

WOOD SUPPLY BACKGROUND ON THE BANKS OF JÚCAR

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In the Middle Ages, wood was an essential material in the human life (GAY, 2001). It was indispensable for the architecture and the navy industry (FLORIDO, 2004; IZQUIERDO, 2014). Just because of trunks traffic the Ribera del Júcar region played an important function in the wood supply in the Valencia coast, a densely populated area, deficient in forests.

Probably, the use of the river Jucar as means of trunks' transport goes back to the roman period. It is documented since Almoravid epoch in the Muslim geographer Mohamed-al-Idrisi, who leave proof of river navigation was the preferential means of transport to supply the region. After the conquest, the pacification of the borders with Aragon enlarged the possibilities for the wood provision, putting up the Iberian forests at Valencia inhabitants' and opening the fluvial traffic form Guadalaviar. In this way, the navigation was in the kingdom of Valencia a traditional waterway of supplying.

Jucar rises in Montes Universales and it converges with river Cabriel in Cofrentes. In its lower route it goes into the valley of Ayora since the Hoya de Buñol and the Vall dels Alcalans bordering the waterfalls of Cofrentes, Cortes de Pallás and Mijares in the Canal de Navarrés.

2. AL-IDRISI, FIRST TESTIMONY OF LOGS RIVER NAVIGATION BY THE JÚCAR

In the second half of the twelfth century, Al-Idrisi (c.1100-1165) provided the first documented reference on wood supply in the region. He described the pines' decline from forests of Quelaza, which were cut and stripped before flowing in to the river. Following the course of Júcar through Alcira logs came to Cullera. Since there were transferred to the port of Denia beams aimed at the shipbuilding industry, the main center of shipbuilding in Almoravid time. The thicker trunks were allocated for architectural projects in Valencia. Mainly pines were in circulation, which have historically been one of the most feature families of the peninsular landscape.

Indications of Quelaza location are ambiguous. The site, now missing, is described as a fortress built at the east of Cuenca, beyond the mountains where Al-Idrisi highlighted the abundance of pine trees and the development of a first timber trade. The Islamic geographer was the first to emphasize the lack of wood on the fringe of the Levantine coast. He also highlighted two important aspects: first, that the mountains of Cuenca were the primary areas of supply in Almoravid period; secondly, he emphasized the importance of Júcar as the main gateway although the Turia provided a direct link to Valencia. The reasons that would discourage this pathway could be due to political tensions raised by the Christian advance in northern Spain (BONNASSIE *et al.*, 2001). In fact, Pedro II had annexed Rincon de Ademuz in 1210 to the Crown of Aragon by taking the castles of Ademuz and Castelfabib, territory that later his son Jaime I added to the real property within the geographical scope of the Kingdom of Valencia, circumstance that prevented access to the northern mountains of the Iberian (ÁLVAREZ, 2003).

3. WOOD SUPPLY AFTER THE CHRISTIAN CONQUEST

While the Christian conquest in 1238 didn't solve the scarcity of wood, the pacification of the border with Aragon expanded the possibilities of supply, to put the Iberian mountains available to residents of Valencia and open the river traffic from Guadalaviar. Also, driving

logs was considered from the outset a royalty, with which the monarchy reserved the direct ownership of the waters. This privilege also included trunk boats (ARCINIEGA, 2011).

Also, from the earliest times the monarchy regulated the timber business through provisions probably based on Islamic customs affiliation. The first legal references date back to the privilege that Jaime I granted in Alcira on January 30th, 1267, which granted full freedom to transport wood to Valencia or any other location of the kingdom freely, by land or by river through Júcar and Turia¹. In relation to this privilege, several royal decrees were issued against those who would prevent or make difficult the transition to wood circulated by Túria, Júcar and Mijares rivers.

Regarding these prerogatives the right of *cinquantè* stands out, a unique provision to ensure the supply of the royal works. Since 1260 there's evidence of this right granted for maintenance of Játiva Castle. The deal was made in Barragà, in the valley of Cárcer, on the right bank of the Júcar near the mouth of the river Albaida (MARTÍNEZ FERRANDO, 1934). Over time, this right would extend to the entire Spanish wood down by the Júcar (FERRER, 1990). Also, its validity is manifested in the successive royal interventions, caused by the pretensions of the lords of the places where wood went across. They prevented their passage to demand payment of duty on goods passing through their territories and a compensation for damage caused by the trees in the infrastructure of the banks. The *cinquantè* was also a duty to which the monarchy often resorted to reward the services of counselors or actual waiters.

4. CHANGES IN MANAGEMENT OF *CINQUANTÉ*

In terms of management, in 1397 the king Martín el Humano moved the payment to the river mouth in Cullera to drive costs on the trunks tax bound for Barcelona. The change was expected momentarily, only to the reform in the palace of the Tinell and to provide wood and provide the dockyards of Barcelona. Amid-fifteenth century Antella is designated for collection. Finally, as it was more convenient download in Alcira in order to transport to Játiva, revenue is transferred to the suburb of San Agustín in Alcira (BRANCHAT, 1785)(ARCINIEGA, 2011).

5. THE RIBERA DEL JÚCAR, SUPPLY REGION IN WOOD IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES

The Ribera del Júcar was also an area of logs supply for construction (IZQUIERDO, 2014). Its importance is featured in the mandate of King Alfonso IV to the justice of Alcira in 1290 to investigate an irregular felling in Cotes (GALLOFRE, 1968: document 1659). Abatements required a license from the king and was limited to a number of individual that local agents should check (FERRER, 1990).

The wood transport in the Júcar stimulated the introduction of work-related activities in carpentry. As early as June 1320 Jaime II granted to Pere Calderó, preceptor of the Infante Ramón Berenguer, rights to establish a sawyer mill near Játiva².

At the beginning of the 15th century the surroundings of Alcira were populated with poplars, up to the point of being the wood supply region for the ten galleys that Fernando I commanded to build in the dockyards of Valencia (GUIRAL-HADZIIOSSIF, 1989). Its role as a supply area was particularly emphasized in providing oak wood to replace the stretcher frame of the main bell tower of the Cathedral in July 1435. The document details the habits developed for selection, felling and transport. Despite the complexity of the process, it took into account the importance of good moon in logging (GARCÍA MARSILLA; IZQUIERDO, 2013).

In the Valencian gothic architecture the use of oak wood is also documented in the portals of the dockyards of the Grau de Valencia on January 28th, 1407 and for making axes for carts and

¹ Privilegio LXXIV de Jaime I. Concedido en Alcira el 30 de enero de 1267 (ALANYA *et al.* (eds.), 1999:101).

² ACA, Cancillería, reg. 218, f. 66r (FERRER, 1990: 524).

cranes, as shown in the purchase of 23rd July 1452 oak wood to the carpenter Pere Bolufer to repair the crane of the Royal Chapel in the Santo Domingo Convent³.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The region of Valencia is a zone of contact of two large peninsular systems of mountain ranges: the Iberian System north and Betic System south. Thus, since the trees were located in mountainous areas of difficult access, river navigation was imposed as the fastest and most economical means, favored by the fact that the Júcar, Turia, Mijares and Cabriel rivers are originated in these mountains and formed the natural routes for transporting logs. Indeed, the decline of logs by the Júcar and subsequent embarkation in Cullera bound for Denia and Valencia is documented from the 12th century geographic descriptions of Mohamed Al-Idrisi. After the Christian conquest, royal decrees issued to ensure and protect logs' navigation are substantial references to know the criteria used for the transport. In this sense, was paramount the privilege of James I in 1270 that exempted from taxes the wood down by rivers. The royal interventions motivated by conflicts between loggers and land lords testify the difficulty of maintaining this privilege.

Just because of the traffic of trunks for construction, the surrounding territory of the Ribera del Júcar played an important role in wood supply. One of the interesting aspects of this participation was the *cinquanté*, that James I granted for the maintenance of Játiva Castle. Since 1260 we are awarded of this reserve, which levied a log of every fifty downing the Cabriel and Júcar. Finally, in the Middle Ages it was also highlighted as a territory of oak wood supply. For example, the search for oak wood to remove the frame of the great bell tower of the Cathedral provides unpublished data on the procedures used at the time for examining the quality of wood, as well as jobs and costs behaved logging and log transport.

³ARV. Mestre Racional, signatura 9.251 (TOLOSA *et al.*, 1997: 92).