

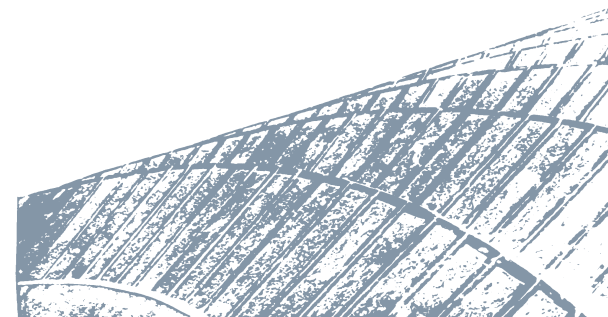


Braga and its territory between the fifth and the fifteenth centuries



Raquel Martínez Peñín (ed.)

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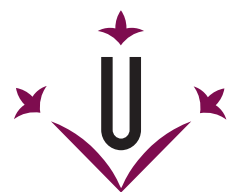
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Buildings and structures for productive activities in late medieval Braga

Ana Sofia Cunha¹ and Arnaldo Sousa Melo²

Keywords: Crafts, medieval Braga (Portugal), 14th and 15th centuries urban space, medieval industrial and trade structures.

Abstract

The town of Braga in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries had a diversity of craft / industrial activities that played a huge role, not only in the supply of the city and in the production of goods for domestic and foreign trade, but also in the organization of the urban space.

In fact, we can find in the city the presence of several crafts, from those who were linked to the sector of leather, or metal, to clothing and food supply, among others. Most of them, including their activities, equipment and productive structures, seems to be emplaced within the fourteenth century town wall, with some exceptions. Namely activities such as tanning and water mills that required specific locations to its emplacement and as such were concentrated in the city's suburbs. But even the intramural location of the several crafts was also uneven, with the concentration of the various productive sectors in certain places of the city, and its absence or rarity in other parts.

1. PhD student in Medieval History, University of Minho.

2. Department of History, Lab2Pt, University of Minho; Project PTDC/HIS-ARQ/121136/2010, funded by FCT.

Given the important role of crafts / industrial activities in the city of Braga in this period, this paper presents the emplacements of the structures and buildings of those activities, its features and the impact that such crafts have had on the urban space and society, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

1. Introduction

In this paper we intend to present the equipment, buildings and physical structures related with crafts or industrial production in the town of Braga (northern Portugal) in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. We centre our focus within the city of Braga and its immediate surroundings.

The real estate market of Braga, between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, was formed in its great majority by dwellings, but it also presented several types of other buildings, such as industrial and craft related structures.

The various tenancy contracts that were made in lives or perpetually, of the main institutions of the city, show that equipment was dispersed in the internal perimeter of the city wall as well as in the suburbs. Generally the type of available information about those structures prevented us from defining its exact location. However through its toponymy it was possible to represent in a map their approximate locations.

The equipments identified for Braga refers to all those spaces or built up structures with various functions, such as the places where the crafts activities took place including industrial and commercial ones. That is the case of large open spaces such as squares, some specific open spaces for fairs and other uses and various types of small or medium size unbuilt areas (*chãos*, *recantos*, *granjinhos*). But also built up structures, such as porches, shops (*boticas*), tents, butchers places (*açougues*) and the tanning locations (*pelames*) and finally specific technical systems as the mills.

References to these equipments, and structures can be found in the mentioned tenancy contracts, and also in various written descriptions from different sources, where they appear often as spatial markers, or elements of space referring in several contexts, for example in the identification of the street network³. In the present paper it would be impossible to address all these structures, so we will present the ones we considered more determining in urban evolution and structures: squares, tents, shops (*boticas*), the butchers places (*açougues*) and the tanning locations (*pelames*).

3. Maria do Camo Ribeiro and Arnaldo Melo, 'A Influência das atividades na organização da cidade medieval portuguesa', in M. C. Ribeiro and A. Melo (eds.) *Evolução da Paisagem Urbana: Economia e Sociedade*, CITCEM, Braga, (2012), p. 153.

2. Square

As a matter of fact, quiet often in medieval towns the square performed very important functions⁴, because in it were frequently concentrated several porches, tents, or buildings of collective use where besides trade and handicraft activities it was also the privileged place for business functions and politics.⁵

In Braga the most important square probably had those functions, called simply *praça dantre a Sé*⁶(the square that was in front of the Cathedral) located at the south side of the Cathedral (Figure 1) is was probably the largest market of the city, according to several written references to it. In this square there were plenty of commercial activity, namely saints, pots (it was the pottery market) and, at the end of the fifteenth century, bread was also sold in that place⁷.

However, even if this square should play a major role in the city and count with the presence of some handicraft and commercial activities, there were also other locations in the city and in its immediate surroundings with an intense artisanal activity, inside as well as outside the city wall⁸. Let us begin by the tents.

3. Tents

Tents appeared to have had some importance in Braga, where a street was named upon them, the *Rua das Tendias* (Tents Street), whose specific location is still unknown, but that existed in the town at least between 1377 and 1490. That name would even-

4. Maria Ângela Beirante, 'Espaços públicos nas cidades portuguesas medievais: Santarém e Évora', in M. Â. Beirante (coord.) *O ar da Cidade: Ensaio de História Medieval e Moderna*, Edições Colibri, Lisboa, (2008), p. 182.

5. Amélia Aguiar Andrade, *Horizontes Urbanos Medievais*, Livros Horizonte, Lisboa, (2003), p. 33; Maria Ângela Beirante, 'Espaços públicos nas cidades portuguesas medievais: Santarém e Évora', in M. Â. Beirante (coord.) *O ar da Cidade: Ensaio de História Medieval e Moderna*, Edições Colibri, Lisboa, (2008), p. 182. In Évora the square had acquired a mercantile function, because in it were installed the butchers, bakers, orchards, and craftsmen who have settled in the tents of arches that were there, thus exposing their products in banquets and trays.

6. AMB, *Livro de Prazos do Senado*, fl. 6v.

7. *Ibid.* 3, Ribeiro and Melo, 'A influência das atividades económicas', p. 157.

8. It is curious to note that, with the exception of pelames, of boticas, mills and the atafona, all these structures are in the possession of the County, and never in the hands of the Chapter If, at least with regard to documentation for analyzed here. For the latter case see: Ana Maria Sá Rodrigues, 'Os Prazos de Braga nos séculos XIV e XV', in Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Faculdade de Teologia and Cabido Metropolitano e Primacial, *IX Centenário da dedicação à Sé de Braga, Actas do Congresso Internacional, vol. II/1. A Catedral de Braga na História e na Arte (séculos XII-XIX)*, Universidade Católica Portuguesa/Faculdade de Teologia, Cabido Metropolitano e Primacial Braga, (1990), p. 464.

tually disappear. Even if its exact location is still unknown there are at least two strong possibilities.

The first hypothesis is that this artery could be located in the same place of the *Rua da Olaria* because, in the 2^o *Livro de Prazos do Cabido*⁹, in 1490 the *Rua das Tendas* were located next to the Cathedral (Figure nº 1).¹⁰ It makes sense that they were located in the vicinity of the town square, next to the Cathedral. The second possible localization that we are proposing is in the later called *Rua dos Burgueses* (*Street of Bourgeois*). Documents from 1309 and 1325 shows a tendency to concentration of tents in that street.¹¹

4. Shops (*boticas*)

The most ancient reference to tents that we have found are dating from 1275 and 1309.¹² Frequently tents were sold or object of tenancy contracts together with houses to which they belong, thus joining domestic and professional space. We don't know how its architecture was, but it is known that in other towns and regions tents could be connected to or be a part of a house, or in porches or even in open spaces.¹³

The shops were used by the craftsman for the sale of their products, supporting crafts activity.¹⁴ Their presence in the centre of city is well attested (Figure 1). For example, the *Rua da Sapataria* was characterized by buildings with a typology characteristic of current houses in Middle Ages with shops on the ground floor that were used for commercial purposes.¹⁵ As for the *boticas* we have found some examples of their existence. In 1470 the Cathedral Chapter of Braga made a tenancy contract in lives of some *boticas* near the corner of *Rua da Judiaria* (Street of Jewry), to Abraão do Rego, goldsmith, and his wife.¹⁶ It is a well-known practice in other Portuguese towns, such as Oporto, the existence of *boticas* outside de Jewry where the Jews, particularly Jewish women, sold their products.¹⁷

9. ADB, 2^o *Livro de Prazos*, fls. 186v-187.

10. *Ibid* 9, fls.186v-187.

11. ADB, *Gaveta de Prazos do Cabido*, doc. nº 58.

12. *Ibid*. 11, doc. n.º 64.

13. Jean Passini, 'Algunos Aspectos del Espacio Doméstico Medieval en la Ciudad de Toledo', in J. A. Solórzano and B. Arízaga (coords.) *El Espacio Urbano en la Europa Medieval, Encuentros Internacionales del Medievo*, Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, Nájera, (2006), p. 264.

14. Donata Degrassi, *L'economia artigianale nell'Italia Medievale*, Carocci, Roma, (1998), pp. 63-68.

15. *Ibid*. 3, Ribeiro and Melo, 'A influência das atividades económicas', p. 152-153.

16. ADB, 1^o *Livro de Prazos do Cabido*, fl. 42v-43.

17. Arnaldo Melo, 'Trabalho e Produção em Portugal na Idade Média: O Porto, c. 1320-c. 1415', (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Minho and EHESS, 2009), p. 244.

5. *Chãos*

The *chãos* means an unbuilt plot in towns. They were often sought by craftsmen. They could be rented or sold to build some houses, or to be left like that, to some use, as for rural or crafts activities. In Braga they were localized mainly in the suburbs of the city, particularly on the outskirts with the name *Chãos*, *Maximinos*, *Corredoira* and *S. Victor* (Figure 2).

Quiet often those *chãos* were rented with the obligation of building houses, which was related with the intent to urbanize the spaces unoccupied of the city, or its suburbs. Their low value would certainly be a way to capture the interest of buyers that would have to built at their own expenses in such property, such as the case of houses, *terreiras* (single-storey houses) or *sobradas* (houses with one or more stores).¹⁸ Before the construction of any structure in those lots, the towns' officers would have to go the verify the limits of the plot and the existence of any impediment for the construction of buildings.

These constructions could serve as domestic or as a working space, or both. Sometimes the tenant should build a new house with one or more stores. For example in 1484 a barber should build a house and in the ground floor must he had to have a door open to the square so that anyone could watch him at his work.¹⁹

Sometimes in these *chãos* (floors) the tenants should rise structures exclusively dedicated to the crafts work. For example in 1486 the Council of the town celebrate one contract with a horseshoer (*ferreiro*) 'João Vaz', which received one *cháô* (floor) as tenant in the *Rua Dom Gualdim* (street Dom Gualdim), with the obligation of constructing at his own expenses a porch (*alpendre*) in the floor so that he could do his craft in it.²⁰

These examples, among many others, show that the activity of blacksmiths and horseshoers existed within the city, including inside the city walls, similar to towns like Oporto, where the presence of such crafts were common inside the walls,²¹ but different from some other towns in which such activities were generally confined to the suburbs²².

18. Luís Miguel Duarte and Luis Carlos Amaral, 'Prazos do Século e Prazos de Deus (Aforamentos na Câmara e no Cabido da Sé do Porto no último quartel do século XV)', *Revista da Faculdade de Letras. História*, II Série, (1984), p. 106.

19. AMB, *1º Livro de Prazos do Senado*, fls. 20-21v.

20. *Ibid* 19, fls. 32-32v.; *Ibid* 19, fls. 74-74v.

21. *Ibid.* 17, Melo, 'Trabalho e Produção', p. 232.

22. *Ibid.* 5, Aguiar Andrade, *Horizontes Urbanos Medievais*, pp. 20-21.

6. Butcheries (*açougues*)

Now we will talk about the *açougues* —butchery— structures that were present in the majority, of the medieval towns and played an important role from an economic point of view as well as for its influence in the urban plan.²³

The *açougues* (butchery) was the place where the cattle were killed, unskinned and the meat was sold. As such their emplacement had to comply to certain needs, namely in the vicinities of fresh water and water lines. In some towns they could be outside the city centre due to the bad smell and water pollution that they produced. Nevertheless it was quiet common in Portuguese medieval towns that they were in the city centre and close to the cathedral, as one can find in medieval Braga.

As a matter of fact, in Braga until the end of the fifteenth century the butchery was placed in the vicinity of the Cathedral (Figure n.º1), next to a course of water line, as in other cities like Oporto.²⁴ However, its emplacement changed to an area in the suburbs, called *Campo de S. Miguel o Anjo*, outside the city wall in the late fifteenth century /early sixteenth century, where they rested until 1787.²⁵

However, it is possible that an intermediate emplacement for the butcherries existed in the late fifteenth century, before the final transfer for the suburbs. It is possible that they had been moved to the vicinity of *Judiaria* (Jewish quarter). This hypothesis, that still lacks confirmation, is based upon some documental descriptions, such as a contract of 1480 that refers the existence of *Rua dos Açougues* (street of Butchers) near the Jewish quarter²⁶, that was close to a *Rua da Triparia*.²⁷

At least from the fifteenth century onwards one can find a specialization and distinction between ‘*açougue da carne*’ (butchery of the meat) “ and the ‘*açougue do pescado*’

23. Tomás Puñal Fernández, *El mercado en Madrid en la baja Edad Media - Estructura y sistemas de abastecimiento de un concejo medieval castellano (s. XV)*, Casa de Madrid, Madrid, (1992), p. 83.

24. *Ibid.* 3, Ribeiro and Melo, ‘A influência das atividades económicas’, p. 153; *Ibid.* 17, Melo, ‘Trabalho e Produção’, p. 227.

25. These new butcherries were done by the Archbishop and Humanist D. Diogo de Sousa;; Avelino Jesus da Costa, ‘D. Diogo de Sousa, novo fundador de Braga e grande mecenas da cultura’, in *Academia Portuguesa de História* (ed.) *Homenagem à Arquidiocese de Primaz nos 900 anos da dedicação da Catedral*, Academia Portuguesa de História, Lisboa, (1990), p. 112; Maria do Carmo Ribeiro, ‘Braga entre a época romana e a Idade Moderna. Uma A metodologia de análise para a leitura da evolução do espaço urbano’, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Minho, 2008), p. 437; Maria do Carmo Ribeiro and Arnaldo Melo, ‘A influência das actividades económicas na organização da cidade medieval portuguesa’, in M. C. Ribeiro and A. Melo (eds.) *Evolução da Paisagem Urbana: Economia e Sociedade*, CITCEM, Braga, (2012), p. 153.

26. ADB, 2º *Livro de Prazos do Cabido*, fl. 46.

27. José Marques, *Braga Medieval*, Ed. Livraria Cruz, Braga, (1983), p. 98; Maria do Carmo Ribeiro, ‘Braga entre a época romana e a Idade Moderna. Uma A metodologia de análise para a leitura da evolução do espaço urbano’, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Minho, 2008), p. 437.

(fish market), for example in documents dating from 1445, 1459, 1490 and 1487.²⁸ At the time of the ‘Archbishop D. Diogo de Sousa’ de Sousa, at least, there was a square or Fish Market, inside the wall next to the *Porta Nova* (New Gate).²⁹

It should be stressed that it isn’t known how those early buildings looked like, but we have some description of the new ones constructed in the late fifteenth / early sixteenth century.

Finally a question arises. Why did the butchery got away from the Cathedral to a new location in the final fifteenth century or early sixteenth? One can easily suggest that the urban reformations made by the humanist ‘Archbishop D. Diogo de Sousa’ de Sousa would not easily coexist with the butchery near de Cathedral, or even inside the city centre, but probably even before him that need was felt need was felt.³⁰

7. Tanning structure (*pelames*)

Other type of productive structures deserving particular attention was the *pelames* the structures needed to the tanning process of animal skins. Unlike what was found in the city of Oporto, where the *pelames* were inserted in the core of the city³¹, in Braga they were located outside the city, in its southern suburbs (Figure 2), as was usual in most cities, as for example in nearby Guimarães.³² In Braga they were located at the end of *Rua dos Pelames* (Street of Pelames), present day *Rua de S. Geraldo*, near the bridge with the same name, over the *Rio Este* (Figure 2), a course of water essential for the entire process of tanning.³³

References to concentration of these structures in that emplacement dates back to the end of the fourteenth century and the second half of the fifteenth century.³⁴ In the

28. AMB, *Livro de Prazos do Senado*, fls. 2v-3v and fl. 6v, fl. 36v, ADB, *Gaveta de Prazos do Cabido*, n.º120; AMB, *Livro de Prazos da do Senado*, fls. 83v-84.

29. Maria do Carmo Ribeiro, ‘Braga entre a época romana e a Idade Moderna. Uma A metodologia de análise para a leitura da evolução do espaço urbano’, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Minho, 2008), p. 471; Avelino Jesus da Costa, *O Bispo D. Pedro e a Organização da Arquidiocese de Braga*, (2.ª ed., refundida e ampliada), vol. I, Irmandade de S. Bento da Porta Aberta, Braga, (1997), p. 112.

30. *Ibid.* 19, Costa, ‘D. Diogo de Sousa’, pp. 98-115.

31. *Ibid.* 17, Melo, ‘Trabalho e Produção’, p. 227.

32. Maria da Conceição F. Ferreira, HYPERLINK “http://opac.regesta-imperii.de/lang_en/anzeige.php?monographie=Guimar%C3%A3es%3A+duas+vilas%2C+um+s%C3%B3+povo%3A+estudo+de+hist%C3%B3ria+urbana%2C+1250-1389.&pk=1778697” *Guimarães: duas vilas, um só povo: estudo de história urbana, 1250-1389*, CITCEM, Braga, (2010), pp. 294-297 and 561-568.

33. *Ibid.* 3, Ribeiro and Melo, ‘A influência das atividades económicas’, p. 157-158; according to this authors the first cartographic image of this *pelames* is in Braunios’ Map of the City of Braga dated 1594 from *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*. On technical aspects see also Ricardo Córdoba Llave, *La industria medieval de Córdoba*, Caja de Ahorros de Córdoba, Córdoba, (1990), p. 160 and 174.

34. ADB, *2º Tombo dos Bens e Propriedades do Cabido* and, *4º Tombo dos Bens e Propriedades do Cabido*, fl. 9v.

late fifteenth century there were about 37 such tanning structures belonging to the Cathedral Chapter and mainly rented by shoemakers through tenancy contracts (called *pelames de sapateiros*, meaning ‘tanning structures of shoemakers’).³⁵

The quantity of *pelames*, 37, seems to suggest the importance of that craft in Braga. They were controlled by the shoemakers, which is quite common in other contemporary Portuguese towns. That could have several different meanings. The city’s shoemakers were the main consumers of the tanned skins and; a part of its production could be for selling as tanned skins and not for the work of shoemakers. Anyway, from the example of other towns one can presume that shoemakers’ probably had tanning specialists working for them.³⁶

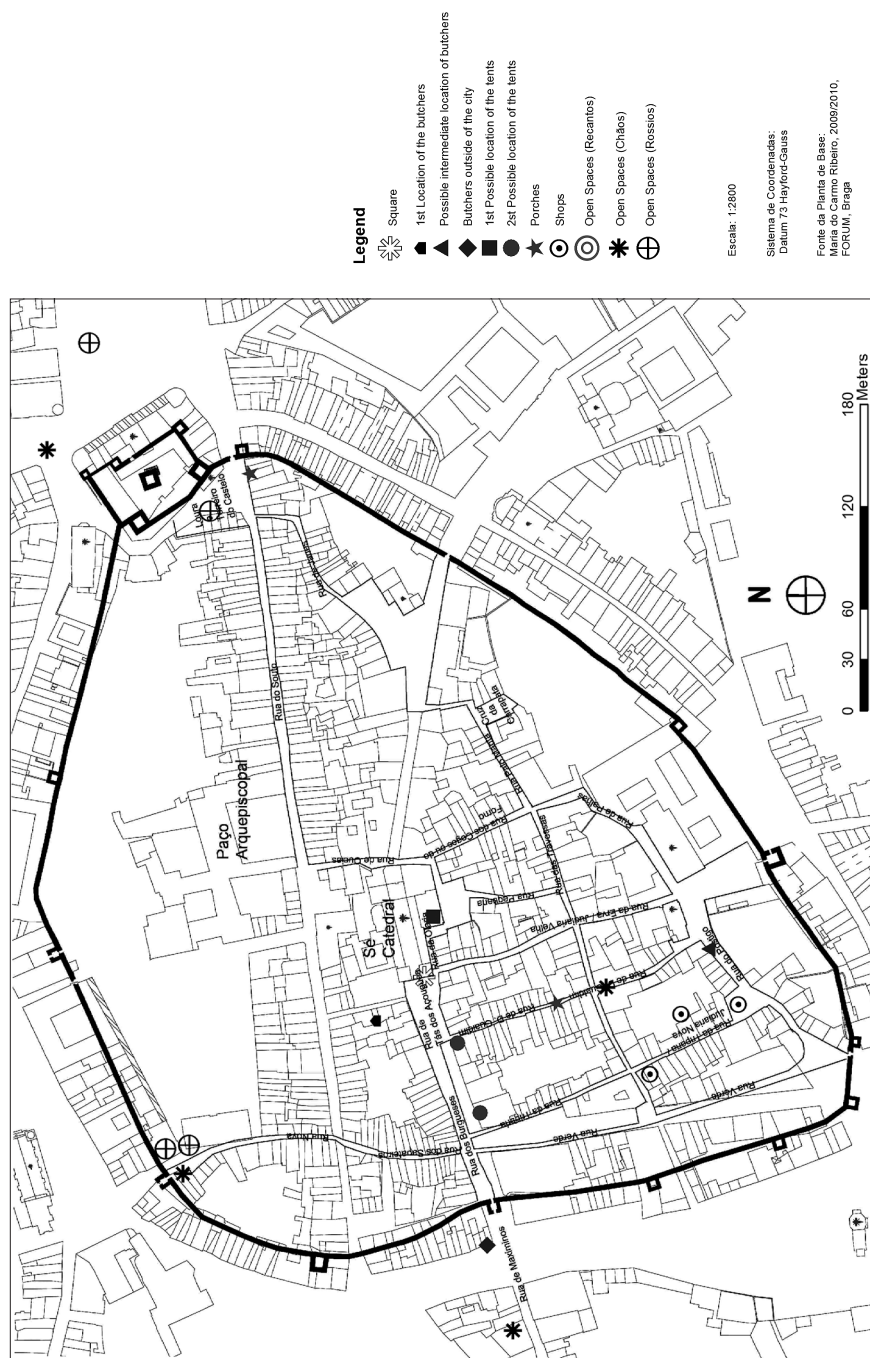
It is also unclear whether the shoemakers had this *pelames* by tenancy contracts individually or as a group or fraternity of shoemakers. Both possibilities could coexist, according with known examples of other towns, like Guimarães. But for Braga the documents doesn’t tell us anything about those questions.

8. Conclusions

From the types of productive structures we have exposed it seems that all this equipment had a very important role in the city of Braga, including in its urban organization. Its localization varied a lot, depending on the type of craft with which they were related, requiring sometimes close availability of natural resources as water, but also considering the pollution made by part of them, factors that had close impact on its distribution and location inside or outside the city wall. Simultaneously the availability of free spaces in some areas would also attract certain activities and structures, while other clearly preferred more central and populated areas where consumers would be in greater numbers. Such was the case, among many others, of Lopo Garcia, blacksmith (*ferreiro*), that had his shop and porch near a wall gate (*Porta da Rua do Souto*) open to one of the busiest streets in town (*Rua do Souto*).

35. ADB, *4º Tombo dos Bens e Propriedades do Cabido*, fl. 9v.

36. Ricardo Córdoba Llave, *La industria medieval de Córdoba*, Caja de Ahorros de Córdoba, Córdoba, (1990), p. 160, pp. 186-199.



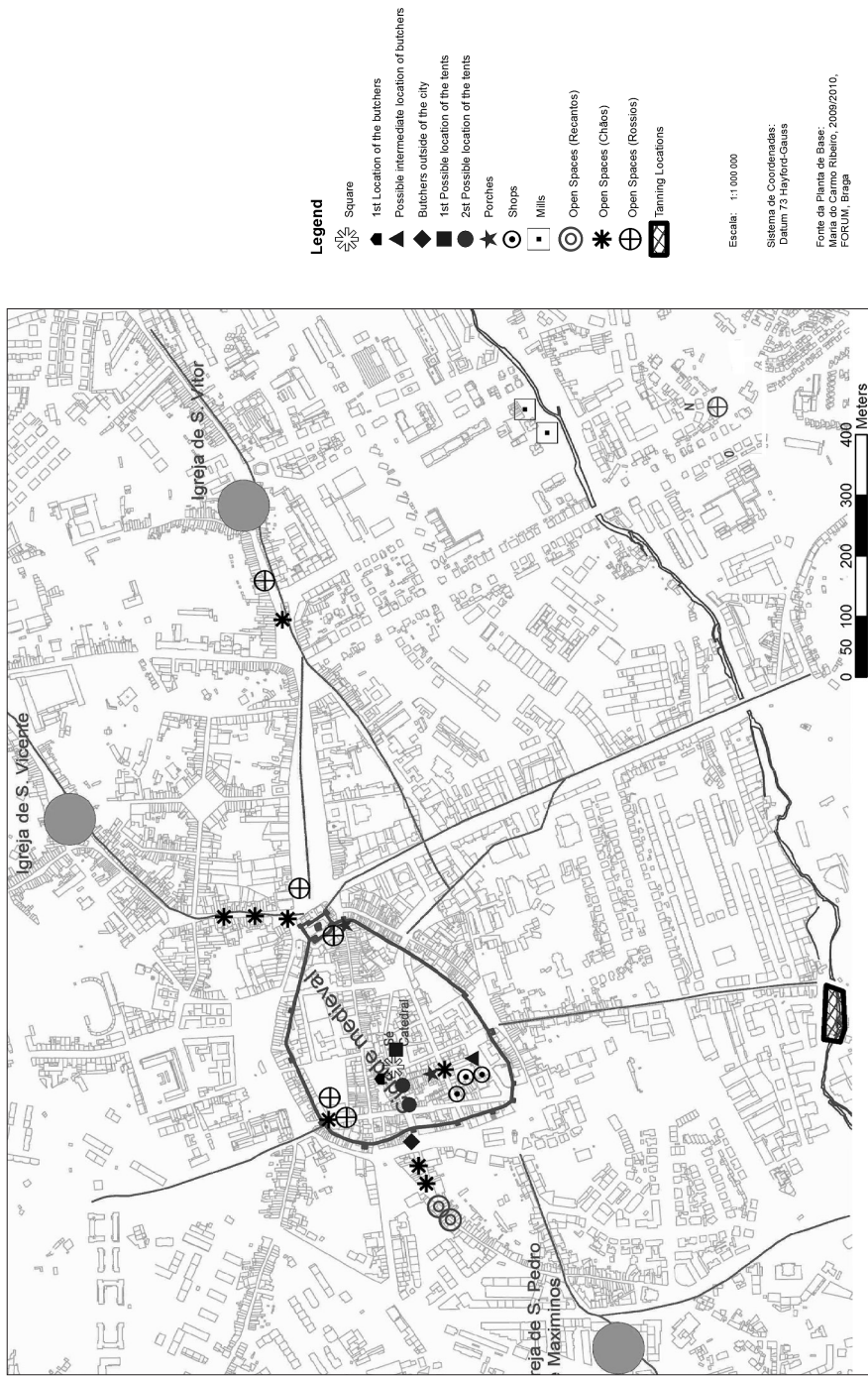


Figure 2. Approximate locations of the buildings and structures for productive activities in Braga and its suburbs in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.