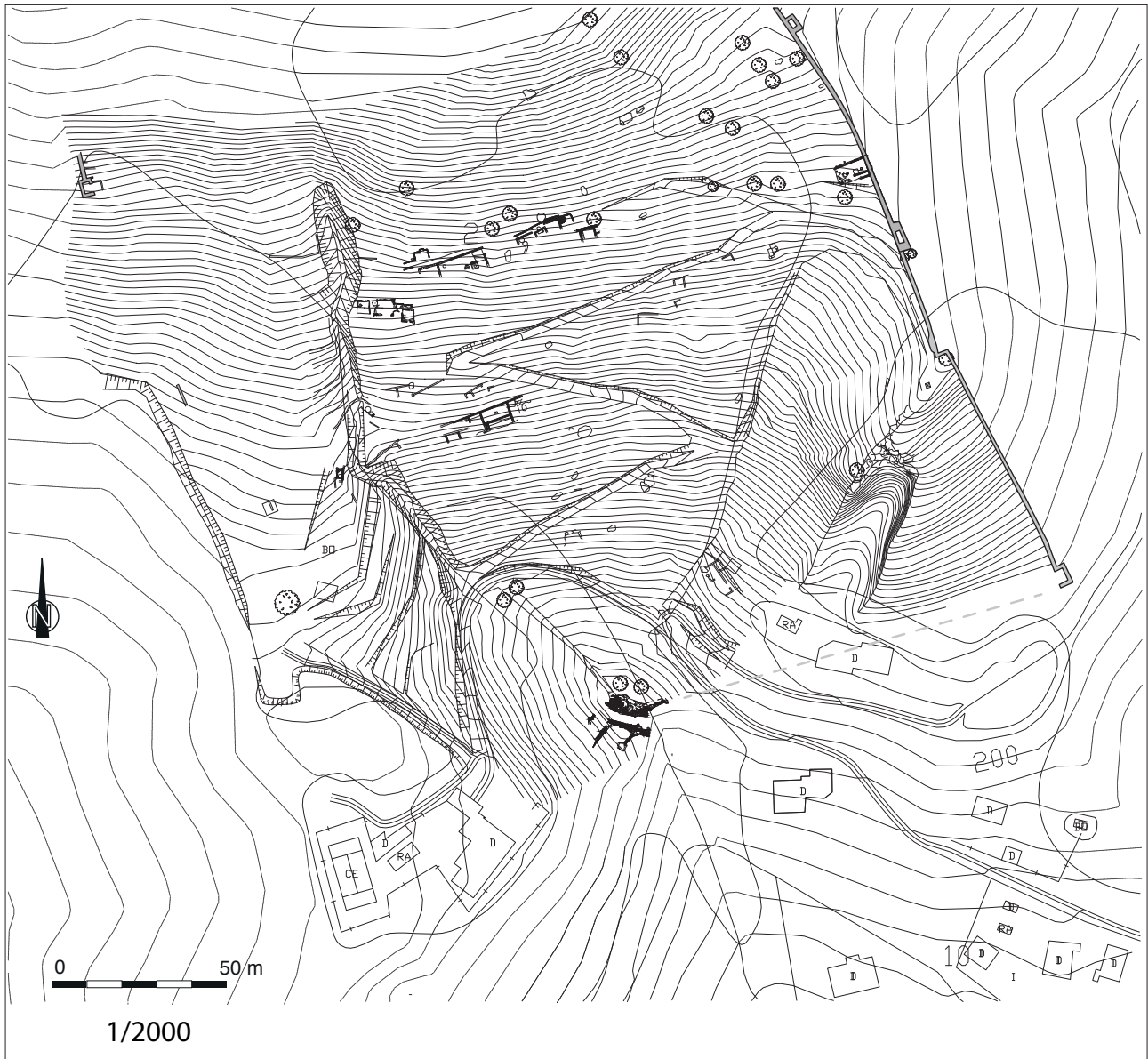


FIGURE 6. Plan of Burriac (Cabrera de Mar) (after Zamora 2007).

52). Apparently, therefore, this settlement offers some indication of the social diversity typical of urban sites, although the limitations of the available information invite prudence.

The Iberian occupation of Olèrdola was considerably affected by continuous occupation throughout the Roman and medieval periods. In the Iberian period it covered some 3.5 ha, although perhaps not all of it was occupied (Molist *et al.* 2009b, 603). The remains dated to this period are scant, but the excavations carried out between 1995 and 2006 revealed a defensive wall with a gate flanked by two towers; immediately inside, there was an area occupied by dyeing and/or tanning and metallurgical workshops (Molist 2009a). With these data, only the remarkable size of the settlement allows us to assume it had a truly urban nature.

The remaining second-order sites mentioned above are even less well-known. An exception, however, is Masies de Sant Miquel in Cessetani territory. This town occupied an area of about 3.5 ha. Two trial digs brought to light a very small section of a defensive wall and allowed the chronology of the site to be placed at between the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC and around 200 BC, when it was destroyed and abandoned (Carrasco, Pallejà and Revilla 1998; Adserias, Cela and Marí 2001; Cela, Adserias and Revilla 2003). A geophysical survey carried out in 2018 confirmed the existence of major fortifications (although their precise structure is not clear in all places) and revealed the urban layout of the southern half of the city (Fig. 8) (Noguera *et al.* in press; Sala *et al.* in press). It is based on three streets of a considerable width (between 2 and 4 m) oriented north to south (Streets 1 to 3), two of which,



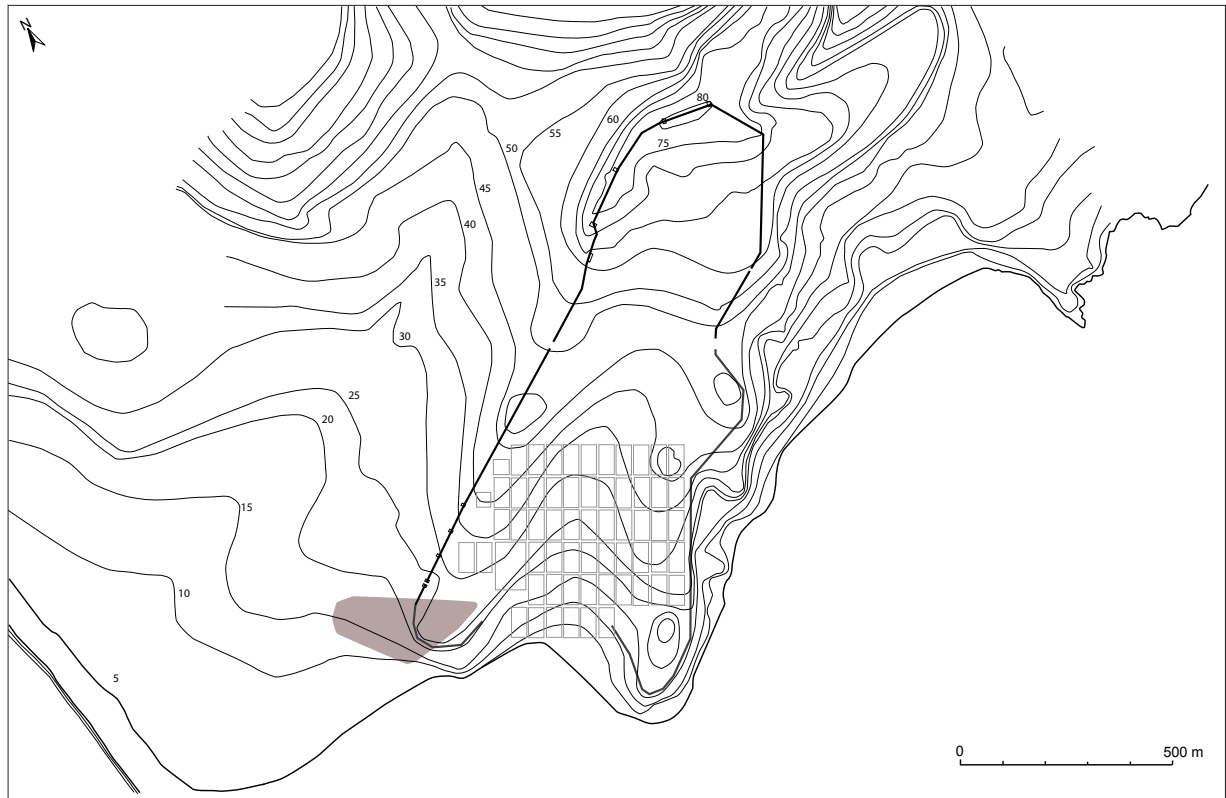


FIGURE 7. Plan of the distribution area of finds and hypothetical size of the Iberian city of Taronk-Kese (topographic map background: Macias *et al.* 2017).

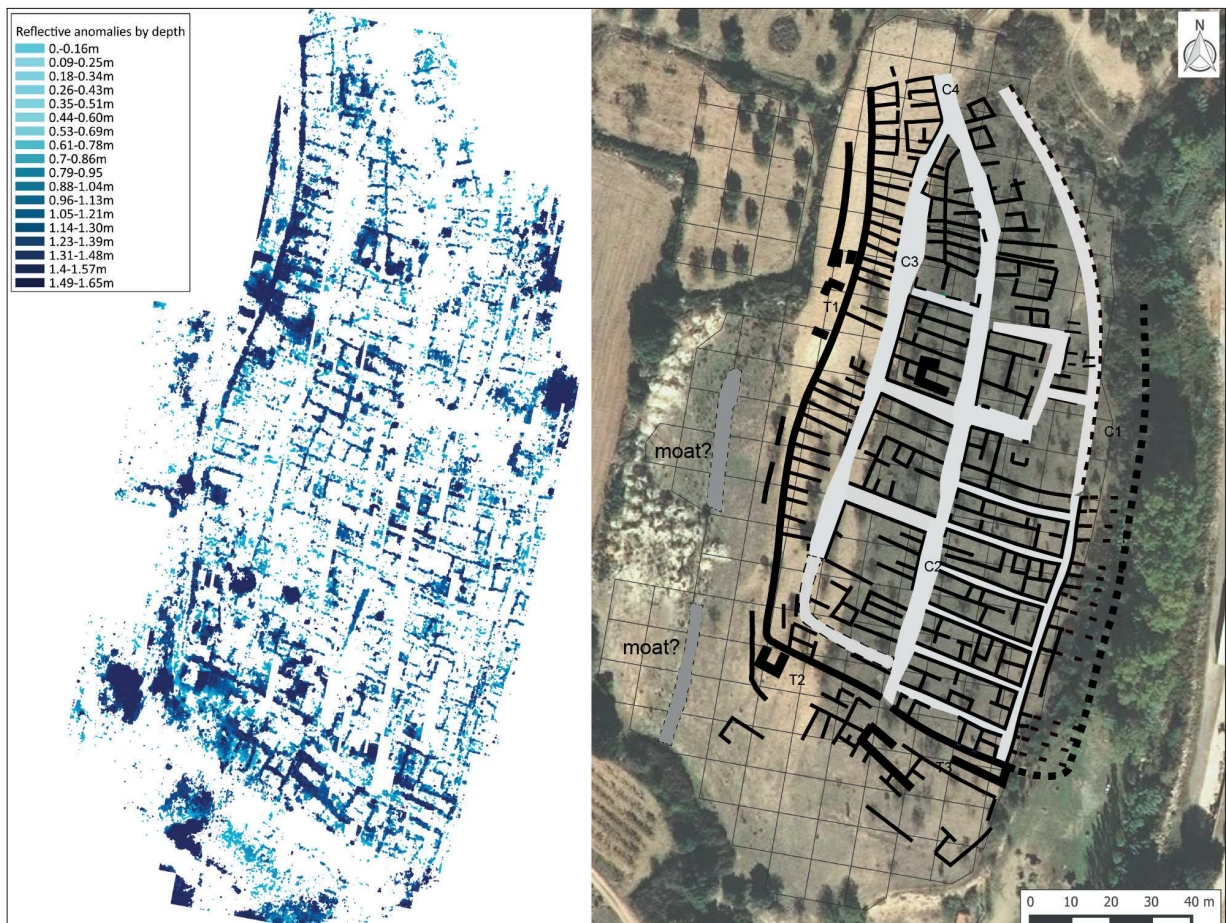


FIGURE 8. Masies de Sant Miquel southern area (Banyeres del Penedès): a) Results of the geophysical prospection; b) Restitution of the plan according to the prospection results.

at least, come together in the northern part of the surveyed area, in what might be an open space or a wide avenue. These streets separate four large habitation areas, each with some distinctive features. The easternmost street has virtually disappeared due to the erosive action of the Sant Miquel stream. Immediately to the west, a second habitation zone is divided transversally by a series of narrower east-to-west streets that determine several elongated rectangular blocks of fairly regular dimensions. This scheme, however, blurs in the northernmost part. The third zone appears to have been occupied by large habitation blocks, as only three east-west roads can be made out. The westernmost habitation area is made up of small juxtaposed buildings erected against the defensive wall, which constitutes their rear-wall. Unfortunately, the plan provided by the geophysical survey does not allow us to clearly recognize the domestic units, although it is clear that the westernmost zone was occupied by small buildings, while the largest ones occupied the central area. In spite of these difficulties, a considerable diversity of size and structure can be perceived, as well as a separation into neighbourhoods, all of which clearly adhere to the sociological heterogeneity typical of urban centres.

Other important features of the urban sites in this area are the relatively large number of written documents and the significant volume of imported Greek and Punic pottery. Among the former, it is worth mentioning the inscriptions of some length on lead sheets, which can be linked to the administration or trade (Sanmartí 2004; 2009). The latter represent 16.5% of the total number of pottery vessels found in Ullastret, 14% in Masies de Sant Miquel and 20.7% in Tarragona (Asensio 2015). These figures contrast clearly with those from smaller sites, such as Puig Castellar in Santa Coloma de Gramenet (3.6%) or Les Maleses in Montcada i Reixac (2.7%), reflecting a major presence of the elites in the urban centres.

## 2.2. The lower course of the Ebro River and the Móra Depression

Surveys and excavations in this region in recent decades have proved the existence of two different settlement systems in the area between Miravet and the mouth of the Ebro and in the Móra Depression.

In the former, where the River Ebro is framed by important mountain massifs, the most common settlement model consists of small, strongly fortified sites, whose areas rarely exceed half a hectare (Noguera 1998; Asensio, Belarte and Noguera 2001; Bea *et al.* 2012). Castellot de la Roca Roja (Belarte, Noguera and Sanmartí 2002) and Assut

de Tivenys (Diloli and Bea 2005) are prominent examples. In this territorial context, only Tortosa (Roman Dertosa), which has been assumed to correspond to the Hibera mentioned in ancient sources, could have been an urban site; the putative Iberian town has traditionally been located on La Suda hill (Diloli 1996). The archaeological data confirm the existence of an Iberian site at Tortosa, although they are still very sparse (Diloli and Ferré 2008). The most substantial recent findings are dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC (Diloli, Ferré and Vilà 2012). From its strategic situation, we can assume that Tortosa was indeed an important site, very likely of an urban nature, but the data we have to date are insufficient to confirm this view.

The Móra Depression is a natural geographic unit of almost 7,000 hectares, crossed from north to south by the Ebro River and with a considerable potential for agricultural production. The data on this territory's prehistory are relatively abundant, in particular for the Late Bronze and the Early Iron Ages. In contrast, the area seems to have been very sparsely populated from the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century BC on. A large settlement, Castellet de Banyoles (Tivissa), was abruptly founded and built quickly in the 230s or 220s BC. It was located in a strategic location for controlling the communications routes, particularly the course of the Ebro River and adjacent areas. The site is also relatively close to the mining area of Bellmunt and, in general, the Priorat region, where significant place-names relating to silver, such as Serra de l'Argentera, are attested. Apparently, the rest of the Móra Depression remained vacant and the whole population appears to have been concentrated in this large site. All the evidence indicates that Castellet de Banyoles controlled and exploited the whole territory of this natural region. The site was destroyed and abandoned around 200 BC and re-occupied, perhaps only partially, during the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the first quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.

The first archaeological data from Castellet de Banyoles dates from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as a consequence of fortuitous discoveries of exceptional items such as gold jewellery, silver objects, silver coins and silverware (Bosch Gimpera 1915; Serra Ràfols 1941; García y Bellido 1950; Fernández Fuster 1955; Blázquez 1955-56 and 1957-58, Marín Ceballos 1983; Olmos 1996). In the 1930s, two pentagonal towers flanking the main entrance were revealed and a number of buildings were excavated in the early 1940s (Vilaseca, Serra Ràfols and Brull 1949). In the late 1970s, Ramon Pallarès carried out some trials (Pallarès 1984a, 1984b and 1987) and since 1998 the University of Barcelona has undertaken large excavations that have uncovered a substantial part of the site (Asensio,





FIGURE 9. Castellet de Banyoles (Tivissa): A) General plan, with indication of Zone 1; B) Plan of Zone 1.

Miró and Sanmartí 2002 and 2005; Sanmartí *et al.* 2012; Asensio *et al.* 2012) (Fig. 9).

In the north-eastern corner (Zone 1), a whole neighbourhood has been discovered; it consists of three habitation blocks (A, B, C) separated by open areas and wide streets. A notable feature of Block A is the three large contiguous complex houses (Buildings 1 to 3, with areas ranging from 260 m<sup>2</sup> to 350 m<sup>2</sup>), all of which are preceded by a large courtyard accessible from the street through very wide gates, large enough for carts. It is important to mention the high-value finds discovered in

these houses: gold jewellery in Building 2 and six silver coins in Building 1 (two Roman *denarii* and one *victoriatus*, as well as three Iberian imitations of Emporitan drachmas). There are good reasons to believe that at least some of the jewels and coins found in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century also came from these dwellings. Two more houses in Block C (17 and 18) are smaller, but still occupy a considerable area (130 to 140 m<sup>2</sup>) and have a relatively complex structure with a large front courtyard. They have also yielded gold jewellery and unique objects, including a glass plate of eastern Medi-

terranean origin, perhaps from Alexandrian workshops, and a bronze item with sophisticated decoration in the form of a human face. Immediately to the east of the large residences of Block A there are two more large buildings composed of several spaces, but without the courtyard; they were related to metallurgical production. Finally, Block B consists of much simpler houses, with only one or two spaces ranging from 35 m<sup>2</sup> to 70 m<sup>2</sup>. They have not yielded any luxury items, although this could be partially due to the notable devastation of this part of the site. The north-eastern corner of this block was occupied by a sanctuary.

The north-eastern tip of the defensive wall, immediately to the west of the northern pentagonal tower (Zone 2), has also been excavated, along with the houses that are attached to it. This has allowed us to better understand the structure of the access zone to the city and the defensive architectural elements that protected it.

The excavation of Zone 3 has so far been limited to removing the surface level in order to detect the preserved remains and to understand their general structure. It looks similar to Zone 1, although some differences in the structure of the largest houses have been observed. We could therefore suspect the existence of different neighbourhoods sharing the same basic structure while being occupied by internally hierarchized gentilitian groups. Overall, and despite certain difficulties in identifying the houses in Block B of Zone 1, the minimum number of domestic units can be assessed at around thirty, which could have housed a population of some 150 people. Assuming that the occupation density was approximately the same in the whole settlement, the total population could be evaluated at approximately 1,012 people. This figure is, however, much lower than that obtained by applying the previously mentioned index of 26 inhabitants per square metre proposed by Moreno and Valor (which would mean 1,730 people). However, the discrepancy may be explained to some extent by the fact that the large dwellings of Zone 1 could have housed more (maybe many more) than 4-5 people.

Castellet de Banyoles provides a clear, although partial image of the structure of a second-order Iberian city in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. The diversity in size and complexity of the houses is particularly evident, which reflects the coexistence in a limited area of persons and social groups of very different social and economic statuses. It is possible that each neighbourhood was occupied by their specific gentilitian groups that were internally (and perhaps also externally) hierarchized; it is also likely that each such neighbourhood would have had a specific gentilitian shrine, although this remains to be confirmed.

### 3. Cities, states and city-states

The data we have presented in the previous pages demonstrate the urban nature of the first- and second-order settlements in the study area in accordance with a definition that is both functional and sociological. A second issue on which it is necessary to reflect is the nature of the polities in which these cities developed and the role that urban sites played in these political entities.

The first concern is about the relationship between the emergence of cities and the formation of states, an issue that has long been debated. It can very often be shown that these phenomena coincide approximately in time, so we can assume they develop hand-in-hand in the same evolutionary process. This process, in its final stage, implies the appearance and consolidation of hereditary and, therefore, institutionalized inequality (i.e. ultimately private property), as well as the creation of the administrative, coercive and ideological instruments (in other words, the state) that make its persistence possible. In fact, recent progress in archaeological research has proved that a large number of the once presumed exceptions to the correlation between state formation and urbanization do not actually exist (Hansen 2000, 14). The existence of states without cities, although possible, is in fact very rare. Moreover, it seems that in this kind of state without cities, urban settlements end up developing quite quickly (in a century or even less; for example, in medieval Norway) (Hansen 2000, 14-15). Regarding the reverse proposition, i.e. the possibility of urbanization without the related or prior appearance of a state, we can only say that it would be contradictory to the definition of "city", at least to the one used in this contribution. This implies the existence of sociological diversity linked to social inequality and political functions related to the hierarchical control of a territory. Therefore, we understand that settlements of a large or relatively large size documented by anthropologists and archaeologists that lack power structures should not be defined as cities, even though some scholars consider them as such. In short, it seems clear that "there is a remarkably close connection between urbanization and state formation" (Hansen 2000, 14).

A second issue is the temporal order in which these phenomena occur. Urbanization and state formation often emerged simultaneously and in close correlation, but it can be argued that this was not always the case. We have already mentioned the situation in medieval Norway, where the existence of a state is assumed since the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD, while the first cities did not emerge before the

11<sup>th</sup> century AD (Hansen 2000, 15). Conversely, N. Yoffee claims that “cities were the transformative social environments in which states were themselves created” (Yoffee 2004, 45), which obviously implies their precedence in relation to states.

We believe the connection between urbanization and state formation can be demonstrated in the case of the central and northern regions of coastal Catalonia. As we have indicated in previous works (Sanmartí 2004; Sanmartí *et al.* 2006; Sanmartí 2009; Sanmartí 2014), in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, and probably as a result of a long process of demographic expansion during the first half of the first millennium BC, the growth of some settlements is documented beyond the limits of hamlets and villages. To this we can add the appearance of complex fortifications that, apart from their defensive role, constituted a landscape of power unprecedented in this area. Ullastret, with its wall equipped with cylindrical towers, is the most representative case. Perhaps it is possible to add Burriac and Tarragona, which, as we have already said, in the 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC became the first-order settlements of the Laetani and the Csetani. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, Sant Julià de Ramis and Masies de Sant Miquel were important second-order towns of some 4 ha, although they had been already occupied in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. In this first occupation phase, they also had associated necropolises (Martin 1994; Vilaseca, Solé and Mañé 1963) that, as we shall see later, probably indicate an important presence of the social elite. During the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, the internal structure of the large Iberian settlements we have just mentioned is only partially known, as their remains have either been destroyed by the building of later phases or are barely accessible. Their urban nature, therefore, cannot be established beyond doubt, although they are on a scale that is undoubtedly beyond that of simple villages. We can also assume that they controlled substantial territories and structured settlement systems that were hierarchized, at least to a certain extent. We can still add the case of Turó de ca n’Oliver, which had an area of 1.8 ha. This is rather small to be considered a second-order town, except for the fact that near this site some zoomorphic sculptural remains have been found that would indicate a significant presence of the aristocracy and confirm its importance in the Laetanian settlement pattern. All this may be evidence that during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC power was more territorially divided, the dominant lineages were less hierarchized and the settlement pattern was less centralized.

Another important aspect documented in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC is the formation of an aristocratic

elite (Sanmartí 2004, 2009, 2014; Sanmartí, Plana-Mallart and Martin 2015). One of the most obvious indications of this is the restriction of the funeral ritual to a limited sector of the population, as the number of tombs decreased considerably, whereas there is no indication of any decline in the population. The funerary offerings also indicate that those buried in the tombs were members of the privileged social class. The lack of continuity, except in occasional cases, of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age necropolises must be added to this, as most of the Iberian-period cemeteries were newly founded. Communities had buried their members in the same place for centuries, sometimes creating cemeteries with hundreds of tombs. The fact that they ceased to do this and that new necropolises appeared that were apparently linked to a privileged sector of society, must have been the result of an important change in land property relations. As we have indicated elsewhere (Sanmartí 2014), we believe that the objective (but perhaps not subjective) property of the land was concentrated in the hands of an aristocratic elite. This transition was made possible thanks to the development of an ideology that legitimized inequality, probably by attributing the function of mediation between earthly society and the supernatural powers to the elite and by endowing its members with a different (and superior) nature that justified their particular funeral ritual.

The neatly hierarchical structure of the settlement patterns on the Catalan coast in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC suggests control by the elites over land and agricultural production. This is seemingly confirmed by the existence of large “silo fields” (frequently with hundreds of pits) unrelated to important population centres, as well as by the rapid dissemination of writing, which is attested in many different kinds of documents, some of them probably of an economic or administrative nature. All these traits are typical of states and the relatively small size of these polities (2,000 to 3,000 km<sup>2</sup>, as already mentioned), as well as the existence in each of them of a capital that acted as a political, military, economic, administrative and religious centre, allows them to be included within the city-state model (Charlton and Nichols 1997, 1 and 4-5; Hansen 2000, 16). Significantly, this type of early state usually emerges “in groups of fairly evenly spaced units of approximately equivalent size” (Charlton and Nichols 1997, 1) and that is exactly what we observe in our study area, as well as in Valencia.

From a broader perspective, the city-states of the Catalan coast, along with those in Valencia (Bonet 1995; Mata *et al.* 2001a; 2001b) (*contra*

Grau, Chapter XIII in this volume) and, perhaps, beyond the Pyrenees at Ruscino, the capital of the Sordones and Anserona (Ensérune) (Boissinot and Izac in this volume), constitute a specific “city-state culture” as defined by Hansen (2000, 16-17) and Yoffee (2004, 46). These scholars use this expression to designate a specific region that shares a large number of cultural features (including, most notably, language and writing) and is divided into a number of city-states. The latter may be formed by internal development in a period of economic and demographic growth (evidently the case of the Iberians), as the result of a colonization process (for example, the Greek city-states in the central Mediterranean and the Black Sea areas), or, finally, as a consequence of the disintegration of a wider territorial state. The case under study in this paper is therefore comparable, *mutatis mutandis*, with the city-state cultures that developed in Phoenicia, Greece or Etruria, to mention only some instances of the ancient Mediterranean world. These of course are not the only examples and they confirm the ubiquity of the city-state in the initial phases of state formation (Yoffee 2004, 42-48 and 60), including well-defined territorial states such as ancient Egypt (*Ibidem*, 47).

Of course, it does not follow from the above that all the territories of the Iberian language and culture were occupied by city-states, at least of a size comparable to those of the central and northern coastal area of Catalonia. In fact, we have shown in other contributions (Sanmartí 2014) that, at least judging by the information available, centralized political entities comparable to those described above did not exist in the Iberian territories between central Catalonia and the middle Ebro valley, including the lower Aragon area (see also Asensio and Jornet’s contribution in this volume). On the other hand, the Ilergetes, a very powerful ethnic group that was ruled, if we are to believe the ancient sources, by a dual monarchy, seem to have controlled a vast territory that has been calculated to have covered some 9,500 km<sup>2</sup> (Sanmartí 2001, 122). This figure is much larger than the usual size of city-states (Hansen 2000, 17), including those on the Catalan coast and in Valencia. We may thus conceive of the Ilergetian polity as a “territorial state” (or a “macro-state”, in Hansen’s terminology, as opposed to city-states, that he defines as “micro-states”) (Hansen 2000, 16). The obvious differences of territorial organization within a territory –the north-east of the Iberian Peninsula– that otherwise shares a large number of cultural features, can be legitimately compared to what is attested in Greece. There too urbanization had different characteristics in the *polis* nuclear area and regions located to the west

and north-west of the former, such as Aetolia, Thessaly or an important part of the Peloponnese; not to mention the existence of macro-states such as Macedonia (Bintliff 1994, 241; Morgan 2003).

#### 4. Conclusion

The largest Iberian settlements of the territory considered in this contribution have not been studied in depth, with the remarkable exception of Ullastret. This is explained both for reasons of (poor) preservation of the remains (especially when, like Tarragona, they lie under later settlements) and limited research at a type of site that demands a great deal of economic and scientific investment. However, the analysis of both the settlement patterns on a macroscale and the internal structure of some of these sites (Ullastret and Masies de Sant Miquel) indicate their urban nature. The most important of them (Ullastret-Indika, Burriac-Ilturo, Tarragona-Tarakon-Kesse) presided over polities that may be identified with three specific ethnic groups (Indiketes, Laetani and Cessetani). Owing to their limited territorial size and their neatly hierarchized settlement structures, these polities must be regarded as city-states. They would have flourished alongside neighbouring areas where heterarchic, non-centralized, forms of organization predominated, including the large territorial state of the Ilergetes, which spread across western Catalonia and eastern Aragon. Thus, as in other regions of the ancient Mediterranean, such as Greece, diversity in the forms of socio-political organization seems to have been the rule in the study area during the early stages of the state formation process. The reasons that may explain this and the relations between the different polities and the different kinds of polities are subjects that have yet to be studied and may constitute one of the principal avenues for further research, alongside comparative studies with other Mediterranean regions. This area, therefore, constitutes an excellent laboratory for the analysis of the early stages of urbanism and social complexity.

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