

# Debates de Arqueología Medieval



*En este número:*

*Andrea Fiorini, Alberto García Porras, Guillermo García-Contreras Ruiz, Antonio Hernández Pardos, Antonio Malpica Cuello, Cristina Martínez Álvarez, Antonio Luis Martínez Rodríguez, Julián Olmos Sánchez, David Ortega López, Antonio Reyes Martínez, Encarnación Reyes Martínez, Jorge Rouco Collazo, Bilal Sarr Marroco, María del Mar Villafranca Jiménez*





**DEBATES DE ARQUEOLOGÍA MEDIEVAL**  
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# DEBATES DE ARQUEOLOGÍA MEDIEVAL

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La revista Debates de Arqueología Medieval nace con la pretensión de estructurar toda una serie de intereses que muchos de nosotros tenemos respecto a la Arqueología Medieval, tanto en lo que se refiere a cuestiones metodológicas como, sobre todo, en torno a los debates históricos que se generan a partir de la investigación.

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# BERBER SETTLEMENT IN THE UPPER MARCH OF AL-ANDALUS (8TH-12TH CENTURY). A POST-DOCTORAL RESEARCH PROJECT

«El poblamiento beréber en la Marca Superior de al-Andalus (siglos VIII-XII)».  
Un proyecto de investigación posdoctoral.

BILAL SARR\*

## Introduction. The research topic and methodology

The postdoctoral project «The Berber Settlement in the Upper al-Andalus» aimed at studying all aspects of the presence of Berber groups in the Upper March of al-Andalus, from the Islamic occupation (8th century) to the feudal conquest (12th century). This two-year project was initiated thanks to a grant from the Casa de Velázquez in 2011 and culminated in stays in France (University of Toulouse II and University of Paris IV Sorbonne) with the assistance of the University of Granada and the Postdoctoral Fellowship Program from the Ministry of Education and Science of Spain.

The Upper March (al-Ṭaġr al-A'lā, sometimes also called al-Aqṣā, even al-Akbar and al-A'zam) was one of three border units of al-Andalus, together with the Middle March (al-Awsat) and the Lower March (al-Adnā), whose territories covered about Tudela, Huesca, Barbiṭāniya (Barbastro), Lérida and Zaragoza. The concept of March, *Ṭaġr* in Arabic (pl. *tuġūr*), refers to any border territory under the political domination of Islam (Dār al-Islām), which adjoins the Dār al-Ḥarb; no Muslim and hostile area.

Throughout history, there seems to be, at least in the Ṭaġr al-A'lā, a wide political autonomy, with a hereditary governance (as in the case of the Banū Qāsī, Banū Šabrīt, Banū 'Amrūs or later the tujibíes) to which Córdoba had to resign to recognise as regional powers. Indeed, it seems that there was a «viceroy» in Zaragoza under the jurisdiction of the provinces and the March was coming to form an intermediate power between the districts in the area and the state capital. Clearly, all these features, with the proximity of the territories under the feudal kingdoms that involves both a constant military threat and frequent contacts and exchanges in various fields, absorbed part of the lifestyle of the inhabitants of *al-ṭaġr*.

With respect to the Berbers, it should be noted that this name designates a set of inhomogeneous peoples that occupied since ancient times almost all of North Africa, from Siwa (Egypt) to the Atlantic Ocean, also including the Canary Islands, and from the Mediterranean Sea to the southern limits of the Sahara Desert. In fact, at the time of ancient Egypt, it has come to be linked to the western people in North of Africa, as the Lebou or Libyans, Tehenu, Memehu,

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\* University of Granada. Director of the PIMA project: Poblamiento e intercambios en torno al mar de Alborán (al-Andalus/Magreb, siglos VIII-XV) (HAR2014-56241-JIN). E-mail: bilal@ugr.es

Meshwesh who tried to invade the Nile delta several times, and they succeeded in 1227 BC during the five years of the reign of Merneptah. But these groups are precisely characterised by its heterogeneity in all aspects. Thus, we find different forms of habitats (nomadic, semi-nomadic and sedentary), economic activities (merchants, ranchers, farmers...), religious beliefs (Muslims, Christians, Jews, polytheists...) and even different levels of socio-political organisation (state, tribal...)<sup>1</sup>. No doubt that the Berbers, because of the geographical location of its origin, since they are the native inhabitants of North Africa, played a leading role from the beginning of the Islamic occupation of Iberia. Actually it must have been a continuous transit of North African contingent, attracted by the political and economic splendour of al-Andalus and by the hope of a better life.

So, the purpose of our project was clear: reconstructing the Berber presence in all its aspects from a multidisciplinary perspective, from written sources of various kinds (Arabic and Latin), the Toponymy, the documentation generated by the feudal conquest and ultimately, when possible, we have tried to contrast this information with the material from extensive archeology (such as surveys and visit to the main archeological sites with Berber place names). And we should highlight this last information; we have carried out archaeological activities in a second instance after the documental study, since there is not a genuine Andalusian Berber material culture. Therefore, this methodological tour could only be unique and go in this direction and not in any other. It is for this reason that throughout the project we have proposed the following thought: is there a Berber archeology or rather an archeology on sites with Berber place-names? What realities do these place names designate?

Having made these clarifications, the methodology we have followed has well-marked steps. The first objective that we established was to create a «bibliography» in order to showcase the status of the matter. This literature was not limited to our study area but we include other experiences that had developed all over al-Andalus. All this reflects the general lack of studies on the settlement and the Berber toponymy focused on a specific area, particularly on the Upper March of al-Andalus. The reality is that, for this area of the upper border, we barely have previous works. The only exception is inserted references in collective works or general thematic articles and M. Barceló's papers in the Penedés area. This gave an added difficulty to our project but also an innovative character.

The review and study of the Arabic sources have occupied an essential part of our work. In this case, we must emphasise the difficulties entailed by a study of this nature: the lack of available data, the frequent subjectivity of the Arabic sources related to Berber, the scarce interest in the Berber studies for this area. And a distinction based on genre should be made here, since this will determine the capabilities and nature of the information. So, geographic sources are the ones which have given us the highest number of details on the place names, and biographical sources about the presence of Berber sages. As for literary and chronicles, they have provided us data with the collective behaviour of the Berbers of the area (sharing in riots, positioning towards the political evolution, etc.).

Similarly, we have extensively reviewed the Latin sources from major general to specialized works in Aragon and Catalonia (charters, chronicles, Repartimientos, capitulations...). Here, we must admit, we did not obtain a lot of information, but an inquiry was

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<sup>1</sup> CAMPS, Gabriel (1984): «Introduction», *Encyclopédie Berbère* I, Aix-en-Provence, pp. 14-26.

necessary to complete the onomastical-toponymical surveys. Latin sources have been especially helpful to know the phonetic development of certain personal names or place names but, in general, they show a lack of knowledge regarding the Andalusian society<sup>2</sup>.

Besides the study of written sources has conducted a review of the place names of the provinces of Huesca, Zaragoza and Lérida, and other areas as Tudela and Tortosa, mainly through available maps from the Spanish IGN. So, we have analysed the repertoire of IGN topographical maps at different scales available, 1:50.000 and 1:25.000 both print and digital. This work has been complemented by consultation and study of some local toponymical studies and other compendiums like the *Toponimia del Reino Aragon* written by Agustín Ubieto Arteta<sup>3</sup>. The toponymy can be a very useful source if we use it wisely and we appreciate the information that it provides us in perspective. Thus, in many cases, the findings may be open to numerous interpretations. Therefore, it is essential to cross their data with those of other sources of information. And that is what we have proposed in this project. Our aim was to confirm the Berber settlements through various means: the written documentation, the toponymical sources and finally the archeological activities.

After these points, our next step was to begin with the field work. In other words, we went from texts and topographical maps to the ground. Here, we have conducted a series of extensive exploration, visits and studies of structures in areas with Berber place-names found on paper in order to locate new settlements and / or redefine the existing ones and their relationship with their hinterlands.

The last issue that we will discuss in this the methodology section is the dissemination of results. In addition to this paper, we reported the results of the project through various channels: internet, papers and participation in scientific events. So, we have created a web <http://www.berebermarcasuperior.org/>, active until shortly after the conclusion thereof (see news <http://www.arqueologiamedieval.com/noticias/6767/nueva-web-bereberes-en-the-mark-top>).

As for the publications, we have accomplished three papers: the first, «Introducción al estudio del poblamiento beréber en la Marca Superior de Al-Andalus (siglos VIII-XII)», published in the *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* Review in 2013. The second, «Présence dans la Marche Berber Supérieure d'al-Andalus (VIIIe-XIIe siècle)» in the Inalco review, *Revue des Etudes Berbers*, and the third, «Lizana. Un hisn y un puente califal perdidos en tierras del Somontano de Barbastro (Huesca)», in the journal *Bolskan*, coauthored with Philippe Sénac. To all this, we must add the recent publication of a monograph on the main results of the project: «*Et cependant les Berbères existent*». *El poblamiento beréber en la Frontera Superior de al-Andalus*», (Granada, 2014).

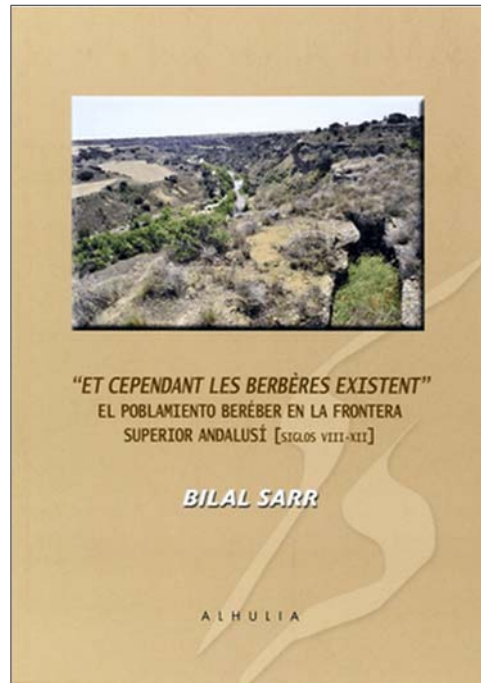
The third route of dissemination is the participation in scientific meetings. At this stage, we must point out our participation in seminars al-Andalus-Hispaniae at the University of Toulouse

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<sup>2</sup> SENAC, Philippe (2008): «Paysans et habitats ruraux de la Marche Supérieure d'al-Andalus: les données des textes et de l'Archéologie», en VV.AA., *Movimientos migratorios, asentamientos y expansión, (siglos VIII-XI: en el centenario del profesor José María Lacarra. XXXIV Semana de Estudios Medievales, Estella, 16 a 20 de julio de 2007*, Estella, pp. 77-104.

<sup>3</sup> UBIETO ARTETA, Agustín (1972): *Toponimia Aragonesa Medieval*, Madrid.

II and IV Paris-Sorbonne (2011 and 2012 respectively) and our participation in the conference «Être Berbère au Moyen Âge», held by the Inalco (Paris, 2012).



**Fig. 1. The book cover of «Et cependant les Berbères existent». El poblamiento beréber en la frontera superior andalusí (siglos VIII-XIII) (Granada, 2014)**

## A review of the main results

### *An arrival in successive waves*

The historical evolution has allowed us to verify several waves of settlement. The first and the most important takes place from the first expedition of conquest. In this moment, the Berbers, as an indigenous people of North Africa, will form the bulk of the contingent of the expeditions. The sources are abundantly clear on this point. Although their figures are exaggerated and inaccurate, they clearly reflect the proportion between Arabs and Berbers. Thus, according to *Aḥbār Mağmū'a*, the whole crew in the first expedition of Ṭāriq b. Ziyād would be entirely Berber and would be composed of 7.000 members<sup>4</sup>. But al-Rāzī calculated the number of Berbers in 12.000. Meanwhile, with Mūsā b. Nuṣayr, the number of combatants barely reached 5.000 persons, and within these a significant number of imaziġen also was included.

Even the *Crónica Mozárabe* (754) makes a distinction between Arabs and «mauri» sent by Mūsā and Ṭāriq respectively, differentiating the origins of both bodies. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the two components, and it has not been produced an assimilation

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<sup>4</sup> *Aḥbār Mağmū'a*. *Crónica anónima del siglo XI dada a luz por 1ª vez*, edition & traduction by Manuel Lafuente Alcántara, Madrid, 1867, p. 6 of arabic ed.

of a group. So, according to all sources, Arabs represent only a minority («*wa lam yakun fī-him min al-‘arab illā yasīr*»<sup>5</sup>) and even some authors specify that the small number of Arabs were only for the Islamisation of the Berbers<sup>6</sup>.

A second wave would be related to the arrival in al-Andalus of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dāḥil. This emir would have a bodyguard Zanata and other Berber tribes, particularly Ṣinhāḡa, and try to win over other Berber groups from al-Andalus and North Africa to fight against the Fatimid Caliphate and quell the members of Ğund rebellion. This matter is not trivial because all these groups would have to settle else somewhere.

With regard to news on the Upper March, for these earlier periods, they are very scarce. So, we do not know or groups which settled and much less their volume. Traditionally, it has been argued that there would be a minor Berber community, and this is based on a single reference of *Aḥbār Maġmū‘a*. In this source, the non-participation of the Berbers of the Upper March in the Great Revolt in 741 was justified as being less numerous than the Arabs. According to this appointment, the Arabs constituted the majority of the population and were more numerous than the Berbers (*fa-inna-hum kānū akṭar min al-barbar*)<sup>7</sup>. Nevertheless, we have references about the participation of some Berber communities in the various local revolts that took place in the Ṭaġr al-A‘lā and, at least, these ones confirm the existence of groups with their own identity and an active political role. For example, Ibn ‘Idārī tells us that the Berbers joined al-Ḥubāb b. Rawāḡa b. Banī Zuhra b. Kilāb al-‘Abdarī and a group of Yemenis who revolted against Yūsuf al-Fihri in 754<sup>8</sup>.

Another case is that of the rebellion of Maṭrūḥ b. Sulaymān al-A‘rābī in 792, for which we are aware of the intervention of a Berber group also in Zaragoza. In this agitation against the emir Hišām I, Maṭrūḥ was assassinated by two of his companions, a certain ‘Amrūs b. Yūsuf and Šarḡabīl b. Šaltān al-Zawāġī, the latter had a nisba related directly to the Zanata zawāġa. Meanwhile, Ibn Ḥayyān in his *Muqtabis* V<sup>9</sup> and the *Aḥbar Maġmū‘a* speak of one of Rizq of the Barānis who participated in an agitation against ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I<sup>10</sup>.

Another very interesting anecdote, provided us by al-Ḥušanī, happened in the times of al-Ḥakam I (796-822). He gives us a glimpse about how it was forbidden «to put to the Berbers in the city» of Zaragoza<sup>11</sup>. So, if this is true, this would be an example of marked segregation.

Therefore, this series of testimonies are to counter the idea of a «small and underactive Amaziġ community», as it has been stated, based solely on the fact of the great revolt of 741. It must be noted that all these events occur around Zaragoza, what we can refer to Berber communities of Monzalbarbar and the door Cineja.

<sup>5</sup> CHALMETA, Pedro (1994): *Invasión e Islamización. La sumisión de Hispania y la formación de al-Andalus*, Madrid, pp. 109-159.

<sup>6</sup> AL-MAQQARI, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb min guṣn al-Andalus al-Raṭīb*, ed. by I. ‘Abbās, Beirut, 1968, I, p. 239.

<sup>7</sup> *Aḥbār Maġmū‘a*, p. 38 /p. 48 of the Spanish transl.

<sup>8</sup> *Al-Bayān Al-Muġrib* II, 37-39; *Aḥbār Maġmū‘a*, 63-74 /67-77 of the Spanish translation; *Faṭḥ al-Andalus (La conquista de al-Andalus)*, ed. by Luis Molina, Madrid, 1994, pp. 71-76; *Nafḥ* I, 238 and III, 26, 30 y 32. See also MANZANO, Eduardo (1986): «La rebelión del 754 en la Marca Superior y su tratamiento en las crónicas árabes», *Studia Historica. Historia Medieval*, IV, pp. 185-205.

<sup>9</sup> IBN ḤAYYAN, *Muqtabis* V, ed. by Pedro Chalmeta, Federico Corriente, Maḥmūd Šubḡ *et alii*, Madrid 1979, p. 244.

<sup>10</sup> *Aḥbār maġmū‘a*, p. 116 /p. 105 of the Spanish transl.

<sup>11</sup> IBN ḤARIT AL-ḤUSANI, (*Quḡāt Qurṭuba*), *Aljoxaní. Historia de los jueces de Córdoba*, translation into Spanish by J. Ribera, facsimile reprint of the 1914 Madrid edition, Córdoba, 2005, pp. 83-84 /91-92 Spanish transl.

In times of ‘Abd al-Rahmān III, 934/323 H, we have the reference of a *ḥiṣn* called Warša, identified as Huesa de Común, where a group of Berbers lived with Ibrahim b. Hišām al-Tujibī, brother of Muḥammad b. Hišām al-Tujibī. This presence in Ḥiṣn Warša could probably be related to other settlements and Berber toponymy as Lagata (Banū Lawāta), Letux, Nepza (Nafza) and Azuara (Zuwāra), which were a focus of intense Berber settlement around the river Aguasvivas, a tributary of the river Ebro.

Another of the most important waves of Berber would occur in the period between the government of al Ḥakam II (961-976) and the disappearance of the *ḥāḡib* Al-Manšūr bi-llāh (1002)<sup>12</sup>. The texts of Ibn Ḥayyān and the *Memories* of king ‘Abd Allāh leave no doubt in this regard. The recruitment of mercenaries and the arrival of volunteers in al-Andalus will be constant. The echoes of splendour of a state expansion, which would resound throughout the entire Maghreb, join the promises of *iḥsān* that are intended to attract a militia group. In this context, groups like the Zirids and the Banū Birzāl arrive in al-Andalus<sup>13</sup>.

As regards the Taifa period, we have the formation of Taifa directed by dynasties of Berber origin on the border of our area, as Alpuente, Albarracín or Toledo. We are aware that this reality does not mean they are states or occupied exclusively by Berbers or they present differences by ethnic-cultural background of the sultans<sup>14</sup> but, at least, it cannot be denied that these data point to the importance of these communities in the area and the development of a local elite within, capable of monopolizing the highest positions of political power.

The first thing to note about the Almoravid rule in these lands (1110-1118) is its short period of life due to an exceptional extension of Hudi Taifa of Zaragoza. After the conquest of Huesca, the Almoravids control only the south and the east of March. From Zaragoza, the Almoravids attack Calatayud and Huesca, in the hands of Alfonso I, and Rueda de Jalón, where ‘Imād al-Dawla, the last Hudi king had entrenched himself. However, despite being a short period, the Almoravid time left its imprint as to what regards the material culture. It will be a program of fortification of certain points, either existing or emerging as a new frontier advances against feudal kingdoms. It is known a plan of reinforcements through fortified strongholds, as noted in The Zafranales<sup>15</sup>, La Torraza, the Velilla de Ebro Tower, Santa Quiteria de Fraga and other towers located in the East bearing a clear Almoravid place name. This indicates a strategy to establish wardens and militias at key enclaves in order to control the territory from the military point of view<sup>16</sup>.

However, in social terms, it could not be considered as a mix with the Andalusian population living in these areas, due to the brevity of his rule and its scarce numerical presence. In fact, in

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<sup>12</sup> GARCIA GOMEZ, Emilio (1948): «Al-Ḥakam II y los beréberes según un texto inédito de Ibn Ḥayyān», *Al-Andalus*, XIII, pp. 209-226.

<sup>13</sup> IBN BULUQQIN, ‘Abd Allāh, *Kitāb al-Tibyān li-l-amīr ‘Abd Allāh bin Buluqqīn āḡir umarā’ Banī Zīrī bi-Garnāṭa*, ed. by Aḡmad T. Ṭībī, Rabat, 1995, p. 57/ Translation into Spanish in *El siglo XI en 1ª persona. Las «Memorias de ‘Abd Allāh, último rey Zīrī de Granada, destronado por los almorávides (1090)»* by Évariste Lévi-Provençal and Emilio García Gómez, Madrid, 6th ed., 2005, pp. 95-96.

<sup>14</sup> SARR, Bilal (2011): *La Granada zirí (1013-1090)*, Granada, pp. 46-50.

<sup>15</sup> MONTON BROTO, Félix (1997): «Los materiales islámicos del yacimiento de Zafranales (Fraga, Huesca)», *Bolskan*, XIV, 157-231; (1997): «El poblamiento en la frontera hispano-musulmana en al-Andalus durante el siglo XI: Zafranales», *Archéologie islamique*, 7, pp. 45-60.

<sup>16</sup> BASSOLS, Sergi (1990): «Una línea de torres vigías musulmanas: Lérida-Tortosa», *Al-Qanṭara*, XI, pp. 127-154.



the capitulation of Zaragoza<sup>17</sup> and in the Castilian chronicles, like *Historia Roderici*<sup>18</sup>, is abundantly discerned between «Almoravids» and «indigenous Muslims» as two different social elements and even legally differenced.

### *Some Berber personalities*

After studying the general and collective aspects, we have been concerned by individuals, by the Berber sage and personalities featured in the Arabic sources. In this sense, the study of the biographical sources and the *Ṭabaqāt* works have taken a special interest.

In total, we have found two families and several individuals: the Banū Ṭābit<sup>19</sup> and Banū Masrūq b. Asbağ<sup>20</sup>. The first ones, known as al-‘Awfī were *mawlā* of the Banū Zuhra b. Kilāb, by relation (*‘alāqa*). His arrival in the Iberian Peninsula occurred during the early days of the conquest. We have reconstructed the biography of seven of them, ranging from 832 to 1121 without interruption<sup>21</sup>. Surely this family is a good example of two processes: the masking of Berber origin and secondly, the association between family and political-religious positions.

As for Banū Masrūq b. Asbağ, all we know is that they belonged to the Banū Hawwāra and that they were very famous emirs of the area.

On the other hand, we have found a certain Abū-l-Aḥwaṣ Ma‘n b. Muḥammad b. Ma‘n al-Barbarī al-Anṣārī (d. 941-942 / 330 H), also identified with the nisba «al-Ṣinhāgī», kadi of Zaragoza named by the same ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III (326/937)<sup>22</sup>. His *nisba* «al-Anṣārī» shows us of whom he was a *mawlā*, and how he tried to hide his origins.

And Yāqūt mentions, through Ibn al-Ġālib al-Ġarnāṭī, a certain Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Zanāṭī, died after 533/1139, i.e. in the Almoravid times. We only know that he studied the *Kitāb al-Istī‘āb* de ‘Abd Ibn al-Barr from Abu Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Ṭābit al-Qurṭubī in 533.

In Tudela (Tuṭīla) also inserted in the Upper March, there was a certain Muḥammad b. Salāma b. Hanīn ḷHarūn? al-Barbarī al-Hawwārī al-Ṣadfī, al-Qāṭin (d. 1009). According to al-

<sup>17</sup> VIGUERA, María Jesús (1988): *Aragón musulmán. La presencia del Islam en el Valle del Ebro*, 2nd ed., Zaragoza, p. 235.

<sup>18</sup> FALQUE, Emma (1983): «Traducción de la “Historia Roderici”», *Boletín de la Institución Fernán González*, 201/2, pp. 368, 369, 370 (par. 33, 62, 65 and 66).

<sup>19</sup> MOLINA, Luis and AVILA, María Luisa (1985): «Sociedad y cultura en la marca Superior», *Historia de Aragón*, III, pp. 69-70; FIERRO, Maribel (1995): «Árabes, beréberes, muladíes y mawālī. Algunas reflexiones sobre los datos de los diccionarios geográficos andalusíes», in MARIN, Manuela and FELIPE, Helena de (eds.) (1995), *Estudios onomástico-biográficos de al-Andalus VII*, Madrid, pp. 46 y 53; FELIPE, Helena de (1998), *Identidad y onomástica de los beréberes de Al-Andalus*, Madrid, 1997, pp. 65 and 95-100.

<sup>20</sup> *Mafāḥir al-Barbar*, p. 248; FELIPE, Helena de, *Identidad y onomástica*, p. 172, TERES, Elías (1978): «al-‘Aqaba. Notas de toponimia hispanoárabe», *al-Andalus*, 43, p. 375.

<sup>21</sup> SARR, Bilal (2014): «*Et cependant les Berbères existent*». *El poblamiento beréber en la frontera superior andalusí (siglos VIII-XII)*, Granada, pp. 127-130.

<sup>22</sup> IBN AL-ABBAR, *al-Takmila li-kitāb al-ṣila II*, ed. by ‘Izzat al-‘Atfār al-Ḥusaynī, Cairo, 1955, p. 729, no. 1843; VERNET, Juan (1950): «El valle del Ebro como nexo cultural entre Oriente y Occidente», *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona*, 23, p. 277, no. 118; MARIN, Manuela, «Nómina de sabios andalusíes» in MARIN, Manuela (1988) (ed.), *Estudios onomástico-biográficos de al-Andalus I*, Madrid, p. 93, no. 1415; MOLINA and AVILA, «*Sociedad y cultura en la marca Superior*», pp. 88 and 96; HAQQI, M., *Al-Barbar fī al-Andalus: dirāsāt mağmū‘a iṭṭiyya min al-faṭḥ ilā suqūt al-ḥilāfa al-Umawiyya (92 H / 711-422H/ 1031)*, Casablanca, 2001, p. 67 and 321.

Ḥušanī, he was kadi in his homeland, a wise man, expert on legal issues (*masā'il*) and he had a good knowledge of the Koran.

Therefore, the list of Berber ulemas is limited to about 10 people, 7 of which are members of the same family. Of these, the only ones who have obvious signs of Berber identity are the last three (al-Barbarī, al-Zanatī and al-Hawwārī), since the Banū Tābit have tried to camouflage their identity at all times.

### *Toponymy and field research*

As mentioned above, the archaeological activities have been contingent upon the results of sources examination and, above all, of the place names. Moreover, interventions have only been carried out in the form of surveys and field visits and they have not been without problems (impossible to access certain settlements of private property, fenced enclosures of unknown affiliation, urban areas...).

Having said that, we have visited numerous sites. We present below an outline of the main sites with Berber place names on which we have worked.

The first settlement which we will focus on is Mequinenza (Miknāsa). Located at the mouth of the Ebro and Segre rivers, its name is one of the clearest traces of the Berber presence, particularly of Banū Miknāsa, a Buṭr tribe that was present since the conquest of al-Andalus<sup>23</sup>. This town was known as al-Miknāsa Zaytūn (of Olives). The references we have about Mequinenza are scarce. The sources are limited to include it in the road to Tortosa (Turtūša) as a small town, like a border *ḥiṣn* in al-Andalus<sup>24</sup>. The most important quote for us is that of al-Rāzī. He qualifies it as *ḥiṣn* near the mouth of the Ebro allowing us to trace its origins beyond the 10th century<sup>25</sup>. The elder rest of Mequinenza is its castle, but it has nothing to do with the *ḥiṣn* mentioned by the Arab sources, because it is rather a reconstruction of feudal castle of the 13th century, achieved in the 1950s. So, alterations, both medieval and contemporary, such as the construction of the Ribarroja Dam which made the whole people moved a few kilometers, have made difficult the discovery of medieval remains.

The geographer Yāqūt al-Rūmī mentions a region (*naḥiya*) called Zanāta in Zaragoza. For his part, al-Rāzī and al-'Uḍrī speak of Zanata like a *ḥiṣn* located around Huesca. We have proposed to identify this *ḥiṣn* with Islamic site of Lizana (Barbuñales, Huesca), where we have developed a systematic survey for several reasons: the topographical coincidence of the site, the complete absence of references to the name of Lizana in the Islamic period and specially due to chronological coincidence, as both, Lizana and Zanāta, appear in the 10th century.

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<sup>23</sup> IBN ḤAZM, *Ġamharat ansāb al-'arab*, 5th ed. by 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad b. Hārūn, Cairo, 1982, p. 496; IBN ḤALDUN, *Kitāb al-'Ibar*, Beirut, 1968, VI, p. 120/ French translation in *Histoire des berbères* by William Mac Guckin de Slane, Paris, 1927, I, p. 172; FELIPE, Helena de (1998), *Identidad y onomástica*, pp. 316-317.

<sup>24</sup> AL-IDRISI, *Nuḥat al-muštāq fī iḥtirāq al-āfāq*, edition and translation into French by Reinhart Dozy & Michael Jan de Goeje in *Description de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne*, Leiden, 1866 p. 190/ 231 of the transl.; AL-IṢṬAḤRI, *Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-Mamālik*, ed. by Michael Jan de Goeje, Leiden, 1967, p. 44.

<sup>25</sup> AL-RAZI, *Aḥbār mulūk al-Andalus*, transl. into French by E. Lévi-Provençal, in «Description de l'Espagne» d'Ahmad Al-Rāzī», *Al-Andalus*, 18.1 (1953), pp. 73-74.



Fig. 2. Mequinenza

Another important mark of place names is the Cinegia door / Cinegio arc (Şinhāġa). It is a clear example of settlement outside the urban core<sup>26</sup>. The trace in this case is exclusively toponymical. It currently refers to the arc, formerly the door of the suburb of Şinhāġa. We find abundant parallelisms to this name in other areas of al-Andalus<sup>27</sup>.

In Zaragoza, we find a rural neighborhood called Monzalbarba, on the right bank of the Ebro, whose name come from Manzil al-Barbar «home/settlement of Berber»<sup>28</sup>. It appears in Latin sources of the Reconquista as Mezalbarba, Mezalbarber, Mucalbaruas<sup>29</sup>.

The Banū Hawwāra have left their mark on the territory with the place name Fabara<sup>30</sup>. We could not find any medieval evidence on the ground but the origin of the name is evident. It should be put

<sup>26</sup> LACARRA, José María (1982): *Documentos para el estudio de la Reconquista y Repoblación del Valle del Ebro*, Vol. I y II., Zaragoza, doc. 6, 223 and 260.

<sup>27</sup> Ceneja and Soneja in Castellón, Senija in Alicante... (DUBLER Cesar. E. (1942): «Über Berbersiedlungen aus iberischen Halbinsel», *Romanica Helvetica*, 20, pp. 193-194 and 197; GUICHARD, Pierre: *Al-Andalus*, pp. 437-438.)

<sup>28</sup> *Tarṣī' al-aḥbār*, p. 29/ Spanish transl. p. 24; OLIVER ASIN, Jaime (1973): «En torno a los orígenes de Castilla: su toponimia en relación con los árabes y beréberes», *al-Andalus*, 38, pp. 319-391, especially p. 330.

<sup>29</sup> In 1123 (LACARRA, José María, *Documentos...*, doc. 94, pp. 107-109), Mezalbarber in 1138 (doc. 279) and in 1141 (doc. 308, pp. 301-302).

<sup>30</sup> BOSCH VILA, Jacinto (1964): «El elemento humano norteafricano en la Península Ibérica a raíz de la invasión musulmana», *Cuadernos de la Biblioteca Española de Tetuán*, II, pp. 17-37.

in relation to the Favara of Sharq al-Andalus<sup>31</sup>, to Albarracín, since the Banū Razīn were a faction of this, and other place names from the south of the Upper March as ‘Aqabat al-Hawwāriyyīn<sup>32</sup>.

Another place name linked with a group of Hawwāra, whose location is still not fixed, is ‘Aqabat Malīla, «the slope of the Malīla». It was traditionally related to Velilla, municipality of Zaragoza’s province, because of some phonetic similarity. However the name place «Velilla» comes from *villa/villula*<sup>33</sup>. J. A. Sesma, C. Laliena and J. F. Utrilla have recently located it between Zaragoza and the Sierra de Alcubierre<sup>34</sup>.



Fig. 3. Western abutment of a medieval bridge in Lizana (Barbuñales, Huesca)

Back in Zaragoza, we find a district called Ġarāwa, with clear parallels in the Valle de los Pedroches and in North Africa, at a location between Constantine and Qal‘at Banī Ḥammād. Our approach, like that of J. Oliver Asín, is likely to be of Jaraba, both for phonetic evolution (we find also «Xaraua» in 1131) and the conditions of its location<sup>35</sup>. But any Islamic rest has not been confirmed in this population so far. Our visit to the area covered not only the current urban centre but the hillock above the village where Neolithic settlement is located.

Placed in the southwest of the province of Zaragoza, on the right bank of the river Jalon joining the Henar, we find Cetina<sup>36</sup>. Çedina, in *Toponimia medieval Aragon*, is clearly derived

<sup>31</sup> GUICHARD, Pierre., *Al-Andalus*, p. 437.

<sup>32</sup> Between Teruel and Cuenca [TERES, Elías. (1978), «al-‘Aqaba. Notas de toponimia hispanoárabe», *al-Andalus*, 43 (1978), pp. 369-403, especially p. 374].

<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Velilla is located in the southeast of Zaragoza province and, according to al-‘Uḍrī, ‘Aqabat Malīla would be in the northern boundary of Zaragoza’s *iqḷīm* (AL-‘UḌRĪ, *Tarṣī‘ al-aḥbār*, p. 150/translat. into Spanish by F. de la Granja, p. 13).

<sup>34</sup> LALIENA CORBERA, Carlos and ORTEGA ORTEGA, Julián (2010): «Un ḥiṣn entre otros: fortificaciones, regadíos y distritos administrativos en la región del Ebro. El ejemplo de Alcañiz el Viejo (Teruel)» in SENAC, Philippe (ed.), *Histoire et Archéologie des sociétés de la vallée de l’Èbre (VIIe-XIe siècles)*, Toulouse, pp. 157-182, especially p. 176.

<sup>35</sup> OLIVER ASIN, Jaime (1974): «En torno a los orígenes...», pp. 366-367.

<sup>36</sup> OLIVER ASIN, Jaime (1974): «En torno a los orígenes...», p. 367.

from Şaddīna, a Berber group name. It should be noted that this Cetina is in a strategic location, between the plateau and the Ebro. Furthermore, there is no doubt that the historical past of the town dates back to the Islamic period; in fact, it is quoted by the *Cantar del Mio Cid* in 1071, as one of the enclaves conquered by Alfonso I.

Hişn al-Barbar(?) («the fortress of the barbarians») is mentioned by Ibn ‘Idārī on the road between Huesca and Pamplona<sup>37</sup>. However, we do not know any more details about it. J. Oliver Asín placed it in the mountains of Orba, in NW province of Huesca a few kilometres from Navarra, and he related to the Awrāba, but we wonder what this hypothesis is based on<sup>38</sup>.

Located within the municipality of Mequinenza, we also pinpoint a place name related to Kutāma, Cotema. Vall Cotema is recorded as an item on the right bank of the Ebro between Les Boqueretes and Vall of Granada<sup>39</sup>. Our visit to the site did not bear any fruit and the same over Oseja (‘Awsaġa), 100 km SW of Zaragoza, linked to the ‘Awsaġa, a Malzūza tribe. And, not far from here, in the heart of Šantabariya (Santaver), we found a Balāt ‘Awsaġa (the Road of the ‘Awsaġa)<sup>40</sup>.

We also find other minor place names, as those located on the banks of river Aguasvivas, which, both for their morphology and for historical episodes cited in sources show a clear Berber presence. The same happens to Lagata (Lawāta) Nepza (Nafza), Letux, Azuara (Zuwāra)<sup>41</sup> and the Maşmūda groups based on the western sector of the March: Banū Mađā b. Tīhalt in Qaşr / Hişn Mađā<sup>42</sup>, in Villarroya de la Sierra, Ateca, Pozuel de Ariza and Deza, located in Soria, and the Banū Faraġ in Tarazona.

## Final thoughts

The first axis of our investigation revolved around several reflections. Is there a differentiated pattern of Berber settlement? How was the Berber presence in the Upper March? When would the first settlements occur?

For now, the picture that emerges from our study suggests that we cannot speak of a single settlement pattern. And this is not surprising if one considers that neither of the Berber groups arriving to the peninsula showed homogeneous identity or the same characteristics or living conditions. One thing is clear: there is a gradual increase in the density of settlements as we approach towards the SW and SE, in an area that would connect with those of most intense berberisation as the Middle March and Šarq al-Andalus respectively. Thus, settlements as Ateca, Ariza, Qaşr Mađā, Cetina, Jaraba, Oseja would form a seamless swarm with local places of

<sup>37</sup> IBN ‘IDARI, *Bayān al-Muġrib fī aġbār al-Andalus wa-l-Maġrib*, 3rd ed. by Georges Séraphin Colin & Évariste Lévi-Provençal (1983): Beirut, II, p. 148; OLIVER ASIN, Jaime (1974): «En torno a los orígenes...» p. 361; FELIPE, Helena de (1998): *Identidad y onomástica*, p. 292.

<sup>38</sup> OLIVER ASIN, Jaime (1974): «En torno a los orígenes...», pp. 337-338 and 361.

<sup>39</sup> MORET I COSO, Hèctor (1994): «Aproximació a la toponímia rural de Mequinenza», *Archivo de Filología Aragonesa*, 50 (1994), pp. 325-348, especially p. 346.

<sup>40</sup> IBN ĤAZM, *Ġamharat*, p. 499.

<sup>41</sup> SESMA MUÑOZ, José Ángel, UTRILLA UTRILLA, Juan and LALIENA CORBERA, Carlos (1996): «Regadíos andalusíes en el valle medio del Ebro: el ejemplo del río Aguasvivas», in *II Coloquio de Historia y Medio Físico. Agricultura y regadío en al-Andalus*, Almería, pp. 67-84; SESMA MUÑOZ, José Ángel, UTRILLA UTRILLA, Juan and LALIENA CORBERA, Carlos (2001): *Agua y paisaje social en el Aragón Medieval. Los regadíos de Aguasvivas en la Edad Media*, Zaragoza.

<sup>42</sup> IBN ĤAZM, *Ġamharat*, p. 499 and 501; FELIPE, Helena de (1998), *Identidad y onomástica*, pp. 165-168.

Castilla-La Mancha and Castilla y León. And to the East, we can find sites as Mequinenza, Fabara and Tortosa.

With regard to the density of Berber settlements, we have collected 19 cores with Berber place names or where sources indicate that there had been a considerable presence of North African inhabitants. And this is opposed to the traditional historiographical theories, although the Berber settlement cannot be described as intense as in the other al-Andalus borders like in the Šarq al-Andalus (Eastern al-Andalus) at all, this would not correspond to the terms «little or non-existent presence» that some authors have argued. We observe a more abundant presence than what the maps considered. So, it can be assessed as «moderately important».

The second of the reflections revolved around the dating and the circumstances where these settlements are produced. However, on the one hand, the sources do not often cite their foundation, and secondly, the archeology can hardly provide clues in this regard. The only thing we could provide is a series of *post quem* dates for some of the settlements through the first citations, the dates of the first remains found in surface and many data linked to the arrival of these tribes. So, settlements such as the Miknāsa, Nafza would be born in the same 8th century, taking into account that many of these groups are already mentioned in the Arabic sources as companions of Tāriq b. Ziyād. We believe that all these Berbers arrived after granting a «*iqṭā'*» type or spontaneous and unilateral settlements then officially recognised by the government of Córdoba. Thus, Mequinenza is a present *ḥiṣn* certainly since the 8th century and *Ḥiṣn Zanāta* exists at least from the 9th century as we can evidence through the ceramic found in the archeological surveys.

Another conclusion we could draw is related to the organisation of the various establishments. It is noteworthy that these Berber settlements are always *rabads*, *ḥuṣūn*, *quṣūr* and when these reach the rank of city, they are only small or medium size *mudun*, never large cities. And this shows that, as we have recognized, these settlements are only those where the Berbers have suffered a little Arabisation process and have not yet been fully assimilated to the dominant Arab culture. Or, at least, these settlements have presented these characteristics in their initial stages, during enough time to be identified with a Berber group. And it is evident that these conditions occur more frequently in small and rural areas than in urban and big cities, where the Arabic political and religious powers exercised a more intense irradiation. In other words, where the Arab-islamisation was more intense.

Finally, we have noted that a clear distinction can be observed between Berbers and Arabs from the beginning, and that it remains until the end of Islam political dominance in the Upper March without forgetting the progress in the process of assimilation. This brings us to consider a number of issues. If there is not a Berber material culture, no building can be defined as truly theirs, why the discrimination between Arab and Berber is maintained until the end of the al-Andalus' times? What are the defining aspects of the Berber identity? The answer to this cannot be found elsewhere than in the language that has been the mark that these communities have strongly conserved in the North Africa until today.

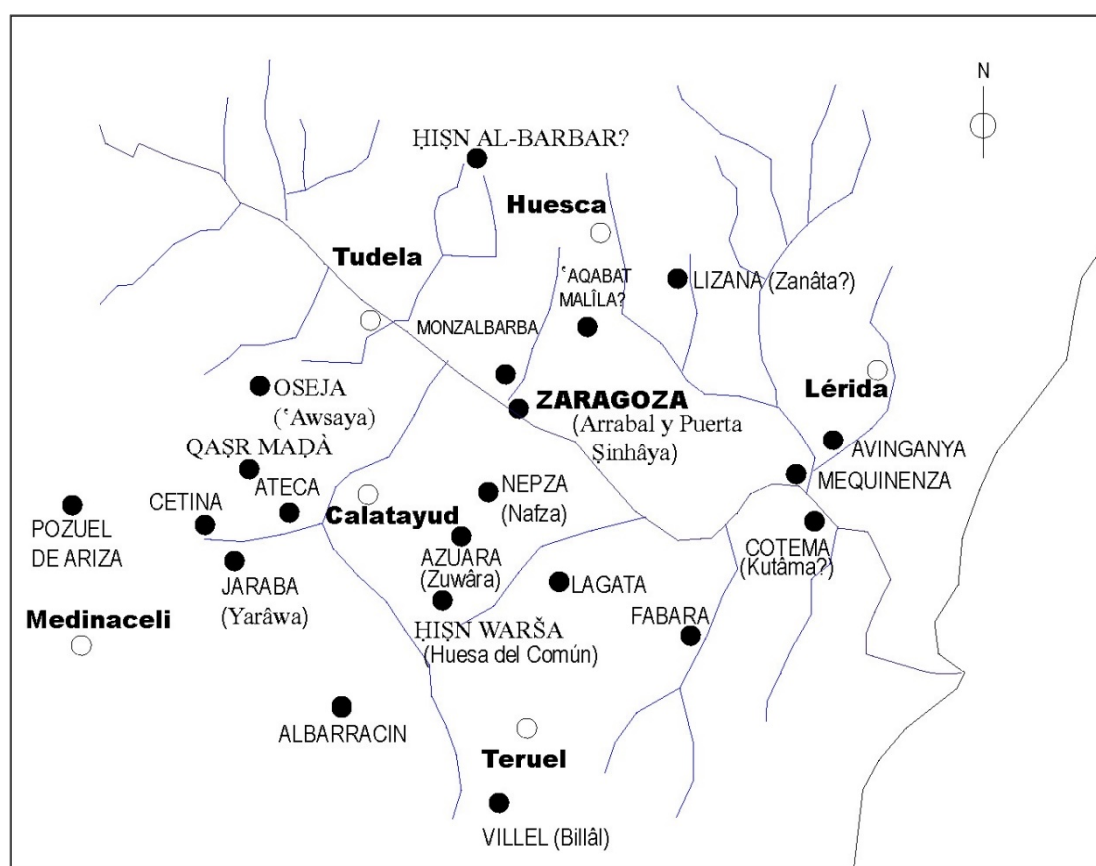


Fig. 4. Black points indicate the location of the Berber settlements in the Upper March of al-Andalus (SARR, 2014: 143)

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