

António Carmona Rodrigues

o Rio **Tejo**
the River
Tagus



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o Rio Tejo

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Tomada de Santarém,
desenhos originais
de Lima de Freitas para
a emissão filatélica *850 Anos
da Conquista de Lisboa
e Santarém aos Mouros*, 1997.
Guache e tinta-da-china s/papel.

The Conquest of Santarém,
original drawings by Lima de Freitas
for the stamp issue *850 Anos
da Conquista de Lisboa e Santarém
aos Mouros*, celebrating the 850th
anniversary of the conquest
of Lisbon and Santarém from
the Moors, 1997.
Gouache and India ink on paper.

Favonius, a fecundating wind, is the western wind that blows in spring when the temperature is smooth, tepid and life-breathing⁸. The Latin authors may have adapted the Greek myth presented by Homer and Virgil to other regions to the mares of Lusitania⁹, which was deemed by the ancients as rich in horses – especially the Lisbon area and the marshlands along the Tagus, where the most fertile lands of Portugal are found.

The river has been used as a penetration route by all sorts of invaders since the most distant times. It also happened when the Praetor Publius Junius Brutus, nicknamed «The Galician», came and marched on the plain that accompanied the banks of the Tagus. As the Romans were used to fighting in the open, they expected the Lusitanians to come down from their natural fortresses to fight them. This was what they did. They were heavily defeated in 182 BC: 25,000 Lusitanians perished and 3100 Roman legionaries lost their lives as well.

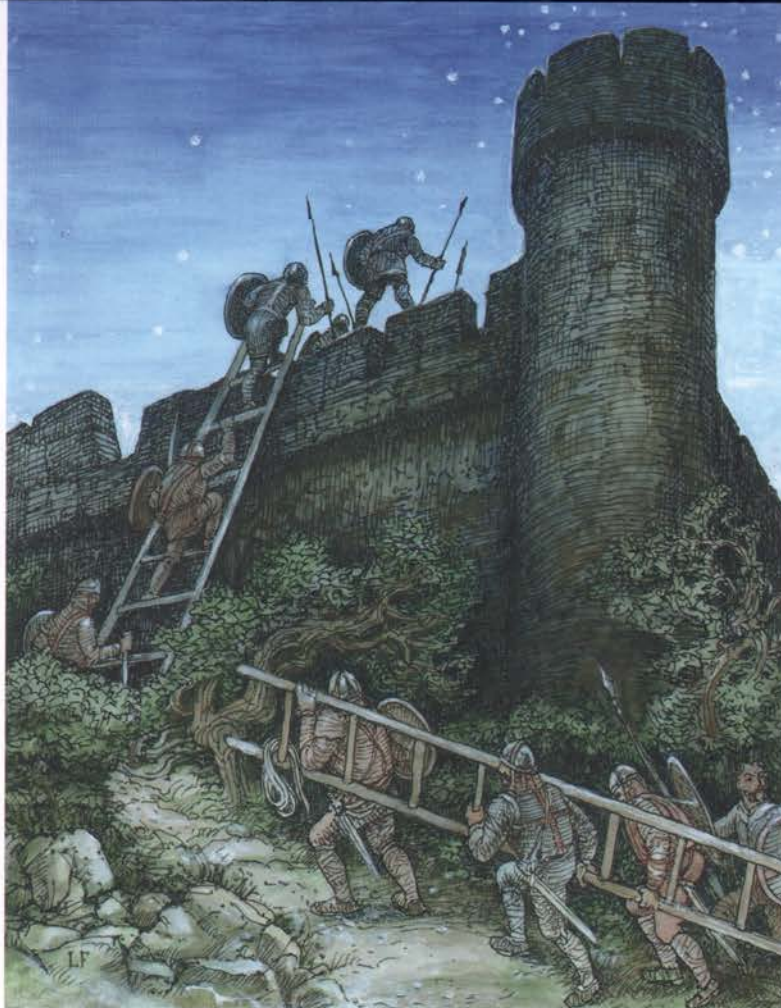
Whereas the invasion of the territory by the river was successful in the Roman occupation of the Iberian Peninsula, at the time of the Muslim conquest in 711 AD the river was used as a no man's land between Christians and Muslims – initially due to the extreme mobility of the Saracen forces, using the raids of their cavalry, and afterwards by the nomadism of some tribes that came to the territory, giving rise to independent groups which lacked a common strategy. It was through these divisions among the Muslims that the Tagus contributed to the consolidation of the Christian military power, using the river as a base for the domination of the Iberian Peninsula, beginning with the conquest of Toledo in the reign of King Alfonso VI of Leon and Castile. As far as Portugal is concerned, with the conquests of Santarém in 1147 and Lisbon in 1148, in the reign of King Afonso Henriques, the Tagus served as a base for the conquest of the south of the country during the reigns of kings Sancho I, Afonso II, Sancho II and Afonso III.

A ilustração da Conquista de
Lisboa aos Mouros, em 1147.
Alfredo Roque Gameiro, in
Quadros da História de Portugal,
Chagas Franco; João Soares. 1917.

The Illustration of the Conquest
of Lisbon from the Moors, in 1147.
Alfredo Roque Gameiro, in
Quadros da História de Portugal,
Chagas Franco, João Soares. 1917.

⁸ *Idem*

⁹ Raul Miguel Rosado Fernandes,
op. cit.



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Autor

António Carmona Rodrigues

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José Manuel Godinho

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Author

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