ON THE FOUNDING OF SEVILLE. RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PHOENICIAN COLONIZATION OF TARTESSOS

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Abstract: A recent archaeological excavation carried out within the Reales Alcázares of Seville, at a plaza known as Patio de Banderas, uncovered several semi-subterranean structures dated between the 9th and 7th century BCE. The structures, dug in the most recent Upper Pleistocene terrace of the Guadalquivir, contained hearths for preparing meals, suggesting that they were possibly outdoor cooking installations situated in the southern periphery of the settlement and near the port area. The associated pottery remains mostly correspond to pots and other handmade containers, however, some pieces of wheel-thrown pottery from the same period have also been documented. This evidence proves that the founding of Seville was contemporaneous with the construction of the first sanctuary on the opposite bank of the Guadalquivir at Carambolo. Both sites constitute a Phoenician colonization model that is found in other river mouth areas along the southwestern Iberian coast. This same pattern occurs in the estuaries of the Guadiana river, at Huelva, and, likewise, in the Bay of Cadiz.

Keywords: Phoenician Colonization; Seville; Tartessos; Port of Trade; Sanctuary.

1. Introduction

Even before archaeology had anything to suggest on the matter, Cadiz was already considered a Phoenician colony. This assumption had been reached before the 20th century through the study of the city's ancient toponym found in Greco-Latin texts (*Gadir*>*Gades*). The same scientific reasoning inherent in this method was also used as early as the 18th century in the case of Seville.[1] However, when archaeological data began to intervene in the resolution of this historical problem, it only obscured the initial arguments of certain chroniclers who had examined the ancient texts and place names of this enclave, reaching the conclusion that the primitive *Spal* (or *Hispal*), the Roman *Hispalis,* was also an Oriental colony.

At the root of this discussion lay various controversial aspects of historical research. For over a century, archaeological studies on Tartessos had developed a marked tendency to highlight the indigenous component of this culture and at the same time, overlook the profound influence Phoenicians had on its shaping. This superficial acculturation role given to the Oriental communities created a generic problem in research. The same issue is closely linked with the development of modern nationalist ideas in the 19th century which encouraged the search for Spanish patriotic roots, especially, trying to find deep cultural ties with Late Prehistory and Protohistoric Iberian cultures.[2] In parallel with this phenomenon, another proposal developed

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1 Pardo de Figueroa 1732, pp. 22-23.

2 Álvarez Martí-Aguilar 2005, pp. 72-77; 2009, p. 81; 2010, p. 67.

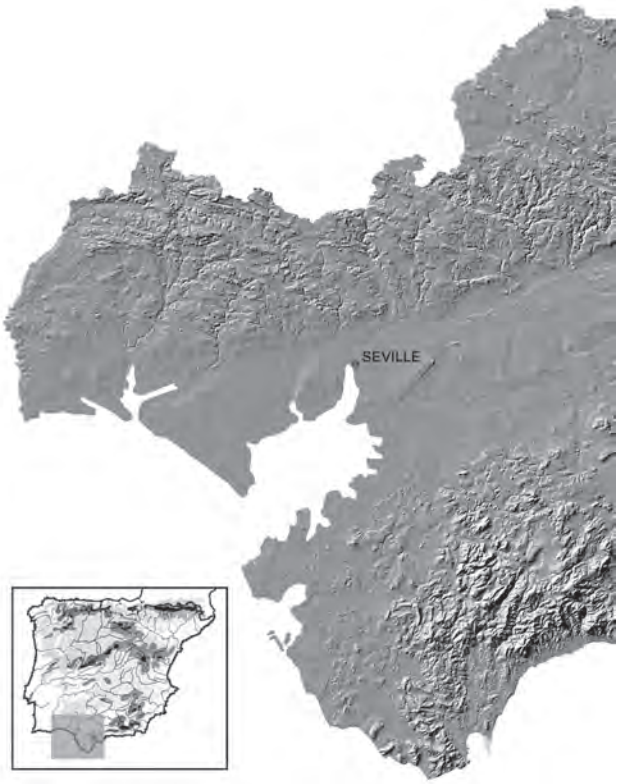

Fig. 1. Location of Seville at the back of the Tartessian bay (drawing: J.L. Escacena).

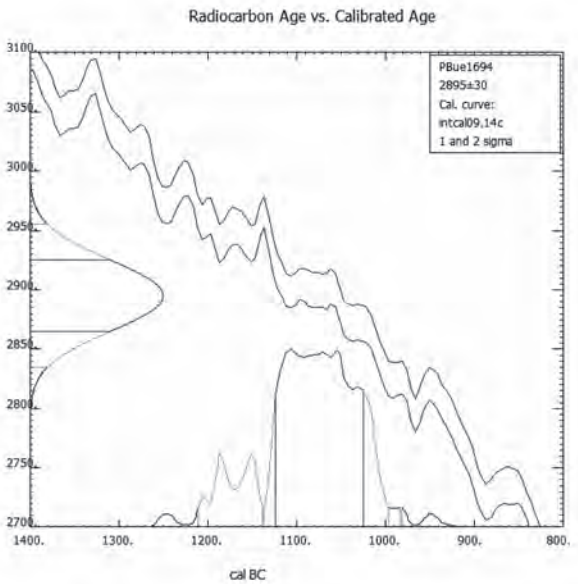

Fig. 2. Radiocarbon measurement obtained from the pit fill 1696 at Patio de Banderas (Seville; drawing: CNA – National Accelerator Center).

among certain specialists in this subject suggesting that Greco-Roman literary sources were of no use in the interpretation of archaeological data. Further, archaeology could even prove that the statements found in classical texts were false. True or not, the problem was that specific investigations followed it as a premise, ignoring, for example, Strabo's statement (III 2,13-14) that, even in his time, Phoenicians densely populated Iberia. The previous attitude, together with the influence of Historicism on academic opinion, brought about a third problem caused by the obliteration of certain archaeological material from scientific publications. In this fashion, only archaeological finds that could back the idea of cultural progress were published, such as Oriental luxury goods brought by Canaanite merchants during the first millennium BCE, fine tableware from Greece and Syria-Palestine, or even monumental architecture. At the same time, the presence of abundant fragments of coarse or primitive looking pottery was not even mentioned. This simple reasoning still has a great influence on the historiographical tradition of Tartessos and the Semitic colonization of the southern Iberian Peninsula, up to the point that any handmade vessel is usually attributed to indigenous production. In Malaga, the handmade pottery found in coastal Phoenician enclaves was dismissed as being containers for honey or other local produce purchased by the Eastern settlers from the native inhabitants.[3] Later on, this opinion led to suggest that this type of pottery belonged to the natives that had been integrat-

3 Schubart – Maass-Lindemann 1984, p. 146.

ed into the colonial Phoenician settlements as cheap labor force.[4] As we will see, archaeological records in Atlantic coastal sites, traditionally considered Phoenician, is very similar to the evidence found in supposedly autochthonous enclaves. During the entire Tartessian period, that is, from mid-9th to the first third of the 6th century BCE, the evolution of handmade and wheel-thrown pottery assemblages followed very similar developments as to composition, forms, decoration and vessel type percentages. Any differences should be considered as local examples of diversity consistent with cultural manifestation.

Protohistoric Seville was situated on the Guadalquivir at the exact position where navigating upstream became significantly difficult for deep-draft ships (Fig. 1). Thus, the reason behind the city's origin and the predominance of this port over all the others along the river was determined by this enforced stopping point.[5] Historiographical tradition, collected in medieval chronicles and oral history, had always accepted the legendary founding of the city by Heracles, also recognizing the equivalence of this demi-god with Melqart. Thus, the Phoenician's role in the creation of the city was defended up until the last regional Renaissance humanism ideas slowly died out.[6] Current research on this issue tends to follow two historiographical tendencies. Those who give priority to the indigenous role sustain that the native inhabitants of Carambolo played a decisive part in the founding of Seville,[7] whereas, the other group suggests that, prior to the arrival of the Canaanite settlers, the region was significantly lacking inhabitants, and therefore, they assume the hypothesis deriving from the traditional written narratives and philological studies on the place name as the most plausible explanation.[8] Although this supposedly regional depopulation is not accepted without questioning, most scholars do sustain that the origin of the urban settlement, dated until now in the 8th century BCE,[9] can be pushed back to the second half of 9th BCE, as suggested by the data yielded from Patio de Banderas. Radiocarbon analysis carried out in the CNA (National Accelerator Center) laboratories determined this time period from a charcoaled wild olive (*Olea europaea*) branch sample (CNA 788) recovered from a pit fill (pit unit 1696; fill unit 1694). The measurement yielded is 2873 ± 57 BP. At 1σ it shows a time range between 1128-973 cal BCE, while at 2σ the range is 1216-906 cal BCE. Although the calibration, carried out by the laboratory, according to Reimer,[10] offers a broad time range, in no case are the dates earlier than the 9th century BCE (Fig. 2). The hypothesis that the Phoenicians played a key role in the founding of the city is consistent with this data and is also similar to the chronology established for the first sanctuary built across the Guadalquivir at Carambolo.[11]

Carambolo is traditionally recognized by the majority of academics as a pre-Phoenician settlement. However, during the initial fieldwork stage, wheel-thrown pottery and pieces of ostrich egg shells were found, in addition to other evidence that pointed to a possible sacred function of the site.[12] From the very beginning of its discovery, this detached hill was actually thought to be a religious center, although this hypothesis remained unconfirmed for a long period of time. Blanco Freijeiro believed that Carambolo Alto, or the *fondo de cabaña* (pit house) could have functioned as an indigenous temple within an equally native settlement.[13] The idea of Phoenician settlement being exclusively limited to coastal areas was so embedded

4 Martín Ruiz 2000, p. 1628.

5 Collantes de Terán 1977, pp. 37-54.

6 Caro 1634, pp. 3-5.

7 Pellicer 1996, p. 92; 1997, p. 248.

8 Belén – Escacena 1997, pp. 113- 114; Escacena – García Fernández 2012, pp. 765-771.

9 Campos – Vera – Moreno 1988, p. 27.

10 Reimer *et al*. 2009.

11 Fernández Flores – Rodríguez Azogue 2007, pp. 103-104.

12 Carriazo 1973, pp. 292-293; Escacena – Vázquez 2009, p. 58.

13 Blanco 1979, pp. 95-96.

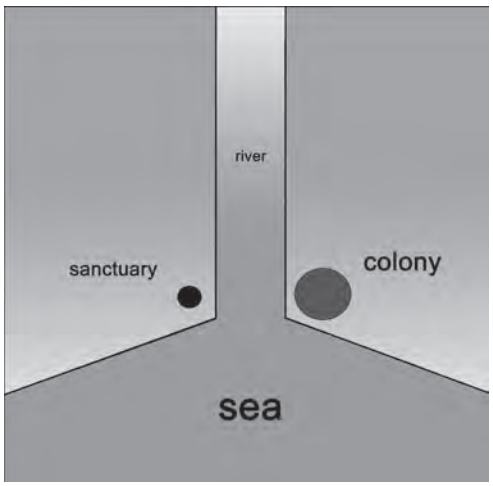

Fig. 3. Theoretical occupation pattern of the archaic Phoenician colonization of the Tartessian coast (drawing: J.L. Escacena).

that when any Oriental element appeared in western Andalusia or north of Cádiz it was seen as evidence of the indigenous acculturation process, as, for example, the statuette of Astarte displayed in the Archaeological Museum of Seville. Moreover, Bonsor's proposal[14] on actual Semitic presence within the Guadalquivir valley had almost been forgotten by the second half of the 20th century. Antonio Blanco was a clear advocate in considering all things Oriental as being Orientalizing. In fact, he represented one of the most noticeable advocates of this last term and of the acculturation process defined by it.

In spite of the predominant academic views towards the end of this last century, other scholars saw Carambolo as a sanctuary with annexed facilities rather than a settlement with its corresponding temple. In this regard, several studies have helped to pave the way for recent discoveries, pointing out the singular and religious character of part of the pottery assemblage and the existence of structures excavated by Carriazo that may have been cult related.[15] Likewise, the liturgical role of certain artifacts was highlighted[16] and, at the same time, the interpretation of the treasure of Carambolo went through a radical change. Previously considered before the jewels of a monarch, it is now seen as having been used as liturgical vestments for the officiating priest and as regalia for cladding the oxen headed for sacrifice.[17]

Excavations carried out in the 21st century at Carambolo have helped to corroborate the interpretation of the site as a sanctuary and Phoenician cult center. This assumption also explains why the aforementioned statuette of Astarte was found here as A. Blanco[18] had already pointed out. In this context, the presence of other ritual objects can be easily accounted for, such as the ceramic *híppos* vessel which possibly represents the sacred barque.[19] The sanctuary therefore occupied an eastern prominent elevation on one of the highest hill areas, the Aljarafe, located west of *Spal* (or *Hispal*), on the right bank of the paleo-estuary of the Guadalquivir and in the vicinity of the ancient river mouth.

Following the thesis which recognizes solely the Phoenicians' commercial role in the history of Tartessos, the colonization process would have been limited to a few enclaves on the southern coastal areas where they resided and carried out mercantile transactions. This proposition negates Eastern communities settling in the interior or *hinterland* territories, even though, it is well known that the first place name of Seville (*Spal* or *Hispal*) is of Semitic origin[20] and also includes a possible allusion to Baal, Lord of the Canaanites.[21]

Various approaches have already been made in determining the spatial patterns of the Phoenician colonization on the southern coast of the Iberian Peninsula and some include aspects pursued in this paper, such as the presence of a river way being fundamental in gaining entrance to inland territories, as attested in

14 Bonsor 1899.

15 Belén – Escacena 2002, p. 169.

16 Izquierdo – Escacena 1998.

17 Amores – Escacena 2003.

18 Blanco 1979, p. 98.

19 Escacena – Fernández Flores – Rodríguez Azogue 2007.

20 Díaz Tejera 1982, p. 20; Lipiński 1984, p. 100.

21 Correa 2000.

the case of Malaga.[22] But now, new information from coastal sites west of Gibraltar can be added to the record. In fact, the Phoenician occupation of the ancient river mouth of the Guadalquivir provides a prototype settlement pattern which can be applied to other estuary areas of southwestern Iberian Peninsula (Fig. 3). Seville and Carambolo would thus represent a political and administrative unit that controlled access to the Guadalquivir valley, an area rich in resources that strongly attracted Oriental settlers. Between the port city and its temple on the opposite bank, the river mouth was strategically and symbolically protected. As we will see, this pattern, characterized by a waterway that separates the habitat (in the east) from the sacred place (in the west), can be found in a number of river mouths and inlets of southwestern Iberia. The model clearly resembles Eastern land occupation strategies, for example, Egyptian settlement strategies along the Nile.

2. Recent Data from Seville

2.1. *Prehistoric Evidence in Secondary Contexts*

The oldest permanent human settlement near Seville, along with any other site of the Lower Guadalquivir and its main tributaries, dates to the Neolithic. A minimal testimony consistent with this chronology and cultural horizon has been detected in the excavation at Patio de Banderas, although it consists of a single pottery sherd recovered in a secondary context from a strata dated to a much later time period. This vessel fragment is decorated with an external embossed cord that, in turn, presents a series of short vertical impressions, made perhaps by the potter himself using his fingernails. The amorphous pottery fragment is part of a light colored clay container that still retains part of the red iron oxide wash or *almagra* that covered its surface (Fig. 4). It can be culturally related to the so-called Horizonte de Zuheros Neolithic[23] with a time period that basically spans from the 6th to the beginning of the 5th millennium BCE. This cultural horizon has been relatively well detected in the Lower Guadalquivir area, as in the Corbones valley,[24] in the city of Lebrija, where it is found in the first settlement layer,[25] and, nearer Seville, in Coria del Río although, here again, only a single sherd recovered from a disturbed context.[26] Therefore, the Neolithic findings of Seville (Patio de Banderas) and Coria del Río (Cerro de San Juan), being so scarce in number and recovered from secondary stratigraphic contexts, cannot be evaluated appropriately. In fact, it would be quite difficult to sustain a Neolithic occupation of these sites with just this slim amount of evidence. Fragments, like these, could have been infiltrated with earth used in building or other activities. In this case, the primary sites would have been located elsewhere, but perhaps nearby. Although this evidence is not enough to authenticate factual inhabitation at these sites, at least it points to the positive existence of Neolithic settlements in the estuary area of the Guadalquivir. At this time period, the ancient river mouth was located approximately 10 km south of Seville as multiple geomorphological studies have thoroughly demonstrated.[27]

A similar situation occurs with another pottery fragment attributed to the Copper Age. This piece of evidence would be contemporary with the end stage of the necropolis which was in use in the highlands of the Aljarafe during the 3rd millennium BCE, occupied today by the towns of Valencina de la Concepción and Castilleja de Guzmán. The pottery fragment is also a residual find, according to archaeological stratigra-

22 Pellicer – Menanteau – Rouillard 1977, p. 219.

23 Gavilán – Escacena – Rodríguez 2009.

24 Fernández Caro – Gavilán 1995, pp. 56-57.

25 Caro – Acosta – Escacena 1986.

26 Gavilán – Escacena 2009, p 345.

27 Gavala 1959; Menanteau 1982; Arteaga – Schulz – Roos 1995; Arteaga *et al.* 2016.

Fig. 4. Patio de Banderas. Neolithic pottery (photo: M.A. Tabales).

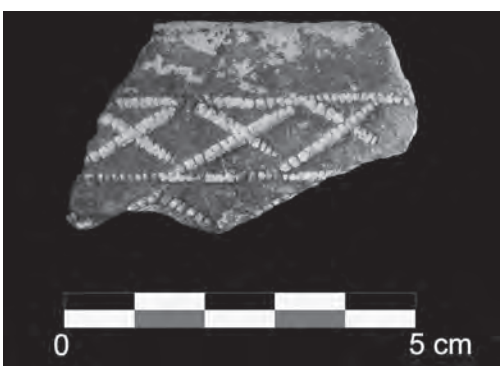

Fig. 5. Bell Beaker shard from Patio de Banderas (photo: M.A. Tabales).

phy terminology,[28] in this case, a Bell Beaker sherd, dating to the late or final moment of the Chalcolithic. The general time span established for this cultural horizon in southwestern Iberia and particularly in the Lower Guadalquivir, ranges between 2100-1900 BCE.[29] The fragment found in Patio de Banderas is ornamented with two horizontal lines filled with short diagonal crossing lines and below it a horizontal zigzag. The motifs were impressed using a comb like instrument, a well-known decorative technique in the Bell Beaker pottery of southern Iberian Peninsula (Fig. 5). Similar elements can be found in the surrounding areas of Seville, specifically, in Carmona[30] and again, in Coria del Río.[31] During the final stage of the Copper Age, the number of human settlements in the ancient Guadalquivir estuary area, especially in the vicinity of Seville, significantly increased. Thus, the aforementioned evidence from Seville is in context with many other well-known nearby sites presenting Bell Beaker material: Valencina, Carambolo, Universidad Laboral, Las Arenas, Coria del Río, etc.[32]

2.2. *The Initial Urban Seville at Patio de Banderas*

The earliest stable settlement in Seville, relative to its genuine urban beginning, is dated to the Tartessian period, specifically, at the beginning of the 1st millennium BCE. As of this time period, the majority of permanent settlement traces are found within various sectors of the old urban area, including the Reales Alcázares (Fig. 6). The fluvial and marine environment of this area undoubtedly played an important role in the founding stage, determining the design and topographic situation of the initial settlement and, therefore, the essence of the ancient city.[33]

Several structures cut into the fluvial terrace of the Guadalquivir lying beneath Patio de Banderas can be attributed to this initial period of *Spal*. They are all vertical interfaces consisting in oval-shaped pits filled with thin layers of debris and dated to the Early Iron Age. These fills are the result of human activities carried out inside them, mainly, related to food processing and therefore to the hearths found within the pit structures. Most of the sherds contained in the fills belong to handmade vessels, the same type which, in most cases, is mistakenly attributed by traditional archaeological scholars to the indigenous inhabitants of Tartessos. As fragments of wheel-thrown pottery are also present, the assemblage points to a time period in which the presence of Semitic communities in the ancient river mouth area of the Guadalquivir has become

28 Harris 1991, p. 166.

29 Lazarich 2005, pp. 363-365; García Sanjuán 2011, pp. 128-130 and 136-137; García Rivero – Escacena 2015, pp. 30-33.

30 Harrison – Bubner – Hibbs 1976.

31 Escacena – García Rivero 2018, p. 161, fig. 6.

32 Ruiz Mata 1978-1979; Fernández Gómez – Alonso de la Sierra 1985; Escacena – García Rivero 2018.

33 González Acuña 2011, pp. 30-32.

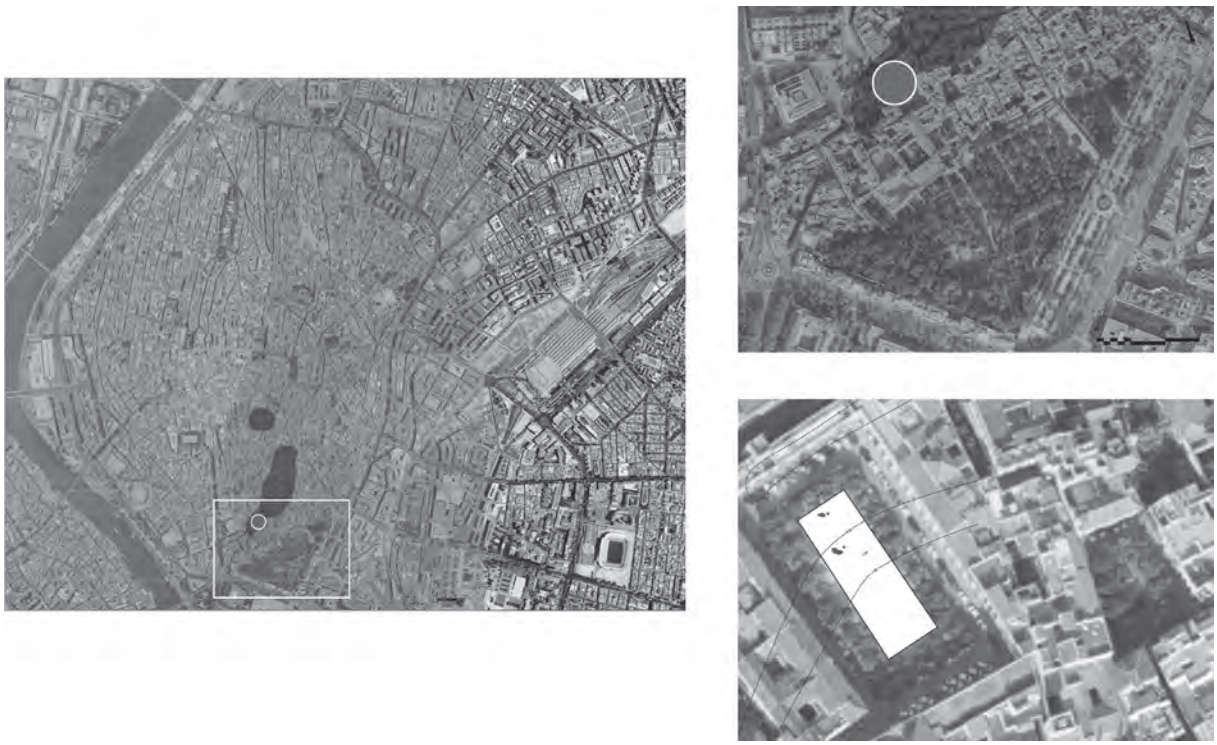

Fig. 6. Hypothesis of the topography of Seville in the 9th century BCE and location of the area excavated at the Patio de Banderas (drawing: M.A. Tabales).

a definite fact. Thus, the archaeological data recently recovered in Patio de Banderas confirms what the majority of specialists had basically already agreed on: that the founding of Seville as a permanent city with true urban characteristics took place during the initial stage of the Phoenician colonization and never prior to this historical phenomenon. The prehistoric data analyzed above was found in secondary stratigraphic contexts and there had also been a millennium long demographic vacuum between the Chalcolithic and Protohistoric phases, that is, a hiatus that covers the entire Bronze Age. The presence of Oriental type pottery excludes therefore designating this initial settlement stage to the Final Bronze Age unless, in the future, well documented evidence of a pre-Phoenician habitat in the urban area of Seville and dated at the beginning of the first millennium BCE, is discovered.[34]

The pit formed by the interface stratigraphic unit 1696 was filled with several levels of hearths (1694) (Figs. 7-8) which included fragments of burnished pottery and handmade pots with coarse or intentionally rough surfaces. The latter are normally thought to have been used for storing foodstuffs or directly for cooking. Unit 1694 also contained several pottery sherds with formal characteristics that provide a more precise chronological range. The fragments belong to dark gray or almost black bowls with vertical profiles. Some present a marked carination near the rim. The interior is smoothed or burnished whereas the exterior is generally rough except for the zone between the carination and the rim (Fig. 9). In some cases, they present burnished geometric motifs on the inside and are usually burnished or highly smoothed overall. Therefore, this pottery type corresponds to the high quality handmade variety (Fig. 10).

34 Torres 1998.

Fig. 7. Patio de Banderas. Oval pit dug in the Guadalquivir River terrace; 9th century BCE. It was possibly used as an outdoor cooking installation (photo: M.A. Tabales).

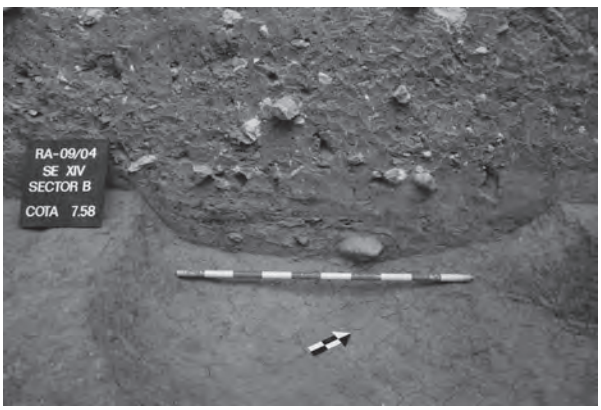

Fig. 8. Detail of the pit and strata of successive layers of hearths.

Fig. 9. Handmade pottery from the earliest occupation levels detected at Patio de Banderas. 9th century BCE (drawing: J.L. Escacena).

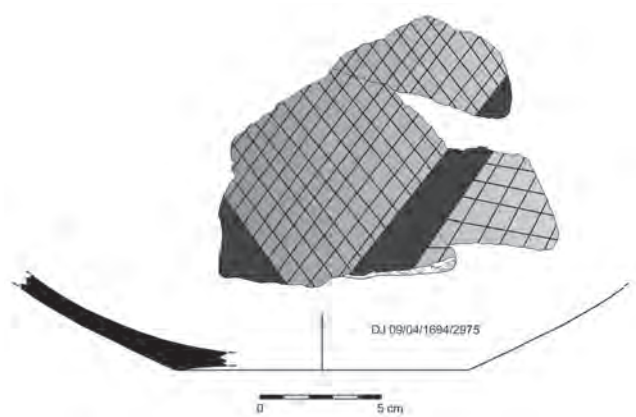

Fig. 10. Patio de Banderas. Handmade ceramic vessel with burnished decoration. Tartessian period (drawing: J.L. Escacena).

All of these fragments probably belonged to vessels associated with food, either for cooking meals or for storing prepared foodstuffs. In any case, their volume exceeds the usual individual tableware size known for this period. In this context, a wheel-thrown fragment, painted with dark brown lines on a yellowish exterior surface, suggests that this pit structure, the oldest one known in Seville and associated with the initial habitat layers of Patio de Banderas, is not dated to a pre-Phoenician Late Bronze Age occupation, but rather to an Early Iron Age phase (Figs. 11-12).

The interface stratigraphic unit 1931 was filled by unit 1933, which also contained abundant Tartessian pottery fragments (Fig. 13). In this case, the pit lacked traces of a hearth, ruling out its association with cooking activities. Furthermore, the ceramic fragments recovered here were somewhat more recent, predominantly, coarse handmade ware corresponding to cooking pots and / or storage jars (Fig. 14). Along with these fragments, some wheel-thrown pottery was also found, specifically Grey Ware (*cerámica gris orientalizante*) (Fig. 15). In the Lower Guadalquivir, this ware appears as early as the 8th century BCE, becoming especially abundant during the 7th-6th centuries BCE.[35] The presence of these slightly

35 Caro 1989; Vallejo 2005 and 2018.

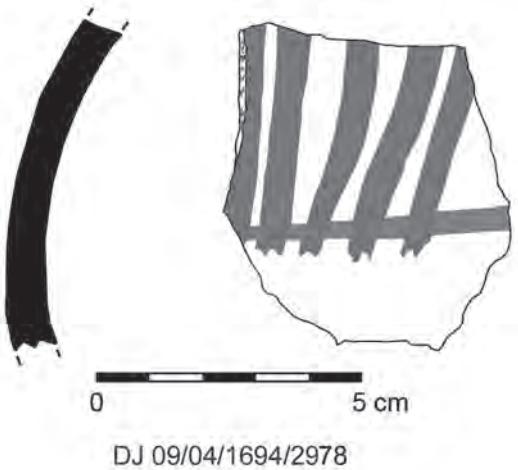

Fig. 11. Wheel-thrown pottery with painted ornamentation evidences that the earliest occupation at Patio de Banderas took place under Phoenician presence (drawing: J.L. Escacena).

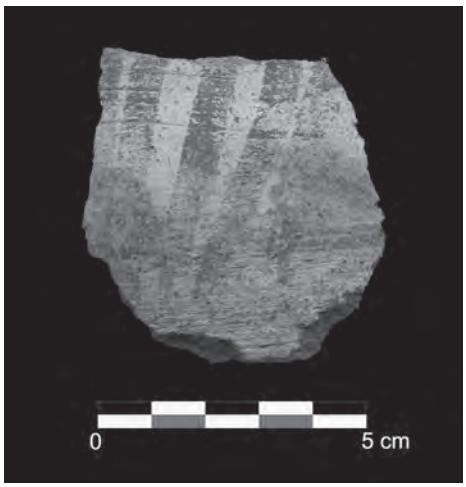

Fig. 12. Image of the pottery fragment with ocre colored painted decoration. Patio de Banderas. The oldest wheel-thrown pottery sherd recovered during the excavation (photo: M.A. Tabales).

Fig. 13. Pit 1934 which possibly could have been used for cooking meals as the above mentioned pit (photo: M.A. Tabales).

more modern elements would date the stratigraphic units 1931 and 1933 between the 8th-7th centuries BCE. The same handmade pottery with rough or poorly finished surfaces appears in particular abundance, generally as cookware or even as funerary trousseau, also during this time period. Its use as cookware is clear in the assemblage of Cerro de la Albina at La Puebla del Río,[36] whereas its use in funerary contexts can be found in the tumular necropolis of Setefilla (Lora del Río) and its associated settlement.[37] Also, Cerro Mariana and its cremation necropolis of Rabadanes (Las Cabezas de San Juan), located on the Guadalquivir downstream from Seville, is a distinct example of the employment of this coarse handmade ware both in everyday activities and in burial rites during the 8th to 6th centuries BCE.[38]

The archaeological evidence documented up till now at Patio de Banderas, together with other previous finds from this same site or its near surroundings[39] corresponds to the oldest human occupation layers of Seville. These structures are actually the earliest direct evidence related to the founding era of Protohistoric

36 Escacena – Feliu – Izquierdo 2010.

37 Aubet 1978 and 1981; Aubet *et al.* 1983, figs. 30 and 33.

38 Beltrán – Izquierdo – Escacena 2007; Pellicer – Escacena 2007.

39 Tabales 2010, pp. 43-46; Escacena 2008, p. 320.

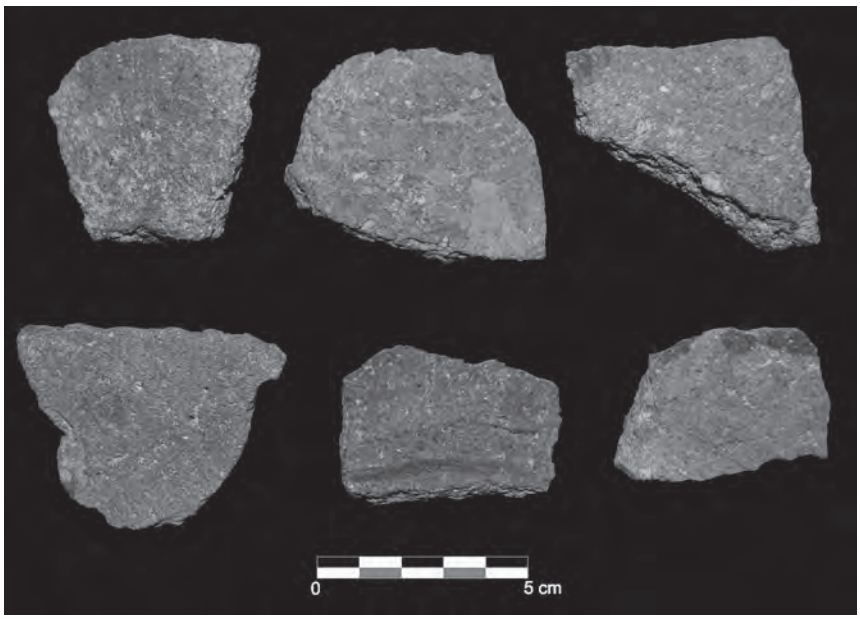

Fig. 14. Coarse pottery sherds from the Patio de Banderas pits belonging to storage or cooking containers (photo: M.A. Tabales).

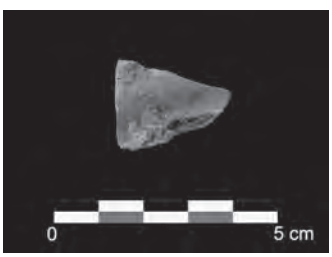

Fig. 15. Patio de Banderas. Grey Ware (*Gris de Occidente*) fragment (photo: M.A. Tabales).

Spal. Although archaeological remains dated to this same time period have been previously discovered in other areas of the historic center, in all cases, the elements found were either out of context or in conditions whereby ground water prevented a correct documentation of the occupation strata. This is the case, for example, of the fragment found at Abades St. decorated with painted geometric motifs[40] or fragments of the so-called *cerámica tipo Carambolo* variety recovered in previous interventions at Patio de Banderas.[41] Also, an archaeological intervention carried out during the 80's at San Isidoro St. uncovered a beaten earth floor and some adobes, elements that can also be ascribed to the 8th century BCE and would correspond to the northwestern sector of the Tartessian period city.[42]

All the pits recently documented at Patio de Banderas were filled with occupation layers containing hearth and food remains. In this second data set, the most significant evidence consists of bone fragments and mollusk shells. The analysis carried out by E. Bernáldez from the Paleobiology Laboratory of the Andalusian Institute of Historical Heritage (IAPH) offers interesting information on the dietary patterns of Protohistoric Seville. According to the author of this study,[43] the three pits (stratigraphic units 1931, 1932 and 1696) had been filled with domestic refuse containing 159 faunal remains which correspond to 84 individuals of different species (Tab. 1).

40 Escacena 2018a, fig. 26.

41 Huarte 2002, pp. 254-255.

42 Campos – Vera – Moreno 1988, p. 19.

43 Bernáldez 2015.

FAUNAL REMAINS. GENERAL DATA PITS 1931, 1932 and 1696	
NR: 159	NMI: 84
Vertebrates (NR: 84) (NMI:17) (651.66 gm)	
Species	NMI
Bos taurus (cattle)	3
Equus sp. (*asinus*) (cf. donkey)	1
Sus scrofa (pig/boar)	3
Caprinos (goat/sheep)	4
Lepus granatensis (hare)	1
Oryctolagus cuniculus (rabbit)	1
Indetermined birds	2
Indetermined fish	2
Mollusks and land snails (NR: 75) (NMI: 67) (100,06 gm)	
Species	NMI
Glycymeris insubrica	7
Glycymeris sp.	3
Ostraea edulis	1
Scrobicularia plana	1
Solen o *Ensis* (razor clam)	1
Theodoxus sp. (cf. *fluviatilis*)	1
Theba pisana	11
Rumina decollata	22
Cochlicella conoidea	1
Cochlicella acutay	4
Indetermined pulmonates	15

Tab. 1. Patio de Banderas. Faunal remains found in the open-air fire pits interpreted here as cooking facilities. Some species of marine mollusks (*genus Glycymeris*) may not be food waste, as other uses are known for these types of shells.[44]

3. Discussion

According to the generally accepted interpretation of Tartessian architectural data in Southwestern Spain, the circular or oval structures recently discovered in the Patio de Banderas should be described as pit houses associated with the local inhabitants of Tartessos and never related to the Semitic settlers. These would have built square or rectangular dwellings, that is, straight wall constructions with corners at a 90° angle, as seen in their homelands and Mediterranean colonies. However, serious doubts have lately been cast on these types of structures, questioning if what has usually been recorded as a *fondo de cabaña* really is the semi-subterranean part of a house. Some scholars strongly object to the idea that many of the prehistoric pit structures were dwellings, especially those ascribed to the Copper Age, supposedly the forerunners of the Protohistoric pit houses.[45] Additionally, the *fondo de cabaña* of Carambolo, the example that became the interpretive paradigm for Tartessian architecture, has also been ruled out.[46] Currently, it is considered to have functioned as

44 Escacena – Vázquez 2009.

45 Jiménez – Márquez 2006.

46 Escacena 2010, pp. 104-113.

a *bóthros* or a ritual pit where offering remains and other "sacred rubbish" from the sanctuary, situated on eastern hillside of the Aljarafe and dedicated to the Phoenician goddess Astarte,[47] were discarded.

When the pit structure of Carambolo was uncovered during the archaeological excavations of 1958, and followed by the discovery of the treasure which gave the site its fame, it was interpreted as a native dwelling and subsequently, all similar structures discovered from then on were too. As, for example, the semi-subterranean structures found in the metallurgical settlement of San Bartolomé de Almonte, in Huelva,[48] or those of Vega de Santa Lucía, in the Cordovan town of Palma del Río.[49] The same interpretation can be found in specialized journals when other similar sites located within the Tartessian area, especially in the province of Cádiz,[50] are described. Hardly any of these studies contemplate the fact that structures with the same formal characteristics could have had different functions. Furthermore, in Colina de los Quemados, Córdoba,[51] in Acinipo, near Ronda,[52] and in Montemolín, Marchena,[53] genuine circular houses with rubble masonry walls, beaten earth floors, doorways, porches and also indoor hearths were discovered. As to the rest of oblong shallow pits found at these sites, with a variety of shapes and complex stratigraphic sequences, they were regarded without a doubt as being unsuitable to live in. Another example is the structure found at Pocito Chico,[54] which again seems more likely to have been a ritual rubbish pit.[55] In most cases, these structures are lacking an entrance, by means of ramps or steps, as well as any traces of a ring of posts or a central post to sustain a roof. In contrast, real dwellings present floors, paved porches and walls with masonry foundations, which incidentally respond to a measuring system based on "Ezekiel's cubit".[56]

At Las Cabezas de San Juan another oval structure with similar characteristics to those uncovered in Seville was found. It also contained several layers of hearths, broken cooking pots, numerous faunal and terrestrial snail remains mixed in abundant ash,[57] demonstrating that, at least in some cases, they were used as outside cooking facilities. This explanation can be applied to the stratigraphic unit 1696 of Patio de Banderas and its corresponding fill, showing several layers of combustion remains (UE 1694). However, it cannot be ruled out that structures with similar characteristics could also have been used for disposing refuse away from the dwelling areas. The structure formed by the stratigraphic unit 1931 and its fill (unit 1933) more likely corresponds with this usage, as it lacked, in this case, hearth remains.

Thus, the pit structures dug in the fluvial terrace of the Guadalquivir, the natural geological formation beneath Patio de Banderas, would be consistent with facilities used by the community that founded and inhabited the city in the Early Iron Age, coinciding also in time with the initial sanctuary at Carambolo.[58] The main urban settlement of Seville would have basically developed from Mateos Gago St. towards the north, reaching approximately, the Plaza de la Alfalfa (Fig. 16). Thus, the structures uncovered in the area of Patio de Banderas could possibly be part of a southern peripheral suburb of the city.

47 Belén 2000, p.72.

48 Ruiz Mata – Fernández Jurado 1986.

49 Murillo 1994, pp. 63-131 and 132-188.

50 Ruiz Mata – González Rodríguez 1994.

51 Luzón – Ruiz Mata 1973, p. 10.

52 Aguayo *et al*. 1986.

53 Chaves – de la Bandera 1991.

54 Ruiz Gil – López Amador 2001.

55 Izquierdo – Fernández Troncoso 2005, p. 719.

56 Suárez – Márquez 2014, p. 209.

57 Beltrán *et al*. 2007, p. 83.

58 Fernández Flores – Rodríguez Azogue 2007, pp. 103-109.

Data of the greatest interest has been provided by the remains recovered from these fire pits, allowing to reconstruct the daily activities of the people who used them as cooking places or rubbish holes. For one thing, it seems as if the presence of coarse ceramics, usually interpreted as cookware, together with burnished decorated fine ware, supposedly used as tableware, would be an indication that pottery types were not so specialized as generally thought. In fact, it is possible that sometimes high quality pottery was also used in preparing food, in the same way coarse ware was sometimes used to contain cremation remains when this was the general funeral rite. Almost all ceramic vessels could have had diverse functions, as the results obtained from the analysis on both ceramic types recovered from the Patio de Banderas pit structures suggest. These conclusions would be difficult to explain if each pottery type had had a highly specialized use.

Fig. 16. The area occupied by the Early Iron Age settlement with the current Street grid of historic Seville (drawing: M.A. Tabales and J.L. Escacena).

In order to determine the daily use of these vessels, a lipid residue analysis was carried out by Professor Paloma Álvarez Mateos from the Department of Chemical Engineering of the University of Seville. The studies have revealed that two basic fat types, animal (ox tallow) and vegetable (olive oil), were being used from the 9th century BCE on. Still, these results must be considered with due caution as further studies are needed in order to contrast this data. In fact, it is still uncertain whether the olive oil used in the culinary procedures carried out within these outdoor cooking areas was obtained from the small wild olives produced by the *acebuche* (*Olea europaea*), abundant then in the region, or from early cultivated varieties of olive tree. So far, data collected in the Iberian Peninsula indicates that the cultivated olive was introduced in Western Europe by Phoenician settlers. Therefore, if the vessel fragments from Patio de Banderas are proven to have contained oil from cultivated olive trees, this would strengthen the idea that the culinary activities had taken place at a time in which the Phoenicians had already settled in the Lower Guadalquivir valley. If the cooking pits at Patio de Banderas were a product of Phoenician, or other Eastern communities, this information could be explained in the context of different gastronomic tastes. The non-Canaanite population of Tartessos would rather follow the Atlantic Late Bronze Age traditional eating habits. Also, rules on what can or cannot be eaten, as well as manners in which food is prepared are difficult to change. Therefore, the use of olive oil at such an early stage of the Phoenician colonization of the Guadalquivir seems more plausible if it is attributed to the newly installed settlers. Within these observations, the analysis also indicated the presence of palm oil residue in one of the vessels. This highly outstanding singular result must be confirmed by further testing. An alternative hypothesis for this particular result is that the sample could have been affected by a millenary bacterial decomposition process of other types of lipids.

As we have already seen, the faunal analysis results show no apparent contradiction on the hypothetical use of the Patio de Banderas pit structures. The study has provided logical data related with outdoor cooking

places or rubbish holes, in the cases when they lack hearths. Goats, cattle, hares and rabbits, as well as some birds and a few varieties of mollusks would have been prepared in these, approximately, 50 cm deep, open fire pits. Among the latter, the marine species confirm the proximity of a fluvial estuary environment as shown in the geomorphological studies carried out in the area.[59] In some cases, domesticated animal bones showed traces of having been charred by fire, confirming that food had been prepared on these hearths. Lastly, the possible presence of a donkey among the animal species is also worth noting, as its appearance in Western Europe has traditionally been associated with the Phoenician colonization.

4. Sevilla-Carambolo and the Phoenician Settlement Pattern along the River Mouths of Tartessos

In conclusion, the data from Patio de Banderas clearly suggests that the first permanent occupation in relation to the founding of Seville took place between the 9th-8th centuries BCE. The archaeological evidence can be attributed to the initial period of the city just founded by the Phoenicians. This paper studies the founding of a colony on the eastern bank of the ancient mouth of the Guadalquivir and the establishment of an important temple on the opposite bank. Consequently, this dual foundation of Seville-Carambolo is equivalent to that of a port/habitat – sanctuary scheme. In this case, the secular settlement in the east and the main sacred site in the west represented a single political entity. The Phoenicians would have controlled and organized the territory by means of both enclaves, following a pattern that can be seen in other sites along the Atlantic coast of southwestern Iberia. This model guaranteed an effective economic and symbolic control over the rivers of Tartessos. This same pattern is also found at other similar places along the ancient Tartessian coastline of the Gulf of Cádiz (Fig. 17). Also, around the Guadiana estuary, a similar spatial implantation model including a Phoenician settlement and necropolis has been recently discovered in Ayamonte.[60] A sacred complex located on the current Portuguese side of the river in Castro Marim was also part of this enclave.[61] As to the mouth of the Odiel river, the candidates for this hypothesis are the city itself of Huelva, in the east, and the Phoenician site of Aljaraque in the west,[62] recently reinterpreted as a possible sanctuary.[63] In the area of Cadiz, the settlement of Castillo de Chiclana, defended by an exemplary Oriental type walled enclosure, would represent the first urban nucleus of *Gadir*.[64] Here, the two main islands of an archipelago that lies directly in the Atlantic, whose names found in classical texts are *Kotinoussa* and *Erytheia*, would have formed the sacred area. Temples dedicated to Melqart, to Baal/Cronos and to the goddess Astarte were raised on these islands. In this specific case, the entrance to the Bay of Cádiz from the ocean, and therefore to the Guadalete river, would have been through a channel existing between the town of Chiclana and the castle of Sancti Petri,[65] heavily blocked with silt today.[66] This water way would have more likely been the ancient entrance to the bay than the present wide entrance extending between the town of Rota and the urban nucleus of Cádiz.[67]

59 Borja – Barral 2005; Barral 2009; Borja – Borja – Jiménez 2018.

60 García Teyssandier – Cabaco 2009, pp. 735-736; 2010, pp. 115-116; García Teyssandier – Marzoli 2013.

61 Arruda 2007, pp. 118-121.

62 Blázquez – Luzón – Ruiz Mata 1971.

63 Escacena 2018b, pp. 150-164.

64 Bueno 2008; Bueno – García Menárguez – Prados 2013.

65 Escacena 2018b, pp. 147-150.

66 Arteaga *et al*. 2001.

67 Sáez 2018, p. 11, fig. 1.

Fig. 17. The sanctuary – river – colony model found along the southwestern coast of the Iberian Peninsula (drawing: J.L. Escacena).

This colonization model organized specifically the territory discovered by the Phoenician diaspora, which written sources would end up calling Tartessos. The four areas just mentioned are the best known examples on how river way access to the rich inland regions was placed under control. So far, with the current archaeological data there is no accurate way of establishing a precise and concrete sequence of events for the founding moment of each of these four particular cases. Perhaps, the course of events would respond with the foundation of a sanctuary in first place and then the secular port settlement afterwards, as some literary references suggest. Classical texts also suggest that this sequence, although very limited in time, would have been based on religious and practical reasons. Strabo (III 5,5), in fact, wrote following Posidonius that on some occasions the gods did not propitiate certain intents made on founding a colony. From an emic perspective these failed attempts could be interpreted as locations lacking effective visual control over important solar positions, whereas, an etic approach suggests that the place elected was unsuitable for making efficient nautical route maps. This explanation is based on the association of the gods with the Sun, the Moon and the five known planets: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, the Earth being excluded.

If this organized control over the southwestern Iberian coast is recognized, it requires accepting that it is a Phoenician enterprise and not an initiative carried out by any other community. If the model were to be positively confirmed in Cádiz, it would be scientifically incorrect to sustain that the city was a Phoenician colony and, at the same time, the place chosen for its location was also a strategic indigenous enclave. As we have seen, the level of importance that has traditionally been granted to the native population should be questioned not only in this case, but in all cases.

The logic behind the act of founding a sanctuary before the settlement, where economic transactions took place, acquires its practical meaning when the rapid progress of the Phoenician colonization in the western Mediterranean is analyzed. This expansion needed the support of a series of navigation points that necessarily had to be located along the coast.[68] As we have already mentioned, such a huge project must have relied on progressively making nautical maps with all the geographic, maritime, sea currents, winds and tidal information needed to reach the newly discovered territories. This "scientific" activity, consisting basically in collecting information on the coast and immediate hinterland, but also in providing navigation ventures and ship crews with the necessary references to operate in the new domains, took place in the temples. Hence, astronomical knowledge was fundamental to these sacred enclaves or rather, theological sanctuaries insofar as the gods were the stars themselves. Locations with the best celestial observation conditions of the risings and settings of these god/planets automatically became special sanctuaries centers, in comparison to the settlement temples associated basically with the economic needs of the colonial progression. In the case of Seville, Carambolo fulfills these astronomical conditions, since from its temple on the hilltop the solar sunrise can be

68 Belén 2000.

observed in the distant horizon.[69] The same occurs in the other sanctuaries mentioned. However, it remains to be determined whether the pattern defined by Seville (colony) and Carambolo (temple), which has been observed in the other coastal sites of southwestern Iberian Peninsula presented in this study, can be extended to other ends of the Canaanite diaspora of the 1st millennium BCE.[70]

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69 Esteban – Escacena 2013.

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