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**ALMADRAVA: HOMENS E MAR. RELAÇÕES SOCIAIS NUMA COMUNIDADE TEMPORÁRIA**

**ALMADRAVA: MEN AND SEA. SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP IN A SHORT-TERM COMMUNITY**

**ALMADRABA: HOMBRES Y MAR. RELACIONES SOCIALES EN UNA COMUNIDAD TEMPORARIA**

*Nuno Miguel Batista<sup>1</sup>*

*Marta Marçal Gonçalves<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Universidade do Algarve, Algarve, Portugal

Nuno Miguel Batista - [nuno.mc.batista@gmail.com](mailto:nuno.mc.batista@gmail.com) | Marta Marçal Gonçalves - [mgoncal@ualg.pt](mailto:mgoncal@ualg.pt)

**Corresponding Author**

*Marta Marçal Gonçalves*

Instituto Superior de Engenharia (ISE)

Campus da Penha

8005-139 Faro, Portugal

[mgoncal@ualg.pt](mailto:mgoncal@ualg.pt)

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## RESUMO

**Introdução:** Descrevem-se as relações homem/mar, num contexto social, de vivência muito específico numa comunidade piscatória temporariamente estabelecida na praia de Faro, durante o período de pesca do atum. Descobriu-se que essa comunidade piscatória existiu neste lugar por décadas, envolvendo quase 200 famílias durante a época da pesca. Esta comunidade apenas dispunha de recursos limitados e rudimentares, baseados exclusivamente na força humana. Todavia, desenvolveram os seus rituais, crenças e vivência. Hoje, tudo está quase extinto.

**Objetivo:** Pretende-se reportar as especificidades da organização espacial e das relações socioeconómicas desta Armação, incentivando a continuidade geracional, a tomada de consciência deste património desaparecido, a sua valorização e o despertar da memória coletiva.

**Métodos:** Utilizaram-se os métodos de ação participativa e o qualitativo, elaborando-se entrevistas não-estruturadas, privilegiando o contacto direto com quem viveu na Armação. Os critérios utilizados para seleção dos entrevistados consistiram na lucidez, sexo, hierarquia social e proveniência geográfica.

**Resultados:** Existência de uma hierarquia socioeconómica que se traduzia numa hierarquia física; os registos e a divulgação do tema facilitam o acesso à informação.

**Conclusões:** Este artigo é uma chamada de atenção para as autoridades e decisores para preservação da memória coletiva e, também, um despertar de mentes e consciências, influenciando a sociedade em geral no sentido em que se trata de um alerta para um valor que, em geral, se perdeu e se esqueceu.

**Palavras-Chave:** Pesca; Atum; Almadrava; Algarve

## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Description of the relationship men/sea, on a specific social and life context, in a fishing community temporarily settled in Faro beach, during the tuna fishing period. It was discovered that such a fishing community existed for long decades in this place, where almost 200 families lived only during tuna's fishing season. This community only had limited and rudimentary resources, based exclusively on human strength. Nevertheless, they developed their own rituals, beliefs and way of living. Now everything is almost extinct.

**Objective:** Report the specificities of the spatial organization and socio-economic relations of this *Armação*, encouraging the generational continuity, the awareness of this disappeared heritage, its valorization and the awakening of collective memory.

**Methods:** The participatory action and the qualitative methods were used, elaborating unstructured interviews, privileging the direct contact with those who lived in the *Armação*. The criteria used to select the interviewees consisted of lucidity, gender, social hierarchy and geographical origin.

**Results:** Show the existence of a socioeconomic hierarchy that translated into a physical hierarchy; the registration and dissemination of the theme facilitates access to information.

**Conclusions:** This paper is a remark to the authorities and stakeholders to preserve the collective memory and, an awakening of minds and consciences, influencing general society in the sense that it will be an alert to a value that, in general, has been lost and forgotten.

**Keywords:** Fishing; Tuna; Almadrava; Algarve

## RESUMEN

**Introducción:** Descripción de relaciones hombre/mar, en un contexto social, de vivencia muy específico, en una comunidad pesquera temporaria ubicada en la playa de Faro, durante el periodo de pesca del atún. Se descubrió que esta comunidad ha existido hace décadas, con casi 200 familias. Esta sólo disponía de recursos limitados y rudimentarios, basados exclusivamente en la fuerza humana; han desarrollado sus rituales, creencias y vivencia. Hoy todo está casi extinto.

**Objetivo:** Relatar las especificidades de la organización espacial y relaciones socioeconómicas de esta *Armação*, fomentando la continuidad generacional, toma de conciencia de este patrimonio que ha desaparecido, su valoración y despertar la memoria colectiva.

**Métodos:** Se utilizaron los métodos de acción participativa y el cualitativo, elaborándose entrevistas no estructuradas, privilegiando el contacto directo con quien aquí ha vivido. Los criterios utilizados para la selección de los entrevistados consistieron en lucidez, sexo, jerarquía social y procedencia geográfica.

**Resultados:** Existencia de una jerarquía socioeconómica que se traducía en una jerarquía física; los registros y la divulgación del tema facilitan el acceso a la información.

**Conclusiones:** Este artículo es una llamada de atención a las autoridades y decisores para preservar la memoria colectiva y, también, un despertar de mentes y conciencias, influenciando a la sociedad en el sentido de que se trata de una alerta para un valor que, en general, se perdió y se olvidó.

**Palabras Clave:** Pesca; Atún; Almadrava; Algarve

## INTRODUCTION

Tuna has assumed, over time, a great importance in the economy and in the traditional food of the Algarve and all the Mediterranean peoples. It is one of the constituent elements of the Mediterranean Diet, considered Cultural and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO, of which Portugal is a member. It is in the Algarve that there is the Confraria do Atum (Tuna Brotherhood), which demonstrates the importance that this industry has in the region.

*Almadrava*, an Arabic term meaning: "place of death" (Santos, 1989) was adopted as a designation for what represents a complex system of fixed nets intercepting shoals of tuna, called *atum rabilho*, Northern bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus* LINNAEUS 1758) on its migration from the Atlantic Ocean to the warmer waters of Mediterranean Sea to spawn, called *atum de direito* and in the reverse direction, after spawning called *atum de revés*. In this migration cycle, the tuna crossed along the Algarve coast, the only zone in continental Portugal where it was fished from the most remote times. The *Almadrava*, located in the sea, 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.

Being a fishing system that already existed in the Algarve when the territory was reconquered from the Muslims in 1249 (Lyster Franco, 1947) and having as first known written reference to an *Armação* on the coast of Cabo de Santa Maria (Faro) in the XVI century (Baldaque da Silva, 1891), it is important to inform future generations about this fishing tradition that has been lost in this region. The main information was obtained by non-structured interviews with people involved in this artisanal fishery and photos provided by those, complemented by documents analysis and bibliographic research.

The *Arraial* was geographically and strategically implanted as close to the *Almadrava* as possible, in the sand of the island of Encão (thus designated in 1940 and currently called beach of Faro), included in the zone designated as Cabo de Santa Maria. With the constant mutation that the coast line has suffered due to the movement of sand dunes, the *Arraial* had to be located in the most convenient way, forcing the alteration of its location, which was confirmed by oral testimonies collected, which referred the 1930s of last century as one of those moments. This *Arraial* had the peculiarity of being located in an island between *ria* and the sea, in Ria Formosa, classified as Natural Park and Ramsar site (Instituto de Conservação da Natureza e Florestas, n.d.).

This article intends to report for the first time the specificities of the spatial organization and socio-economic relations of *Armação* of Cabo de Santa Maria, Ramalhete and Forte (CSMRF), situated in Faro, in the Algarve region, in the extreme south of continental Portugal, in southern Europe, at the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea.

## 1. METHODS

The use of bibliographic publications, the informal collection of photographic elements and the dialogue with the people who have lived this experience, are essential to consolidate the gathered knowledge and information.

The data collection helps to define the object of study in order to know it better, and to perceive the relations between the parts that constitute it and the interactions between the object and its surroundings (Serra, 2006).

For the construction of the conceptual base, the methods designated by the previous author as a 'participatory method of action' and the 'qualitative method' were used. In the first method, the researchers engage with certain social groups, registering the oral testimonies as a way to facilitate the understanding of the *modus vivendi*. In the second method, the object of study is described with the purpose of deepening the knowledge about it, assuming a description of the observed events, under the intended approach of the point of view.

The collect of information directly from a territory and the populations that make up that territory, as well as the formation of an empirical basis that allow conclusions, constitute an important part of the research, requiring a lot of time and resources, and at this moment new knowledge is produced (Serra, 2006).

Only by traversing the territory and carrying out surveys it is possible to create a new knowledge on the subject (*ibidem*), even if one cannot observe the phenomena, as is the case of the *Armação* of CSMRF, once it has disappeared.

This type of survey has an eminently descriptive character about the environment that surrounded the inhabitants of the *Armação*, aiming the description of objects and events, including the opinion of the people in these situations. Therefore, it is a question of phenomenological, informative or descriptive surveys, as designed by Serra (2006).

In this sense, non-structured interviews were developed with the people who lived in the *Armação* of CSMRF, privileging the direct contact with these people and the objects of the survey.

The criteria used to include the interviewees, in order to have some reliability, were the following:

- Only the testimonies of those who still had vivid and coherent memories were considered;
- Different genders;
- Different backgrounds in the social hierarchy;
- Different geographical origins.

Due to these criteria, the interviewees are as follows:

- Age: 94; Gender: female; Social hierarchy: widow of the last *Mandador*; Geographical origin: Lagos; Onward referenced as: HV.
- Age: 88; Gender: male; Social hierarchy: *Companheiro*; Geographical origin: Faro city; Onward referenced as: FL.
- Age: 88; Gender: male; Social hierarchy: *Companheiro*; Geographical origin: Faro beach; Onward referenced as: JM.
- Age: 76; Gender: male; Social hierarchy: *Companheiro*; Geographical origin: Armação de Pêra; Onward referenced as: BP.

• Age: 91; Gender: male; Social hierarchy: *Companheiro*; Geographical origin: Armação de Pêra; Onward referenced as: CP.

As a way of processing and evaluating the contents of the testimonies, the authors sought to support this information with the use of cartography, photography and bibliography about the subject.

## 2. MODUS VIVENDI IN THE ARMAÇÃO

### 2.1 Life at sea: Almadrava

In a more detailed description, *Almadrava* was a tuna-trapping apparatus: a complex system of fixed nets in the sea, vertical, suspended on the surface by floating buoys tied to the seabed with iron anchors, with a great extension. The purpose of this system was to intercept the tuna, routing along its nets, forming labyrinths, until it gets cornered in the central part, *Copo*. Once there, the tuna was caught by moving the nets, obeying a complex technique, by the use of a horizontal net, lying on the seabed, which was raised thus pushing the tuna to the surface – a *Levantada*. *Almadrava* was divided in three main parts (Baldaque da Silva, 1891):

- *Quadro*, central part, that includes the *Copo*, where the tuna was retained and captured;
- *Rabeira*, a net that stretched from the *Quadro*, in the middle of the sea, towards the coast line, to the Northwest, close to the sand, reaching about 4,000 meters;
- *Quartel*, another net that extended from the *Quadro*, in an opposite direction to the coast line, to the Southwest, also in the sea, reaching about 4,600 meters.

The three main parts of the *Almadrava*, above described, formed a colossal barrier within the sea, with such a dimension that its location and development was in the hydrographic plans of the Algarve coast.

*Almadrava* of CSMRF caught the tuna, *atum de direito*, which was the tuna of major commercial value, with more fat, being nowadays very appreciated especially by the Japanese, currently the world's largest consumers of this fish.

The *Armação* of CSMRF was the largest in the Algarve since 1931.

In 1935 the *Almadrava* had an extension of approximately 10,000 meters at sea surface and its central part was extended to a depth of 20 meters. There were used 70,000 meters of steel cable from 2 to 3.5 inches, 90,000 kilograms of cork for the confection of floating and signaling buoys, 400,000 square meters of fishing net of various dimensions and were attached to the seabed through 350 iron anchors of 2 to 3 meters long which weighed a few hundred kilograms, each (Brito, 1943).

The *Arraial*, onshore, had to be very well structured and organized in order to give appropriate support to a structure of such dimensions, especially because all works was carried out manually, without using mechanical means. At the beginning of the season *Almadrava* was transported and mounted on the sea in stages for several days. During the season, all this equipment was handled and maintained. At the end of the season everything returned from the sea, in stages, to onshore.

Due to the salary received, which was directly proportional to the required responsibility and skills, an organizational hierarchy was formed. At the top of the hierarchy was the Master, *Mandador* or *Mestre* as he was best known by the fishermen. The *Mandador* ran the whole team and was responsible for the execution and orientation of all operations, including those related to the life of the community. He was the brain of the *Armação*, with great experience and knowledge. He had the power and control of techniques and secrets that were only shared among his predecessors.

The *Mandador* controlled and coordinated the two shifts: sea and onshore, under the guidance of the *Preguiceiro*, who were his direct assistant and to whom he delegated powers in his absence. Below the *Mandador* was the clerk, *Escrivão*, in charge of the daily written record of all that was going on in the *Armação*. His tasks were the handling of all administrative part and the count of the caught tuna, and he was also responsible for the weekly payments of the fishermen's salaries.

The *Interinos* were fishermen who run small groups of fishermen for several activities and were the assistants of the *Preguiceiro*. They were chosen from the most skillful and experienced fishermen of the community.

The *Companheiros* were all the fishermen and the work force of the *Armação*. There were also other elements indirectly related to fishing namely, the doctor, pharmacist, carpenter, caulkers, barber (who went every Sunday to *Arraial* for shaving and cutting hair), tavern keeper and warehouse attendant. This short-term fishing community was made up of people from different Algarve sites, namely Faro, Quarteira, Armação de Pêra, Lagoa, Olhão, Santa Luzia, Culatra, Fuzeta and Tavira, resulting in an exchange of knowledge and habits, fostering mutual acculturation.

The *Companheiros* were divided in two shifts: onshore and sea. In the shift onshore, in the *Arraial*, all necessary items for the maintenance and repair the nets were prepared. Steel cables, floating buoys made of cork involved in fishing nets, and wooden vessels which were damaged during the fishery, were arranged and mended.

In the shift of the sea all the maintenance and repair operations of *Almadrava* were carried out in the open sea, such as the signaling and protection against other vessels that were approaching.

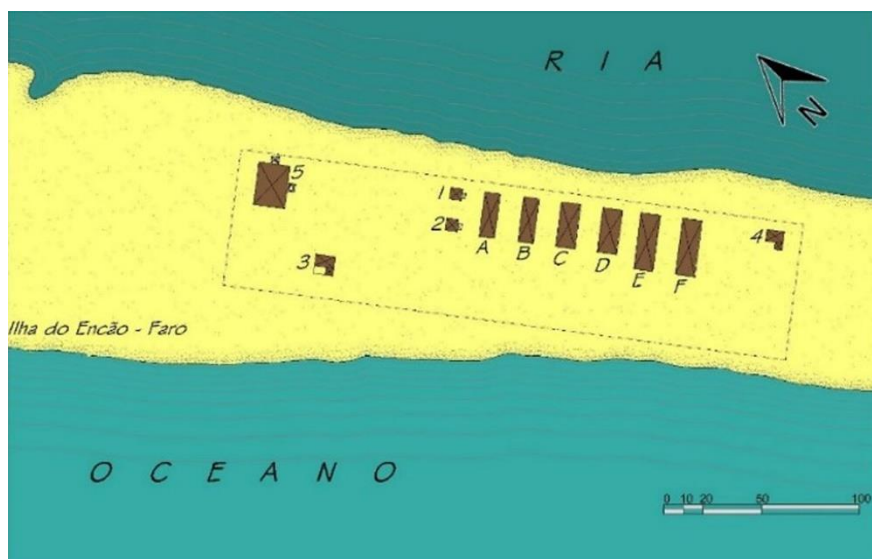
When the tuna began to enter in the *Quadro*, it was down to this shift to do the counting and to communicate with the *Mandador* when he was ashore. When the *Mandador* thought it was time to raise the nets, whether by the number of fish in the trap or for other reasons, such as an approach of tuna predators, which could damage the nets, then he ordered: a *Levantada*.

## 2.2 Life onshore: Arraial

**Spatial Organization of Arraial:** in 1935 (Brito, 1943) the *Arraial* was on an island and had 144 *Companheiros*. It consisted of the house of the *Mandador*, of the *Escrivão* and the director, all made of wood structure with zinc roofs. There were also about 30 houses for *Companheiros*, all made of reeds (*junco* or *barrão*) with wooden doors and without windows. Some reed houses had two and three doors and each door corresponded to a division where a family lived. In its interior, 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 at the inside walls of reed's structure to make the most of the available space, which was reduced. In the house of the direction there was a belvedere to be able to observe better the fishery. There was the small market and bar (*venda* and *bar*) or canteen where food was purchased (HV, oral information, November 2016).

There was no electricity or drinkable water or sanitary infrastructures. In this part of the island there was a freshwater well that was only used to wash the dishes. The management provided firewood to the *Arraial* to be able to cook. Some families cooked away from home in view of the safety aspect, as the houses were made of reed (*ibidem*). Although the *Arraial* was a highly structured organization, which allowed each member to know exactly what work was to be performed, pause moments were rare due to the constant bustle from the beginning in the month of March to the end of June, season period. Day-to-day life began early in the morning, with a *Companheiro* knocking at the doors of all the others, shouting: *Arriba com Deus camarada!* that is, "Stand up with God, comrade!" (HV, oral information, November 2016). From that moment, each one had to be in his place of work in 30 minutes. The day-to-day life was spent outdoors. When the *Companheiros* went to the sea, very early, it would ring the bell in the *Arraial* and only returned at the end of the day. There was no work schedule. If it was necessary to get up in the middle of the night the *Companheiro* was ready and available (*ibidem*). The nets and iron anchors were stretched out along the sand right next to the houses of the *Companheiros*, until being taken to the sea. There was no storage place to store the nets and floating buoys, and by the end of the season they were wrapped into the boats' sails and stored inside the houses (*ibidem*). Before 1910 a wooden chapel existed in the center of the community, with a wooden altar with the image of Santo António, also in wood, which was destroyed by political motivations resulting from the establishment of the republic in Portugal, in that year (Prudêncio, 2003).

Later, in 1936, there was a change in the location of the *Arraial*, replacing the old reed houses by six more modern sheds, parallel to each other, perpendicular to the coastline, alphabetically ordered from A to F, built with walls of wood and zinc roof (Fig. 1).



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.

**Figure 1** – Scheme of the implantation of the *Arraial* from 1936

Source: authors

They were divided lengthwise into several compartments ordered numerically, from the East and West sides and each shed had, from twenty to twenty-four compartments. Each compartment only had a door with a shutter to the outside, as with the old reed houses (Fig. 2). There was also the small market and bar (*venda* and *bar*), built with the same materials as the sheds, on the East side of the *Arraial*. In the *Arraial* there was already a warehouse in wood structure and zinc roof, to store all the nets and floating buoys during the winter (HV, oral information, November 2016).



**Figure 2** – Two *Companheiros* and a child in front of one of the doors with shutters of the sheds

Source: authors' private archive

The importance of these buildings was related to the hierarchical position that each one held in the *Arraial*. The *Companheiros* lived in shared and reduced spaces while the *Mandador* and the *Escrivão* lived separately in isolated and large spaces. Their houses were in front of the working area where the nets, cables, floating buoys and iron anchors were handled, in the access between the sheds and the warehouse, which was the ideal location to control all the works in the *Arraial*. The house of the director was the most isolated and largest, and was used to house a director who wanted to spend the night in the *Arraial* or for the priest to prepare for the blessing of the nets. Most of the time this house was empty (HV, oral information, November 2016). After 1936, until the end of the short-term community in 1967, there were no further changes.

The supply of bread, coffee and sugar in bulk, wine and other products was guaranteed by the small market and bar in the *Arraial* which was daily provided by a vessel named *Barca da Parte*, which came from Faro (FL, oral information, November 2016). Later, in the 1960s there was also the market and bar of "Ti Marreca" on the beach of Faro, close to the *Arraial*, where people could eat some appetizers such as boiled or grilled snails, traditionally ate, on May 1st, on Labour Day in Algarve (*ibidem*). There were also the two nearby freshwater wells, as an alternative to the water coming from Faro, which supplied freshwater, one located in the Carga Palha site and the other in Quinta do Lago (JM, oral information, April 2017). According to some testimonies, the popular saints were celebrated in the *Arraial*, Santo António, São João and São Pedro. The space was decorated with sticks and boat sails and there was a popular ball with a camp fire (FL, oral information, November 2016).

All the *Companheiros* lived in the short-term fishing community, under certain rules and conditions, which were updated every year. The *Condições da Matrícula* stipulated the basic rules, maturities in cash and salaries in genders. The salary in cash, through a fixed salary, was usually very low and paid weekly. Then they had the *percentagens* or *partes* or *fortunas* of the tuna caught, which was the percentage of the net value of the sale of the tuna in the auctions, paid at the end of each season. They also received in the form of *caldeiradas* or *comedorias*, which were the number of tunas to be deducted from the total fishery. The *caldeiradas* were the feeding of *Companheiros* and their families.

The role of woman and children. While the *Companheiros* were doing their work, their wives took care of the "house" and the children, cooked the meals and secured the water supply from Faro in the *Barca da Água*. The water was then distributed every day, on the bank of the *ria*, to the earthen jugs that the women carried. Washing their clothes was another of their tasks, an

opportunity they used to socialize without male interference (HV, oral information, November 2016). Some caught clams in the low sea of the *ria's* estuary obtaining a complement to the feeding; others exchanged the clams for other products that did not exist often in the *Arraial*, such as fresh vegetables and fruits, or even clothes. Before the construction of the bridge, in 1956, access to the *Arraial* was done exclusively by boat. After the construction of the bridge, the access was also made on foot or by donkey, being widely used by traders (*ibidem*). Their free time was spent knitting and *empreita* (basketry). During period of fascist government of Portugal (1926-1974) motto was "God, Homeland and the Family"; so, women were educated to be wives and mothers, beginning at an early age to learn household chores, leaving behind their studies. School-age children attended the local school, located near the *Arraial*. The other younger ones played in the *Arraial*, resorting to what was at hand: they used to play ropes and swings on the enormous iron anchors placed there, played with the cork boards that were left over (Fig.3) and sometimes used them for to play little games, played to the typical games of that time, using what nature gave them, such as sand, stones, pieces of wood, small plants and small insects. On the day of the blessing of the nets the great joke was to scratch with the chalk, not only the nets, cables, floating buoys and iron anchors already blessed, but also what was provided (HV, oral information, November 2016).



**Figure 3** – Children sitting on top of the pieces of cork used in confection of the floating buoys

Source: authors' private archive

Ritual of blessing of the nets: the ritual of blessing the nets was associated with the faith of the *Companheiros* and the belief regarding the uncertainty of each day of fishing. The dangers they had to face every day, the precariousness of that profession associated with the poor class of society, the hope and eagerness to catch enough fish to survive and feed their families made them have a great devotion. This ritual of blessing (or baptism) of the nets began when the *Almadrava* was ready to be thrown into the sea in mid-April, always on a Sunday (FL, oral information, November 2016). On that day, the *Companheiros* and their families wore their best robes (Batista & Gonçalves, 2017).

To mark that day the directors gave to the *Companheiros* 1 liter of red wine and 1 kilogram bread. The children received sweets. The priest arrived to the *Arraial*, in a boat, accompanied by the directors of the fishing company; when they arrived at the beach, the priest made the preparations for the ritual, after which he left the house of the directors, accompanied by two *Companheiros*, one with the kettle of holy water and the other with the cross of Christ. The remaining *Companheiros* and their families opened wings for the priest to pass and followed him in procession. Then the nets, the cables, the floating buoys and the iron anchors, spread by the sand, were blessed. The priest preceded some children with chalk in the hand to mark with cross everything which has already been blessed, avoiding repetitions. The ritual ended with the blessing of the main net of the *Almadrava*, the *Copo*, in which the tunas were captured. Then everyone knelt and prayed the *Salvé-Rainha do mar à moda de Armação de Pêra* (Fig. 4), which is the *Salvé-Rainha do mar* prayed in a vibrant way by two brothers in the *Arraial* who came from Armação de Pêra, that passed to the *Companheiros* (BP, oral information, April 2017). It was a very strong moment, intense, thrilled, with many tears and became chilling for the observer.



**Figure 4** – Blessing of the nets. *Companheiros* kneeling over the *Copo* of the *Almadrava*  
**Source:** authors' private archive

### 3. MEN AND SEA: COPEJO

The *Copejo* arose the most varied types of emotions in the *Companheiros*. It was the ultimate proof of all the effort up to that moment. It was the true confrontation of Man against Nature to obtain sustenance (David Florido-Corral, 2013). When the *Mandador* decided that it was time to raise the tuna catch, a *Levantada*, he would ring the bell in the *Arraial* and the onshore shift would join to sea shift to give support and everyone began the preparations for the *Copejo* (HV, oral information, November 2016) (Fig. 5).



**Figure 5** – The last *Mandador*, Francisco Custódio Correia Júnior, in action, rightmost person looking down, with Brown coat and light hat, moments before the *Copejo*

**Source:** authors' private archive



A *Levantada* began with a technical movement of the nets that slide, drawn by the vessels, in order to reduce the space of the *Quadro* to less than half of its original size. The *Quadro*, originally 360 meters long by 60 meters wide, was now only 146 meters long and 60 meters wide, the *Copo*. The tuna is a frightening fish and now it was starting to feel tight and to get nervous. On the surface, the vessels formed a fence around the *Copo*. Until then the order was silence but when the *Companheiros* began to raise the nets to the surface the order was to make noise to enervate the tuna.

The nets were rising little by little and the tuna had less and less room to move. They shouted: “Ala! Ala! Ala!”, cursed, prayed, sang and continued to hoist the nets coordinated by the instructions and the sound of the whistle of the *Mandador* (FL, oral information, November 2016). When the tuna began to rise to the surface, nervous, agitated, and in the distress of the tightness with the rest of the shoal, it tried to jump out of the water, a movement that was used by the *Companheiros*, usually in groups of two, suspended by cables attached to the masts of the vessels, with *bicheiros de mão* in hand, ready to hoist into these, taking advantage of such an impulse. This is the only way to understand how two men managed to bring tuna with 300 kilograms or more to the surface. The water was temporarily red with the blood of the tuna, which is why it was called “The bullfight of the sea”. This scenery was an inspiration for great individuals throughout the ages such as: King D. Carlos who accompanied a *Copejo* in 1894 and portrayed this moment with a painting; Júlio Lourenço Pinto in 1894 (writer, politician and literary critic); Manuel Teixeira Gomes in 1904 (7th president of the Portuguese republic and writer); Raúl Brandão in 1923 (military, journalist and writer); Alberto Sousa Costa in 1923 (writer), Carlos Filipe Porfírio, who painted “*O Copejo*” in 1942 (Algarve’s painter and filmmaker, friend of Pablo Picasso) and the well-known artist Salvador Dali.

“... The *Copejo* was very handsome! It was like a bullfight: the man and the bull! The fish felt trapped and lifted all that foam in the air! The men sang as they lifted their nets. And then they threw themselves into the sea into the *Copo* to catch the fish that were already tired of fighting...” (description of *Copejo* verbally obtained from HV, November, 2016).

Shortly after the *Copejo*, the tuna caught were moved to the *andainas* that were vessels that transported the fish to Vila Real de Santo António, located on East part of Algarve, for the canning industry. Each *andaina* could carry about 100 tunas (FL, oral information, November 2016).

The fish count was made at sea by the *Mandador* and the *Escrivão* and a flag was then hoisted inside a vessel designated as *Barca das Portas* with a code corresponding to the number of fish caught (JM, oral information, April 2017).

This flag was sighted in the *Arraial*, by a *Companheiro* who soon hoisted another flag of equal code to be sighted in Faro, approximately 5,000 meters away, by the directors. It was the fastest and most effective way of transmitting information in an era where the telephone was a rarity, especially in the case of an island. When the Portuguese flag was hoisted, it meant that they had caught between 700 and 1000 tunas and it was a reason of great joy for the women and children who attended the *Copejo* from the beach (CP, oral information, May 2017), approximately 4,000 meters away.

The fish corresponding to the payment of the *Companheiros* went to *Arraial* to be distributed by them and dismantled or *ronqueado*, which was the designation used due to the noise produced by the brush of the knife along the spine of the tuna. It was dismantled on the top of some stone slabs in the *Arraial* and later divided into several parts, as many as the number of *Companheiros*. Then they were distributed by lot, as follows: the various parts of the tuna were distributed along the sand. Each *Companheiro* had a personal object that was randomly placed by a child upon each part of the tuna. Each *Companheiro* then collected his personal object and the part of the tuna that he left in luck (FL, oral information, November 2016). The *Mandador* kept the roe, the heart, the ears and the fat parts of the tuna loin. The *Companheiros* kept the rest of the tuna.

## CONCLUSIONS

Throughout the process of gathering information, it was verified that most of the contacted people showed a high sense of identity with this theme, which is the fundamental basis for generating an anonymous movement of providing informative elements that will complement the knowledge.

The elements found so far in official repositories, such as libraries and historical archives, were very scarce, so it was necessary to contact the people who lived *in loco* at the *Armação* of CSMRF, recording their testimonies, in addition to written information. However, this was also a limiting factor to the study, due to the advanced age of those involved, presently at about 90 years of age. It was for this reason that only five interviewees were obtained.

This method allowed confirming the existence of a socioeconomic hierarchy that translated into a physical hierarchy, mirrored in the spatial arrangement of the lodgings of this small temporary community.

With the records made and with the dissemination of this theme, it is possible to access this information, allowing a generational continuity, awareness of this heritage, its appreciation and the awakening of the collective memory, providing a new revival for it.

During the *Arraial* livelihood, as described, people lived difficult times, when the social conditions offered during the months of the work were precarious. But the *Companheiros*, in spite of the intensive work activity that absorbed them and the risks that were taking, always were optimistic by nature and they knew how to adapt themselves to the circumstances. That is also proved today, with the climate changes, which impose social and technic adaptations to the small communities of fishermen (Shaffril, Samah, & D'Silva, 2017).

The limited amount of tuna caught in later times led to the decision to provisionally close the *Armação* provisionally, which, however, turned out to be definitive, in 1967.

In the short-term fishing community that also ended, there were strong bonds of friendship, camaraderie, family and a great sense of community, as a giant family, similarly to that described by Oncescu (2015) to rural communities.

At present the *Companheiros* are engaged in other activities, most of them have already died and those still alive have lost contact with each other.

While the interviews took place, we realized that this short-term fishing community, although it disappeared 50 years ago, was a marked part of the lives of those who participated in it, which demonstrates the degree of affective bonding that developed with the work, the place and the people.

This way of living and being, through such primary resources, with the exclusive use of human strength, almost has been lost, like its rituals and beliefs, in a territory that has been assaulted for decades by mass tourism.

We hope that this paper would be a tribute to the families involved all through these decades and an awakening of memories, minds and consciences.

The main results of this research are the awareness that this heritage, which is being lost, needs a consequent urgency to an adequate registration and disclosure to the valuation of such asset that is scarce.

This paper is also an appeal to the authorities and stakeholders to preserve the collective memory of a common good that was a *modus vivendi* of a profession that disappeared from the Algarve.

As future developments, the authors intend to compile, sort and disseminate the information that is emerging, allowing different approaches or perspectives of the same theme, with the aim of achieving a more detailed and comprehensive knowledge about it.

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