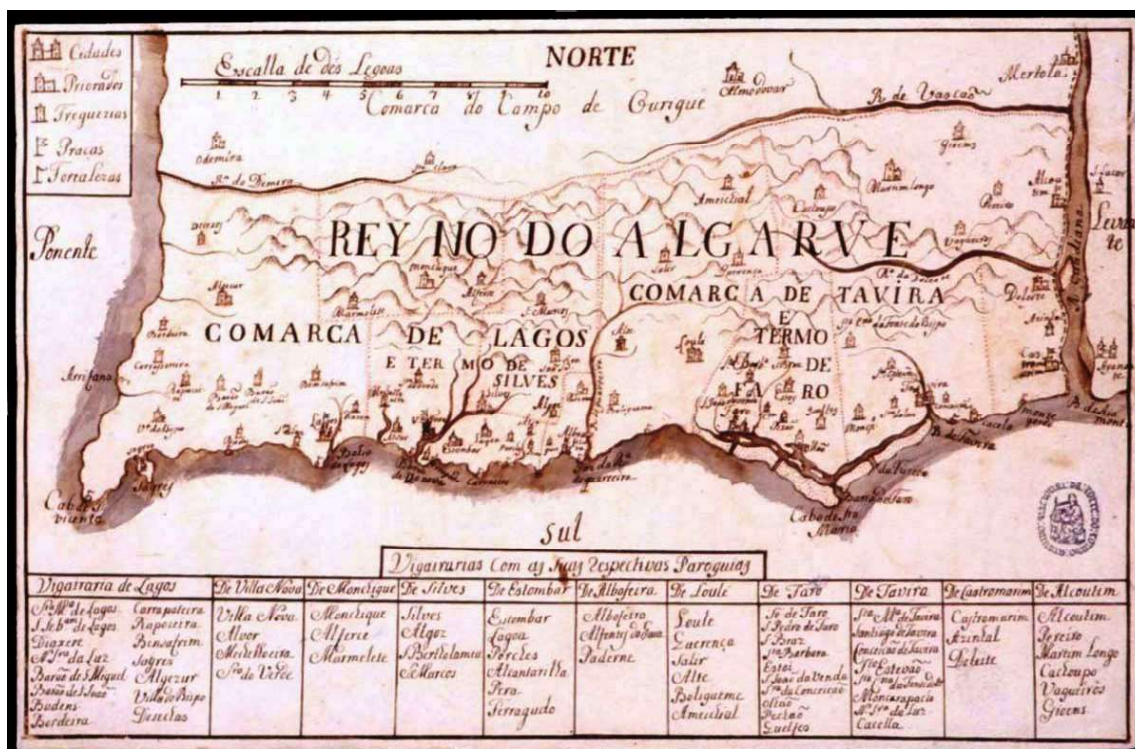


Afonso III referred to himself thereafter as the King of Portugal and the Algarve. Most Algarve town/village coats of arms, to this day, bear the head of a Moorish king and a Christian king.



Middle Ages

Disputes with Castile about the conquest of Algarve ended after Afonso 's marriage to Beatrice of Castile – in 1267 the Treaty of Badajoz defined the Guadiana river as the border between Portugal and Castile. In the 15th Century King Joao I sailed his fleet of 45,000 men from Tavira to conquer Ceuta, paving the way for African exploration and enriching Portugal with gold and slaves. Thereafter his son Henry the Navigator based himself near Lagos and conducted the maritime expeditions to establish the colonies of the Portuguese empire. Prince Henry also set up his school of navigation at Sagres Point (a disputed issue) Trade flourished in Lagos and is became the capital of Algarve in 1577 until the Lisbon earthquake in 1755.

The earthquake and ensuing tsunami heavily damaged most of Algarve, except Faro, which was protected by the sandy banks of the Ria Formosa lagoon. Waves were as high as the top of the city walls in Lagos.

Modern Times

The Civil War (1828-1834) fought between supporters of Miguel I and Pedro IV, resulted in an exodus of people from inner Algarve to the coasts. An anti-liberal, Remexido, fought in the inlands, and attacked coastal cities. Battles were fought at Cape St Vicente and Sant'Ana. In 1836, Miguel I, defeated and living in exile, named Remexido the Governor of the Kingdom of Algarve. He was captured in 1838 and shot in Faro after a trial.

Algarve prospered as the center of the cork industry, a major export (Portugal is the world's largest producer). Based in Sao Bras da Alportel (80+ factories) and to a lesser extent Silves, this industry has now moved to the centre and north of Portugal. The first canned fish factory was based in Villa real de Santo Antonio, and Algarve's fishing industry also thrived as a result.

In the 1950's the Mediterranean Basin developed tourist hotspots, and with air travel more accessible, Algarve further prospered.

History of Tavira

Tavira sits strategically on the Rio Gilao, protected from the sea by a curved estuary and large sand banks. Hills flank the river near the mouth of the river giving rise to natural protection and fortification.

Phoenician Era

Tavira's origins date back to the late Bronze Age (1.000-800 BC), settling on the Rio Gilao. In the 8th century BC it became one of the first Phoenician settlements in the Iberian West, comprising sailors and traders. The Phoenicians created a colonial urban center here with massive walls, at least two temples, two harbours and a regular urban structure which lasted until the end of 6th century BC, when it was destroyed by conflict. It is thought its original name was Baal Saphon, named after the Phoenician Thunder and Sea god. The Romans later called it Balsa.

After laying abandoned for a century, it was revived and became an even larger settlement during the so-called Tartessian Period. Tartessian Tavira, was again abandoned by the end of the 4th century BC. Another urban center emerged at nearby *Cerro do Cavaco*, a fortified hill occupied until the time of Emperor Augustus.

Roman Era

During the time of Caesar, the Romans created a new port, some 7 kilometres from Tavira, named Balsa. Balsa became a big town, in fact much bigger than Tavira, that grew, prospered and decayed in parallel with the Roman Empire.

Under Roman rule, Tavira was a secondary passing place on the important road between Balsa and Baesuris (today Castro Marim), acquiring strategic importance due to the presence of a bridge over the river.

Moorish Rule

When the Moors conquered Iberia, in the 8th Century, Balsa was already extinct as a town. Moorish influence can still be seen in Tavira today with its whitewashed buildings, Moorish style doors and rooftops. The Tavira Castle, two mosques and palaces were built by the Moors. The impressive seven arched "Roman bridge" is now not considered to be Roman after a recent archaeological survey, but originates from a 12th Century Moorish bridge. This was a good time economically for Tavira, which established itself as an important port for sailors and fishermen. The area remained rural until the 11th century when Moorish Tavira (from the Arabic Tabira, "the hidden") grew rapidly, becoming one of the important towns of the then Gharb al-Andalus (the west), today's Algarve.

The Seven Knights and Conquest of Tavira 1239

During the Reconquista, the Christians reached eastern Algarve in 1238. Despite a period of truce between the Moors and the Christians, seven of the principal knights of Dom Paio Peres Correia, Master of the Order of Santiago, were ambushed and killed while hunting in Antas, in the parish of Luz.

In a bloody conflict of retaliation in June 1239, Correia captured Tavira and decimated the population, with any survivors to be kept in the tiny quarter of Mouraria. In January 1242, Sancho II donated the domains of Tavira and the patronage of the church to the Order of Santiago.

Castile and the Two Afonsos

Pretending that the city had been conquered by a Castilian Military Order, Alfonso X of Castile claimed it for himself, coming to impose siege and conquer it in 1252. The following year, a treaty was signed by which Alfonso III of Portugal would marry Afonso X's daughter and, if that union resulted in a son who would turn seven, his maternal grandfather would give him the gift of the Algarve.

Since the conditions of this legislation were fulfilled in 1264, Afonso X delivered the Algarve to Afonso III by letter of 20 September, set in Seville. Because of this act, the Portuguese sovereign granted foral letters to various Algarvian villages, the first of which Tavira in August 1266

Medieval Tavira

The conquest of Ceuta, with the armada launched from Tavira, started the process of the Portuguese Discoveries. Tavira saw its strategic and economic importance increase. During the reign of Manuel I, the vil-