

LAS SOCIEDADES PORTUARIAS DE LA EUROPA ATLÁNTICA EN LA EDAD MEDIA

JESÚS ÁNGEL SOLÓRZANO TELECHEA
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(EDITORES)

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Door to the Mediterranean: port activity in late Islamic Lisbon

Ana Luísa Sérvulo Miranda
Universidade de Lisboa

1. INTRODUCTION

“By the time we arrived there, it was the most opulent commercial centre of all Africa and a big part of Europe” attested to in his report an English crusader who had participated in the Christian conquest of Lisbon, in the middle of the 12th century¹. Despite a sincere feeling of wonder the crusader might have experienced, one cannot ignore some exaggeration due perhaps, to the wish for exalting a recent prey. Nonetheless, in this narrative of the conquest of Lisbon, *De Expugnatione Lyxbonensi*, it stands clear the connotation of this city with a civilizational archetype distinctive from the northern European one.

The city was portrayed as a place of social blending, where merchants from Spain and Africa thrived and northern European characters were absent. The reference in the *Heimskringla* saga to the fact that Lisbon would be *“half Christian and half heathen; for there lays the division between and Christian*

1. *De Expugnatione Lyxbonensi - Conquista de Lisboa aos Mouros em 1147. Carta de um Cruzado Inglês que participou no acontecimento*. Tradução de José Augusto de Oliveira, Livros Horizonte, Lisboa, 1989: 33-35. On the authorship of the report: ..., *op. cit.*: Introdução [7-10].

Spain and heathen Spain” corroborates the crusader’s observation². Both narrators were aware they were facing a society which, despite its Atlantic location, was far from the Atlantic concept they were familiar with.

In fact, Lisbon, born on the right shore of the River Tagus, had a Mediterranean imprint since its inception, attested firstly in its foundation myth. As Strabo wrote:

*“Even in Iberia a city is shown named Ulyssea, also a temple of Minerva, and a myriad other traces both of the wandering of Ulysses and also of other survivors of the Trojan war, which was equally fatal to the vanquished and those who took Troy”*³.

The myth of Ulysses would be adopted mostly during the Portuguese Humanistic Renaissance, in order to exalt Lisbon, which, by that time, was the cradle of the Discoveries, affiliating the city with the voyager hero⁴.

Archaeology testifies Mediterranean presence since the 1st millennium B.C. with the first Phoenician settlements on both sides of the Tagus. During Roman ruling, Olisipo would increase its importance connecting the *mare nostrum* with the sea routes that extended further north to Britannia and Germania Inferior. For roughly a thousand years the roman-origin citadel standing on top of the hill, whose walls extended towards the river, held governmental elites which supervised the city’s port activity.

Under Muslim dominion, beginning in early 8th century, al-Ušbūna played a discrete part in the whole context of Al-Andalus. For the head of the government settled in Cordoba, whose interests headed almost exclusively to

2. *The Heimskringla or Chronicle of the Kings of Norway*. Translated from the Icelandic of Snorro Sturleson by Samuel Laing, Vol. III, Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, London, 1844: 151.

3. *Geography of Strabo*. Literally translated, with notes: the first six books by H. C. Hamilton, Esq., the remainder by W. Falconer, H. A. late fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, Vol. I., Henry G. Bohn, London, 1854: 224.

4. About the construction of the myth of Ulysses and its relation with Lisbon: Aires do Nascimento “Do Mediterrâneo ao Atlântico: os erros de Ulisses até Olisipona, no Ocidente”. Available at: http://www.ulisseweb.eu/pdf/malta_convention_2006/Aires_Nascimento.pdf [31-10-2015]

the Mediterranean, al-Ušbūna's geographical eccentricity and its facade towards the «Tenebrous Sea» discouraged a more affirmative presence. Despite some events that led to a deeper engagement from the Cordovan authorities, such as the Viking attacks on the western coastline, the city – as most of the Garb al-Andalus – was left on its own. For nearly three hundred years its importance was limited mainly to a local and regional scope and the wide strategic role it held during the Roman era seemed hopelessly lost.

Only after the collapse of the Umayyad caliphate of al-Andalus into several independent kingdoms – taifa kingdoms – in 1031, would we see Lisbon, as a part of the kingdom of Badajoz, increasing its dynamism⁵. Its growing importance was also a reflection of the economic development throughout Europe and the Mediterranean, starting from the previous century. This tendency was reinforced by the coming of the Almoravids from North Africa, by the end of the 11th century⁶.

Almoravids already had at their disposal a significant fleet, which grew substantially when several Andalusian ports and their respective navy (the fleet of the taifa of Seville, for example) came under their rule. Therefore, the Almoravids had the means for developing the circulation between the two shores of the Gibraltar Straits and for raiding the Atlantic Christian coastline up to the Pyrenees⁷.

On the eve of the Christian conquest, Lisbon had just regained its social and economic paradigm and deepened its Mediterranean features, which can be perceived either through written sources or through material culture. The intensive urban construction in the contemporary era, mostly during the 90's of the past century, revealed numerous findings, from remaining structures to pottery, allowing us to expand our knowledge on matters related to daily life. Combining written sources – either Muslim or Christian – and archaeology we

5. On further details about the end of the caliphate and the rise of the taifa kingdoms: Viguera Molíns, M. J. *Los Reynos de Taifas y las Invasiones Magrebíes (al-Andalus del XI al XIII)*. Editorial MAPFRE, Madrid, 1992: 25-44.

6. About the coming of the Almoravids and the fall of the taifa kingdoms: Idem *Ibidem*: 155-178.

7. *Historia Compostelana*. Introducción, traducción, notas e índices de Emma Falque Rey, Ediciones Akal, Madrid, 1994: 244-245.

may seek to reassemble Lisbon's major characters in late Islamic period, as well as its role in the commercial networks which spread throughout al-Andalus and the whole *dar al-Islam*.

2. AN ISLAMIC *FINIS TERRAE*: THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND POLITICAL PERIPHERY

Lisbon, situated on the extreme west of the European continent was seen since Ancient times as the end of the known world – *finis terrae* – the place where the land ended and ahead was a hostile and frightening sea which held all sorts of dangers. The Islamic culture was heir of the same concept regarding the Atlantic Ocean, described as the *Tenebrous Ocean* by the 12th century geographer Al-Idrīsī – a sea where “darkness is so dense, that one cannot distinguish anything outside the middle of the day”⁸.

According to Al-Idrīsī *no one knows what exists in that sea, “neither no one can ascertain, due to the difficulties which oppose to navigation, the deep darkness, the height of the waves, the frequency of the storms, the uncountable monsters which live in it and the violence of its winds”*. He asserted the existence in this Ocean of numerous whether inhabited or deserted islands, “*but no sailor dared to penetrate the high sea, limiting oneself to coast without losing sight of the continent*”⁹. Three centuries later, Al-Ḥimyarī had the same view on the Atlantic:

“[Atlantic Ocean] *it's a name of the Sea of Darkness. It's also called the Green Sea and the Surrounding Sea. One has never reached its limit and its extension is ignored. In it, no animal is found*”¹⁰.

Lisbon's location on the inlet of an elongated river which crosses Iberia – Tagus – and near the Atlantic made it the perfect setting for stories of voyagers who dared to defy the unknown waters of the Ocean. The story of the “*Adventurers*”

8. Al-Idrīsī *Geografía de España*. Traducción de Eduardo Saavedra, Anubar Ediciones, Valencia, 1974: 138.

9. Idem *Ibidem*: 159.

10. Al-Ḥimyarī *Kūṭab al-rawḍ al-miṣṣār*. Traducido por M. Pilar Maestro González, Anubar Ediciones, Valencia, 1963: 66.

who departed from Lisbon and done an expedition “*to know what the Ocean holds and which are its limits*” is one example¹¹. However, this would be the exception, for most navigation was apparently made along the coastline.

In the course of most of the period of al-Andalus, the geographical periphery of al-Ušbūna had consequences on the political level. If during Roman governing, Olisipo’s location was strategic to Romanisation, during early Muslim period, al-Ušbūna (and Ġarb in its entirety) saw its peripheral feature stressed for an administration that held an oscillating approach, from indifference to repression.

Since its conquest in 714 until the second half of the 8th century, Lisbon, Santarém and Coimbra may have benefited from a status equivalent to Tudmīr (Murcia)¹², in Eastern al-Andalus (Šarq al-Andalus), allowing Christians and Jews to keep their religion and their property, against the paying of a tribute¹³ as the legal status of *ḍimma* predicted¹⁴. The distance between Lisbon and the city of the Guadalquivir kept Ġarb and subsequently, Lisbon, sheltered from permanent governmental interference, at least for nearly a century and a half.

In 758, a descendent from the Umayyads, who had escaped the massacre perpetrated by the Abbasids in the East, arrived in al-Andalus and took power, supported by several tribes which pledged him allegiance. Local authorities, little accustomed to obeying a higher power, rebelled against him. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I ordered “*heavy hand over their inhabitants and whoever rebelled*

11. Al-Idrīsī, ..., *op. cit.*: 175.

12. *Ajbar Machmuâ (colección de tradiciones)*. Traducida y anotada por Don Emilio Lafuente y Alcántara, Imprenta y estereotipia de M. Rivadeneyra, Madrid, 1867: 26.

13. Picard, C. *Le Portugal musulman (VIII^e – XIII^e siècle). L’Occident a’al-Andalus sous domination islamique*. Maisonneuve et Larose, Paris, 2000: 26.

14. *Ḍimma* refers to the contract through which the Muslim community accords hospitality and protection to members of other revealed religions, on condition of their acknowledging the domination of Islam. The beneficiaries of the *ḍimma* are called *ḍimmis*. For further details: Chehata, C. “*Ḍimma*” *Encyclopaedia of Islam. New edition, prepared by a number of leading orientalisks*. Lewis, B., Pellat, Ch. and Schacht, J. (eds.) Burton-Page, J., Dumont, C. and Ménage, V. L. (ed. secret.), Vol. II, C-G (fourth impression), Leiden E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1991: 227-231.

*there, until the inhabitants of the West were diminished and kept within the limits of obedience*¹⁵.

Roughly half a century later, in 809, also in al-Ušbūna, Tumlus, an individual of unknown origin with connections to Merida, assumed himself Lord of the city and the extreme west of al-Andalus up to Coimbra. The emir al-Ḥakam sent his son Hišam who, after having pursued him, “*destroyed him his country and humiliated his pride*”¹⁶, according to Ibn Ḥayyan. Tumlus was killed by his companions, who swiftly entered the service of the emir, being “*included in his troops with good payment*”¹⁷.

During the 9th century, Lisbon was attacked by Vikings: “*By the end of the year 229, [=844] Normans, who got known as mağūs, appeared in the western coast of al-Andalus and detained themselves in Lisbon*” for thirteen days, fighting and plundering the city. According to Ibn Ḥayyan, subscribing Al-Rāzī, after the assault, they would follow up to Cadis and to Sidonia¹⁸. Apparently, the governor of Lisbon – Wahballāh b. Ḥazm – wouldn’t have sufficient resources to face the several dozens of ships which “*had detained in his portion of coast*”¹⁹.

By this time, the autonomic uprisings that take place in al-Andalus²⁰ (such as the one led by the Banū Surunbaqī, whose area of influence covered Lisbon) as well as the Viking threat impelled the Umayyds to enforce their position in the region. The strategy of the emir ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II involved an articulated defence providing the Tagus estuary and coastline of a set of fortifications able to detect eventual enemy approaches. Simultaneously, the navy was developed

15. *La Conquista de al-Andalus*. Traducción Mayte Penelas, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid, 2002: 90.

16. Ibn Ḥayyan *Crónica de los emires Alḥakam I y ‘Abdarrahmān II entre los años 796 y 847 [Almuqtabis II-1]*. Traducción, notas e índices de Mahmūd ‘Alī Makkī y Federico Corriente, Instituto de Estudios Islámicos y del Oriente Próximo, Zaragoza, 2001: 48-49.

17. Idem *Ibidem*: 48-49.

18. Idem *Ibidem*: 312.

19. Idem *Ibidem*: 312.

20. About the muladi uprisings during the 9th century see: Manzano Moreno, E. *Conquistadores, emires y califas. Los omeyas y la formación de al-Andalus*. Crítica, Barcelona, 2006: 317-359.

and, when in 966 after a new attack over Lisbon's surroundings, the Normans were heading south, the Muslim fleet moored in Seville set sail towards the West and intercepted them in Silves, in today's Algarve, putting them on the run "until God took them away"²¹.

In the following century, Almansur, *bādjib*²² of caliph Hisham II. In the following century, Almansur, *hādhib* of caliph Hisham II, developed the navy. As told by Ibn Iḍarī, a considerable fleet was equipped under the orders of Almansur, in the place called Qasr Abū Danis, presently known as Alcácer do Sal, around 80 kms south of Lisbon, on the estuary of the River Sado. This fleet "built by sailors and transporting the different corps of infantry, as well as provisions, supplies and weapons" would raid the sanctuary of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, in 997²³.

In the beginning of the 11th century, the caliphate of al-Andalus entered a downward spiral marked by civil war which would bring to a close end with the collapse of the Umayyad caliphate in 1031. When one of Almansur's sons, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Sanchuelo, entitled himself caliph, turmoil settled in – despite the Amirid family was ruling *de facto* for decades, the Umayyad caliphate still held a symbolic role, granting a rather illusive social and political cohesion which now, with Ibn Sanchuelo's move, could no longer endure.

Therefore, several different factions rose, trying to enthrone a caliph of their own as civil war started. In trying to escape the growing instability, some local authorities became independent from Cordoba, assuming the office of *bādjib* at the same time they regarded theoretical obedience to the caliphate. Ġarb al-Andalus, would be no exception to this trend.

21. Ibn Iḍarī *Al-Bayān al-Mugrib, Histoire de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne*. Tome II. Traduite et anotée par E. Fagnan. Gouvernement Général d'Algérie, Alger, 1904: 394-395.

22. The *bādjib* firstly corresponded to the person responsible for guarding the door of access to the ruler. With time, it became a title corresponding to a position in the court which frequently approached one of a chief minister or a head of government. For further details see: Sourdel, D. "Hādhib" *Encyclopaedia of Islam. New edition, prepared by a number of leading orientalists*. Lewis, B., Ménage, V. L., Pellat, Ch., and late Schacht, J. (Eds.) Dumont, C. Secretary General (assist.), Van Donzel, E. and Hawting, G. R. (ed. secret.), Vol. III, H-Iram, E. J. Brill Luzac & Co., Leiden London, 1986: 45-49.

23. Ibn Iḍarī ..., *op. cit.*: 492.

In 1009, Sābūr al-Āmirī, a freedman of Almansur of Slavic ascendance, proclaimed himself *bādġib* in Badajoz. The taifa of Badajoz held the western territories of al-Andalus, except the today's Algarve and Baixo Alentejo, and extended to Coimbra, limited North by the kingdom of Leon and limited East, by the taifas of Toledo, Seville and Cordoba. Lisbon was one of its main cities, like Santarém and Évora. Sābūr entrusted governance to the Berber 'Abd Allāh b. Maslama Ibn al-Afṭas, who, after his death, in 1022, took power, ignoring the claims of both Sābūr's sons, who took refuge in al-Ušbūna where, in vain, would proclaim themselves his legitimate successors²⁴.

Around 1034, Ismā'īl Ibn 'Abbād, son of the king of Seville, after obtaining permission to cross Aftasid lands, coming back from a razzia to Christian territory, was ambushed and chased by the Aftasid army²⁵. He found refuge under the sons of Sābūr, presumably in the city of the Tagus. A few years later, 'Abd al-Malik b. Sābūr tried to make Lisbon independent, but "*he wasn't able to reign, due to his frail character and the little he took care of matters*"²⁶. In the face of this, the people of al-Ušbūna secretly asked Ibn al-Afṭas for help, who gladly sent one of his sons and an armed escort. When 'Abd al-Malik found the city occupied by the Aftasids, he knew his aspirations had come to an end, so he asked for a safe-conduct authorising him and his family to transfer to Cordoba, where he would spend the rest of his life retired in his father's former home, overshadowed from the political stage²⁷.

The sources would remain silent about Lisbon for a few decades, to re-emerge by the end of the century. In 1093, Lisbon, Sintra and Santarém passed unto Christian rule²⁸. Apparently, al-Mutawakkil Ibn al-Afṭas, feeling threatened by the Almoravids from North Africa, agreed with Alfonso VI to the annexation

24. Ibn Iḍarī *La Caída del Califato de Córdoba y los Reyes de Taifas (al-Bayan al-Mugrib)*. Estudio, traducción y notas Felipe Maíllo Salgado, Universidad de Salamanca, Salamanca, 1993:196-197.

25. Idem *Ibidem*: 172.

26. Idem *Ibidem*: 197.

27. Idem *Ibidem*: 197-198.

28. Brandão, Fr. António *Terceira Parte da Monarchia Lusitana. Que contém a Historia de Portugal desde o Conde Dom Henrique, até todo o reinado delRey Dom Afonso Henriques*. Imprensa em Lisboa em o Mosteiro de S. Bernardo por Pedro Craesbeck, Impressor del Rey, 1632: 14-15.

of these three towns in exchange for protection. However, shortly after the Christians took over the city, the Aftasid king would be deposed and executed by the Almoravids²⁹. Lisbon would remain under Christian rule until it returned to Muslim jurisdiction in the early 12th century by the hand of the Almoravid General Sīr b. Abū Bakr³⁰.

During the 11th century, Lisbon maintained its peripheral condition as coins testimony it. Numismatic studies attest to the usage of «blank discs» or with small subtitles, produced, according to José Marinho, by decentralized dies. These could be a way to suppress the lack of coins, needless to appeal for regal authority. These coins might testify the city's autonomy over some usually royal prerogatives such as minting³¹.

Under Almoravid rule, Ġarb – and subsequently Lisbon – was still neglected as illustrated by the emir Yūsuf b. Tāšfin's recommendations to his son 'Alī regarding al-Andalus: "*an army of 17000 horses with the following disposition: 7000 to Seville [where the government was settled], 1000 to Cordoba, 1000 to Granada, 4000 to Levant and the rest to the frontiers*"³². Here we see that the defence of the capital was the most important, even if it meant exposing the other regions.

Tensions increased around the 1140's, when there was a decrease in military forces in al-Andalus due to the Almohad advance in North Africa³³. In Ġarb, Ibn Qāsī rebelled in Mértola, 'Umar b. Abī Ṭūt in Tavira, Labīd b. 'Abd Allāh in Santarém and Abū Muḥammad Sidrāy b. Wazīr in Badajoz, Évora, Beja and

29. 'Abd Allāh Ibn Buluggīn *El siglo XI en 1ª persona. Las «Memorias» de 'Abd Allāh, último rey Zīri de Granada, destronado por los Almorávides (1090)*. Traducidas por E. Lévi-Provençal (ob. 1056) y Emilio García Gómez, Alianza Editorial, 2010: 338-342.

30. Ibn Abī Zar *Rawḍ al-Qirṭās*. Traducido y anotado por Ambrosio Huici Miranda, Vol. I, Valencia, 1964: 314.

31. Marinho, J. "A moeda no Gharb al-Andalus", *Portugal Islâmico – Os últimos sinais do Mediterrâneo*. MNA, Lisboa, 1998: 175-184 *apud* Bugalhão, J. "Lisboa islâmica: uma realidade em construção", *Xelb, 9, 6º Encontro de Arqueologia do Algarve*. Câmara Municipal de Silves, Silves, 2009: 389.

32. Viguera Molins, M. J. *op. cit.*:178.

33. Idem *Ibidem*: 180.

Silves³⁴. The *De Expugnatione Lyxbonensi* recorded the small number of soldiers: in a population of 154000 men (excluding women, children and noblemen from Lisbon and the surrounding towns), “no more than fifteen thousand men had armour with spear and shield, and with these weapons they would go out fighting, once some of them, then the others, according to the orders of their governor”³⁵.

This situation, beside the conquest of Santarém by D. Alfonso Henriques and his alliance with the governor of Évora³⁶, paved the way for the Christian conquest. The peripheral situation of Islamic Lisbon which, in other situations, protected it from conflict, now accelerated its downfall in 1147.

3. A BEAUTIFUL CITY, WHICH EXTENDS ALONG THE RIVER: THE URBANISM

During Muslim rule, the city is portrayed as being inherently connected to the river, as stated by Al-Idrīsī:

*“Lisbon is built on the northern shore of the river they call Tagus, which passes by Toledo. Its width next to Lisbon is of six miles and there the tide is felt violently. This beautiful city, which extends along the river, is tightened within walls and protected by a castle”*³⁷.

However, the Mediterranean presence in Lisbon is more prior to the Islamic establishment, dating back from the 1st millennium B.C. Archaeological digs in the valley of the Tagus revealed Phoenician settlements such as Lisbon and

34. Idem *Ibidem*: 190.

35. *De Expugnatione Lyxbonensi*: 35.

36. *Ibidem*: 56.

37. Al-Idrīsī, *op. cit.*:172.

Almaraz in today's Almada³⁸, in which were found abundant remains with oriental characteristics³⁹ dating from the 8th century B.C. onwards.

During Roman rule, Olisipo's geographical location favoured the circulation between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. The merchant profile of the city was underlined by Strabo:

“The breadth of the mouth of the Tagus is about 20 stadia; its depth is so great as to be capable of navigation by vessels of the greatest burden. At the flood-tide the Tagus forms two estuaries in the plains which lie above it, so that the plain is inundated and rendered navigable for a distance of 150 stadia”⁴⁰.

That's why in 138 B.C., the city was occupied and fortified by proconsul Decimus Junius Brutus⁴¹. Amphorae from the area of the Straits of Gibraltar arrived in Lisbon with prepared fish⁴², imports that would decline during the 1st century A.D. with the development of fish industries in the today's Lisbon downtown area, on its western side, outside the city wall. In this location, there was a branch of the Tagus towards which, used to flow two watercourses coming from today's Martim Moniz and Avenida da Liberdade (Image 1). On the left side of that canal there would be a port which supported this business until the 5th century⁴³, exporting to far destinations such as the Italic Peninsula and Northern Europe. The urban areas excluded by the late Roman wall –

38. Arruda, A. M. “Fenícios no território actualmente português: e nada ficou como antes”. *El Carambolo, 50 Años de un Tesouro*. La Bandera Romero, M. L., Ferrer Albelda, E. (coord.), Secretariado de Publicaciones de Universidad de Sevilla, Sevilla, 2010: 440.

39. *Idem Ibidem*: 442.

40. *Geography of Strabo*: 227-228.

41. *Ibidem*: 228.

42. Pimenta, J. “A importação de ânforas de preparados piscícolas em Olisipo (Séculos II-I a.C.)”, *Actas del Congreso Internacional CETARIAE. Salsas y salazones de pescado en Occidente durante la Antigüedad*. Universidad de Cádiz, 2005: 221-233. Available at: http://www.museudadidade.pt/arqueologia/estonline/Publicacoes/A%20importa%C3%A7%C3%A3o%20de%20%C3%A2nforas%20de%20preparados%20pisc%C3%ADcolas%20em%20Olisipo%20%28s%C3%A9culos%20II_I%20a.C.%29.pdf [31-10-2015].

43. Matos, J. L. “Lisboa Islâmica”, *Arqueologia Medieval*, 7, 2001: 79-81.

commonly known as the “*Cerca Velha*” (The Old Wall) – had also temples, warehouses, bathhouses and the hippodrome⁴⁴.

The English crusader declares that Lisbon stands “*high upon a round hill whose walls, going down in stages, reach the margin of the Tagus, separated from it only by the wall*”⁴⁵. Al-Ḥimyarī describes the doors that assured communication with the suburbs: two doors faced to the West, one of them known as *Porta do Postigo* (Door of the Wicket), a door towards the river called *Porta do Mar* (Door of the Sea), a door near a hot water fountain known as *Porta de Alfama*⁴⁶ and a door towards East face to the cemetery, *Porta do Cemitério*⁴⁷.

From the 10th on, the city’s urban tissue discarded the typical classical orthogonal model organised around public buildings and adopted another one in which extended family determined spatial alignment, thus, resulting in an apparently spontaneous and tortuous urbanism “*in which the family house is the main defining element of the interurban space*”⁴⁸. This urban configuration stunned the English crusader as we can see by his remark: “*Their buildings are agglomerated so tightly that, unless in the case of the merchants, one can hardly find a street with more than eight feet of width*”⁴⁹. The fact that merchants have access to wider streets shows the relevance of al-Ušbūna’s maritime and commercial features and, furthermore, the importance of this socio-economic group.

This Orientalisation of the urban frame was also extended to several aspects of daily life. The Mozarabs⁵⁰ were getting closer to Arab cultural influence,

44. Idem *Ibidem*: 79-81.

45. *De Expugnatione Lyxbonensi*: 34.

46. Alfama comes from *al-ū amma* meaning “the baths”. For further details see: Sidarus, A. Rei, A. “Lisboa e seu termo segundo os geógrafos árabes”, *Arqueologia Medieval*, 7, Porto, 2001: 38.

47. Al-Ḥimyarī ..., *op. cit.*: 44.

48. Bugalhão, J., Folgado, D. “O Arrabalde Ocidental da Lisboa Islâmica”. *Arqueologia Medieval*, 7, 2001:112.

49. *De Expugnatione Lyxbonensi*: 35.

50. Mozarab: “Spanish *mozarabe*, Portuguese *moçárabe*, Catalan *mossarab*, a word of uncertain origin for which two etymologies have been propounded. In the 13th century, the Archbishop Rodrigo Ximenez (*De rebus Hispaniae*, III, 22) declared that the Christians living under Muslim rule after the conquest of 92/711 *Dicti sunt mixti*

as it shows in art⁵¹, pottery and in linguistics⁵². The Mozarabs and Muslims would have such resemblance that the English crusader would mistake them for Muslims: “*other Moors, alive, but similar to cadavers, dragged themselves by land and begging, they held and kissed the sign of the cross and proclaimed good the Holy Mother of God*”⁵³.

One of the most important innovations in the second half of the 11th was the construction of the mosque, which testifies to the consolidation of the Muslim dominion. By this time, the Jewish and Mozarab autonomous neighbourhoods developed in the suburbs⁵⁴. The English crusader refers to the outskirts of Lisbon:

“*At the basis of the [city] walls, there are outskirts perched on the cliffs sharply cut, and are so many the difficulties defending them, that one can take them into account as well fortified castles*”⁵⁵.

arabes, eo quod mixti Arabibus convivebant. This Latin-based interpretation is the earliest known etymology of the word Mozarab. However, Arabist scholars of the 19th century (following F.J. Simonet) considered it an arabism, derived from *musta'rab*, *musta'rib* with the sense of ‘arabised, one who becomes Arabised’, an opinion generally accepted” in Chalmeta, P. “Mozarab”, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New edition, prepared by a number of leading orientalis*. Bosworth, C. E., Van Donzel, E., Heinrichs, W. P. and the late Pellat, Ch. (Eds.) Dijkema, F. Th. (pp. 1-384), Bearman, P. J. (pp. 385-1058) and Nurit, S. (Mme.) (assist.), Vol. VII, MIF – NAZ, E. J. Brill, Leiden, New York, 1993: 246-249.

51. Regarding the Mediterranean influence over Mozarab artistic production: Fernandes, P. A. “O sítio da Sé de Lisboa antes da Reconquista”, *ARTIS – Revista do Instituto de História da Arte da Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa*, 1, 2002: 57-87.

52. About the interconnection between Arabic and Romance, one example is the “*muwashshab*” or “*muwashshaba*” [pl. *muwashshabd*], corresponding to a genre of poetry developed in al-Andalus in the end of the 9th century, which main body was composed in Classical Arabic, while the language of the final part was either in vernacular Arabic or Romance mixed with vernacular Arabic or, more rarely, in pure Romance. For further details see: Schoeler G. “Muwashshaha”, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New edition, prepared by a number of leading orientalis*. Bosworth, C. E., Van Donzel, E., Heinrichs, W. P. and the late Pellat, Ch. (Eds.) Dijkema, F. Th. (pp. 1-384), Bearman, P. J. (pp. 385-1058) and Nurit, S. (Mme.) (assist.), Vol. VII, MIF – NAZ, E. J. Brill, Leiden, New York, 1993: 809-812.

53. *De Expugnatione Lyxbonensi*: 79.

54. Gonçalves, L. R. *Settlement systems and Territorial Organization: Two Valleys in the Lisbon Periphery (IX - XIV centuries)*. Master thesis in Medieval History presented at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Lisbon, 2011: 55. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10451/6873>. Also a brief acknowledgement for the explanations and further discussion whenever the author of this paper felt “adrift” in the tortuous urbanism of al-Ušbūna.

55. *De Expugnatione Lyxbonensi*: 34.

The new religious Mozarab centre would be localized near the church of Santa Maria de Alcamim, opening to a wide fertile area, which profited from the two creeks that headed for the river whilst it was away from the most important urban zones – the harbour, the mosque and the citadel⁵⁶. The creation of the parish consecrated to Sevillian saints Justa and Rufina, protectors of the potters, after the Christian conquest, may indicate Mozarab settlement for the Islamic period⁵⁷.

Regardless of the abundant archaeological findings (some of them still waiting for deeper examination), either inside or outside the enclosure, there are no remaining port structures dating from Islamic period. Its location may only be reassembled from written sources and archaeological traces from the Roman period.

There would be a port in the outlet of the canal operating since Roman period⁵⁸ next to the city wall, in Alfama. Another one would have existed in the middle of the canal, as the concentration of several industries may indicate. As said by Lirola Delgado “*The port spaces are intimately connected with economic development. A port usually has an interface function, connecting the terrestrial and maritime routes*”⁵⁹. However, the city may have had numerous sites with natural conditions favourable to hold vessels⁶⁰, which may explain partially the lack of mooring structures.

56. Gonçalves, L. R., ..., *op. cit.*: 56.

57. According to Viera da Silva, Santa Justa e Rufina “was one of the three parishes founded by D. Gilberto, the first bishop of Lisbon (*Hist. EccI*) and that in 1173 had been deposited in the church the body of the martyr Saint Vincent when he came from the Sacred Promontory, in Algarve. What is certain is its existence in 1191, proven by the document of the synod held in Lisbon in that year” in Vieira da Silva, A. *As freguesias de Lisboa (estudo histórico)*. Publicações Culturais da Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, Lisboa, 1943: 31.

58. Matos, J. L., *op. cit.*: 80.

59. Lirola Delgado, J. *El poder naval de al-Andalus en la época del califato omeya (siglo IV hegira/X era Cristiana)*. Tesis Doctoral dirigida por el Dr. D. Emilio Molina López. I. Departamento de Estudios Semíticos. Facultad de Filosofía y Letras. Universidad de Granada, 1991: 343.

60. According to Lirola Delgado: “Since ancient times it has been determinant in the establishment and development of ports its geographical location. For its settlement, it was searched for the presence of favourable geographical features such as bays, coves or rivers, in a way they could provide natural shelters and were accessible to boats” in *Ibidem*: 342.

For a long time, researchers thought there would have been a third harbour in the confluence of both streams, near today's Rossio (Image 1, n° 10), due to the finding of structures which could have been used to attach boats. However, the later discovery in this very same area of the 4th century A.D. hippodrome dismantled that hypothesis⁶¹. Thus, by the end of the Roman Empire, the canal was already too diminished, “*delimitated in a space not much above the archaeological site of Mandarim Chinês [Image 1, n° 2], but still important enough to affirm itself as a structuring element of that space*”⁶².

Urban growth related to the river connects itself to the evolution of navy from the 9th century onward, as a result of the political conjuncture already described in this paper. During taifa period, the creation of several political centres led to the multiplication of shipyards also in Ġarb, in Seville and Alcácer do Sal, which already had a significant fleet, as in Huelva-Saltes, Santa Maria al-Ġarb and Silves, cities that ascend to regional capitals⁶³.

Despite the instability recorded during the 11th century until the Christian takeover, the city remained dynamic, with an increasing economic activity and – we assume – the development of the navy. Lisbon became in one of the basis for the naval attacks against Christian coastline, according to *Historia Compostelana*:

*“About this time, the ones from Seville, the ones from Saltes, the Castellenese [the ones from Granada or Cacula], the ones from Silves, the ones from Lisbon and other Saracens who inhabit the coast from Seville to Coimbra, they used to build ships and come by boat with armed people, they devastating and sacking the coastal regions from Coimbra to the Pyrenees”*⁶⁴.

61. Gonçalves, L. R. ..., *op. cit.*: 60.

62. Idem *Ibidem*: 61.

63. Picard, C. *L'océan Atlantique musulman. De la conquête arabe à l'époque almohade. Navigation et mise en valeur des côtes d'al-Andalus et du Maghreb occidental (Portugal – Espagne – Maroc)*. Éditions Maisonneuve & Larose/ Éditions UNESCO, Paris, 1997: 103-114.

64. *Historia Compostelana*: 244-245.

4. A LAND OF MANY GRACES: THE ASSETS

Arab authors, geographers mostly – Al-Rāzī, Al-Idrīsī or al-Ḥimyarī – and Christian sources as the aforementioned *De Expugnatione Lyxbonensi*, are unanimous on their description on the resources of Lisbon and its rural area of influence, which granted the city its economic viability and, thus, its autonomy.

According to Al-Rāzī, “*the periphery of Lisbon is long in many resources and there are many delicious fruits. And it gathered in itself the graces of sea and land*”⁶⁵. The geographer alludes to hawk breeding, to the production of honey and to the gold one can find in Almada, on the left shore of the Tagus⁶⁶. This reference to the precious metal is later corroborated by Al-Bakrī⁶⁷ and Al-Idrīsī:

*“This city [Lisbon] has in front of it, on the opposite margin and next to the outlet of the river, the so-called fort of Almada, because the sea throws gold reeds over the shore. During the winter, the inhabitants of the region go close to the fort looking for that metal and there they dwell as long as winter lasts”*⁶⁸.

We assume that people who had means of survival closely related to the sea, would dedicate themselves to this activity, during winter time, when navigation could be dangerous due to the sea and the weather conditions.

Another commodity referred by geographers is grey amber, coming from the belly of the sperm whales, which was used in the making of medicines and perfumes. Al-Ḥimyarī alludes to the amber coming from the coast of Sintra, in the region of Lisbon⁶⁹ as other authors as we will see further ahead.

65. Al-Rāzī *Crónica del Moro Rasis. Fuentes cronísticas de la Historia de España*, III, Seminario Menéndez Pidal y Editorial Gredos, Madrid, 1975: 87-88.

66. Idem *Ibidem*: 87-88.

67. Al-Bakrī *Geografía de España (Kitāb al-masālik wa-l-mamālik)*. Introducción, traducción, notas e índices por Eliseo Vidal Beltran, Anubar Ediciones, Zaragoza, 1982: 39.

68. Al-Idrīsī ..., *op. cit.*: 172-173.

69. Al-Ḥimyarī ..., *op. cit.*: 233.

When it comes to agricultural goods, the region between Lisbon and Santarém, identified in Muslim period as Balata (and today known as Valada) is the most praised by the authors. Santarém owed its prominence to several factors: its strategic location, up the Tagus, around 80 miles East of Lisbon deep into the countryside and on the top of a hill, with an expanded view over its surroundings; to its Roman past as head of administration of the region – *conventus* – to which Lisbon was subdued, a status still held during Islamic period; and, finally, due to the productiveness of its lands⁷⁰.

Al-Rāzī alludes to the floods of the Tagus:

“When the Tagus enlarges, it leaves throughout the flat land and cover it all and, after the river decreases, they make their good latter sowings. [...] And in the perimeter of Santarem there is so fructiferous land that, from the day the bread is sown, until seven weeks, it is mown”⁷¹.

Al-Ḥimyarī compares the river with The Nile:

“The Tagus inundates periodically the plains which border it the same way that Nile does in Egypt. After the flooding, the inhabitants sow the grain over the mud which was deposited there, when sowing time has already passed. The obtained harvest is highly abundant and there is no delay in the forming of the ears and their growth”⁷².

The region would also be fertile in all sorts of vegetables and fruit trees, which supplied Lisbon through a road that stretched along the river connecting both towns.

From the West, Lisbon would be supplied by the region of Sintra. Besides the grey amber, which probably was mostly directed for exports, this province was also abundant in orchards, being known for the size of their apples and

70. Viana, M. *Espaço e povoamento numa vila portuguesa (Santarém 1147-1350)*. Centro de História, Caleidoscópio, Lisboa, 2007:19-20.

71. Al-Rāzī, *op. cit.*:83-84.

72. Al-Ḥimyarī, ..., *op. cit.*: 235.

pears⁷³. Studies in archaeobotany made for the remains found at the Núcleo Arqueológico da Rua dos Correeiros – NARC (Images 1 and 2, nº 1) reveal some of the species consumed in al-Ušbūna, such as figs, grapes, plums, blackberries, raspberries, strawberries or melons⁷⁴. The English crusader attests to the existence in Almada of extensive vineyards, figs (more figs than they were able to eat⁷⁵) and pomegranates⁷⁶. These would be either freshly consumed or transformed into other products, such as jams, sweets or wine⁷⁷.

Both archaeology and written sources confirm the existence of silos in which supplies were gathered in order to face the city's demand⁷⁸. As the crusader testifies:

“Later were found on the outskirts, from our side, in caves opened in the downslide of the hill, nearly a hundred thousand loads of wheat, barley, corn and vegetables, supplies from the most part of town, because on the basis of the walls they had great extension of space and the hardness of the firm rock to keep a great amount of domestic objects”⁷⁹.

These food items would come from cultivation fields in the al-Ušbūna's area of influence and from the nearby properties in the city's perimeter⁸⁰.

73. Al-Ĥimyarī, *Op. Cit.*:233.

74. Bugalhão, J., Queiroz, P. “Testemunhos do consumo de frutos no período islâmico em Lisboa”, *Al-Ándalus Espaço de Mudança. Balanço de 25 anos de História e Arqueologia Medievais, Homenagem a Juan Zozaya Stabel-Hansen, Seminário Internacional, Mértola, 16, 17 e 18 de Maio de 2005*, Campo Arqueológico de Mértola, Mértola, 2006: 195-212. Available at: <http://terra-scenica.com/PDFs/Correeiros.pdf> [31-10-2015].

75. “It's so abundant in figs that we could hardly eat a part of them”, *De Expugnatione Lyxbonensi*: 34.

76. *De Expugnatione Lyxbonensi*: 33.

77. For further reading regarding wine consumption in al-Andalus: Marín, M. “En los márgenes de la ley: el consumo de alcohol en al-Andalus”. *Estudios onomástico-biográficos de al Andalus (Identidades marginales)* XIII. Cristina de la Puente (ed.), Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid, 2003: 271-328.

78. Silos are quite frequent in the urban perimeter as we can see in: Image 1, nº 5, nº 9, nº 12, nº 19, nº 20 and nº 22). Bugalhão, J. *Xelb, 6º Encontro de Arqueologia do Algarve*, 9, Câmara Municipal de Silves, Silves, 2009: 388.

79. *De Expugnatione Lyxbonensi*: 52.

80. For further information regarding agriculture systems on the city's perimeter see: Gonçalves, L. R., *Op.Cit.*

The *De Expugnatione Lyxbonensi* also refers to the plethora of fish one could find in the Tagus, stressing that “*the fish of this water keep always their fat and natural flavour without changing them or corrupting them for any circumstance, as it happens among us*”⁸¹. The region was also celebrated in their horses which “*conceive from the wind*”⁸².

Besides gold and silver, other materials could be extracted from the earth, such as salt⁸³. According to Al-Bakrī, bezoar stones, which were believed to have medical properties were found on a hill near the city “*on which they shine during the night just like lamps*”⁸⁴. Also the water had special elements: in Sintra there was a spring with healing powers and in Lisbon, next to the wall, there were “*hot baths*”⁸⁵. These waters could be used in the washing of wool and tannery in Alfama. The finding of quartered cattle carcasses (sheep and goats mostly) in the western suburb confirm cattle breeding at the city’s border and the existence of correlated crafts⁸⁶.

The inventory of Lisbon’s resources helps us drawing a sketch of the socio-economic frame of the city as well as the city connection to its surroundings, made by land or through port activity. This exchange between urban, periurban and rural area is evidenced when we analyse the distribution of Islamic pottery in the region of al-Ušbūna⁸⁷. (image 3)

Ceramics would arrive to the north of Lisbon by coastal navigation and would spread inland, making use of the river network. Most remains were found

81. *De Expugnatione Lyxbonensi*, p. 33.

82. *Ibidem*: 34.

83. *Ibidem*: 34.

84. Al-Bakrī ..., *op. cit.*: 37.

85. *Ibidem*: 34.

86. Bugalhão, J. *op. cit.*: 388.

87. The lack of archaeological findings in the south shore of the Tagus (besides Almada) in branches of the river which deepen inland (areas with a considerable flux during Roman period and after Christian conquest) can reveal a superficial settlement in those areas during the Islamic period. However, since most of the findings (in the north shore of Tagus) were done in areas of continuous urban construction, one cannot discard the possibility of a deep connection also for Islamic period, which hasn’t been exposed yet.

next to the coastline and only a few were dug out in country sites near the course of the rivers Loures, Lisandro, Sizandro and Alcabrichel⁸⁸. Small vessels would board from Lisbon and would go up river, assuring the trade between manufactured and agricultural products.

The production of pottery during the 11th century is attested by two production units: one in Mandarin Chinês and another one in Alfama (images 1 and 2, n° 27). Regarding the decoration techniques, they manufactured red and white painted pottery, either fully or partially glazed, stamped glazed and in “*corda seca parcial*”⁸⁹.

The number of findings, as well as the decoration typologies, increase for the Almoravid period. Several types of bi-chromatic glazed pottery such as white and green or green and brown and locally produced corda seca with black glaze are some examples of the increasing dynamism among this industry⁹⁰. From the time of Almoravid governance there were two manufacturers working: the one of the Mandarin Chinês (which already laboured previously) and a new one, in NARC, both in the western suburb⁹¹ and another one in Alfama (Image 1 and 2, n° 24). Moreover, red painted ceramics, either locally manufactured or imported, was widespread⁹².

When it comes to imports, some remains decorated in “*corda seca*” and in green and manganese⁹³ were found either in urban or, less frequently, in rural

88. One has to highlight the strategic importance of some of these small rivers, which extended to the early 19th century, as we can see by the defence system known as “The Lines of Torres Vedras”, built up to avoid the Napoleonic Army progression towards Lisbon.

89. “*Corda seca*” in Portuguese or “*cuerda seca*” in Spanish refers to a technique which consists in using a dark line of a greasy substance for keeping colours separated during the cooking process. The ceramic piece can be either totally (“*corda seca total*”) or partially (“*corda seca parcial*”) decorated using this method. Bugalhão, J. Fernandes, I. C. “A cerâmica islâmica nas regiões de Lisboa e Setúbal”, *Arqueologia Medieval*, 12, Mértola, 2012: 84.

90. Idem *Ibidem*: 74.

91. Idem *Ibidem*: 75.

92. Idem *Ibidem*: 84-85.

93. Whenever is used the contrast between manganese oxide and copper oxide over a white paste background.

context⁹⁴. During the Almoravid rule, imports diversified with the coming of “*corda seca total*” and black painted ceramics, while simultaneously the green and manganese imports subsisted⁹⁵.

All through this period, Seville, Cordoba and Denia were the most important sources for the imported items⁹⁶. Toledo is also pointed as one of the main sources for the 11th century “*corda seca parcial*” ceramics found in Lisbon, having the Tagus as its main diffusion medium⁹⁷. However, as studies about the distribution of “*corda seca*” pottery show⁹⁸, there was a widespread reproduction of the same aesthetic references regarding pottery, meaning that, not only objects were exchanged, but also cultural references evidenced in pottery, through the adoption of distant and more sophisticated decoration techniques, which might meet the costumers’ demands.

Moreover, Seville is the homeland of the saints Justa and Rufina, protectors of the potters, who may have been embraced by the Mozarab inhabitants of al-Ušbūna’s north-western suburb, revealing the cultural transfer underlying the trading networks and, thus, reclaiming Lisbon to a common Mediterranean-based milieu.

5. FROM LISBON TO EGYPT

Though relations with the Maghreb were common, due mostly to military operations and political interchange (especially during the Almoravid period) and perceived either through sources or material culture, information is scarce

94. Idem *Ibidem*: 84.

95. Idem *Ibidem*: 85.

96. Idem *Ibidem*: 74.

97. Bugalhão, J. Gomes, S. Sousa, M. J. Folgado, D. *et al.*, “Produção e consumo de cerâmica islâmica em Lisboa. Conclusões de um projecto de investigação”, *Arqueologia Medieval*, 10, 2008: 121.

98. For further details regarding the dissemination of “*corda seca*” throughout al-Andalus and the Western Mediterranean: Délery, C. “Perspectives méthodologiques concernant l’étude de la céramique de cuerda seca en al-Andalus (IX-XIVS.): d’un objet archéologique à un objet historique”. *Arqueologia Medieval*, 8, 2004: 193-236. Available at:

<http://www.camertola.pt/sites/default/files/ArqueologiaMedieval%208.pdf> [31-10-2015].

regarding navigation and travelling details. As Christophe Picard remarks, “*the precise reasons for travel are difficult to find outside the travelling reports, the riḥla*”⁹⁹, *concerning solely to the Mediterranean or the Indian Ocean*”¹⁰⁰. Therefore, in order to reassemble the itineraries of men, one must examine the itineraries of the products.

One of the most valued goods traded in the *dar al-Islam* came from the belly of sperm whales (*Physeter catodon*) – the grey amber or ambergris. This substance consists in a solid waxy substance originating in the intestine of the sperm whale in order to protect its internal organs from pointy objects and it was believed that they had healing properties, being used either in medicine or in perfumery.

Besides the aforementioned authors who referred to the existence of this matter in the region of Lisbon, Al-Mas‘ūdī remarked that “*amber abounds in the sea of al-Andalus, being exported to Egypt and other countries*”. Additionally the author asserted that “*the one which is brought to Cordoba comes from the two ports of Santarém and Sidónia*”¹⁰¹.

There would be a great demand among the wealthy, not only in al-Andalus, but also in the East¹⁰². However, there was a huge price difference between both

99. *Riḥla* literally means a journey, voyage, travel or even a travelogue. The *ḥadīth* literature (literature on Tradition of the Prophet) presents the Prophet Muhammad as urging believers to seek knowledge even as far as China. This gave rise to the concept of «travel in search of knowledge» in medieval Islam. For further information see: Netton, I. R. “*Riḥla*”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam. New edition, prepared by a number of leading orientalist.* Lewis, B., Ménage, V. L., Pellat, Ch., and late Schacht, J. (Eds.) Dumont, C. Secretary General (assist.), Van Donzel, E. and Hawting, G. R. (ed. secret.), Vol. III, H-Iram, E. J. Brill, Leiden: 528.

100. Picard, C. ..., *op. cit.*: 419.

101. Al-Mas‘ūdī *Maḥoudi*, *Les Prairies d’Or*. Texte et traduction par C. Barbier de Meynard et Pavet de Courteille, Tome premier, Imprime par autorisation de l’empereur a l’Imprimerie Impériale, Paris, 1861: 336.

102. Al-Maqqārī reports the following episode regarding the king of Seville, Al-Mu‘tamid, and his favourite wife, Al-Rumaykīya (more known as I‘timād): “*That princess happened one day to meet, not far from her palace in Seville, some country women selling milk in skins, and walking up to their ankles in mud. On her return to the palace, she said to her royal spouse, ‘I wish I and my slaves could do as those women are doing’.* Upon which Al-Mu‘tamid issued orders that the whole of his palace should be strewn with a thick paste made of ambergris, musk, and camphor, mixed together and dissolved in rose-water. He then commanded that a number of vessels, slung from ropes of the finest spun silk, should be procured; and thus arrayed, Al-Rumaykīya and her maids [went out of the barem and] splashed in that mud”. Al-Maqqārī *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain*. Translated

ends of the Mediterranean: “*The ounce of Baghdad is sold in Spain at 3 golden mitqals and in Egypt at 10 dinars*”¹⁰³. Al-Maqqārī also says that “*from the shores of al-Andalus, it was extracted an excellent grey amber, better than many others in scent and fire resistance*” an opinion different from Al-Mas‘ūdī’s who writes 5 centuries before him and disparages Andalusian amber¹⁰⁴.

There are multiple references for the extraction of grey amber for the Islamic period as we previously saw but no reference to whale hunting. The first evidence of whale hunting during the Middle Ages, in the region of Lisbon, is the document which settles the statutes of the town of Ericeira – the “*Foral da Ericeira*” dated from 1229 – which determines taxes regarding the whale hunt¹⁰⁵. For that reason, one cannot be certain whether during Muslim rule, whales were being hunted or just exploited for their stranded remains¹⁰⁶.

The Cairo Geniza letters portray exchanges mostly among the Jewish community, throughout the Mediterranean, mainly during the 11th and 12th centuries, being hence, a valuable source for the path trodden by ambergris as well. To this date, no letters directly regarding to al-Ušbūna or linking al-Ušbūna to the Mediterranean trading networks have been discovered. However, considering the complete information we have so far, there is a strong possibility that some of the letters regarding the Mediterranean ambergris trade may refer to the one coming from the Lisbon area.

from the copies in the library of the British Museum and illustrated with critical notes on the History, Geography and Antiquities of Spain by Pascual de Gayangos, Vol. II, Printed for the Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland. London, 1843: 299.

103. According to Lirola Delgado, one ounce was equivalent to 31,48 grams, while the *mitqal* used as a weight measure for the precious metals, corresponded to 4,72 grams. The *mitqal* served as calculation coin, being usually assessed as 15/16 from a dinar. ..., *op. cit.*: 408.

104. Al-Mas‘ūdī ..., *op. cit.*: 336.

105. Silva Marques, J. M. da, *Descobrimientos Portugueses. Documentos para a sua história*. Publicados e prefaciados por João Martins da Silva Marques, suplemento ao Volume I 1057-1460, Reprodução Fac-similada, Instituto Nacional de Investigação Científica, Lisboa, 1998: 372.

106. Brito, C. “Assessment of catch statistics during the land-based whaling in Portugal”, *JMBA2. Biodiversity Records*. Published on-line. Available at: http://www.escolademar.pt/wp-content/uploads/pdf_docs/artigos/006_JMBA2BioRecords2007_Brito.pdf [31-10-2015]

As an example, a letter from c. 1110¹⁰⁷, which “*speaks of gold from Morocco, silk from Spain, ambergris, which was found in the Atlantic Ocean, and of musk and civet perfumes, which were imported from far away Tibet or Indochina and the Malay Archipelago*”¹⁰⁸. In this letter, Abū l-Ḥasan, who had just arrived to Alexandria coming from Almeria, writes to his superior, Abū Saʿīd al-ʿAfsī, in Fustat, Egypt, saying: “*One of the friends [in Almeria] of the aforementioned Kohen [Kohen al-Fasī, meaning from Fez, in Morocco] sent a quantity of ambergris with me and asked me to sell it through you*”¹⁰⁹. Furthermore, Abū l-Ḥasan, despite of his subordinate condition, gives strict instructions to his supervisor: “*It [the ambergris] will be brought to you by my brother Abū l-Barakāt. As soon as you take delivery, sell it without any slackness or delay for whatever price God grants and apportions*”¹¹⁰.

Considering the traffic between Lisbon and port cities such as Almeria regarding ceramics and the testimony of Al-Masʿūdī concerning the voyage of the grey amber from Santarém to Cordoba or Egypt, it’s reasonable to believe that some of the ambergris traded in Almeria came from Lisbon. As Christophe Picard suggested:

*“Santarém is obviously in the countryside, around 100 kms from the coast; but after the fall of Coimbra in the end of the 9th century, Santarém was the greatest city situated in the North of Ġarb al-Andalus and, as Medina Sidónia, in the absence of coastal important cities, it was the one which served as reference to geographers and Arab chroniclers”*¹¹¹.

In addition, Al-Masʿūdī wrote in the first half of the 10th century, while Cordoba was the political and administration centre of Muslim Spain, while Almeria played a discrete part in the whole of Andalusian background, meaning that by

107. Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Heb. d 66 (Cat. 2878), f. 52. Quoted in Goitein, S. D. *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders*. Translated from the Arabic with introductions, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1973: 49-51.

108. Goitein, S. D. *op. cit.*: 49-50.

109. Idem *Ibidem*: 50.

110. Idem *Ibidem*: 51.

111. Picard, C., *op. cit.*: 375, note 98.

referencing Cordoba he might have been referring to the south central region of al-Andalus.

The ambergris coming from the region of Lisbon, might have navigated near the coast, passed by today's Cabo de São Vicente and coasted the Andalusian shore making the reverse itinerary listed in *Historia Compostelana*, docking into ports such as Silves, Cacela, Saltes and Seville on the way to Almeria, where they could, for instance, sell ambergris and stock the vessels with “*corda seca*” pottery back home or, who knows, head further East.

The presence in the East of at least one merchant from Badajoz is demonstrated in the Geniza letters for this period. In 1065, young Ismā'īl b. Isaac al-Andalusī, who was active in Jerusalem, Tyre, Aleppo and other cities of Syria wrote to a business friend in Fustat, Egypt, named Yešū'a b. Samuel, enclosing a letter to his family:

*“perhaps one of the merchants from Toledo or one of the pilgrims returning to Madrid is prepared to convey the letter, for my brother and my father used to commute to Madrid. Or, there may be with you even a letter to me from my family, if they believe that I am still alive”*¹¹².

This letter corroborates other sources regarding the inland routes which were connected to the sea ports. Moreover, it suggests that there were merchants who assured the continuous flux of this network, either by sea or land. Al-Idrīsī listed the main ports one could find throughout the course of the Tagus: Toledo, Talavera, Makhada, Alcantara, Conetira Mahmud, Santarém and finally Lisbon¹¹³. The navigability of the Tagus may lie behind of some of the pottery findings in Lisbon, such as the imported green and manganese mug which archaeologists think that may have come from the Marca Média (Middle March) whose capital

112. Goitein, S. D. *A Mediterranean Society, The Jewish Communities of the World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, Volume I: *The Economic Foundations*. University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1967: 69.

113. Al-Idrīsī, *op. cit.*: 190.

was Toledo¹¹⁴. However, further research on this documental *corpus* has to be developed in order to trace these connections.

Nonetheless, if we take into account that only in 1085 Toledo passed into Christian rule and that circulation between both kingdoms was a common place, the hypothesis of the cosmopolitan Ismā'īl b. Isaac al-Andalusī had a remote association to Lisbon seems plausible, considering his family's merchant background. Furthermore, the Jewish community in al-Ušbūna occupied a large area in the suburbs next to the river, which may express a close relationship with seafaring activities.

6. CONCLUSION

Since Classical Antiquity, sources describe Lisbon as a point of intersection of different cultures. Its pleasant conditions and the nearby River Tagus have been stimuli for Phoenician, Roman, Muslim and Christian settlements. The closeness to the river has always been its major advantage and condition since its inception. Since ancient times it has encouraged circulation of people and goods, which have partially compensated its geographical eccentricity and political periphery in the debut of Islamic ruling.

After the end of the Umayyad caliphate of al-Andalus, in the early 11th century, the political centres multiplied all over Muslim Spain with the emergence of about thirty taifa kingdoms. The economic and urban growth came attached to this process, being simultaneously cause and effect for the fragmentation of the Andalusian caliphate. Lisbon, which was included in the taifa kingdom of Badajoz, benefited from this political outcome and during the 11th century and first half of the 12th expanded in several dominions as written sources and Archaeology reveal.

114. *Marca/march/tbugur*: "By the late eighth century three frontier districts, or Marches (*Tbugur*), had been created along a diagonal extending from the mouth of the Tagus to that of the Ebro, with Mérida, Toledo and Zaragoza normally serving as their administrative centres. They were usually known respectively as *al-Tagr al-adna* (Lower March), *al-Tagr al-Ausat* (Central March) and *al-Tagr al-Ala* (Upper March)" in Collins, R. *Caliphs and Kings: Spain, 796-1031*. Wiley Blackwell, 2014: 27.

On one hand, there was a demographic growth as demonstrated by the enlargement of the city's outskirts outside the "*Cerca Velha*", mostly inhabited by Mozarabs and Jews. This evolution came with economic development either in primary sector or in industry. Lisbon's surroundings, especially Balata, were fertile in food supplies and raw materials and pottery manufacturing was developed in the suburbs next to Tagus, where merchandise could be easily delivered and shipped either to the nearby regions or further on. Exports comprised luxury items such as ambergris, which would be transformed into perfumes and pharmaceutical potions, on its arrival to the East.

With the coming of the Almoravids in late 11th century, contacts with the Maghreb were reinforced, which also reflected in trade. The trading network is shown in Lisbon's material culture, which deepened its Mediterranean characteristics, as we can see in the diversity of ceramics found in Lisbon dating from this period.

The possible location of ports is mostly taken from written sources and archaeological remains (such as warehouses) in the nearness of the Tagus, which may indicate the former presence of harbours. However, Lisbon's location on the estuary of the most elongated Iberian river and the likely existence of natural mooring conditions made late Islamic Lisbon attractive to different communities and made al-Ušbūna a living port.

As a result, we are standing before an Arabised society, though not completely Islamised. Mozarabs were easily targeted as Muslims by the Christian conquerors, due to resemblance regarding language, dress code and general daily life, which caused perplexity amongst crusaders. This cultural identity is the coming output of the circulation networks integrating al-Andalus, the Maghreb and the Mediterranean, in which Mozarabs and Jews play an important role at either short or long distance commerce, respectively.

The presence of mixed religions, ethnicities and cultures was perceived and criticised by a very displeased crusader: "*The cause for such agglomeration of men was that there wasn't among them any mandatory religion; and since each one had the religion they wanted, for that, from all the corners of the world the most depraved men flocked here like towards a latrine, a nursery for all the*

*debauchery and filth*¹¹⁵. The crusader's perception denotes how Lisbon during the late Islamic rule had sparkling similarities with the Mediterranean world – a city which inspired a man of the North to feel both wonder and repulsion.

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Image 1: Map of Islamic Lisbon with the archaeological sites, authored by Gonçalves (2011:141) based upon Bugalhão (2009:385). We can see the underlined “Cerca Moura” heading towards the river and the western and eastern outskirts. On the left, the Tagus branch with the two creeks flowing from the North outer limits of the urban area, crossing the western suburb.

DOOR TO THE MEDITERRANEAN: PORT ACTIVITY IN LATE ISLAMIC LISBON

Nº	Name	Context	Centuries	Nº	Name	Context	Centuries
1	Núcleo Arqueológico da Rua dos Correiros (NARC)	Housing, pottery, manufacturing, eviction	X-XII	20	Rua de Sao Mamede, 9	Housing, storage	XII
2	Mandarin Chinês	Housing, pottery, manufacturing, eviction	XI-XII	21	Rua das Pedras Negras, 22-28	Housing	?
3	Claustro da Sé	Housing, eviction, mosque (?)	X-XII	22	Largo das Portas do Sol	Storage	XII
4	Alcáçova do Castelo	Housing	XI-XII	23	Rua dos Correiros	?	?
5	Fundação Ricardo Espírito Santo Silva	Housing, storage	XI-XII	24	Largo das Alcaçarias	Housing, pottery, manufacturing	XI-XII
6	Rua de Sao João da Praça	Wall	?	25	Rua da Padaria/ Rua dos Bacalhoeiros	Housing (?)	XI-XII
7	Igreja de São Lourenço	Storage	XI-XII	26	Teatro Romano - Sul	Housing, eviction	XI-XII
8	Mosteiro de S. Vicente de Fora	Storage	XII	27	Largo do Chafariz de Dentro	Eviction, pottery, manufacturing	XI
9	Praça da Figueira	Housing, storage, eviction	XI-XII	28	Rua de Sao Miguel, 53	Housing	XII
10	Rossio	Eviction	XII	29	Pátio da Senhora da Murça	Wall	?
11	Zara/ Rua Augusta	Housing, eviction	XI-XII	30	Rua Garrett, 30	Storage	XII
12	Teatro Romano	Housing, storage	XI-XII	31	Rua do Comércio/ Rua de São Julião	Housing (?)	XI-XII
13	Rua da Judiaria	Wall	?	32	Rua dos Remédios	Housing	XI-XII
14	Termas dos Cássios (Calçada do Correio Velho)	Housing	XI-XII	33	Palácio do Marquês de Angeja	Wall	?
15	Encosta de Sant'Ana (Martim Moniz)	Housing, eviction, storage	X-XII	34	Liceu Gil Vicente	Out of context	XII (?)
16	Rua do Ouro (197-203)	Housing	XI-XII	35	Aljube/ Rua Augusto Rosa	Eviction	XI-XII
17	Casa dos Bicos	Wall, eviction	XI-XII	36	Travessa dos Machados	Housing	?
18	Armazéns Sommer	Housing	?	37	Necrópole da Mouraria	Necropolis	?
19	Palácio Condes de Penafiel (S. Lourenço)	Housing, storage	?	38	Necrópole de São Vicente de Fora	Necropolis	?

Image 2: Archaeological sites marked on "Image 1", with their names, context in which those remains were found and the centuries they belong to, according to Bugalhão (2009:385).

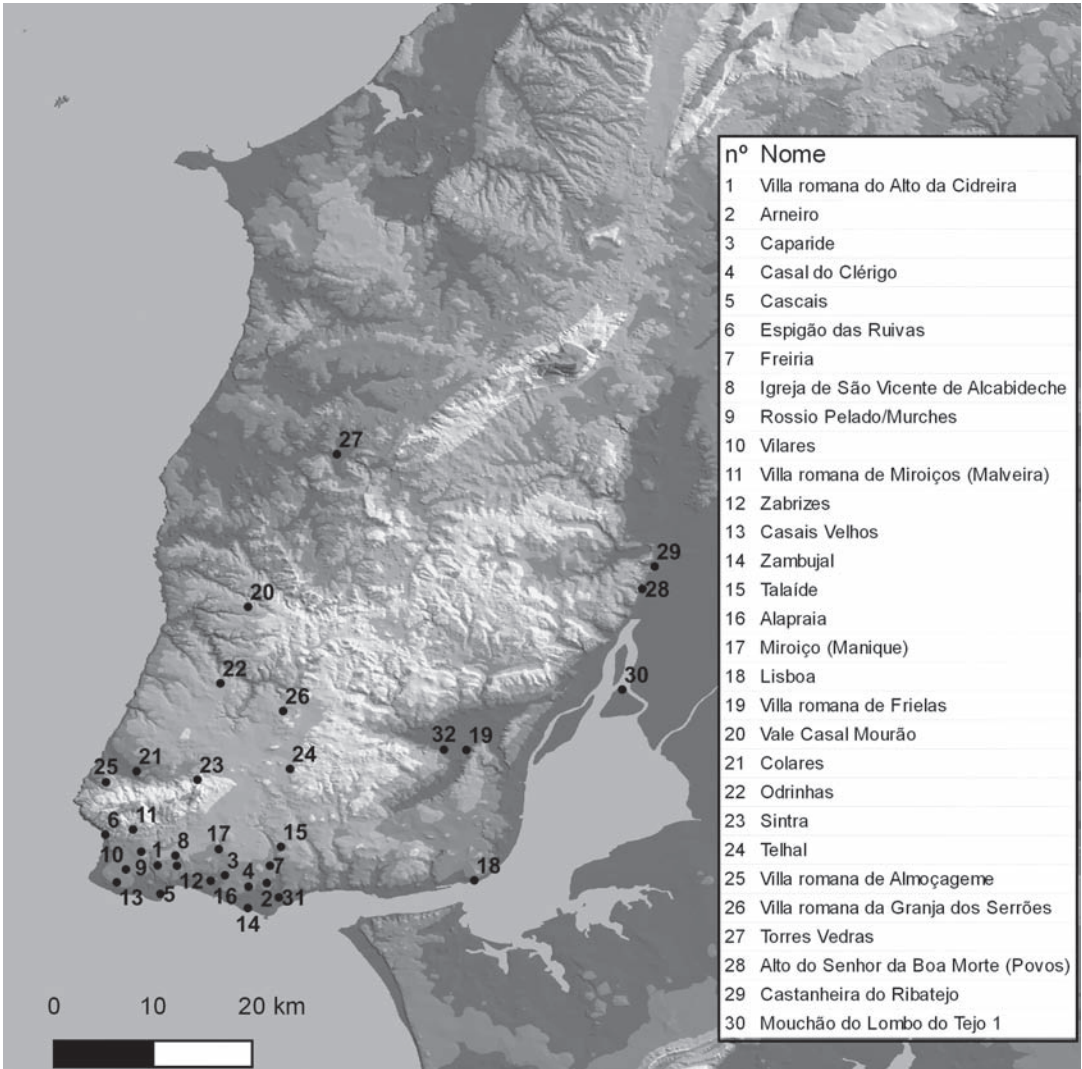


Image 3: Map of the region of Lisbon with the archaeological sites in which Islamic pottery was found (Bugalhão and Fernandes, 2012: 76) authored by Luís Gonçalves.

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Esta obra tiene por objeto el análisis de las sociedades portuarias de la Europa Atlántica en la Edad Media, que constituyen un tipo de sociedades urbanas en las que el puerto creó unas comunidades bien definidas por las funciones portuarias y marítimas, aunque su peso dependió de las relaciones de la ciudad con el puerto y fueron muy raras las sociedades portuarias puras. Esta monografía se divide en dos partes: la comunidad marítima y la comunidad portuaria. La primera encuadra una categoría de profesionales, conformada por su relación directa y estrecha con el mar, como marinos, transportistas, mercaderes, piratas, maestros, pilotos, tripulaciones, propietarios de naves y pescadores. La segunda parte está dedicada al estudio de los profesionales, incluidos en ámbitos laborales, situados en los alrededores de las actividades marítimas y portuarias, como la construcción naval, la maniobra de los barcos en el mar, los toneleros y cesteros, los sogueros y cordeleros, los regateros y mulateros, los encargados de los servicios del puerto, y los escribanos y notarios que anotaban los fletes. La interacción de la evolución económica, social y cultural de las sociedades portuarias nos permite abordar este tipo de sociedades como una categoría específica de la historia social y relacionarla con la historia de las sociedades urbanas europeas. Este monografía se ha realizado en el marco del proyecto de investigación Las sociedades urbanas de las ciudades y villas portuarias de la Europa Atlántica en la Baja Edad Media (HAR2012-31801)

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