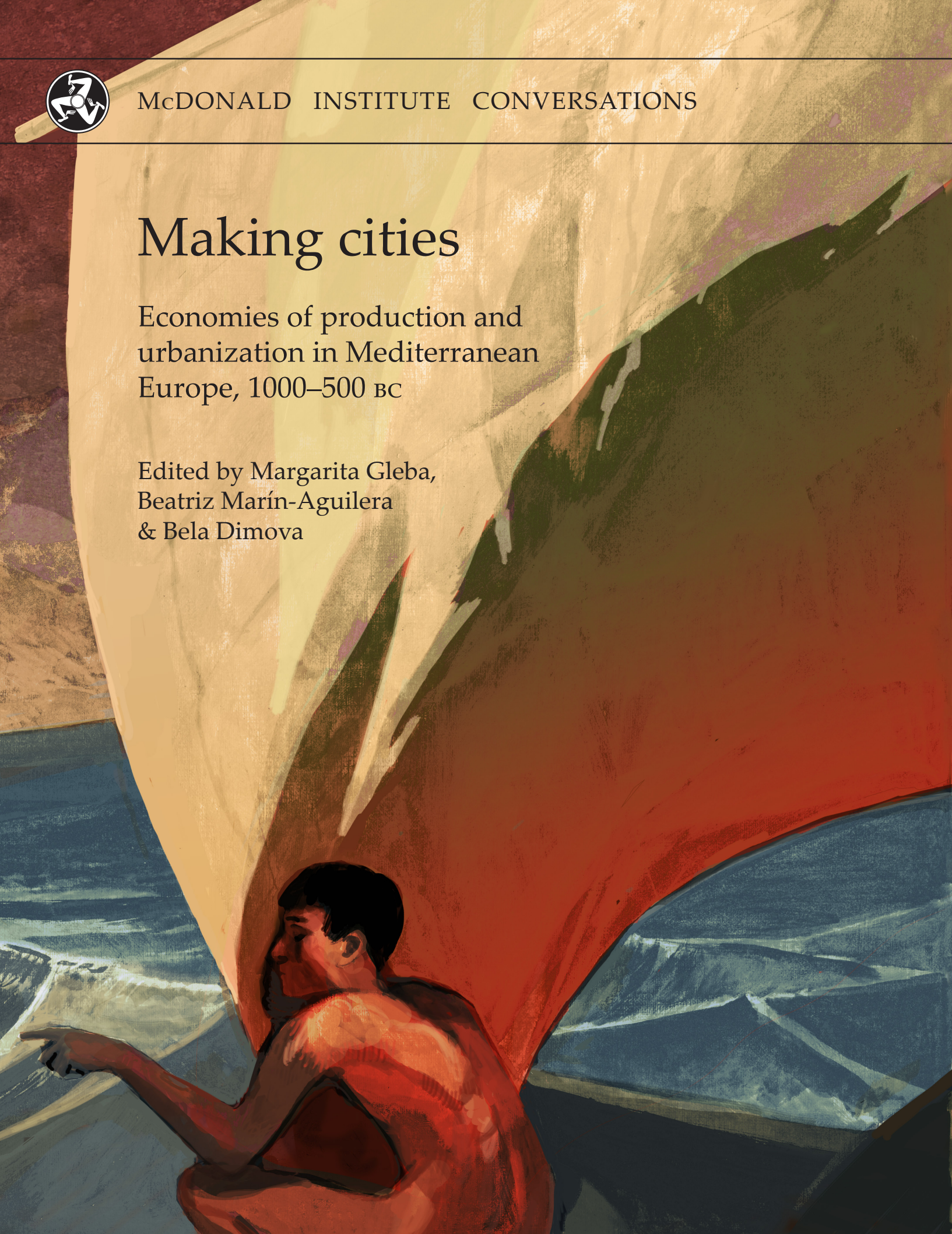

McDONALD INSTITUTE CONVERSATIONS

Making cities

Economies of production and urbanization in Mediterranean Europe, 1000–500 BC

Edited by Margarita Gleba,
Beatriz Marín-Aguilera
& Bela Dimova

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with contributions from
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Chapter 27

Urbanization and social change in southeast Iberia during the Early Iron Age

Jaime Vives-Ferrándiz Sánchez

This chapter deals with the archaeological evidence for processes of urbanization in eastern Iberia (Fig. 27.1) during the early Iron Age (*c*. 700–400 BC) from the viewpoint of the local economies. I will address to what extent these economies were connected to a wider network of settlements and how this pattern informs the Iberian urban experience. A starting point will be the economic features of these sites. In what directions did they change and why? Connectivity, mobility, politics and power are at the core of these questions. Among the social, economic and political implications of these processes, I will pay special attention to the latter. I shall identify material evidence for the emergence of political communities and institutions connected to the processes of urbanization.

In the first part of this chapter, I will briefly provide an overview of the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of my approach and some basic features of the urban fabric in the area of study. In the following two sections, I will empirically illustrate the economies of production in contexts in which metals and farming were the basis for power. In the last part of this contribution, I will show how and to what extent these processes of urbanization transformed socio-political relations. Urbanization entails processes of emergence of elites that in due course constituted new forms of political power. These changes are first visible in the funerary realm in the sixth century BC, and from the fifth century BC in the settlements, where new political institutions emerged.

Iberian urbanization: connectivity and dispersed territories

My methodological position to understand processes of urbanization in this area starts from considering settlements as material culture, fundamental in the constitution of social relations and not simply as an epiphenomenon to them. From this basic tenet, it follows that socio-political institutions and ideologies are inscribed in material culture. Because urbanization operates on various levels, I will deal with this issue privileging connections of the settlements to a wider world, to other arenas, and social practices. This has proved to be fruitful, because a number of studies emphasizing connectivity, exchange and intensification as common features of urbanization have provided fertile ground for a comparative archaeology across the Mediterranean (Horden & Purcell 2000; Osborne & Cunliffe 2005; Riva 2010).

Secondly, following Osborne's suggestion (2005, 5), I approach the Iberian nucleated settlements as a historical problem in itself: these sites are the question to be researched and not the answer. Gone is the time when Iberian, Mediterranean – or European, for that matter – urban forms were seen as failed or local attempts at other – namely Greek or Roman – standard models. Not far from these views is the use of checklists for recognizing urban features (see Osborne 2005 for a critical overview). The town facilitates new economic, social and political activities.

If we take seriously this approach – the urban as the question, not the answer – one obvious starting point is to see what is specific to urbanization in eastern Iberia. A couple of Iberian features are worth highlighting (and this also applies to much of the far western Mediterranean): urbanization is expressed in many forms but processes of urbanization did not involve the creation of large settlements. In fact, we are dealing with relatively small sites in comparison to other Mediterranean contexts, of no more than 5–10 ha, and most of them do not extend beyond 2 ha. Some coastal sites are even smaller. However, these sites were all characterized by relatively packed urbanism and high-density occupation. Their foundation can be seen as the material product of the 'desire for living

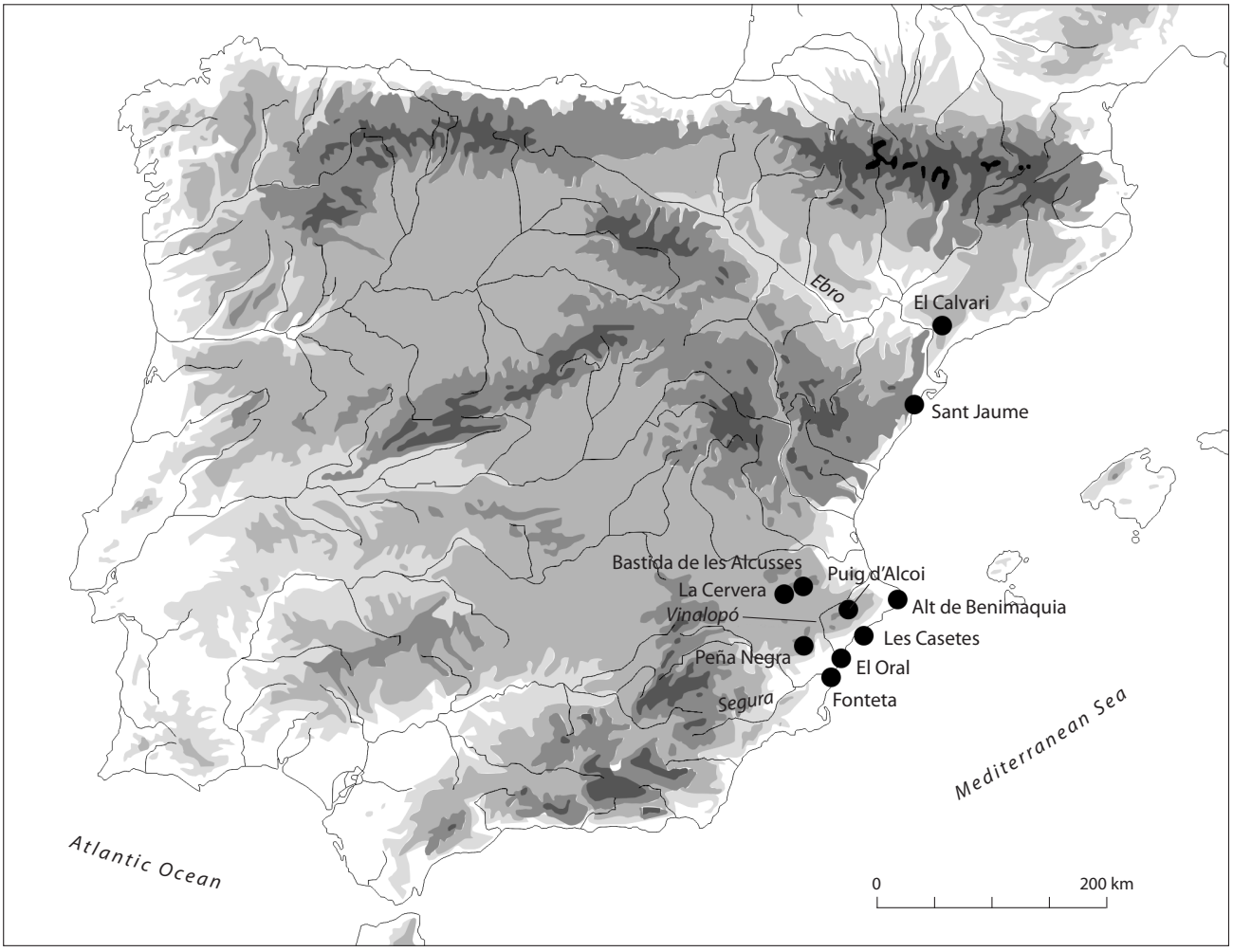

Figure 27.1. *Map of the study area showing the main sites mentioned in the text.*

together' (Osborne 2005, 8) of communities of no more than 500 people.

Most of these Iberian agglomerations were founded from scratch and in a short period of time. From their very beginning, they were enclosed spaces, and they were not subject to population growth, expansions and renovations. For the most part, they were very short-lived settlements, abandoned after one or two centuries. It is worth mentioning that there is not a gradual nor punctuated development towards increasingly larger settlements.

Research about the urban as the question requires primarily investigating broad relations between these settlements and the larger environment, and not looking 'from the vantage point of city walls' (Horden & Purcell 2000, 90). Many scholars have advocated a concept of the urban that goes beyond these limits and understands the town in a wider space (for instance Emanuele Greco, cited in de Polignac 2005, 48; see also Morgan 2003). In other words, processes of urbanization must be viewed in connection with processes of ruralization, although I am aware that these were not two clearly separable phenomena at the time. In fact, most of the sites I will deal with in this paper contained farming implements and feature facilities for processing agricultural produce. In other words, households in towns were economically embedded in the countryside.

Urbanization arose alongside contacts with the wider Mediterranean world. Networks of settlements and connections, both long-distance and short ones, shaped these phenomena. 'Interdependence is essential for survival, and urbanization is the product of that interdependence' (Purcell 2005, 255). Therefore, a more nuanced view of urbanization invites us 'to conceive towns less as separate and clearly definable entities and more as loci of contact or overlap between different ecologies' (Horden & Purcell 2000, 100). In eastern Iberia, sites were very close to each other, and their

location and easy access must have promoted – and was derived from – relations between them.

The integration of settlements in long-distance exchange routes is one of the defining features of urbanization processes, as has been recognized in other Mediterranean contexts (de Polignac 2005, 65; Riva 2010, 184). This system of connections is to be seen as operating both within its immediate territory and outside it, including the networks of maritime exchange. On this matter, the search for control of resources and their exploitation is another key issue and no wonder that connectivity gave the elites opportunities for intensification. The foundations for their power were primarily based on land resources and the exploitation of metals. They promoted technological innovation to these ends. As a corollary, production and distribution are inseparable.

Cemeteries are more often than not part of the processes of urbanization, as it has compellingly been demonstrated in Etruria, where 'the tomb constituted the physical, material and conceptual space where elite groups transformed their prestige into political authority' (Riva 2010, 177). Likewise, I contend that in Iberia the tombs were places where political relations were structured, although there were geographical and chronological variations. At any rate, ideologies were manipulated *both* in tombs and in other public spaces in the settlements. This is more evident from the sixth and fifth centuries BC onwards.

Local economies into broader networks

The indigenous inhabitants established in the lower valleys of Vinalopó and Segura rivers had been actively involved in long-distance exchange since the Late Bronze Age as can be seen at Peña Negra. The site was occupied without interruption between the tenth–ninth and the sixth centuries BC (González Prats 1983). Diverse architectural layouts have been recorded in the settlements, from small huts made in perishable materials to terraced areas with elongated domestic structure. It is difficult to date with precision this variation in the architecture due to the nature of the archaeological record, but it appears as if different construction techniques were deployed simultaneously.

Intense metallurgical activity has been recorded in the early phases of occupation: swords and axes were produced in clay moulds and exchanged in long-distance regional networks (González Prats 1992). The situation in Peña Negra is not an exception, as it is reproduced throughout the area. At other sites, like the nearby settlement of El Bosch, stone casts to produce swords and axes dated around the eighth century BC have been recorded (Trelis 1995, 185; Trelis *et al*. 2004, 320). This evidence indicates that specialized activities were not centralized in one site within the settlement pattern, and households seized control of the exchange networks in order to increase power.

Around the eight century BC, these communities saw people of Phoenician origins settling in a promontory on the coast by the mouth of the Segura river. The settlement of La Fonteta (Rouillard *et al*. 2007; González Prats 2011; 2014) must be understood in relation to the Phoenician trade diaspora throughout the Mediterranean and into the Atlantic (Aubet 2006, 94–6). These movements of people, ideas and materials are by no means exclusive for the western Mediterranean. From the early first millennium BC, increasing interactions in different directions, and involving either long-distance connections or short ones, made the Mediterranean 'mediterranized' (Broodbank 2013, 53 and 546). This situation provided people, and especially the elites, with an array of opportunities to engage with new objects, know-how and materials, and they varied from one region to another. Consumption practices were altered as a consequence. Intensification of production and engagement with new technologies are other consequences of such interactions. Let us move on to these economies.

'Few routes are really dictated by nature' (Broodbank 2013, 64) and direct access to the sea was crucial for the political economy at the time in this place. In fact, Fonteta's location speaks volumes about the newcomers' interest in settling by the sea and connecting to Mediterranean overseas networks. There is evidence of copper, lead, silver and iron metallurgy already in the earliest levels of the settlement (Renzi 2014). Iron metallurgy is a novelty at this time and its introduction is believed to be linked to the Phoenicians' activities. Iron ores, iron slag and hammer scale provide evidence for metallurgical workshops and smithing activities at La Fonteta during the eighth and seventh centuries BC, either for the production of iron objects or for other stages of its processing (Fig. 27.2) (Renzi *et al*. 2013, 181).

There are no rich local ores in this area, but the existence of powerful indigenous groups with long-distance relations may have attracted the early Phoenician settlement. Some of the exploited minerals were of polymetallic composition, and were most likely from the area of Málaga or Granada. Be this as it may, the newcomers in La Fonteta must have been involved in trading networks. In fact, relations with indigenous settlements existed from the very beginning of the Phoenician presence in the area and they were driven by a close co-existence between groups (Vives-Ferrándiz 2008 and 2014). Other pieces of evidence, for instance the distribution of metal ingots (Renzi 2010),

Figure 27.2. *Metallurgical workshop at La Fonteta (after González Prats 2011).*

draw a social scenario in which the territory was not sharply divided in terms of an inland-coastal division.

In the second half of the seventh century BC, the Phoenicians extended their trading relations to new areas and intensified the networks already in place. Thus, beyond Cape de la Nao, up to western Languedoc, the Phoenicians traded with local people, looking for metals and other natural resources (Aubet 2009, 344). Sites located on the coast and next to waterways became important nodes of contact: for instance, the area around Cape de la Nao, the mouth of the rivers Xúquer, Millars, Sènia and, of course, the river Ebro. The expansion of Phoenician trade brought local economies into broader networks of regional or interregional exchanges.

This complexity is hinted at by the fact that the circulation of metal may have involved different spheres of exchange other than the ones considered so far. Although local communities had exploited mineral resources since the Late Bronze Age, and metal had long circulated, metallurgical activity increased around this time, revealing the opportunities Phoenician trade brought to the area. The occurrence along the eastern coast of Iberia of copper-based cake ingots, suggests that metal circulated in different forms (Montero-Ruiz *et al*. 2010–2011). Lead isotope analyses of metal objects found in El Calvari de El Molar and Can Roqueta have confirmed that the origin of the metal is the mining district of Linares or Almería (Montero-Ruiz *et al*. 2012) and that it reached the eastern coast via Phoenician trade with indigenous communities. This evidence reinforces the complexity of the situation and the fact that the western Mediterranean during this period was more often than not interconnected in a variety of social, cultural and economic networks.

Agricultural intensification

Intensification of production and the redistribution of surplus are important changes dated to this period. *Amphorae* appear in the Iberian archaeological record in the eighth century BC – the earliest occurrences being local types of western Phoenician origin. As standardized containers, *amphorae* are an expression of

the regulation of trade and of the extraction and redistribution of agricultural surplus. *Amphorae* contained different foodstuffs, among which wine had the lion's share. Wine trade not only contributed to changes in the economy of Phoenician settlements, stimulating production and new high-risk investment in the land, but also contributed to changes in consumption practices. The demand for wine also promoted local production at indigenous sites such as l'Alt de Benimaquia, where a local elite set up their own production around the turn of the seventh century BC (Fig. 27.3) (Gómez Bellard *et al*. 1993).

Phoenician-type *amphorae* – probably of local origin – with seals, stamps and graffiti are recorded at the sites of Peña Negra, Monastil and Camara around the seventh and sixth centuries BC (González Prats 1983, 228), probably intended for redistribution along the Vinalopó valley. The similarity and coincidence of the stamps and seals – circles, crosses and stars – in a small area of the Vinalopó valley reveal an interest in controlling production and suggest a degree of economic competition (Vives-Ferrándiz 2008, 251). Yet, standardization of measures, seals and weights and the storage and exchange of produce show that there was a certain degree of cooperation between the elites who controlled the networks of exchange.

Two important points are to be emphasized. Firstly, these developments were clearly influenced by western Phoenician technological know-how. Not only do the wine presses at Alt de Benimaquia, quadrangular basins recovered with a clay wash, point to clear connections to oriental Phoenician practices, but also locally produced *amphorae* for redistributing this product were copies of western Phoenician types (Álvarez *et al*. 2000). And secondly, at Alt de Benimaquia, we start to recognize a historical feature of this process of urbanization: the close integration between the countryside and the walled nucleated settlement – the site features walls and towers unseen in the area before. This is by no means an obvious occurrence: although settlements have always been connected in one way or another to the surrounding landscape – cultivation matters – we witness from the sixth century BC in eastern Iberia that trading activities and the rural hinterland increasingly influenced each other. Urban and rural go together and, as a corollary, production and redistribution are to be seen as inseparable.

Over the following two centuries, between the sixth and the fourth century BC, this integration started to be more evident and affected several economic realms, although the production of cash-crops for trade stands out as the most visible one. One avenue for future research is to understand to what extent textile production was affected by developments aimed at trading with the wider world. At sites such as Peña Negra, La Fonteta, El Oral (Fig. 27.4) (Abad & Sala 2001; Abad & Sala 2009) or La Picola (Badie *et al*. 2000) – the latter two walled settlements of no more than 1 ha located on the coast – loom weights

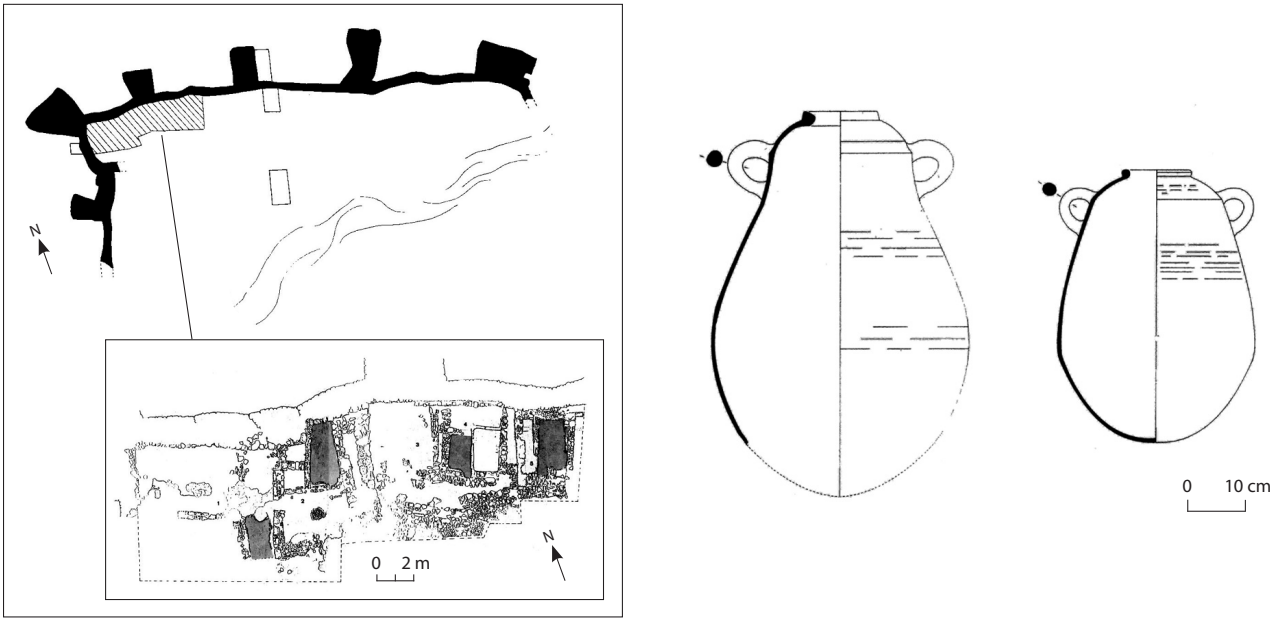

Figure 27.3. *Plan of Alt de Benimaquia (wine presses are grey-shaded) and local* amphorae *inspired by western Phoenician types (after Álvarez* et al. *2000).*

Figure 27.4. *Plan of El Oral (after Abad & Sala 2009).*

seem to be connected to domestic production of textiles and there are no large facilities for weaving. Admittedly, a surplus from the production of different households might have been mobilized for trading activities, but this point is difficult to confirm based on the archaeological evidence we have. Nonetheless, exclusive imported bronzes for feasting at El Oral and Attic tableware at La Picola suggest that direct contacts with Mediterranean trade played a key role at these sites.

Evidence of substantial redistribution and activities for the processing of agricultural produce have been attested in coastal settlements (see details in Vives-Ferrándiz 2018), in ports that acted as 'visible intensifications of the wider network' (Horden & Purcell 2000, 168). For instance, the settlement of La Illeta dels Banyets is set on a peninsula of about 0.7 ha. The site is dated to between the second half of the fifth century up to the third century BC (Olcina *et al.* 2009 with references). Agricultural processing and storage for redistribution were important features of the site because at least two wine-presses and one oil-press and a workshop for the production of fish-based derivatives are attested. The way the wine basins were waterproofed suggests that some technical solutions were mediated by intense connections with areas of Punic cultural background. This was not just a port accessible to merchants, since foreign people participated in its constitution and, hence, this is a nice illustration of the way microregions cohere over long distances (Horden & Purcell 2000, 123). The networks need not be associated with settlement hierarchies but they project complex movements and relations.

The economic dimension of this site is paralleled in the nearby settlement of Tossal de les Basses (Rosser & Fuentes 2007). From the fifth century BC there were harbour facilities, and the settlement had a defensive wall fortified with towers and rich burials. Beyond the wall of the settlement there is an area devoted to metallurgical and ceramic production. Paleoenvironmental studies suggest that much of the agricultural processing at Tossal de les Basses focused on arboriculture as a productive strategy oriented towards the export of cash-crops and not for consumption in the domestic realm (Iborra & Pérez Jordà 2013). Opportunities to intensify production are the basis of an engagement in the activities of redistribution. I have suggested that the concept of redistributive engagement (Horden & Purcell 2000, 178) as embedded in the political economy has proven to be useful for an understanding of the variety of trade settlements in the area and the basis of their political authority (Vives-Ferrándiz 2018).

Inland sites were also part and parcel of these networks. They have to be seen as shaped by connectivity and economic relationships with the wider Mediterranean, too, although not in a uniform way. In fact, only some walled hilltop settlements – called *oppida* in the Iberian bibliography – were well connected to trade routes and networks. At the same time, they were exploiting the land and relied heavily on farming. They are rather small settlements ranging in size from 1–2 ha. One such *oppidum* is El Puig d'Alcoi (Grau & Segura 2013), which developed over the course of the seventh to the fifth century BC into a central place. Elites of the site manipulated the opportunities that interaction brought about and expanded their influence over the immediate territory where other, smaller sites exploited resources (Fig. 27.5).

Other areas show the displacement of craft activities in specialized settlements. At La Cervera, furnaces and areas for metalwork have been documented in an area stretching over 2 ha where there are no dwellings (Fig. 27.6) (López Serrano *et al*. 2018). These structures are dated to the late fifth century BC and the first half of the fourth century BC. This site must have been important for the production and redistribution of iron objects. It is located in the vicinity of other, contemporaneous, hilltop, walled *oppida*, such as La Bastida de les Alcusses and La Mola de Torró. This pattern fits perfectly into a coherent organization of the territory and an occupation of the space aimed at the exploitation of resources on which the power of the elites rested.

Urbanization, institutions and political authority

Different degrees of interaction with the environment and differences in the strategies to maintain and increase power among all these inland hilltop sites existed (Bonet *et al*. 2015; Grau & Vives-Ferrándiz 2018). They all can be seen as particular expressions of the processes of urbanization and they have been identified as the central places of small polities whose existence depended on personal relations commanded by elites, and specifically by warriors. Certain traits of a collective organization for the whole community exist, namely public constructions such as the walls. However, the development of institutional structures (Whitelaw 2017) transcending these personal relations can be detected in some sites. In historical terms, this is a crucial social change for understanding urbanization.

This process began in the area around the late fifth century BC. I conceive institutionalized forms of power as resting on social structures transcending the life-cycle of its members. People, therefore, are subsumed into this structure of relations. At La Bastida de les Alcusses, power resting on a political institution has been identified. The site, of around 4 ha,

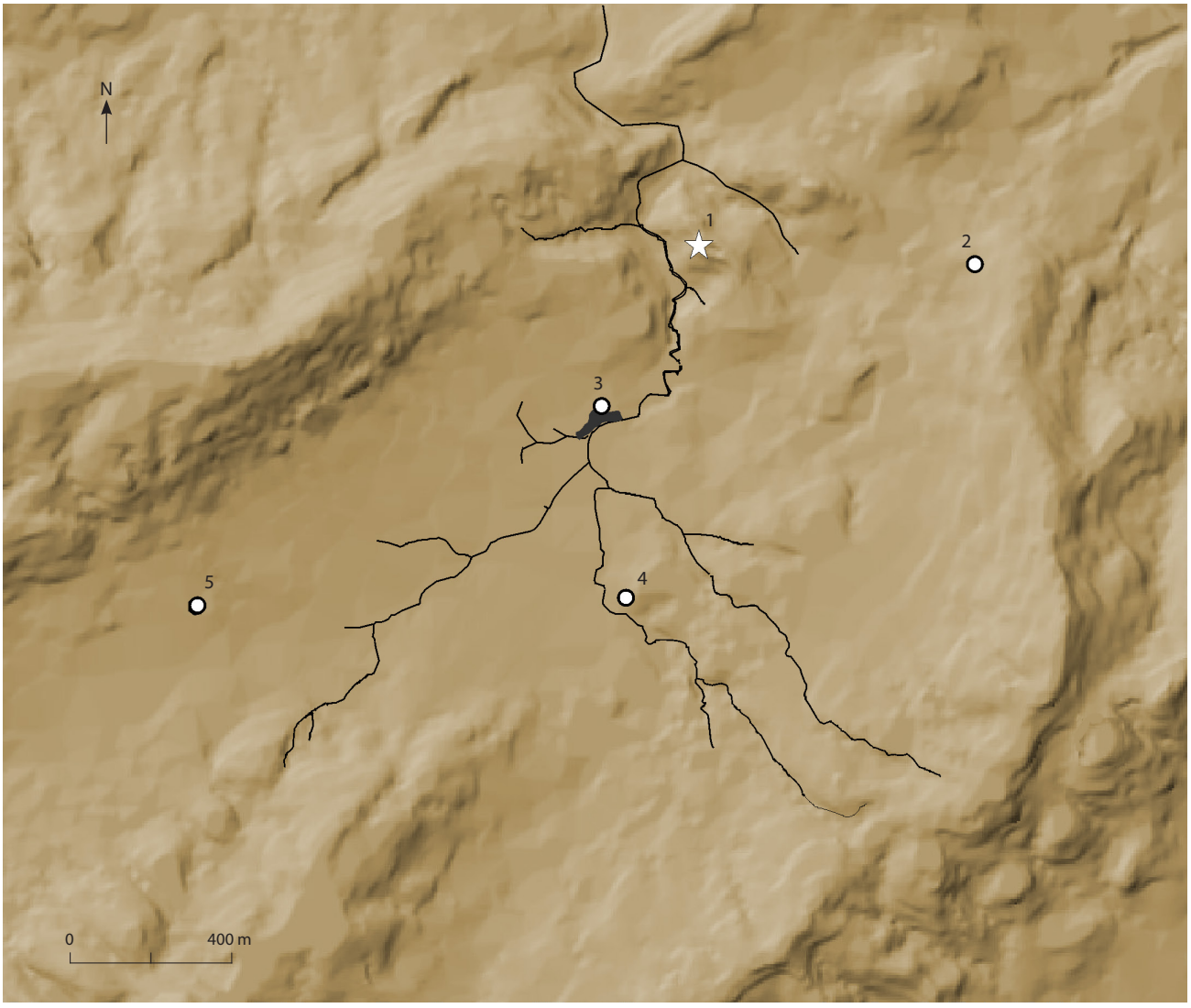

Figure 27.5 *(above). The territory of El Puig d'Alcoi and the secondary rural settlements: 1) El Puig; 2) La Pastora; 3) El Mas del Regall; 4) La Sarga; 5) La Moleta (after Grau & Segura 2013).*

Figure 27.6 *(left). Different furnaces for iron metalwork from La Cervera (courtesy D. López Serrano).*

has been extensively excavated and had a very short occupation span, centred between the late fifth and fourth centuries BC. This urban site is characterized by a relatively planned use of space, with streets running the length of the settlement that determined the location of blocks of houses which otherwise remained quite autonomous in their constituent details. Neither houses nor blocks resemble each other. Detailed micro-scale analysis has revealed that there were differences in access to land resources and labour between the houses. Some of them relied heavily on farming while others manipulated specialized knowledge (writing, metallurgy) or symbolic and immaterial resources, but these features never concentrate in one house or even one compound of the site. The picture is one of social heterogeneity, in which several houses acted as distinctive economic, social and symbolic units, while other dependent houses existed alongside (Vives-Ferrándiz 2013).

All these houses were certainly part of a larger urban unit: the *oppidum*. In contrast to smaller *oppida* such as Covalta or Puig d'Alcoi (of between 1–2 ha), La Bastida de les Alcusses is four times larger (Fig. 27.7). The distinctive nature of the economic and social relations at this site was based on a collective organization for the whole community. In this scenario, the elites developed material, social and ideological mechanisms to constitute a collective institution of political authority. These mechanisms involved the control of the economic bases, the government and the collective memory. The archaeological identification of such institution in the urban fabric relies on three different contexts (see details in Bonet & Vives-Ferrándiz 2011; Vives-Ferrándiz 2013; Vives-Ferrándiz *et al*. 2015). Let us review them briefly.

Several features in the planning of this *oppidum* point to the centrality of surplus in its configuration. Firstly, three out of the four gates and some of the streets running along the length of the site were designed to enable the circulation of carts. Secondly, a central storeroom has been identified in Block 7 (Fig. 27.8). This communal building – part of it identified as a granary – is not physically linked to any house. On the contrary, it is open to a central square and well connected to different streets. The fact that ploughs and other agricultural tools were found in this building suggests that the grain did not necessarily come from the production of the households – for example, as tribute – but from mobilized labour. The social and economic relations in the urban fabric are radically different from what we see in other organizations such as chiefdoms, because the social structure has changed with the constitution of a centralized institution. That said, I do not mean that ownership of

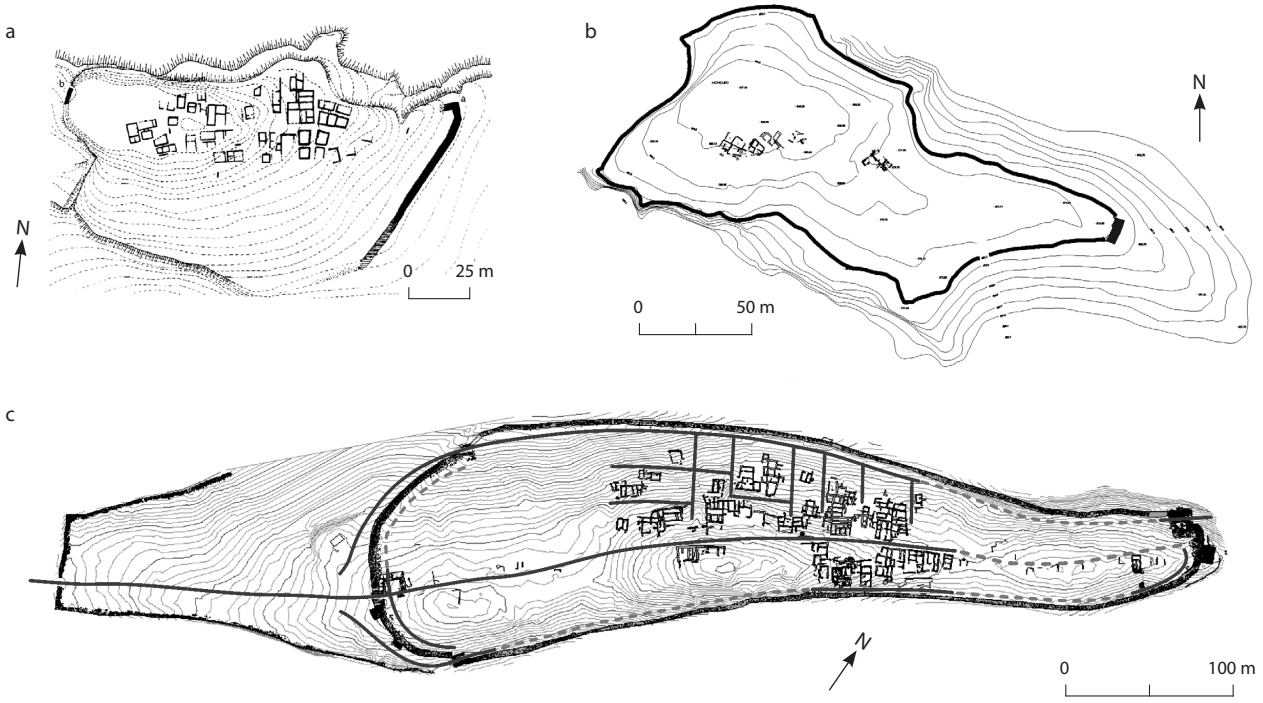

Figure 27.7. *Plans of three walled settlements (not to scale): a) Covalta; b) Puig d'Alcoi; c) La Bastida de les Alcusses (after Bonet* et al. *2015).*

Figure 27.8. *Aerial view of the storerooms at La Bastida de les Alcusses (Museum of Prehistory, Valencia).*

this surplus belonged to the whole community but to various empowered households of the *oppidum*. This statement is supported by two other contexts, to which I turn my attention now.

Block 5 has been identified as a collective building for public meetings and gatherings. Two of its distinctive features are isolation – no other building is adjacent to it – and location on the highest part of the site. Its construction must have been planned from the foundation of the *oppidum*. The layout shows different adjacent large rooms open to courtyards(?), or open spaces, which suggest that meetings might have been a concern in the design of this building (Fig. 27.9). Interestingly, tableware abounds and no evidence for other activities – widely recorded in the other buildings such as farming, weaving, cooking, metalwork – has been identified. Therefore, the social structure at La Bastida de les Alcusses required a building for collective meetings that was part and parcel of the urban fabric. We lack data for a detailed understanding of this context, but it may be the case that decisions beyond the level of the household might have been involved. Tableware attests that rituals of consumption were part of the social practices performed there (cf. Tuck in this volume).

The most impressive public construction in the Iberian *oppida* were the walls. Resources, know-how and labour were mobilized for their construction, and no wonder that they have long been seen as the materialization of the identity of the settlement. Around 375–350 BC, on the occasion of a partial renovation of the structures of the West Gate and the walls at La Bastida de les Alcusses, an outstanding collective ritual was performed and the remains buried beneath the gate. Five sets of ritually 'killed' iron weapons, residues of food and tableware – including red-figured Attic kraters – and the charred remains of the doors of the former gate were deposited (Fig. 27.10). This is not a foundation nor an abandonment ritual, but a ritual action carried out during the course of the occupation

Figure 27.9. *Plan of Block 5 at La Bastida de les Alcusses (after Bonet & Vives-Ferrándiz 2011).*

Figure 27.10. *Weapons ritually 'killed' in the West Gate, La Bastida de les Alcusses (Museum of Prehistory, Valencia).*

of the settlement. This context nicely mirrors the ritual practices of the funerary realm in the area, reserved for high-status male individuals, in which weapons were 'killed' and placed in individual tombs. However, there are no human remains here and the five panoplies of the West Gate stand for a collective ritual.

Among the many historical dimensions of such an action, I want to stress the implications for understanding the urbanization processes, which is the concern of this volume. This elite ritual practice was a public enactment of rebuilding the gate on the same location – in which feasting might have also taken a no less significant role – that points to the existence of collective institutionalized forms of political authority. Because this deposit formed part and parcel of the new gate of the site, I suggest that it helped to generate a collective memory for the community based on continuity of the life-cycle of the *oppidum*, in a tremendously symbolic place of the *oppidum* such as the main gate.

The socio-political use of a public space of the *oppidum* can be seen as a defining feature of the processes of urbanization of southeast Iberia. We might be facing processes of differentiation between the various *oppida* in the landscape on the basis of their manipulation of memory. These processes of place-making were not given but constructed historically. This action was not a foundation ritual, because the community had occupied the site for more than half a century. Therefore, it may be the case that, in coming together, these communities embodied new forms of socio-political relations. Storerooms for surplus extraction, a building for public gatherings and the construction and a public place for the manipulation of memory, all form the material bases of an empowered political institution in which elites grounded their identity.

To be sure, this identity was progressively elaborated in connection with ritual practices in another setting: the funerary sphere. From the seventh to the fourth centuries BC we witness a gradual shift in social differentiation in death in this area (Vives-Ferrándiz 2008). The ritual of cremation is widespread but there is an array of variables such as the structure of the tomb, the degree of its monumentalization or decoration – sometimes with life-sized sculptures – or the grave goods. At any rate, the early Iberian tombs also show that elite identities were being constituted around a funerary ideology that claimed power through an exclusive funerary ritual, imports and weapons.

During the sixth century BC, cemeteries show the progressive introduction of iron weapons in tombs, which were otherwise associated with exclusive objects, imports and special architecture. The exceptional objects in some tombs of Les Casetes, e.g. an Egyptian faience New Year's bottle in Tomb 18, a bronze incense burner in Tomb 17, or different gold beads, parts of necklaces and amulets in Tombs 3, 10, 12, 15 and 16 (García Gandia 2009), speak about the elite's access to a wider world through connections.

Funerary ideologies were eventually transformed, precisely at the time when political authority was being redefined in the *oppida*. During the first half of the fourth century BC, some tombs included sculptures of high-status adult women, the so-called 'Damas' (ladies), such as the renowned Lady of Elche or Lady of Baza (Aranegui 2015). At the same time, the number of tombs with weapons reached their peak in cemeteries (Quesada 1997). The tomb of the Lady of Baza (Tomb 155 at the cemetery of Cerro del Santuario) included four complete panoplies (Quesada 2010), mirroring the collective ritual of the West Gate at La Bastida de les Alcusses.

Some scholars have interpreted the sculptures of the so-called 'ladies' as important women who transmitted the heritage and property of the household or lineage (Aranegui 2015), and as representations of values attached to the house as an institution. It is the combination of these two funerary ideologies – warriorhood expressed in weapons and household embodied in the sculptures of women – that characterizes Iberian cemeteries in the fifth and fourth centuries BC. In short, political authority was constituted from the active manipulation of symbols and materials in the ritual domains of the tomb and the *oppidum*.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed processes of urbanization in eastern Iberia from two main viewpoints: engagement in networks and creation of communities. Overall, I hope to have contributed with an archaeological body of data that may be fertile ground to make future comparisons among different areas of the Mediterranean.

A wider perspective on urbanization based on the networks of relations between different ecologies, settlements and people has helped to introduce in the discussion factors such as mobility, accessibility and surplus. I have dealt with these processes in the long-term, from the ninth–eighth centuries BC onwards, although it is admittedly difficult to pinpoint starting moments of these developments. The fundamental intensification of relations in the western Mediterranean from the eighth century BC onwards has been framed within the economic developments in the realm of production.

From the fifth century BC, major changes in the area go hand in hand with a new framework of social relations based on empowered households. Several settlements in eastern Iberia became the setting for these elites. Access to long-distance exchange and the control and redistribution of agricultural surplus are at the basis of such political and social changes. Large-scale workshops appear, not by chance, in connection with the elites' involvement in long-distance exchange although in different nodes of power. The creation of places of exchange connected to Mediterranean networks enabled the redistribution of production, both local and foreign. Centralized storage facilities are a feature of some settlements. The engagement of households with these nodes of power varies within each settlement and across the landscape.

The urbanization of this area was not a linear evolution, but a process of diverse engagements with other places and ecologies. It was an indigenous process of urbanization because these cities fundamentally differed from other Mediterranean cities. Diversity in the urban forms was the norm and there was no standard model for the creation of a new settlement. These observations inevitably lead us to highlight the 'dynamic and mobile nature of what is urban' (de Polignac 2005, 66).

Lastly, I have seen urbanization, first and foremost, as a process of creation of communities. Hence, I have stressed the role of collective rituals for political purposes of the elites: public gatherings on special occasions that marked the constitution of memory, either in the gate of a settlement or in a tomb. These actions were as relevant for the constitution of political authority as land ownership or the control of long-distance trade.

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Making cities

Large and complex settlements appeared across the north Mediterranean during the period 1000–500 BC, from the Aegean basin to Iberia, as well as north of the Alps. The region also became considerably more interconnected. Urban life and networks fostered new consumption practices, requiring different economic and social structures to sustain them. This book considers the emergence of cities in Mediterranean Europe, with a focus on the economy. What was distinctive about urban lifeways across the Mediterranean? How did different economic activities interact, and how did they transform power hierarchies? How was urbanism sustained by economic structures, social relations and mobility? The authors bring to the debate recently excavated sites and regions that may be unfamiliar to wider (especially Anglophone) scholarship, alongside fresh reappraisals of well-known cities. The variety of urban life, economy and local dynamics prompts us to reconsider ancient urbanism through a comparative perspective.

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