

ABSTRACT

It seems most probable that Alpera (from the arabic *al-Behera* or *al-Buhayra*, “the Lake”) was the starting point for a hydraulic system who carried the water surplus to the lands of Almansa and Ayora, with two channels named “Arroyo de Alpera” and Malecon, the latter being a tributary of Zarra. This drainage and distribution system started a period of deterioration from the Almohad times. It definitely got deteriorated from the Christian conquest. The village first belongs to Almansa and latter on to Chinchilla, Alpera always kept some population because it was a village plenty of water. Anyways, it was hard for the population to stay and grow, and int was an unsafe village next the border. But then don Juan Manuel, lord of Chinchilla, Almansa, and all of Villena, promoted an agreement between both places to open –or open again– the watering ditch which allowed water to reach Almansa and put mills to work. In 1445 six people from Alpera bough all of it (farming, land and water), and divided Alpera into six pieces. From then on, these six owners and Chinchilla’s town council started having problems with Almansa. Alpera managed to grown and reached a population of 100 houses, there when in 1566 this village bough its independence.

Keywords: Irrigation. Hydraulic. Channels. Al-Andalus. Estate of Villena. Middle Ages.