

FROM HISPALIS TO ISBILIYA. THE TRANSFORMATION FROM URBS INTO MADINA.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Geographical conditionings.

The city of Seville is in the south of the Iberian Peninsula, in the region of Andalusia, in the valley of the Guadalquivir River. (1) At about 120km. from the sea, it is located on a plain surrounded by two platforms, which are El Aljarafe and Los Alcores (2). The average height of the present city above the sea level is between 7 and 8 m. However, the area in which most of ruins have been found and are conserved is at about 12 m. (3) (Fig.1).

The primitive Seville was surrounded by two rivers: the Guadalquivir and the Tagarete. Both rivers have undergone numerous changes in their course as well as in their flow (4). To this date, no exhaustive study has been carried out on this aspect which is essential for delimiting with exactness the old and upper medieval city. The numerous lagoons, which still in the XVI century were a serious problem for the city, are witness to this.

The location of Seville in an easily floodable swampland (5) make it difficult to explain the reason for its establishment and its continuity since Protohistory. In fact, there is a forceful reason, and this is that it was the last point up to which the Baetis was navigable for deep-draught ships (6). This situation continued through the Middle Ages, and up to the present day without interruption.

1.2. History of the researches.

No purely archeological study exists until the year 1956. It is Prof. F. Collantes de Terán's doctoral thesis, titled Contribución al estudio de la topografía sevillana en la Antigüedad y la Edad Media, not published until the year 1977. The hypothesis set forth, based on archeological prospections and excavations, as well as on chance findings, are still valid in many aspects, making it a work of obliged reference (Fig. 2).

During the 60's other data were added to those gathered by Prof. F. Collantes de Terán (7). The heavage of a wide trench in a main artery of the city, the present Avenida de la Constitución, took place exactly in 1960. These works, supervised by Profs. Collantes de Terán and Carriazo (8), gave way to the finding of structures corresponding to the roman and islamic enclosures, housings, burial sites, as well as a great number of islamic ceramic pieces, which without doubt, corresponded to a heritage.

A few years later, the future Prof. E. Gómez Piñol (9) read his dissertation, an unpublished work in which starting from Prof. Collantes's thesis, adding a deeper study of the sources as well as more recent archeological findings.

The decade of the 70's is preceeded, in archeological publications, by an almost exclusive interest in the classical urbs. Since 1972, the then Professor of Archeology of the University of Seville, Antonio Blanco Freijeiro, analized in a series of publications, the structure of the Roman urbs (10). The works of Collantes and Gómez Piñol were the inspiration for a number of new hypothesis which found their parallels in other old cities, specially Italian. This author corrects part of the limit of the enclosure proposed by Prof. Collantes, and also suggests the possibility of a Republican enclosure widened during the Empire, all this together

with the transformation of the vital centres of the city, and so proposes the existence of a republican forum and an imperial forum, and also a corporative forum, of which all three there is no trace.

The only archeological excavation centered on the aim of finding a medieval building took place in 1972, on the site of the supposed Almohade palace of La Buhayra. Said excavations were directed by F. Collantes de Terán and J. Zozaya. The results were quite interesting; the presence of the palace was confirmed, at the same time that first dated findings; both by written sources and the relative chronology of archeological material belonging to the Islamic and Medieval Christian Seville, took place (11).

An archeological excavation which took place in El Patio de Banderas in El Alcázar of Seville was published in 1976. An Upper Imperial commercial installation was discovered, and above it, the remains of a Paleochristian and Visigoth baptistry from the IV and V centuries (12).

Two years afterwards, an archeological excavation took place in the vicinity of Abades Street, near the archbishop's palace (13).

The decade of the 80's, concretely since 1982, is the beginning of an archeology of " rescue " or " emergency ".

Between the years 1982 and 1985, this activity depended on the Provincial Archeological Museum of Seville. Many studies took place during this period (14). In other cases, the Museum simply followed the works, as in the unfortunate case of the works related to the city's new Underground (15).

In 1986, it passed on to be responsibility of the Junta de Andalucía, and in the case of archeological activities, concretely of the Provincial Delegation of Culture of Seville. This same date states the beginning of a project titled " Of Systematic Research of the City of Seville ", under the direction of the archeologist J.M. Campos Carrasco. Since this date and until 1988, a great number of interventions took place, which were: Nijne in 1986, seven in 1987 and seven in 1988 (16). This project is presently at standstill, in that related to the study of materials and the publishing of findings, as well as to the renewal of new activities in the excavation (17).

The doctoral thesis titled La estructura urbana de la Sevilla islámica, written by myself, was read in the University of Seville in 1988. This work is the result of a systematic archeological prospection of the city. The written sources, historiography, graphic documentation, direct prospection, and search for parallels, were the steps followed to define what is left in this city of its islamic past (18).

Throughout these last years, and thinking in the events in 1992, a great number of restorations and rehabilitations of historical buildings were undertaken, being accompanied by " rescue " archeological excavations, as in the cases of The Palace of Altamira, The House of Miguel de Mañara, or the Monastery of San Clemente. Even though each and every one of them has supplied important facts on the evolution of housing in the city, they have yet to be published.

2. From the Classical city to the Medieval City.

2.1. The written sources.

Hispalis was founded as a colony by Julius Caesar towards the year 45 B.C.. It received the name of Colonia Julia Romula Hispalis (19). Archeology has proved that there was a prior settlement, which may be dated back to the VIII century B.C. (20).

Although the political capital of the Baetica was Corduba (present day Cordova), the truth is that the economic capital was Hispalis. This was the port from which all the provincial exports sailed to their various destinations, but specially to Rome. The importance of this city in the Baetica is comparable to that of Alexandria, London, Lyons or Ostia in the different points of the Empire (21).

Since the beginning of the V century, various Barbarian peoples plundered and tried to take the city, such is the case of the vandals, alans or sueves. However, the visigoths did not succeed, and it was not until the reign of Teudis (531 - 548), that they finally established themselves in the city (22). It seems that it is from this date that Hispalis in instituted as the province's capital. Its role in international commerce must have lessened considerably, although there remains evidence of the presence of foreign merchants (Syrian and Greek.)(23)

At the moment of the conquest of the city by the Muslims, 711 or 712 (24), these established themselves in the city, up to the point that it was the capital of al-Andalus during the first years.

The first actions over the city of which there is knowledge are quite late:

- 214 H. / 829. Emir Abd al - Rahman the II founds the aljama mosque known as Ibn Adabbas (25).

- 230 H. / 844. Said emir orders the reconstruction of the city walls, in fear of a future Viking attack and in reaction to the one which had taken place in this same year (26).

- Towards the year 230 H. / 844 or 301 H. / 913 - 914 is the date corresponding to the building of the Dar al - Imara or government house. It is a fortified palace outside the city walls (27).

- 276 H. / 889 - 890. In this year, the governor's palace, which was inside the city walls, near the greater mosque, was surrounded by a wall (28).

- Late XI century or early XII. Date in which the first treatise on hisba was written by Ibn Abdun, which enables us to reconstruct a great number of aspects of the " first " Isbiliya, at the same time that it gives us a description of living conditions in this city (29).

2.2. The archeological sources.

The present city barely preserves reminders of its classical past. Only a few elements have survived (30), which are (Fig.2,3):

- Temple in Mármoles Street.
- Remains of Roman thermae, number 16 Abades Street.
- A series of honorific, commemorative and funerary inscriptions, most of them reused in Islamic constructions.
- Capitals, found throughout different points in the city.
- Remains of walls, ashlar ramparts found only in the subsoil.
- Remains of housing or infrastructure, which appeared especially in the excavations after the 80's.

These findings are specially concentrated in the height 12 of the city, which corresponds to the walled enclosure proposed by Prof. Collantes de Terán.

It should be pointed out, that when observing the urban outline of this area, regularity is practically nonexistent. It is truly not known up to what point did this city have a hypodaemic outline. What is certain is that from the excavations of these last years, a continuity in the disposition of houses and streets (31), or an absolute discontinuity (32) is observed.

In the same way, no transformation is observed in the period between the V and beginning of the VIII centuries. However, during these years, and from the IV century on, a transcendental change, the christianization of the pagan city, must have taken place (33). The written sources mention various temples, as well as the celebration of councils. The only testimony is the font found in El Patio de Banderas in the city's Alcázar. During this period, there certainly existed temples outside the city walls; near the augustan road which lead to Gades (present Cádiz). Another characteristic process of this period is militarization (34), of which there is not much knowledge, neither through the written sources, nor through the archeological ones.

The truth is that once the Muslims took over the city of Hispalis, no great changes took place until more than a century after (between 711 and 829). It is evident that some of the Christian temples were transformed into mosques (35) and that buildings of new plans and different characteristics began to rise. However, the buildings considered landmarks of the Islamic city were not built until the reign of the Umayyad emir Abd al - Rahman the II. The following were built during his domain (Fig. 4):

- The aljama mosque (36), of which many remains, both written and archeological are kept.

- The city walls, remains of which are found sporadically in the subsoil, and mostly in a casual way, without excavation. This creates a confusion in dating, because these findings had systematically been dated as Roman, because of the fact that they were walls of ashlar ramparts, although we know from the Muslim sources that type of construction also used "stone of the highest quality" (37).

Some years later, but still under the Independent Emirate of Damascus, two palaces were built, one inside the city walls, the palace of Umayya, another outside the city walls, the Dar al - Imara, or Palace of the Prince.

An active commercial zone developed around the aljama mosque, and there is no doubt of the existence of baths, the only one of which there is proof is through the treatise written by Ibn Abdun, which he describes as forming part of the aljama (38). The religious, political and economical centre, the palace of Umayya, was in the south - west area of the city, constituting the madina. It is not known up to what point this area could constitute an important part of the classical city, but the truth is that it is in this area where the greatest number of Roman inscriptions are found. Gold coins were also found in the subsoil of the aljama mosque (39), as well as structures of a certain importance; remains of large thermae were found near the temple. All this has made the researches of the Roman Seville suppose the existence of an imperial forum in the vicinity (40). This would follow the law of continuity in the vital areas of the city.

No definite change took place in the central area of Isbiliya until the XII century, specifically under the almohade caliph Abu Yaqub Yusuf (1163 - 1184). This caliph decided to "make Isbiliya a capital", and with this aim in mind, endowed it with extraordinary buildings such as: the new aljama, (site of the present cathedral), the silk merchant's customs house (a market of hypocaustic plant), the shipyards, wharf, bridges, reformations in the city walls, an aqueduct (41). All this moved the madina towards the south, being this southern area the most noble of the city, where most of the important public buildings stand, as still is today.

Therefore, the organization of the urban space in the classical period subsisted with the logical changes, due to the different civilizations, until the second half of the XII century, date in which a great urban transformation takes place. Curiously enough, this

change was not altered in a substantial way until the XX century, due to the plans worked out for the Universal Exposition of 1929.

NOTES.

- (1).- On a scale of 1:50.000, page 984, the geographic coordinates are 37 22' lat and 6 0' long.
- (2).- Related bibliography: A. González Dorado (1975), F. Sancho Royo (1985).
- (3).- F. Collantes de Terán (1977), 36; A. González Dorado (1975), 72; M. Valor Piechotta (1991), 19.
- (4).- L. Menanteau, J.R. Vanney (1985), 122; J.R. Vanney (1970); F. Sancho Royo (1985), 511.
- (5). - F. Sancho Royo (1985), 511.
- (6).- F. Collantes de Terán (1977), 42 - 48, 58.
- (7).- J.M. Carriazo (1964 - 65), 63.
- (8).- J.M. Carriazo (1960); Ibidem (1974 - 75), 91 - 98.
- (9).- E. Gómez Piñol (1963).
- (10).- A. Blanco Freijeiro (1972), 1 - 22 ; Ibidem (1979); A. Blanco and R. Corzo (1976), 142 - 144.
- (11).- F. Collantes de Terán, J. Zozaya (1972), 221 - 274.
- (12).- M. Bendala; I. Nereguela (1980), 335 - 380.
- (13).- Structure informed on by F. Collantes de Terán (1977), 80 - 81. Recently published by R. Corzo (1991).
- (14).- Archeological excavations published in the A.A.A./ 1985. (Anuario Arqueológico de Andalucía).
- (15).- L.J. Guerrero Misa (1984), 95 - 98; F. Fernández and A. de la Hoz (1986), 49 - 72.
- (16).- Archeological excavations published in the A.A.A./ 1986, 1987 and 1988.
- (17).- It is inevitable to mention the lack of long term planification, of prior research (specially of the written sources and historiography), of specialization in the different periods on part of the members of this team. This has caused, that once finished the periods of excavations, and except for the study, truly shallow, of the classical remains, the rest of the information is yet to be deciphered and put to use. Few voices have protested publicly of this situation, and in this I agree with the statements of S. Ordóñez Agulla (1991), 65 - 66.
- (18).- M. Valor Piechotta (1989); M. Valor Piechotta (1991).
- (19).- A. Díaz Tejera (1982); A. Blanco Freijeiro (1979).
- (20).- F. Collantes de Terán (1977), 61 - 72; M. Vera Reina (1988), 37 - 60.
- (21).- S. Ordóñez Agulla (1991), 283.
- (22).- A. Blanco Freijeiro (1979), 175 - 188.
- (23).- L.A. García Moreno (1979),
- (24).- M. Valor Piechotta (1989), 19 - 20.
- (25).- Ibidem, 261 - 262.
- (26).- Ibidem, 20.
- (27).- Ibidem, 139 - 141.
- (28).- Ibidem, 143 - 144.
- (29).- E. Levi Provençal (1947); E. Levi Provençal, E. García Gómez (1981).
- (30).- F. Collantes de Terán (1977); J.M. Campos Carrasco (1986); J.M. Campos Carrasco (1988); S. Ordóñez Agulla (1991).
- (31).- J.M. Campos Carrasco (1989), I, 50; J. Escudero Cuesta et alii (1987), III, 267.

- (32).- J.M. Campos Carrasco (1990), 42; Ibidem, 51.
- (33).- D. Claude (1969).
- (34).- Ibidem. The date of the first wall of Seville is not known. Before the 80's, there were only casual findings; no case has been found in the present decade.
- (35).- The transformation was simple, the east - west orientation was changed into a north - south one. And so, the qibla is the southern wall of the building. This is merely a supposition, since there is no archeological proof. This could be the reason why the andalusian mosques face the south, and not towards The Mecca as is mandatory.
- (36).- M. Valor (1989), 260 - 271.
- (37).- Al - Bakri. Trans. E. Vidal Beltrán (1982), 32; Al - Himyari. Trans. P. Maestro (1963), 50.
- (38).- E. Levi Provençal; E. García Gómez (1981), 82.
- (39).- D. Ortiz de Zúñiga (1796), III, 253; V, 297.
- (40).- A. Blanco Freijeiro (1979), 133; F. Collantes de Terán (1977), 80 - 82.
- (41).- Ibn Sahib al - Sala. Trans. P.M. Antuña (1930), 84.

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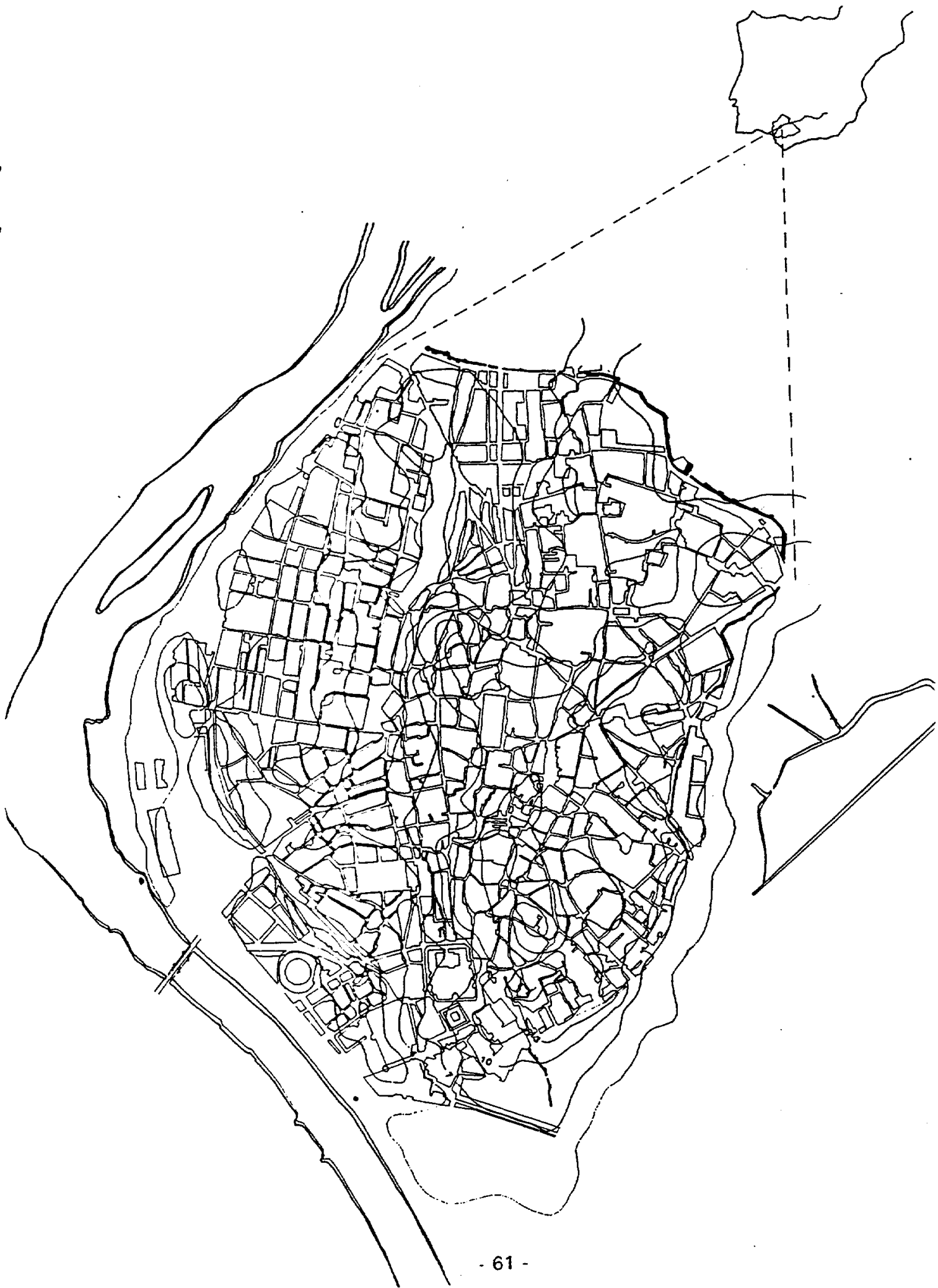
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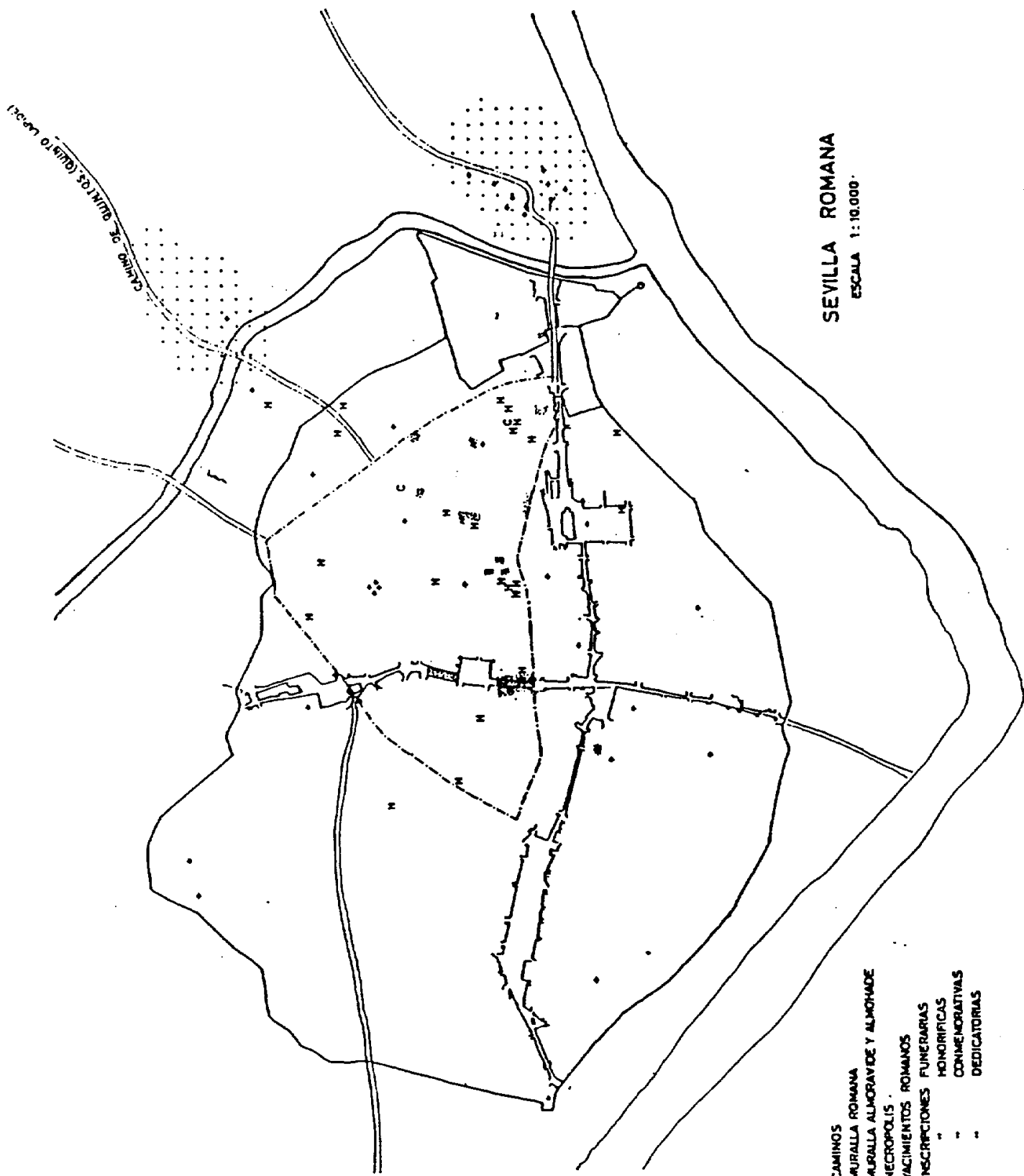
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KEY TO FIGURES=

- (1).- Map of the Iberian Peninsula locating the province of Seville.
Geographical chart of the city.
- (2).- Chart of Seville published by F. Collantes de Terán (1977),74.
- (3).- Geographical chart published by the Ministerio de Hacienda.
Excavations and finds inside the city walls.
- (4).- Geographical chart published by the asistente Olavide, year 1771.
 - 1 Aljama mosque.
 - 2 Umayya palast.
 3. Dar al-Imara.
 - 4 Aljama Almohade.
 - 5 Alcázar Almohade.





SEVILLA ROMANA
 ESCALA 1:10.000.

- CAMINOS
- MURALLA ROMANA
- MURALLA ALMORAVIDE Y ALMOHADE
- · · · · NECROPOLIS
- · · · · YACIMIENTOS ROMANOS
- INSCRIPCIONES FUNERARIAS
- H " HONORIFICAS
- C " CONMEMORATIVAS
- B " DEDICATORIAS



