

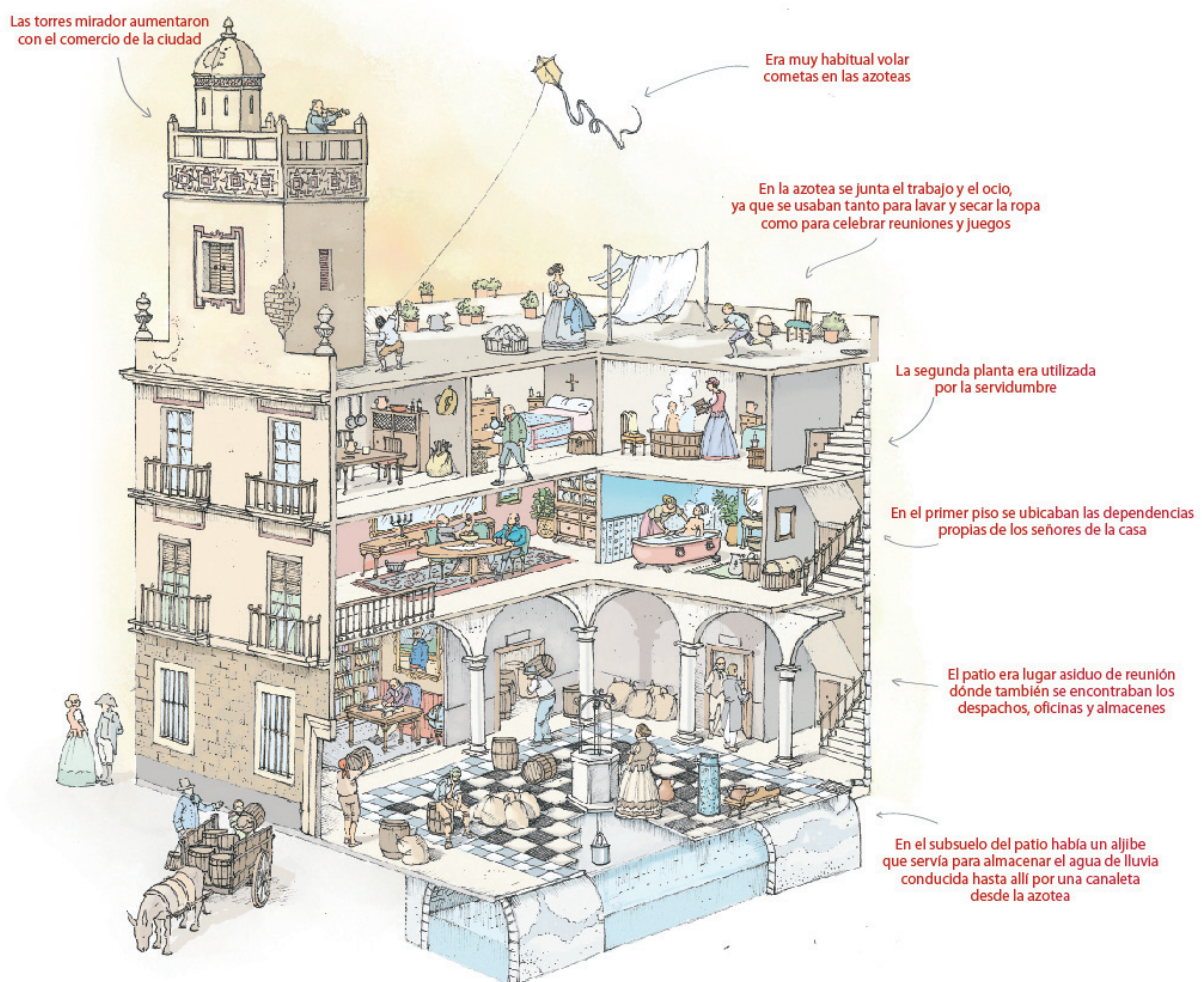


History of the watchtowers in Cádiz

Cádiz became famous all over the world thanks to its watchtowers. They were the first thing travellers saw when they came into the town by sea, creating a picturesque and distinctive silhouette of the city. The watchtowers of Cádiz are one of the most characteristic elements of Andalusian architecture, which is influenced by North Africa. Generally watchtowers were used between the 18th and 20th centuries. Around 1777, Cadiz had 160 watchtowers; these can be seen in the Museum de las Cortes, which has a model of Cadiz in 1777. Of these 160 watchtowers, nowadays 126 are still standing.

In the 18th every merchant decorated his house with a watchtower, they were thus a symbol of prosperity for Cádiz, acquired through its successful trade with the West Indies.

Merchant's house in the 18th century:

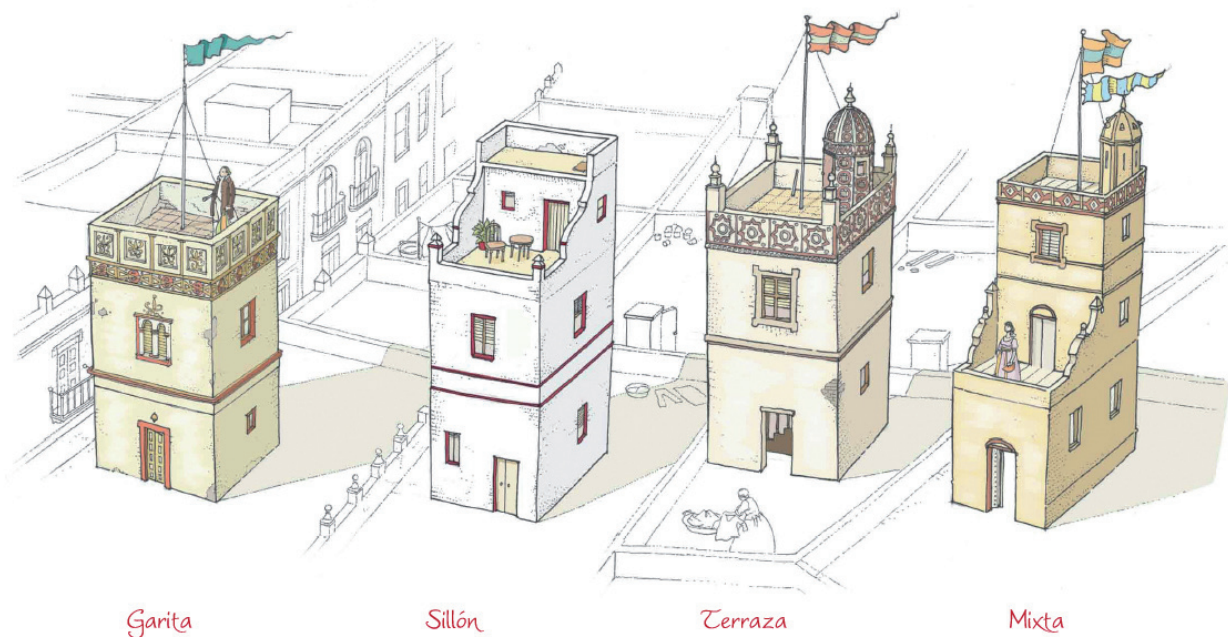


The watchtowers were commonly square, with one or two floors which were decorated with wooden artworks. The only exception is an octagonal tower, which is situated in the following street: C/Jose del Toro, 13. This tower is known as "the hidden beauty" because it is impossible to see it from the street.

The watchtowers had two functions: they were a place for recreation, a bright and protected meeting point against the stormy weather, and they were a place from which the traffic in the harbour could be observed.

Most of the watchtowers were built in the 17th and 18th century, when Cadiz was the official entrance port of all the arriving merchandise from America. Many "Gaditanos" (citizens of Cadiz) in this time were merchants, and this is why there are so many watchtowers. Each merchant wanted to be able to see his ships arriving in the harbour, and each watchtower had its own flag so that the ships could identify them from far away.

The watchtowers of Cádiz are characteristic elements of 18th century architecture and of a lifestyle that was closely connected to overseas trade. That is why the majority of the towers are situated next to the harbour, in the western part of the city where the upper class commonly lived.



In the 18th century Cádiz turned into one of the most beautiful cities in Europe: well-designed, paved, and clean with higher buildings than usual, crowned with towers, which served as vantage points. It was a rich city, a cosmopolitan centre of trade with many foreign inhabitants (Genoese, English, French, Dutch...)

In 1717, King Felipe V ordered the relocation of the 'House of Commerce' and the Consulate of the West Indies to Cádiz, giving Cadiz the monopoly on trade, and an infrastructure that greatly contributed to the enrichment of the city.

This monopoly ended in 1765, although this did not affect the city's growth. Her privileged geographical position and the inventiveness of the 'Gaditano' merchants meant that Cadiz continued to develop.

In 1972 the urban ordinance prohibited the construction of more watchtowers because there were not longer used and because of danger of collapse.

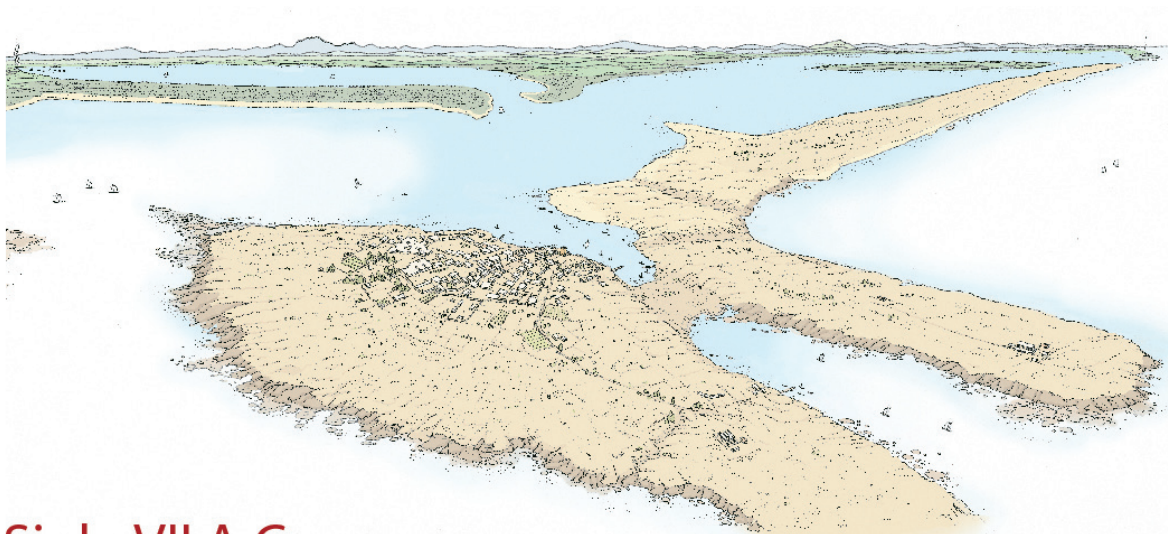


TORRE **TAVIRA**
CÁMARA OSCURA

Ubicación de las torres vigía



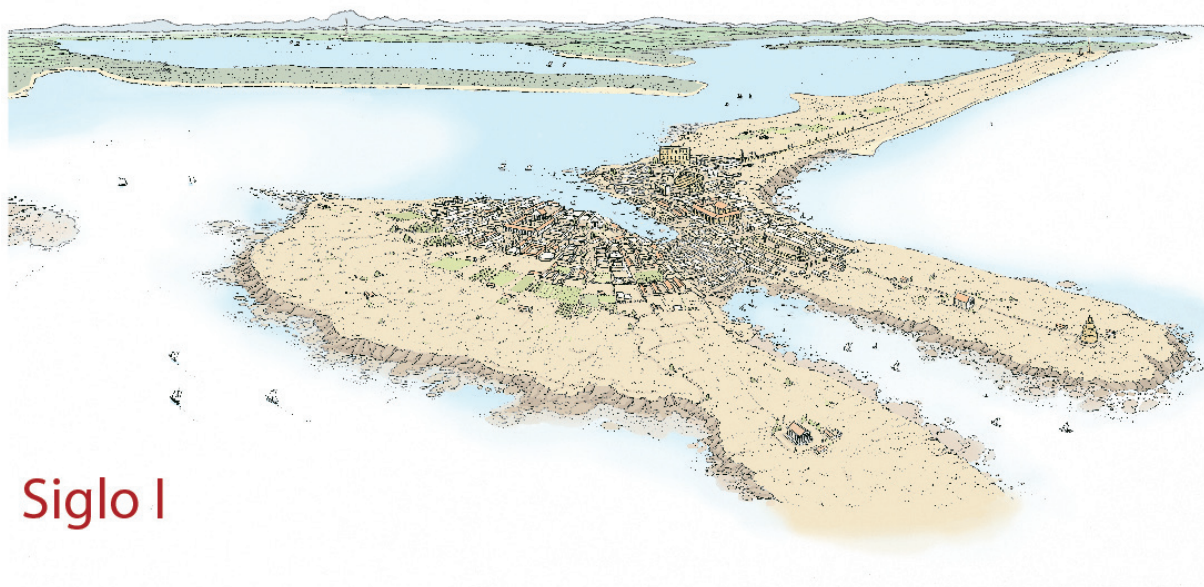
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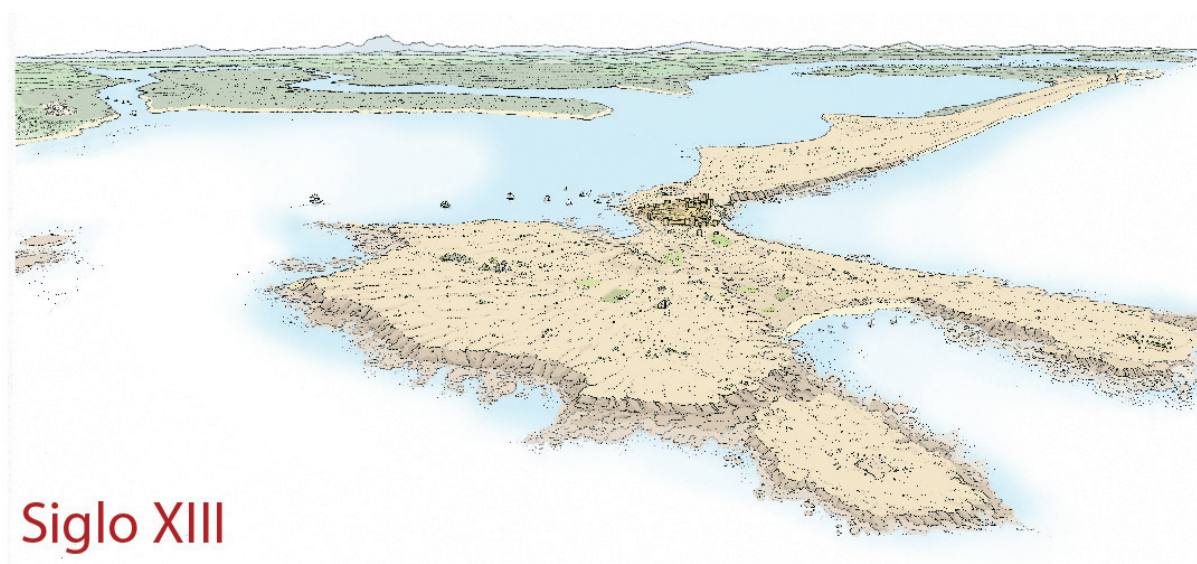
Siglo VII A.C



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Siglo I



Siglo XIII

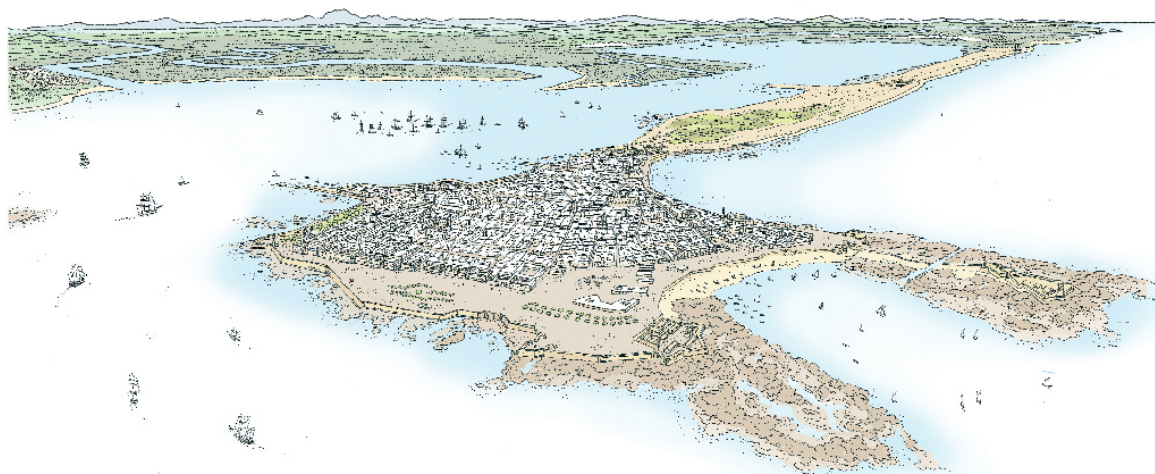


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Siglo XVI



Siglo XVIII



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Siglo XXI