

LANDSCAPE AND MEMORY: LITERARY RECREATIONS OF THE MILITARY COLONIAL GEOGRAPHY IN MOROCCO

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The present article explores the existing relationships between landscape and memory in the Spanish imaginary geography of the colonial Morocco (1859-1936), through the analysis of the travel literature. The pages that continue try to find out the cultural signification of the most subjective side of the narrated landscape linked to the memory and to the national memory of the imperial period. It can be advanced that for the Spanish case, due to the development of the colonial policy itself Africanist, the warlike subject predominates, and for this reason -in itself very significant-, the textual contributions that refer to the geography of the war will be the only analyzed.

An observable common feature in travel literature is that what is appropriate it has been seen through the construction of landscapes (Zusman, 2007). All the diversity of natural and sociocultural elements is interrelated among themselves at the same time as they remain submitted to different esthetic and ideological canons (Gregory, 1994; Paradela, 2005, Schama, 1995). At the same time, when this process of transformation coincides with the colonial practice, the landscape revision is converted in a valuable instrument of analysis to examine the cultural aspects of the colonialism (Blunt, 2002; Borghi, 2008; Cosgrove, 2003; Ramiro et al., 2007) or the constitution and diffusion of some specific geographical imaginaries (Garcia Ramon, et al., 2008; Cerarols, 2009). So, the study of those practices of displacements (of journeys) allows us to reconstruct a Cultural Geography that finds its bases in the mobility and not in the sedentarism or, in any case, in the juxtaposition of both practices (Zusman et al., 2007).

On the other hand, recently we are also experiencing a «return to the landscape» (Mateu Bellés, et al., 2008), understanding it in a more holistic way (Azevedo, 2008). Now «the landscape can be interpreted as a social product, as the result of a collective transformation of the nature and as a cultural projection of a society in a specific space» (Nogué, 2007: 12-13). With this interpretative approach that understands the landscape as a social product, the values of the representation and of the power of the look recover. Consequently, the landscape not only shows as it is the world; they are rather a construction, a composition of this world,

a way of looking at it. In effect, when conceiving the landscape as a «way of seeing» (Berger, 1972; 1991), the ideological charge incorporated in the process of appropriation of the space (Mitchell, 2002) has to be assumed. That way, the landscapes are built socially within the framework of a complex and changing set of different relationships of being able. Besides, from this point of view, also one may arrive in the links that are established among the landscapes and their corresponding historical and national horizons. In this sense, and as it notes Ortega Cantero (2008), the modern societies have used often the landscape as factor of identity, supporting in it to characterize and to state the collective entity itself, and converting it into the sensitive representation of the feeling of national belonging. So, we see as the landscape can also acquire an important historical and national meaning.

The occupation and territorial colonization of Morocco was not in any moment an easy enterprise. From the Spanish point of view, it remained in a hard way marked by repeated warlike confrontations and by a great mobilization of soldiers and artillery, what was translated into a high Spanish military presence in African ground (Balfour, 2002; Guerrero Acosta, 1998; Madariaga, 1999; Nogué et al. 1999). If is done a geographical reading of the process, it is observed that the military skirmishes took place in the places where the interests of Spain and Morocco were opposed, that is, in the surroundings of Ceuta and Melilla. On the other hand, if we do a historical review, the period that is analyzed it starts with the military confrontations, which in Spain, were baptized as the War of Africa (1859-60). It was a war that from the first moment was orientalized and took some almost mythical characteristics in the Spanish collective imagery (González Alcantud, 2004; Marín, 1996; Martín Corrales, 2002; Morales Lezcano, 2004). Was considered a «great victory» that, even if it had some limited political and economic consequences, was converted in the main source of inspiration for the construction of one (new) colonialist speech that agglutinated all the legacy of exaltation of the Spanish medieval reconquest. Thus, the great majority of travellers that carried out the prototype route -of Tangier or Ceuta towards Tetouan-, went over what was the battlefield, and therefore, they reminisced about the productive and tasty military victory constantly in all the period of analysis.

In turn, from ends of the 19th century, those people that were displaced to Melilla or that went over the Rift route, also left evidence of the multiple warlike confrontations happened in the area of the Moroccan Rift. Melilla and its surrounding districts, lived before the formal establishment of the Protectorate, the military misfortunes of 1893, 1909 and 1911. Besides, after 1912, the rift resistance was organized and it played the lead in the hardest military backhand for the Spanish army, known popularly as the «disaster of Annual» (1921). This defeat, silenced and censored by the Spanish Army and Government (Maradiaga, 1999; Villalobos, 2004), had later its reply with the landing of Alhucemas, directed in 1925 by Primo de Rivera and where the Spanish and French armies cooperated for first and last time. The local resistance nullified militarily, a period of theoretical «pacification» that lasted up to the end of the period of analysis, when the same Spanish generals of the African army designed and executed the coup d'état of July 1936, was opened that it led to the Spanish Civil War.

Throughout the period of analysis, a lot of travel accounts left written down the evolution of the geography of the war in African territory. However, when referring to the Spanish evocations of the warlike landscapes, also the troublesome legacy inherited from the previous

centuries will have to be considered. This, will condition strongly the defining speech of the enemy (González Alcantud, 2002; Mateo Dieste, 1997), creating a particular look than only will collect the typical elements of the imperial period but all the ensemble of imaginations forged for centuries in the heart of the Spanish society.

Likewise, the landscapes are the configurations of the geographical spaces that, besides, of exerting basic territorial functions, are capable of having intense moral and cultural influences (Martínez de Pisón, 2007). The case of the Spanish literary recreations of the geography of the war in Morocco is a good example of that because puts in debate the role of the journeys associated to the construction of the «empires» and the «national states» in the conformation of certain geographical imaginations of relevance, the warlike ones, which from 1936 went to the Peninsula.

With the creation and recreation of specific landscapes associated to specific ideological messages, images and patterns of meanings are forged that they allow exerting the control on the behavior of what is historical, since the people assume these landscapes «politicized» in a natural and logical way, passing to incorporate them to their imagery and to consume them, to defend them and to legitimize them. In this sense, it is confirmed clearly that landscape is also a reflection of the power and a tool to establish, to manipulate and to legitimize the social relationships. As well manifest Nogué (2007), it is for this reason that it is so important to indulge in a controversy the symbols that the nation, the state or the religion leave printed in the landscape to mark their existence and its limits.

With the historical revision of the attempt of the Spanish colonial expansion in Morocco we see a «Catholic territoriality» that links the ideology of the reconquest with the new colonial needs and the hatred for the traditionally stereotyped Muslim as a patriotism surfaces. To more, has to be pointed out than only were Spanish victories. In any case, it has to be considered as a constant cumulus of military defeats that ended up turning into a nightmare for Spain. In this sense, the historical recovery of the geography of the war through their landscapes has a great documentary value, since the landscape experience is a result of a process of formation of the conscience historical and national (Ortega Cantero, 2008), which in turn is product and exhibition of the cultural history of Spain.

Finally, it is also necessary to arrive in the wise remark of Martínez de Pisón (2007), which considers that landscape is always filtered by the culture and besides, the degree of assimilation of the concept of landscape expresses the territorial culture of a society. In this sense, the analysis of the epic and Spanish tragedy in Morocco through the narration of their landscapes is a necessary exercise to revalue the effects and defaults of the Spanish colonial presence in Morocco -in their just measurement-.

