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Lost views and consolidated settlements: La Pubblica and Salto del Esla before and after the building of Ricobayo reservoir in Zamora

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Lost views and consolidated settlements: La Pubblica and Salto del Esla before and after the building of Ricobayo reservoir in Zamora

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Abstract

Ricobayo reservoir (1929-1935), built by the company Saltos del Duero in the Spanish province of Zamora, meant the devastation of villages like La Pubblica, but also the building of a new settlement, provisional at first and called Salto del Esla, which was consolidated as a village in the 1950s. It is aimed to recover the lost image of La Pubblica and to show the development of Salto del Esla, using diverse sources, such as photographs, audio visual material, postcards, and technical journals.

Vedute perdute e città consolidate: La Pubblica e Salto del Elsa prima e dopo la costruzione del bacino di Ricobayo a Zamora

Il bacino di Ricobayo (1929-1935), costruito dall'azienda Saltos del Duero nella provincia di Zamora, comportò la distruzione di piccole città come La Pubblica, ma la costruzione di una nuova città, in origine un insediamento provvisorio, ossia Salto del Esla, che si consolidò negli anni Cinquanta del Novecento. Si intende mostrare l'immagine perduta de La Pubblica ed esporre lo sviluppo di Salto del Esla attraverso l'uso di diverse fonti, come fotografie, materiali audiovisivi, cartoline e pubblicazioni scientifiche.

Keywords: Reservoir building, Heritage, 20th century.

Costruzione di bacini, patrimonio, secolo XX.

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1 | Introduction

The water stored in reservoirs may be used for diverse purposes, such as hydroelectricity, irrigation or industrial use, human consumption, recreation, etc. [Lempérière 2003, 7, 8], fact that explains why the construction of these structures was a widely spread policy, synonym of progress and development, implemented all over the world, especially during the 20th century:

The financial crisis of the 1930's started the first construction wave of large hydropower dams in the United States. This wave continued into the Second World War. During the Cold War, the weapon race between the USA and USSR was accompanied by a parallel neck-and-neck race in dam construction [Van de Giesen 2010, 2185].

However, if the future of dams is linked to sustainable energy resources and developing countries as thought nowadays, previous positive – but also negative – experiences must be considered, since, despite all the prior benefits linked to water utilisation, building these engineering structures undoubtedly implies a direct social effect on the communities connected to them. This issue has been approached sometimes as a mere problem of costs and organization concerning the resettlement of people affected by the flood of reservoir areas on the whole. Nevertheless, from a social and heritage point of view, it is essential to analyse the consequences of the impact caused by dam building activities on resettled communities, since, in the 20th century they could have been linked to situations of forced land expropriations in exchange of risible amounts of money; loss of cultural traditions bounded to a local context [Lempérière 2003, 23,

24], or the trauma triggered by the destruction of homes and the architectures that work as a support for the inhabitants' memory and identity as a commune.

Besides, on the other hand, nowadays we must also cope with the problem of preserving the villages already built to accommodate dam workers. These former urban centres might be defined as the new heritage elements – that identified a particular community settled in a specific urban context built by a hydropower company –, result of dam building activities. These villages, built next to dams and consequently remote, have been gradually abandoned since workers started to be substituted by technology in the management of dams.

Examples of degraded and ruined villages, sign of the prevailing urban and architectural models during the dam building context, seem to be bound to whether disappear or be turned into touristic complexes, according to some proposals as happens with the Spanish village of Salto de Castro in Zamora, Spain. However, many of them have not been studied yet, and, as a result, the historical, symbolic, or emotional values that could be attributed to these elements have not been established yet. Proceeding on the basis that for preserving and disseminating the values of our cultural heritage, the first thing to do is to get to know it from a rigorous scientific approach. That is the reason why this topic has turned into a new line of research nowadays and the justification for RTD projects that address it.

This article intends to recover the lost image of a flooded village in the interest of hydropower development in the 1930s in Zamora, and to show the heritage loss that the building of Ricobayo dam implied. Besides, it is also aimed to present the changes carried out to consolidate a village built for the dam workers in the same decade, Saltos del Esla, in order to present the interest of these villages.

2 | Reservoir and dam building in Spain at the beginning of the 20th century: *Saltos del Duero and Ricobayo*

Spain is described as a wealthy country in terms of hydric resources, since its geography is crossed by various and relevant river courses, and this richness, also related to economic issues, explains the reason why state policies started to be developed in the country [Fernández Rodríguez 2021, 71]. However, although it has been widely said that water utilisation and reservoir building in Spain is an issue strongly linked to Franco's dictatorship time frame (1939-1975), the origins of this activity date back to the process of Romanization of the Iberian Peninsula and its development was carried out during the Middle and Modern Ages [Molina Sánchez 2015, 37-49]. The innovation achieved due to the discovery of a new way to produce and transport vast quantities of electric energy to further locations in 1884 [Espejo Marín - García Marín 2010, 107] meant the strengthening of water utilisation in Spain during the 19th century. Using hydroelectric plants making the most of waterfalls and conveying the obtained energy through alternating current [Cayón García 2002, 304] was understood as the perfect way to complement the use of fossil fuels as a resource to generate electricity [Cayón García 2002, 303, 304].

And this development caused the promotion and expansion of hydropower policies in the country at the beginning of the following century. In this sense, the National Plan of Hydraulic Exploitation or Gasset Plan (1902), Irrigation National Congresses (1913-1934), Hydrographic Union Confederations (1926-1931) and the National Plan of Hydraulic Works (1933)¹ [Mateu González 2002, 36] have to be outlined. Within this context of hydropower expansion, the engineers Eugenio Grasset and José Orbegazo decided to fund a hydropower company together with the entrepreneur Horacio Echevarrieta, after sharing a previous employment relation. This

¹ Translation by the author from *Plan Nacional de Aprovechamientos Hidráulicos* – also known as '*Plan Gasset*', honouring its developer, Rafael Gasset (1902); the *Congresos Nacionales de Regadío* (1913-1934), *Confederaciones sindicales Hidrográficas* (1926-1931) and the *Plan Nacional de Obras Hidráulicas* (1933).

company, named Saltos del Duero, was definitively established in 1918, due to the investment made by Banco de Bilbao which made possible to cover the expenses of the works all over the territories that had been acquired by the company [Díaz Morlán 1998, 182, 183]. After years of applying for licences and several unforeseen difficulties, the first reservoir promoted by Saltos del Duero got underway near Ricobayo in the province of Zamora (Castile and León) in 1929. The relevance of this building is confirmed by the investments made in 1929 and 1930: the initial financing consisted of eight million *pesetas* (48.080,97 €) and, one year later, it was increased until reaching twenty-seven million *pesetas* (162.273,27 €). Besides, the number of workers involved in the building was 2600 in the summer of 1930 [Díaz Morlán 1998, 193].

In addition, it is possible to know that the expenses in relation to expropriations were also high during the first years of building. Although there is not an exact amount of money specified, according to the annual report for 1932, the company had an agreement with the 75% of the owners to acquire their properties and two-thirds of the land to be flooded had already been occupied by that year and it was stated that «most of the interested people, convinced of our generosity and the resistance to higher expectations, have decided to establish an amicable relation with the company» [Saltos del Duero 1933, 3].

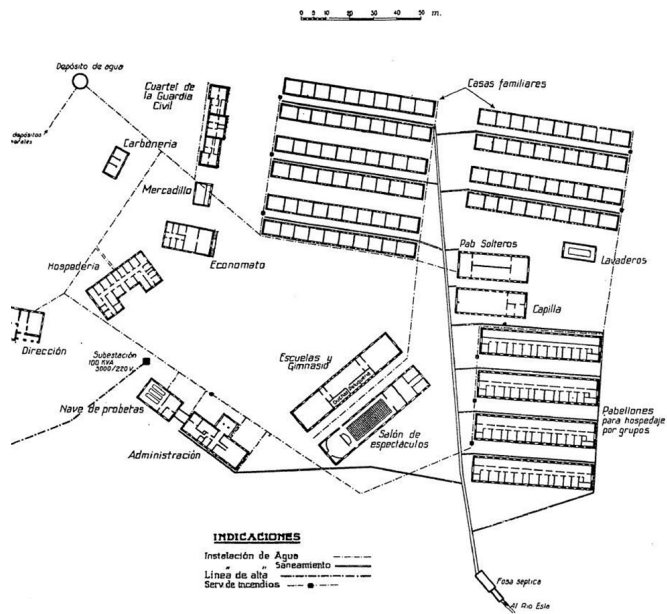
In 1934, Saltos del Duero kept on developing and signed a distribution agreement that kept any capacity enlargement for itself, which meant that the rest of companies operating in the area only could distribute energy [Pueyo 2008, 20]. Years later, during Franco's dictatorship, Saltos del Duero merged with another hydropower company, Hidroeléctrica Ibérica, in 1944, resulting in Iberduero S.A. [Díaz Morlán 1998, 196]. Thus, Saltos del Duero first and then Iberduero were the companies that exclusively exploited the hydric possibilities of river Duero.

Iberduero S.A. would keep this denomination for almost five decades, specifically, just until the merging with the company Hidroeléctrica Española. From that moment in 1992 onwards, it starts to operate as one of the biggest power companies in the country: Iberdrola. The interest of the company in document and register the progress of the dam and the reservoir building and the actions related to it, such as the previously mentioned expropriations, were the main reason for the existence of some of the visual sources presented in this research: on the one hand, different postcards published by the company in 1930 and a documentary, recorded by Fernando López Heptener, which was publicly released in 1933.

Nevertheless, it should be remembered that some of these documents and the information they provide are rather biased, particularly the audio-visual materials, as it will be explained afterwards, since they were created to be presented whether to investors or to the general public, but always praising the activities carried out by Saltos del Duero to 'improve' Spaniards' lives.

3 | From provisional condition to consolidated settlement: Salto del Esla

According to contemporary architecture journals, such as «Revista Nacional de Arquitectura» or «Revista de Obras Públicas», the settlements provisionally built to accommodate workers on-site were called «(water) resource use villages» [Temes 1954, 41] or merely «camps» [Orbegozo 1930, 439]. The building of these villages, which also depended on the dam building contractors, normally presented some common features relating to the provided facilities: a building equipped with housing and office for the project managers; a particular amount of flats consistent with the number of workers in the exploitation, a doctor, a priest, a teacher, etc; two guesthouses; two, or more, hostels; a General Services pavilion; a health care facility; canteen; chapel; school; cinema; slaughterhouse; laundry; police station; garage and gas station [Temes 1954, 41].



12 Fig. 1: Saltos del Duero, View of Salto del Esla from the dam (*Memoria* 1932).

Fig. 2: José Orbegozo, Urban layout in Salto del Esla, 1930 («Revista de Obras Públicas», 439).



Fig. 3: Saltos del Duero, Postcard with photographs of the hostel in Salto del Esla at the beginning of the 1930s (author's private collection).



Fig. 4: Saltos del Duero, Postcard with photographs of the chapel in Salto del Esla at the beginning of the 1930s (author's private collection).

Needless to say, a camp was built next to the Ricobayo dam and the village received the name Salto del Esla, referring to the dam and river Esla, that provided the water to be collected in the reservoir. Although it is known that this camp was definitively consolidated in the 1950s, keeping its appearance since then, it is possible to recover the original urban layout as well as the image of some remarkable buildings, like the chapel or the guesthouse, because of the mentioned company's interest in disseminating the progress made and the achievements obtained in Ricobayo. Accordingly, José Orbegozo – one of the engineers who cofounded Saltos del Duero – published several articles in the journal «Revista de Obras Públicas» in 1930 linked to the dam building plans and the process of development. One of them, relating to the different ancillary technical means used throughout the works, also explained that given the impossibility to obtain manpower from the surroundings as well as to accommodate the necessary personnel in nearest villages to the dam, it was necessary to build a camp for workers. Besides, this paper also included the plan of the urban layout together with a brief description of the most essential facilities in the camp. It is perceptible that the urban plan corresponded with a functional conception, as delimited areas for diverse uses can be identified: different groups of housing, depending on the workers marital status; church; gym and a building designed for shows and performances, intended for employees' leisure time; the shopping area with the staff shop and the market, the only place where perishable products could be purchased; the Administration and Management buildings, sited in the adjacent area to the dam, constituted the 'company authority' centre.

At the same time, some of these buildings were set out around a wide space that could have worked as a public square. Getting to know the different building approaches applied in the village at the beginning of the 1930s due to the photographs issued by the company Saltos del Duero as postcards. Through these visual documents it is possible for us to state that when the edifices in the settlement had been already built, adapted to the land orography as the section for housing pavilions is located on a slope, the land had not been developed yet and there was no pavement or tarmac.

Although these postcards confirm that some buildings had been already built in 1930, it might be difficult to establish the end of the works in the village; however, due to the information provided by another graphic document – a photograph included in 1932 annual report elaborated by Saltos del Duero – it could have been feasible that the settlement had already been built by this year, since buildings destined to housing and office for the managers and the guesthouse, for instance, are noticeable at the background. Orbegozo's article also explained that it was decided to build some facilities as permanent edifices from the very beginning of the project, while other were built as provisional buildings [Orbegozo 1930, 440]. This difference in conception depended on the typology of the architecture and on its function, that it to say, those buildings considered strictly essential to live in the village were permanent and those considered not so vital were obviously provisional.

The Management building together with the Administration one, the company shop, and the headquarters of the 'Guardia Civil' were masonry built in the first place, as they were considered basic to provide the workers in charge of the dam functioning with suitable accommodation and workspace as well as security. On the other hand, the group of provisional constructions – such as those destined to provide lodgings for workers and their families, church, schools, market, laundry, gym, pub, etc. – presented masonry foundations, but were built using grinds of double wooden walls, as happened with the chapel. In this regard, it is interesting that the chapel was considered a non-basic facility for the new community at first, since this idea was completely the

opposite within context when the church was consolidated. And this shift was the result of the political, ideological and, consequently, social changes that Francoism brought to Spain at the end of 1930s.

19th and 20th centuries implied a period of great instability marked by industrial development and political confrontations among liberals, republicans and left-wing ideals against absolutists, conservatives, and right-wing standards in Spain. Religion was in the spotlight within these problematics, since the Spanish Catholic Church together with landowner aristocracy were controlling the deeply religious rural Spanish population until 20th century. In fact, this tension about religion was remarkable even for the creation of Spanish Constitution in 1931, during the Second Republic period, due to some articles that were described as ‘anticlerical’ [Pérez Agote 2003, 213, 214]. In May, that very same year, the so-called ‘Burning of convents’ took place in Madrid and, this event, together with the articles in the Constitution and the hostilities between the government and Cardinal Segura caused a hostile position between Church and State [Núñez Díaz-Balart 2017].

The Spanish Civil War and the establishment of Francoism changed the situation. As the Spanish Catholic Church supported the uprising by the nationalist side and justified the war as a ‘crusade’ to save the country and the religion. This institution turned into such an important element in the new regime that Spanish society during Franco’s dictatorship was defined by National-Catholicism, establishing the idea of being a good patriot and Spaniard, if being a good Catholic.

This new way of life had already rooted in the 1950’s, moment when dam and reservoir building activities expanded due to the considerable increase of electricity demand and the companies’ recovered expectations for obtaining financial benefits after the price freeze after war and post-war periods [Pueyo 2008, 15]. During the dictatorship, the State also turned into a key element in dam building development over the country. Within the Autarchy period, a policy linked to the creation and recovery of public works, called ‘Plan Peña’, developed by Alfonso Peña Boeuf, Minister of Public Works from 1938 to 1945 [Fernández Rodríguez 2019, 87].

Peña also implemented the General Plan for Public Works, approved in 1939 and 1941, which highlighted the relevance, but also the complexity of building hydropower structures [Fernández Rodríguez 2019, 88]. In the following years, particularly in the 1950s, one of the most well-known specific francoist dam policies was developed: the so-called ‘Plan Badajoz’, an initiative aimed to improve production and farm income in the province of Badajoz (Extremadura) which was authorised by a regulation having the force of Law, entitled *Ley de 7 de abril de 1952 sobre el Plan de Obras, colonización, industrialización y electrificación de la Provincia de Badajoz*.

As explained above, francoist dam policies were not unprecedented, since they continued with an activity already driven by former governments in Spain. Nevertheless, this stimulus motivated by the State explains why the total amount of the capacity of these structures was sixfold increased in thirty years [Bartolomé Rodríguez 2011, 801] after the Spanish Civil War and the establishment of Franco’s dictatorship and, consequently, why dam and reservoir building in Spanish recent history is automatically linked to Francoism in Spaniards’ mindset.

Hence, the Spanish Catholic Church was one of the pillars in Franco’s dictatorship in the 1950s and, as a result, parish churches had turned into a highlight in any urban centre, because they represented the relevance of the institution for Spanish society. From this perspective, it would have been inconceivable to build, or to consolidate, any village considering the parish church as a non-essential building as happened in Salto del Esla. In this sense, it is possible to find some later cases in which provisional settlement plans did not include the presence of a parish church but the permanent project, as analysed, for example in three settlements built in Alcán-



Fig. 5: Parish church in Salto del Esla in 2020 (photo by the author).



Fig. 6: Housing building in Salto del Esla in 2020 (photo by the author).

tara (Extremadura) in the vicinity of the namesake dam [Teixidó 2012, 238-244]. Maybe this new context, marked by the new regime and its own interests, explains the reason why Salto del Esla was taken into account in francoist dam policies and was consolidated: the need to provide industrial workers and their families with a proper home in a village with all the considered basic facilities then, parish church included.

The parish church in Salto del Esla, currently demystified, presents features that are clearly inspired by models disseminated by state organisms, like the General Direction of Devastated Regions, during their period activity in post-war rebuilding process (1938-1959): longitudinal floor plan, access below the choir, the baptistery at the left and the stairs to the choir at the right of the entrance and an exempt bell tower [Blanco 1982, 29]. Besides, although some of the mentioned elements are clearly inspired by historical models, the architectural 'style' in this parish church clearly combines tradition and renovation, possibly marked by economic factors that determined the architectural simplicity. This situation has also been identified in the building of other parish churches located in other peripheric regions in Spain, like Asturias, also built in the 1950s by state organisms [Fernández García 2015, 7].

Although some religious architectural examples connected to new settlements built by the National Institute of Colonisation – such as the parish churches in Vegaviana, La Moheda, Rincón del Obispo or Alagón del Caudillo, located in Valle de Alagón, Extremadura [Centellas - Soler - Bazán De Huerta - Abujeta 2012, 288] – have been already studied due to their modern schemes, it is also worthy to get to know other religious architectures that materialise the intermediate step between the recovery of historic styles and modern proposals.

On the other hand, it is also considered possible that the housing buildings for workers were also consolidated at the same time, as previously suggested. Basing on the urban layout, some housing blocks were built near the chapel, and the photograph of this building in the postcard shows that the buildings next to the chapel were also built as non-permanent wooden edifices. Furthermore, the appearance these houses present nowadays is utterly different than the one-floor wooden blocks observed in the postcard, as each of the buildings is now only divided into two different and more comfortable residences.

Fortunately, Salto del Esla is a relatively populated village in summer, and, in fact, preservation works were carried out during this season in 2020. This situation is kind of exceptional among other cases of consolidated onsite dam villages built by the same company in Zamora, Spain, in the following years. Salto de Villalcampo and Salto de Castro, for instance, are two villages, built in the 1940s, which have been gradually abandoned for the last years and are currently degrading.

4 | Recovering the image of flooded villages: from 'La Pubblica' to 'La Pubblica de Campeán'

In his job as a cinematographer for Saltos del Duero and his contribution to documentary and informative film production about companies, the leading figure of Fernando López Heptener has been already studied by Mariano Cebrián [1994].

López Heptener worked for Saltos del Duero while the company was building the Ricobayo dam. In fact, he oversaw expropriations of lands and housing located in areas to be flooded [Cebrián Herreros 1994, 41] and that was the reason why he was able to capture with his camera the currently lost image of disappeared settlements. In this sense, one of his most remarkable production was *Por tierras de Zamora*. Although it may seem that this documentary was conceived to spread the historical or touristic information about this province, undoubtedly it also consists of a propaganda film funded by Saltos del Duero. This documentary contains views of

Ricobayo reservoir and dam building process, pictures of significant and impressive engineering structures, such as the bridge near Manzanal del Barco as well as the pioneer experience of the disassembling, moving and reassembling of the Visigoth San Pedro de la Nave church to save it from the flood [García Cuetos 2019, 22-35; Fernández Rodríguez 2021, 98]. The impact sought by Saltos del Duero was so important that the film was also shown at the Capital Cinema, in Madrid in 1933 [Cebrián Herreros 1994, 42] in order to reach as much audience as possible and convey the ideas of industrial and technical development and achievement that the activities carried out by the company Saltos del Duero implied.

In addition, this documentary was deliberately narrated. The possibility of including voice in the film offered the opportunity to justify the flooding and consequent devastation of six different villages under the waters of Ricobayo reservoir arguing the ‘miserable’ lives of those communities, which existed ‘unaffected over time’, isolated from modern times, and whose homes were ‘unhygienic and meagre’. Approaches like this could be described as a constant within this kind of contexts, whether real or literary. In fact, it is possible for us to find equivalent situations in Spanish contemporary literature, as happens in the novel *Central eléctrica* (1958) by Jesús López Pacheco, where the engineer, Mr. Ruiz, states that the world will not miss anything although those villages disappeared under the reservoir waters [Fernández Rodríguez 2021, 140, 141]. In Heptener’s documentary, these statements were exemplified precisely with images recorded in one of those flooded villages, La Pubblica, which was one of the villages where López-Heptener took part in the expropriations for Saltos del Duero too [Cebrián Herreros 1994, 41].

This humble village is described in the documentary as the fossilisation of the past in modern times in the most derogatory sense and the narrator even suggests that young people from La Pubblica were eager to leave their former homes since they ‘know that life in the new village (built by the company for them in Campeán Meadow) is going to be more pleasant and easier’. This breakdown between past and present times was also intentionally and metaphorically demonstrated in the film when showing the migration process: the first part of the route leaving La Pubblica was done on horseback, but afterwards people used cars to get to La Pubblica de Campeán.

Nevertheless, from our perspective, one of the most relevant issues regarding this documentary is precisely the possibility to recognise what was interpreted in the 1930s as the fossilisation of past times, because that preservation could imply what it is nowadays understood as heritage: popular cultural manifestations, techniques applied in different fields, vernacular architecture, traditional clothing, etc., preserved by a community as a support for their identity. In the end, *Por tierras de Zamora* constitutes a company-produced documentary that also presents diverse aspects that define both tangible and intangible cultural legacy preserved in ‘La Pubblica’ for generations until its devastation. Although the ‘poor living conditions’ described by the narrator, Heptener did not record any image in the inside of the houses in ‘La Pubblica’, or, at least, he decided not to include them in the final cut.

Through the documentary it is complicated to state the urban layout in the village, but in terms of infrastructures, it is feasible to conclude that this community did not have piped water supply to their homes, and that was the reason why they used water wells. For its part, the vernacular architecture built in the village was similar to the preserved in any other contemporary rural village. It is possible to identify buildings for housing, usually one-floor residences built in stone with tile or stone roofs, together with other constructions, that were roofed with stone or vegetal materials and could present one or two floors. These edifices could have been linked to farming activities since for instance, the livestock could be gathered on the ground floor and



Fig. 7: Fernando López-Heptener, Villagers travelling from La Püeblica to La Püeblica de Campeán (frames *Por Tierras de Zamora* 1933).



Fig. 8: Fernando López-Heptener, Villagers posing while using the well (frame from *Por Tierras de Zamora* 1933).



Fig. 9: Fernando López-Heptener, Views of different housing and farming buildings in La Puebla (frames from *Por Tierras de Zamora* 1933).

the level above could be used as straw loft. Moreover, the relevance of outer spaces, especially for women, who seemed to be used to gather in the street, but also in their home courtyards was also registered. Although maybe Heptener's intention could have been just to show some picturesque shots with women as main characters, this documentary also stands out for providing us with information about traditional feminised tasks in the village. Some of the recorded images depict the relevance of wool and linen culture in Castile and León. In fact, according to the information disseminated by the Oral Archive in the Ethnographic Museum in Castile and León, women used to be valued depending on how skilled they were in spinning and weaving, since these activities were fundamental for family economy in the region.

Another traditional work in the province is pottery, which is considered as outstanding in Moveros, where this industry is said to have been developed mainly by feminine potters [Cortes Vázquez 1958, 95]. Even though Moveros and La Puebla were not located in the same council, *Por tierras de Zamora* also shows the traditional role of women as potters in La Puebla before the flooding, connecting different villages through this traditional craft.

Likewise, it is considered relevant to outline the traditional costumes worn by some women for the recording. Although from a contemporary point of view the presence of this outfits seems to complement the picturesqueness of that stagnant village and its inhabitants sought by Lopez Heptener, women wearing them also imply an example of the extended possession and use in the village of the traditional costume, which is worn all over the region of Aliste, as well. As previously stated, many families and neighbours left La Puebla after the expropriations and moved to their new homes built by Saltos del Duero in La Puebla de Campeán. The moment when La Puebla was entirely inhabited is not specified in *Por tierras de Zamora*, but the documentary also shows the destruction suffered by the village since the water started to cover the already ruined buildings.

The last shown image related to 'La Puebla' in this film entails an emotional silent cry for the rootless commune and the abandoned village and deeply connects with the heart-breaking current view of ruin and devastation, emerging from the profoundness of the cultural landscape created after Ricobayo building when water level decreases in the reservoir during dry summers in Zamora.

5 | Conclusion

Reservoir and dam building implied the devastation of territories in inhabited remote rural areas, such as 'La Puebla', in Spain during the 20th century, which meant the irreparable loss of ways of living, traditions, and cultural manifestations of diverse foundation.

Nowadays, when the image of these flooded villages may have been forgotten, it is possible to recover not only the picture but also the village and its popular architecture, which provided the commune with spaces to carry out uses and traditions preserved until those times. The building of Ricobayo meant a breakdown in this community way of life when the population was forced to move to a brand-new village, materially and emotionally external to them, and were compelled to re-adapt to a new living context.

However, dam building was not only an activity connected to devastation. On the other hand, it was also the direct cause of the building of new settlements, which, after a consolidation process, turned into the definitive homes for workers and their families, a new community in the end, and functioned as any other common village with all the facilities required. Studying the evolution and consolidation processes of these camps allows as to delve into the conceiving



Fig. 10: Fernando López-Heptener, Women gathering in outer spaces to develop traditional works (frames from *Por Tierras de Zamora* 1933).



Fig. 11. Fernando López-Heptener, Traditional works carried out by women in La Púbrica (frames from *Por Tierras de Zamora* 1933).

of the urban layout and the election of the architectures built for the community of workers as permanent or provisional depending on its function. Surely, this information is also relevant to compare the building of these camps in different moments of Spanish recent history, especially when speaking about Franco's dictatorship and the regime's idiosyncrasy in connection to religion. Furthermore, being aware of these experiences may be also necessary nowadays for more than knowledge or heritage purposes.

Firstly, as long as water utilisation and future dam building works may affect small communities, it is considered vital to guarantee the preservation of their most relevant cultural manifestations in terms of memory and identity in order not to repeat the same mistakes.

On the other hand, regarding the onsite villages, it is important to value their significance as historical documents which show the development of hydropower industries in Spain during the 20th century and the criteria applied for urbanism and architecture policies in those times. In addition, considering the degradation observed in some of these settlements nowadays and the possibility of future interventions, it is believed that the first step required, before pondering to carry out any action, should be research in order to identify and study the relevance of these settlements and the architectures within.

Fig. 12: Fernando López-Heptener, View of La Pubblica after the flood (*Por Tierras de Zamora* 1933).



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