

HYDRAULIC COMMUNICATION STRUCTURES IN THE VEGA ALTA DEL SEGURA AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO TOURISM (MODERN AGE)

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Curiosity and knowledge encourage society to travel from one side to another. The knowledge about the cultural heritage is a composed core and endogenous tourism. So important is the role played by economic strategies to tourism, as the meaning and informative references relating to the monuments. These revelations cause emotional impressions and moral and cognitive impact on tourists. For this reason, this study is based on the progress of knowledge with the aim of being a means of improvement when the informative activity exercised by a guide.

The present study is based on an interpretation of the past (modern age) and the present on the oldest hydraulic communication structures (bridges, cradles and boats) in the Vega Alta del Segura (municipalities of Cieza, Abarán and Blanca), Murcia (Spain). In the area of research, there are nine bridges currently. After a bibliographical review and to recognize the antecedents of each of them, the historical analysis has been focused on three specific places. These three geographical spaces are occupied by the Bridge of Nine Eyes in Cieza, the Bridge of Iron in Blanca, both of automobile and pedestrian traffic, and the Old Bridge in Abarán of pedestrian traffic. The argument of this work is more inclined towards the tourist culture than towards a cultural tourism. The content shows a progress of knowledge. The objective is to recognize the tourist identity of these three bridges through historical knowledge and an analysis of the environmental landscape.

These bridges offer a scarce historical material wealth. The reason for this situation is explained through the destruction of the fearsome floods and the evolutionary influence of the technology emerged during the twentieth century. In effect, the successive interventions, the natural catastrophes hide their original architectural format. However, this circumstance doesn't mean that there isn't a rich and relevant documentation on them. The places where they are located today experienced different constructions during the last six centuries. In order to achieve the objectives of the research it has been necessary to follow an itinerary.

The first was to review and analyze the bibliographies of the research area. In second place has been to go to the Provincial Historical Archive of Murcia where it has handled the Notarial Protocols, and the Municipal Archives of Cieza, Abarán and Blanca. The finding of a documentary variety through the Notarial Protocols stands out. The testaments, the agreements, the litigation, the inventories, the agreements, the transfers of power stand out. In the Municipal Archives we have used the Actas Capitulares. The most used document has been about the ordinances, where Cieza has been the main source of this model. On the other hand, the Actas Capitulares of Abarán and Blanca have not transmitted any information

The third process is about collecting the data extracted from historical documents and bibliographies. The data has been classified into three tables by their corresponding thematic fields. The first table stores information about bridges, cradle and ships from 1500 to 1800. These data are arranged by a time criterion that goes from the oldest to the most modern date. The table contains five column headers (year, real estate, municipality, yield and cost rate). The second table shows the construction masters that intervened in the communication structures of the first table. This consists of five column headings (names of teachers, technique and municipality, year, work and reform, and the bridges that are dealt with). The third table reflects a hierarchical organization in the construction of bridges. Fourth, we have proceeded to analyze the data, compare them, know the differences and similarities between them. To all this we must add the use of graphic material, both historical and current

The structure of this work is presented with four points: The first section exposes the current context and the location of the hydraulic communication structures existing in the Segura river. The bridges in Cieza have a very specific monograph on their history and evolution. The same thing does not happen with the Puente de Hierro en Blanca, of which its historical past is unknown. Finally, the Old Bridge of Abarán is declared BIC (Well of Cultural Interest with category of Monument by the General Direction of Cultural Assets of the Region of Murcia). His information dates back to the 19th century, thanks to local studies.

The second section is divided into two general blocks: rural communication structures (Cunas and boats); and, secondly, urban communication structures (wooden bridges and stone bridges). The first block identifies which are the Cunas (elongated structure, which crossed the river from one side to another and was formed by two parallel esparto bars and wooden crossbars) and wooden boats. It is pointed out that the cribs were used in Abarán and in Blanca until the middle of the 18th century. On the other hand, in Cieza, cunas and boats were used when there was not enough time and money to build a bridge made of wood or stone.

The second block deals with wooden and stone bridges. It exposes the agents that conditioned and characterized the installation of bridges. The agents are: a) Demography. This section shows that the impact on the urban landscape depends on the population density of each municipality and its evolution during the Modern Age. b) Orography. The site and the relief also influenced that Cieza had in its territory bridges before Abarán and Blanca. This is because Cieza was in a place of greater openness and communication. In its territory was the royal road. The bridge of Cieza was the link that united the northwest and the center

of the Kingdom of Murcia. On the contrary, Abarán and Blanca are at the epicenter of a valley of difficult access and poor communication. c) Administrative procedures. The local councils were the ones who administered these works. The financial means were pro rata population of the municipality; amount contributed by other villas, especially in Cieza; use of money from city council coffers; and, finally, the donation of altruistic benefactors. d) The personnel involved and the organization of the work in the buildings. The presence of carpenters, stonemasons, masters of architecture and engineering was essential to design, build and preserve the bridges. It is formed by 14 professionals of this nature. These professionals were accompanied by a development team, composed of different degrees of power: the first, the regent (Director of work). In seconds powers (Alarifes Majors). Third, master masons, carpenters and lime manufacturers. In fourth and fifth level, minor workers and collaboration of the population. Sixth, the beasts and the animals.

The third section analyzes the landscape that surrounds these three bridges, where the interaction between nature and man is evident. From an environmental point of view, the scenario is detailed by its natural habitat, by the orographic, cultural and historical panoramas, and, finally, through sensory values (sound of the river, aromatic and color tonalities). This offers the value of these bridges by the visual quality of the immediate surroundings, the scenic background and the human assiduity. Therefore, these three bridges are integrated into a rich, active and efficient landscape.

The fourth section are the conclusions. The first conclusion affirms that the bridges of the Vega Alta del Segura are attractive elements for the development and tourist activity. They are located in a historical space of great intensity and social activity. Then they are places to conserve. Another conclusion has been the renewed knowledge about these communication units, especially in the Puente Viejo de Abarán (BIC) and the Puente de Hierro Blanco, by reducing the dates of their buildings (18th century), and by specifying unknown determining events. In the Bridge of the Nine Eyes of Cieza, on the other hand, the monograph coincides with all the documents found, up to 90% of the data accumulated in this property. However, it has been necessary to organize the testimonies in different lines, in order to clarify the discrepancies and similarities, and to configure a didactic and structured content. So, these bridges must be carefully considered and analyzed for two reasons: first, because they involve patrimonial values and provide cultural content for human knowledge; and, secondly, because they are a reflection of the insistence, conservation and effort of a population, maintaining the place and the current environment.

This study has proven the pragmatic and evolutionary value of these infrastructures, and the environmental and landscape value that surround them. Although, they are components that with certain tourist strategies can serve as attraction for tourists and interested. Then, it brings a duality: a contemplative tourism, based on cognitive and sensory experiences; and an active tourism. Bridge of the Nine Eyes, the Old Bridge and the Iron Bridge are assets with attractive values, which facilitated social fluidity, the union of isolated spaces, the prevention of tragedies and progress in a given territory.

