

S. 1.1 – THE PORT CITY AND ITS EVOLUTION

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The Morphological Evolution of Early Modern Maritime Cities: A comparative approach between three Euro Atlantic second tier ports

HELENA TEIXEIRA (FLUP-CITCEM)

Abstract

As a privileged place for exchange of goods, people and ideas, port cities are a crucial element in the connection between humans and the oceans.

The last decades witnessed a rise in the number of works dedicated to the study of port cities but these studies, however, tend to focus on a single city, failing to establish broad comparisons and to insert individual research objects into wider frameworks. With this in mind, an ongoing doctoral project at the University of Porto aims at bridging the gap between urban studies and Maritime history through the comparative analysis of three interconnected Euro-Atlantic second tier port cities (Bordeaux, Bristol and Porto). In common, these cities share a similar geomorphological setting with a background in international trade, a formation of socioeconomic networks, a certain level of autonomy in regard to state politics, and a relevant role in the first stages of maritime globalization.

At the time of overseas expansion, when Euro-Atlantic ports gained prominence regarding Mediterranean ones, their influence crossed international borders through maritime and commercial connections. In this paper we aim to study how this mercantile vocation changed the urban morphology of these cities, reflecting if a shared urban language emerged between them.

Keywords

Early Modern port cities; Space Morphology; Urban evolution; Comparative studies

Evolution of the first ports in the Early Modern Atlantic. An historical archaeology approach.

ANA CATARINA GARCIA (CHAM)

Abstract

This paper presents an historical archaeology approach on port systems emergence in overseas Atlantic spaces during the Early Modern age. This could be a relatively complex task, as these sites have had relatively recent colonization and/or human occupation with no coeval studies on port structures, often times under destruction actions, accelerated by current urban pressure. For this reason, we based our analyses not only in historical data, but also on different geomorphologies of coastal spaces and landscapes used in favor of port function.

Based on a comparative approach of islands and continental ports, namely Azores, Madeira, Cape Verde and Brazil, we will present a matrix that traces how spaces evolved and were characterized from the 15th to 18th centuries.

We graphically reconstructed the emergence of Early Modern Atlantic new ports structures. The objective is to apply an evolutionary matrix to each case study and understand how the different port spaces and their different structures were established since their settlement and how they evolved.

The main focus is to understand how the landscape influenced the emergence and functioning of the first port structures and how they fulfilled colonial settlements objectives. At the same time, we look for contact points and influences of the first global maritime navigation systems, circulation of people and goods on ports functioning systems.

Keywords

Atlantic, Ports, Historical Archaeology, Landscapes

Biography

Ana Catarina Garcia. PhD candidate in History-variant Archaeology at FCSH-UNL. Research Assistant from CHAM - Center for the Humanities (FCSH-Nova University and University of the Azores). Team member of the project CONCHA - Horizon 2020. MSCA-RISE 2017. "The construction of early modern global Cities and oceanic networks in the Atlantic: An approach via Ocean's Cultural Heritage". Team member of UNESCO Chair "The Ocean's Cultural Heritage", held by NOVA University of Lisbon. Team member of the Project COST- Oceans Past Platform (OPP). Scientific coordinator of the recent projects: "The location of the Germain submarine U-581. Sunk in Pico during World War II" and "Campo das Cebolas in Lisbon, Urban rehabilitation Project". Recently is evolved on environmental history research, highlighting the history of whaling in Portugal, the study of port debris in modern age or landscape and coastline studies. Worked for about 15 years in the Azores related with archaeological heritage management.

Plight of the Minor Harbours

ELIZABETH SHOTTON (University College Dublin)

Abstract

There are hundreds of local harbours, quays and piers along the Irish coast, the some dating to the medieval period. Once critical infrastructure for coasting trade and local fisheries, these structures were shorn of their purpose following the centralisation of port activities in the mid-twentieth century. Daily subjected to the ravages of the sea, these minor harbours are in danger of imminent collapse without constant maintenance and repair, the cost of which can rarely be justified by the county councils tasked with their care. While a few are repurposed as marinas, most are too small or ill-configured to suit, so are replaced by new structures, representing another form of threat to this coastal heritage.

Until the appropriation of harbour construction by the Irish government, starting in earnest in the 1840s, all small harbours were privately built by estate owners or local communities. Documentary evidence generally exists for government-sponsored harbours, providing a history of maritime engineering during this period even in the absence of the structures. Such evidence is, however, scarce for works from the eighteenth century or earlier. Given the increasing severity of storms and rising sea-levels their preservation becomes imperative, lest this important cultural heritage is taken by the sea, and demands a new purpose to justify the investment.

Sandycove, south of Dublin, is one such harbour, built in the early eighteenth century by the Earl of Carysfort for shipping stone. Though used until the nineteenth century, and remaining an official outpost of Dublin Port to this day, it is rarely understood as a harbour due to substantial silting which has created a sheltered beach now used by swimmers. Just north of Dublin another former outpost at Skerries has recently been intentionally allowed to silt up by the county council to achieve the same end, providing an alternative use for these local harbours that could facilitate their preservation.

Keywords

harbour, beach, coasting trade, coastal heritage

Biography

Dr Elizabeth Shotton teaches in construction technology and design studio, with an emphasis on sustainable building and development, at both undergraduate and graduate level. She holds undergraduate degrees in Commerce and Architecture as well as a PhD in Architecture from University College Dublin (UCD). In addition to teaching architecture, first at the University of British Columbia before being appointed at UCD in 2003, she is active in architectural practice and maintains her professional registration in Canada.

Elizabeth's research interests are closely linked to teaching, with a focus on the sustainable use of material resources through advances in materials, construction technologies and design processes. She is currently leading a study on Ireland's Minor Harbours, examining the evolution of maritime engineering in small harbours along the coast of Ireland from the seventeenth century to the present.