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Book for abstracts



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Shellfish consumption in a late medieval coastal town (Almada, Portugal)

The archaeological excavations in the Rua Capitão Leitão n.º2, Almada (Portugal), revealed the presence of two storage pits, later abandoned and filled with domestic waste during the Late Middle Ages. Ceramic analysis allowed the identification of two deposition moments: the first from the late 13th and 14th century, and the second between the late 15th and early 16th century. A vast and diverse faunal assemblage was identified, made up of mammals, birds, fish and, especially, shellfish remains. As an urban settlement located between the Atlantic coast and the Tagus River, Almada had easy access to a diversity of marine and estuarine mollusk species.

We present the results of the shellfish assemblage analysis, where a total of 21,360 remains were found, corresponding to 8813 individuals distributed through over 30 subspecies. Most of these remains correspond to the town inhabitant's consumption, with cockles (*Cerastoderma edule*), mussels (*Mytilus galloprovincialis*) and oysters (*Ostrea edulis*) being the most abundant, as well as clams (*Ruditapes decussatus*) and razor shells (*Solen marginatus*). The residual presence of other species, namely sea snails, may be due to shared habitat with the other exploited mollusks.

Some of these remains present cut marks associated with consumption, mostly oysters with triangular knife cuts related to the method used to open the shells. The presence of clutches in some individuals, as well as traces of other predator's damage, gives us data about specific habitats and shellfish exploitation in those periods.

KEYWORDS

archaeozoology, late medieval, urban archaeology

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