

The Muluya River as a millennia-old frontier: representations of the Algarve and the construction of geographic knowledge (14th–16th centuries)

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This paper intends to analyze the role of the Muluya River as a border-like element in Western Maghreb, ever since the definition of the *Diaecesis Hispaniarum* under Diocletian in the late 3rd century AD up until the 16th century. As such, we aim to compare its cartographical representation with the textual evidence provided by late medieval Hispanic chronicles.

This study has its origins back in Gonçalo Matos Ramos' doctoral research, in an article regarding the semantic evolution of the Algarve by André de Oliveira Leitão and in the technical support provided by Luís Ribeiro Gonçalves. As such, this proposal is endorsed by these three researchers.

As to the methodological framework, we shall focus into two specific fields: the medieval Hispanic chronicles and the 14th to 16th century maps. Among the first ones, we shall analyze particularly the “Crónica de Portugal de 1419”, of unknown authorship, Rui de Pina's “Crónica de Afonso III” and Duarte Nunes do Leão's “Crónica de Afonso III”. Special attention shall be given to the geographic knowledge's sources (classical and patristic) and the authors' social and cultural context as court officials. As for the maps, we shall approach “Carta Pisana” (late 13th century), Abraham Cresques' “Catalan Atlas” (1375), Martin Behaim's “Erdapfel” (1492), “Cantino planisphere” (1502), among others. We shall take into consideration the evolution of geographical knowledge, the outbreak of the portolan charts, as well as the continuous dialectic between the classical “auctoritates” and the empirical evidence collected during the oceanic expeditions of Early Modern Age.

In short, we intend to determine the importance of Muluya River position in building the perception of an intimate connection between the two margins of the Strait, i. e., the construction in the westernmost Mediterranean space of a geographical macro-unity known as the “Algarves d'aquem e d'alem mar”. Both the textual and cartographic evidence shall therefore be linked with the definition of expansion rights of the crowns of Castile and Aragon over the ancient Roman provinces of “Mauretania Tingitana” and “Mauretania Caesariensis” (present-day Morocco and Algeria), manifested within the Monteagudo Treaty (1291).

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