PRINCIPAL LANDMARKS AT THE ANDALUSI FORTIFICATION OF VASCOS, IX-XIth CENTURIES (TOLEDO, SPAIN).

INTRODUCTION

Madina Vascos was an Islamic and Andalusian city, which spectacular remains are located in the province of Toledo, Spain. In this poster I would like to introduce at the principal landmarks of the fortification. Those landmarks allow us to classify the remains inside of the official Umayyad tradition fortification, developed in the Iberia Peninsula between the 8th and 10th Centuries (Jiménez 1949). Thus, this is an extract from my PhD, where I try to understand the evolution of the settlement through its defenses, and determine the causes which motivated those people to create, develop and eventually abandon this madina and its adjacent land. The opening spaces in the wall are studied in this document, and the poster follows the following scheme: Firstly I introduce some of the typical elements which configure the city or madina in al-Andalus; Secondly, some of the landmarks of this fortification are heeded; and finally between interpretation and conclusion we discuss some guidelines regarding a possible interpretation.

CONFIGURATION OF THE MADINA

The medieval Islamic madina was configured with elements built by the official power to different objectives. One of the most relevant elements which forms the orography perception of the city was the binomial Qasb-Wall (madina). The first one was made to be the residence and the protection place for the delegates of the Cordoba governments. The second one was the defense and control of people; organized around the principal mosque, or around the gates. Nevertheless, the gates were the place for the relations and veiled communications among power and inhabitants. The openings within the wall were used to demonstrate what its engineers might do. Besides, the opening landmarks allow us to approximate to the evolution of the site due to the fact that they were the main ways of the fort.

OPENING LANDMARKS

GATES The structure of the plan of the several gates was the same: two quadrangular towers flanked the gateway, which had a small wall as decorative parapet -mochetas (Zozaya 1996). Vascos still have five principal gates, three in the Qasb and two of them in the Wall of the madina. The gateways of the Qasb were defensive more, and could be divided in two types: complex with barbican at west and east, and direct access for the principal entrance. All of these gates have lost the upper part, although the vassos of the principal gate was founded in the archaeological dig (Izquierdo and De Juan 2004). The remains of the horseshoe arch are still at the entrance.

Min Gate of the Qasb, with rest of the horseshoe arch.

West Gate of the defensive wall of the madina. Observe the remains of the corner horseshoe arch.

MINOR GATES: Other accesses were built in the fort. These small gateways had a double functionality: serving as architectural discharge and allow the inhabitants to evacuate waste. The structure of the gates was similar: one small opening of c. 0.8 m. wide and between 1.60 to 1.90 m. in height. Ashlars or even bedrock was founded as sill. The jams were defined by the internal part of the wall, where three monolithic lintels rested, configuring some of the upper gates. Those lintels have been preserved in five out of seven minor gates of the defensive wall, while they have been lost in the unique minor gateway of the Qasb. Besides these gateways were regularly connected to a quadrangular compact tower, which functionality suggest control of the access.

Between 2007 and 2010 we have dug the two main accesses in the wall of the madina, The West and The South gates. We discovered that both gateways were barbican and were paved with granite (Izquierdo 2009). The plan structure continues with the tradition of the Early Islamic constructions defined previously. These gateways had the special element of propaganda which we founded in the principal gate of the Qasb, a horseshoe arch. In cases as no, one official constructor had carved in the ashlar the form of this arches conformed the symbol of the Omayyad tradition.

CONCLUSIONS

In this short presentation some of the main landmarks, i.e. the openings elements, have been introduced. Those elements bring us the possibility to know a few evidences of the relations between the people, and the inhabitants of the city. In some special cases, another sector of the society was linked to the power: the engineers and the official constructors. The connections among those specialists –al-arif and the local builders, probably allowed for local variations which can be spotted in other forts (Martínez and Piedecasas 1996; Gurriaran and Márquez 2005), and which can served to mark the evolution of this settlement.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
