

CODE 95**EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES: EACH ONE IN HOME
THE TUNA FISHERMEN AND THE COMPANY'S OWNERS****Batista, Nuno¹; Gonçalves, Marta Marçal²**

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ABSTRACT

This article describes, in a general way, the provisional housing in the *Arraial* of Faro's beach, Algarve, Portugal, where fishermen lived during the tuna fishing season (50s and 60s) and which already disappeared, and the existing houses in the city of Faro, where the owners of the fishing company lived. The transition from thatched roof houses to the wooden pavilions on the beach, which housed fishermen and their families during the tuna fishing season, from March to June, and the houses owned by the employers, are described. Two of the main objectives to be achieved is to disseminate this heritage, part of which disappeared, and to rouse the population's awareness, especially the local population, about the danger of its total disappearance. This research was based on documentary, photographic and bibliographical analyses and also on interviews with people involved in this activity, and who are now about 90 years old, which constitutes, beyond the scarce information that exists, an important limitation to the development of this work. This is the reason why it is urgent to register and disclosure this heritage, given the advanced age of those who witnessed in the first person all this experience and art. Being a heritage that characterizes this region, it must be valued and transmitted to the generations to come. Otherwise, there will exist a great risk of its complete disappearance, both physically and from the collective memory of the community. The originality of this paper is the taken approach: based on the tuna fishery in Faro, it performs a characterization of the fishermen's dwellings, located on the beach, and those of the employers, located in the city.

KEYWORDS: Tuna fishing dwellings; company's owner house; Faro; Algarve; Portugal.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tuna fishing in continental Portugal during the 30s and 60s of the last century only occurred, in the Algarve coast, almost at the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea, when the tuna passes in a migratory cycle from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea to spawn, called *atum de direito* and in the reverse direction, after spawning called *atum de revés*. This fishing also occurred throughout the southern Iberian Peninsula, including Andalusia region in Spain, although the object of study of this paper is the Algarve. In the case of Faro, the fishery was done on Faro Beach, which is an island, about 4 km away, in a straight line, from the city of Faro, and it was only accessible by boat.

One of the main objectives to be achieved is the dissemination of this heritage, part of which disappeared and the awakening of the population's awareness, especially the local population, about the danger of its total disappearance. This research was based on documentary, photographic and bibliographical analyses and also on interviews with people involved in this activity, and who are now with about 90 years old, which constitutes, beyond the scarce information that exists, an important limitation to the development of this work. This is the reason why it is urgent to register and disclosure this heritage, given the advanced age of those who witnessed in the first person all this experience and art. All the possible information collected was scarce, as said, and one of the reasons were the difficulties of the information available from the Commercial Registry Department which was not centralized and the limitations generated by the recent data protection law. This law did not allow to obtain the architectural plans of the presented houses.

The fishing system consisted of *Almadrava*, located in the sea, and was supported by the *Arraial*, located onshore, which consisted of the dwellings of the fishermen and their families, forming the *Armação*, a short-term fishing community, during the fishing season. In contrast to the fishermen's houses, which were of poor architecture and poor finishes, there were the houses of the fishing company owners, which were of great architectural richness, above the average of the existing houses in the city of Faro.

2. FISHERMEN HOUSES

Being a fishing system that already existed in Algarve when the territory was reconquered from the Muslims in 1249 [1], and having as first known written reference to an *Armação* on the coast of Cabo de Santa Maria in the XVI century [2], in 1621, the existence of *Armações* of tuna fishing has been recorded as well as, consequently, the existence of the *Arraiais* very close to the sea, in the island of Faro. More recently, following the records of the *Arraial* of 1935, it included 144 fishermen and their families, which were assigned according to the hierarchy [3]. The *Arraial* consisted of the house of the *Mandador*, the top of the hierarchy, of the *Escrivão* and the director, all in wood structure. There were also about 30 houses for *Companheiros*, the bottom of the hierarchy, all made in reeds (*junco* or *barrão*) with wooden doors and without windows. The reed was collected in the sand dunes and in *Ria Formosa* [4].

2.1. The dwellings before 1936

Primitive in what concerned to materials and techniques of construction, this type of houses had rectangular shape, with walls and cover composed of vegetal materials, due to the scarcity of wood (Figure 1). These were reed houses with two or three doors, each of them corresponding to a division where a fisherman and his family lived [5].

In its inside the floor was made with thick rope rolled forming a kind of carpet. They also used thin ropes and cork to make suspended shelves hanging inside the walls of reed's structure to make the most of the available space, which was reduced. It also existed a grocery store and a bar (*venda* and *bar*) or canteen where it was possible to purchase food [4].

There was no electricity in the island where the *Arraial* existed. There was also no drinkable water or sanitary infrastructures. In this part of the island there was freshwater but that was only used to wash the dishes. Water to drink and firewood to be able to cook were provided from the Faro city [4].

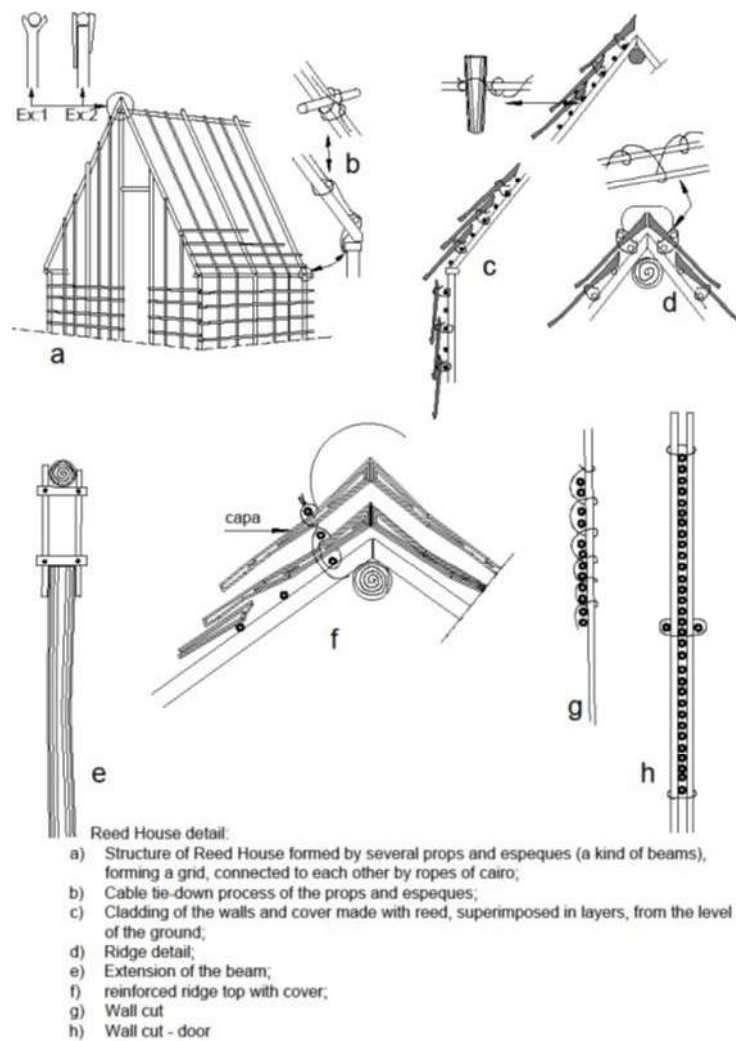


Figure 1: A scheme with details of a reed house in the *Arraial* (authors)

2.2. The dwellings after 1936

Later, in 1936, there was a strategical change in the location of the *Arraial*, due to the constant movement of the sand dunes, and the reed houses were replaced by wooden sheds. They were parallel to each other, perpendicular to the coastline, alphabetically ordered from A to F. These sheds were composed by thin wooden structure and thin walls. The roof's cladding was in zinc plates (Figure 2).

These constructions were divided lengthwise into twenty to twenty-four compartments ordered numerically, from the East to the West. Each compartment possessed a single outside shuttered door just like the old reed houses (Figure 3, left).

There was also a small grocery store and a bar (*venda* and *bar*) located on the East side of the *Arraial* and a warehouse located on the West side, to store all the nets and floating buoys during the winter [4], both built with the same materials as the sheds.

The importance of the houses was attributed in accordance with the hierarchical position of each one in the *Arraial*. The *Companheiros* lived in shared and reduced spaces. The *Mandador* and the *Escrivão* lived separately in isolated and larger spaces and their houses were in front of the working area where the nets, cables, floating buoys and iron anchors were handled, between the sheds and the warehouse, which was the ideal location to control all the works in the *Arraial* (Figure 3, right).



Figure 2: A scheme of the implantation of the Arraial in 1936: 1 - House of the Mandador; 2 - House of the Escrivão; 3 - House of the Directors; 4 - Bar and small market; 5 - Warehouse; A, B, C, D, E, F – Sheds of Companheiros. Between 1,2,3 and 5 – working area (authors)



Figure 3: Left: front side of one of the sheds' shuttered doors; right: the warehouse (authors' personal archive)

The house of the director was the most isolated and largest, used only when some director or important person visited the *Arraial*, such as the priest to prepare himself to the blessing of the nets. From 1936 until the last year of tuna fishing in this place (1967), this arrangement was maintained, without further changes.

3. OWNERS HOUSES

The last fishing company operated in Faro called Companhia de Pescarias do Cabo de Santa Maria, Ramalhete e Forte, started in 1916 and was the result of the fusion of two other fishing companies, called Companhia de Pesca Louletano-Silvense (1892-1916) and Companhia de Pesca do Atum do Cabo de Santa Maria e Ramalhete na Costa de Faro (1899-1916). After this fusion the 12 owners of the previous companies became partners [6]. They were very important people of Faro's society with a great political, military and industrial importance. In this paper are presented only the houses that could be found, either because it was impossible to locate them, either because they were demolished. These houses were patrimonies of the owners of the companies or of their descendants, placed in the city of Faro, and which existed between the 30s and 60s from the last century, although their construction might have begun earlier.

3.1. The house of Viscount of Cabo de Santa Maria

Francisco Augusto da Silveira Almeida Vilhena, also known as Viscount of Cabo de Santa Maria was an owner of the fishing company. He was the director of Faro customs, substitute civil governor of Faro, ex-mayor of Faro, and owner of 3 local press agencies [6]. His house is located on Rua Rasquinho, 27 in Faro, known as *Casa do Conde de Santa Maria* (Figure 4), was built in the 19th century [7].

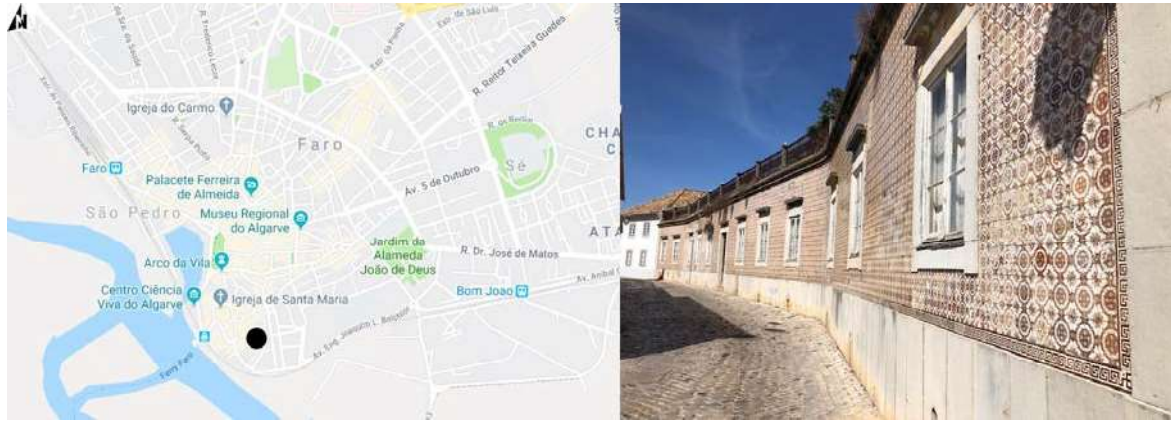


Figure 4: Left: location of the house of Viscount of Cabo de Santa Maria (authors based on Google Maps); right: picture of the house (authors)

This house is located inside the Old Town walls, characterized by a longitudinal plan with one floor, and a roof with four-tiered roofs. Its main façade is bounded by pilasters, stonework punch and mass topped by wrought iron railing, brown and white patterned integral tiles, and twelve framed spans [7]. Currently is for sale.

3.2. House of José Alexandre da Fonseca

José Alexandre da Fonseca, great owner and industrialist of cork, who was director of some political positions, descendant of a great slave and ivory trader was another owner [6]. His house is located on a corner, having façades in 3 streets: Praça Dom Marcelino Franco, 2-2A; Rua da Misericórdia, 48 a 60 and Rua do Albergue, 17-25, and is known as *Casa na antiga Rua do Pestana* (Figure 5).

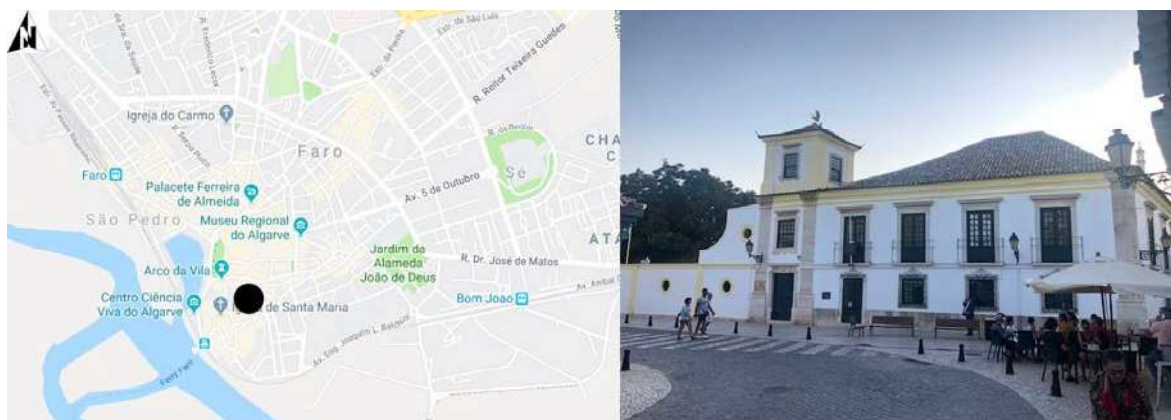


Figure 5: Left: location of the house of José Alexandre da Fonseca (authors based on Google Maps); right: picture of the house (authors)

Built in the 18th century, the house suffered improvements in the 20th century [7]. His house has a longitudinal plan and a differentiated coverage with four and two water roofs. There are five openings on the noble floor, framed with straight architrave lintel, one window and four bay windows with

wrought iron guards, and a rear façade with monumental gate for access to the patio, flanked by pilasters with gable and pediment with oculus in the center [7]. Today is the Consulate of Brazil.

3.3. House of Constantino Cúmano

Constantino Cúmano belonged to a well-known family of doctors [6]. His house is located on a corner, having façades to 3 streets: Rua Lethes, 32, Travessa do Lethes, 1-3 and Largo do Terreiro do Bispo, 7-8. It was known as Doglioni Palace or Cúmano Palace (Figure 6). This house was built in the 18th century and suffer improvements in the 19th and 20th centuries [7]. Today belongs to the Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Algarve, CCDR (Coordination and Regional Development Commission).

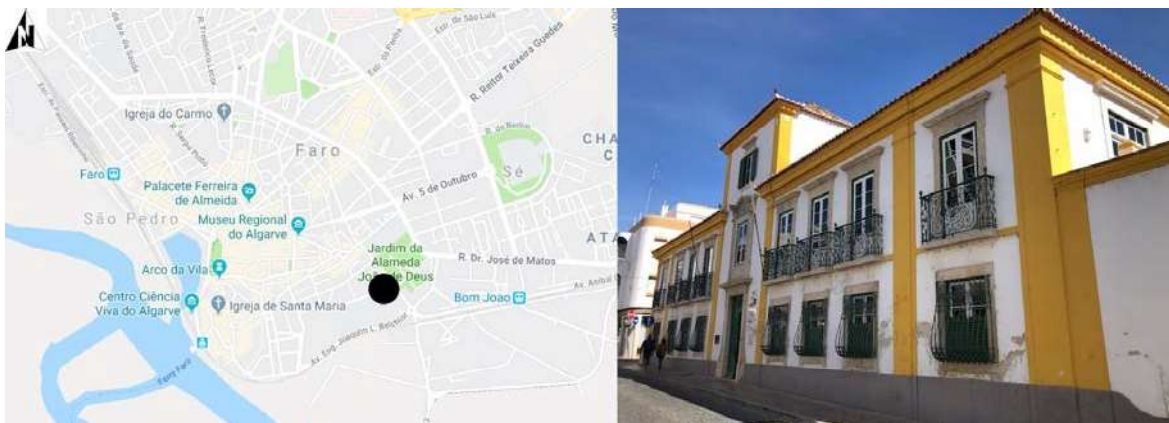


Figure 6: Left: location of the house of Constantino Cúmano (authors based on Google Maps); right: picture of the house (authors)

His house has a rectangular floor plan, with masses arranged horizontally on two floors and vertically on three floors in two parts, and differentiated roofing with four and gabled roofs. The main façade is delimited by pilasters. There are three floors in the central body and two floors in the four lateral bodies, with nine openings per floor, eight barred sill windows and an architrave door on the ground floor, eight bay windows with balconies and wrought-iron guards on the noble floor, and in the center a larger window with cut-out architrave lintel. The 3rd floor window is airlock and has also an architrave [7].

3.4. House of Vidal Belmarço

Vidal Belmarço was a successful entrepreneur, whose family was made up of important Faro traders [6]. His house has also 3 façades, to the following streets: Praça Dom Marcelino Franco, 2-2A; Rua da Misericórdia, 48-60 and Rua do Albergue, 17-25. It is known as Belmarço Palace (Figure 7).

This house, built in the 20th century, was a revivalist palace of bourgeois and eclectic style with two floors, rectangular floorplan and exuberance of the facades, partially clad in stone and with a great diversity of door and window frames. There is masonry structure with limestone masonry in frames, wrought iron in guards and skylight. With tiles inside and Marseilles tiles on the roof, the house was a clear sign of the importance of this family [7].

In 2018 came up news about this palace in a national newspaper [8], which brought a new breath to this lovely building: *“The Palace functioned as the Labor Court until the 1990s, and was later acquired by the Faro Chamber, which ceded it to the Ministry of Justice to set up the Faro Court of Appeal, a project that never got off the ground. Now [2018], despite being in private hands, part of the building will open to the public on time for cultural events, explained João Rodrigues, owner of Suburbs, a company that will move there in the coming months”*. Today, as reported, a private company operates there.

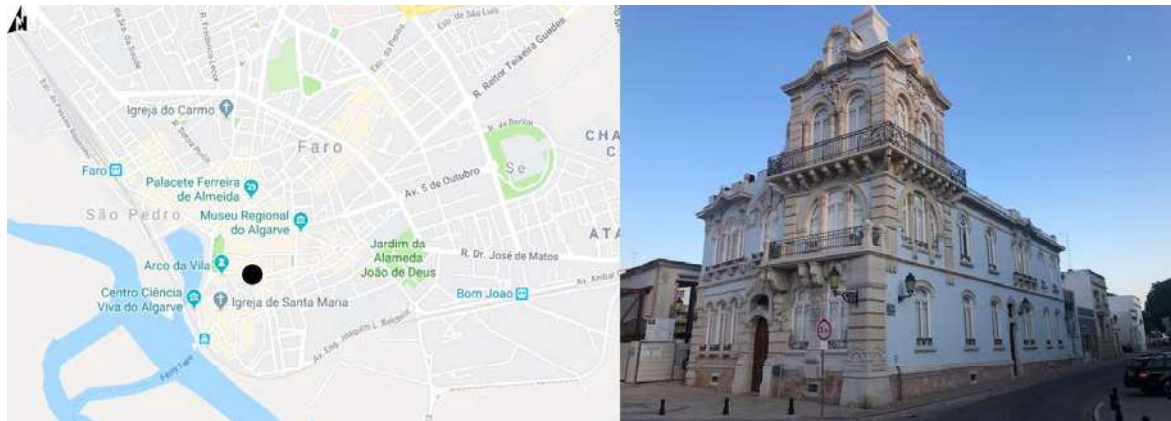


Figure 7: Left: location of the house of Vidal Belmarço (authors based on Google Maps); right: picture of the house (authors)

4. CONCLUSIONS

It was found that there is a big difference between the fishermen's houses in Faro Beach and the fishing companies' owners ones. Apart from the social and monetary difference, one reason for this difference is that the tuna fishing season lasts only a few months. Thus, only temporary housing was needed, although there are cases, such as Arraial Ferreira Neto in Tavira, Algarve, where an authentic village was built with "stone and lime" houses; but in this case it was justified, since in Tavira the tuna fishing season lasted longer than in Faro.

It can also be concluded that the owner's houses in Faro are all mostly located in the Historical Centre area or near the riverside area of the town. In many of these houses, you see a turret. It is thought that this turret - the *mirante* – might have been used to control tuna fishing, which was taking place at Faro Beach, about 4 km from the city [9]. In this tower, using a binocular, the owners could control the amount of tuna caught, as there was a code of flags hoisted on Faro Beach and was visible from the city of Faro [3].

Being a heritage that characterizes this region, it must be valued and transmitted to the generations to come. Otherwise, there exists a great risk of its complete disappearance, both physically and from the collective memory of the community.

The originality of this paper is the taken approach: based on the tuna fishery in Faro, it performs a characterization of the fishermen's dwellings, located on the beach, and those of the employers, located in the city.

This heritage must be valued, so, the publication of this work may influence the society in general, but primarily, the region's society, to alert them to a value that has been forgotten. At the same time, the future generations will be elucidated, helping to preserve the collective memory of a professional art that disappeared from the Algarve.

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