

THE PERSISTENCE OF ROMANTIC IDEAS AND THE ORIGINS OF NATURAL PARK POLICY IN SPAIN

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Abstract: The circulation of geographical ideas is interesting, not only within intellect currents, but also with regards to their transfer from the conceptual and representational to the practical plane. This article studies the influence of the romantic idea of nature and landscape in the earliest decisions regarding the declaration on National Parks. The Spanish case is specially interesting because of its landscape and environmental diversity. Moreover, Spain is known to be one of the first European countries to initiate a conservation policy, rooted in the romantic “regeneracionistas” movements, and because of the role played by geographers in the early conservation development. It is argued in the text, that it is the survival of the romantic ideas which partially explains the choice of the first parks and sites, more precisely, that such a process concentrated on high Atlantic mountains and forested areas while Mediterranean environments were postponed. Landscape and geologic symbolism, romanticism’s heritage, predominated at this time over ecological observance. In addition to this, identity and traditional reasons, which also favored romantic “places of choice”, whereas social reasons and arguments in favor of increase of productivity prevented an earlier classification of areas with great biological resources as Doñana in the Southwest.

Key-words: nature conservation, National Parks, romanticism, landscape, *regeneracionismo*, Covadonga, Ordesa, Doñana, Hernández-Pacheco.

Résumé: LA PERSISTANCE DES IDEES ROMANTIQUES ET LES ORIGINES DE LA POLITIQUE DES PARCS NATIONAUX EN ESPAGNE – La circulation des idées géographiques nous intéresse, non seulement à l’intérieur des grands courants de pensée, mais aussi par le transfert du monde des conceptions et des représentations à celui des pratiques de l’aménagement. Le texte analyse l’influence des conceptions romantiques de la nature et du paysage sur les premières classifications de parcs nationaux en Espagne. Le cas espagnol est intéressant du fait de la diversité de paysages et de milieux; parce que l’Espagne a été un des premiers pays européens à mettre en place une politique de protection de la nature; par le romantisme profond des mouvements régénérationnistes et de renaissance régionale de la fin du siècle dernier, et finalement, par le rôle joué par les géographes et les arguments géographiques dans cette première étape. L’hypothèse

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posée est que la survivance des images romantiques expliquerait en partie le choix des premiers parcs et sites et la préférence montrée pour les milieux de haute montagne atlantique et forestiers face aux milieux méditerranéens et humides. Le symbolisme paysager et géologique, de racines romantiques, aurait de cette façon primé sur le critère de représentation écosystémique. D'autres raisons de caractère historique et identitaire favorisèrent aussi les lieux d'élection romantique. Tandis que des arguments de caractère social et productif, notamment la colonisation agraire, auraient retardé la classification de milieux de grande richesse biologique, tels Doñana.

Mots-clés: conservation de la nature, parcs nationaux, romantisme, Espagne, *regeneracionismo*, Covadonga, Ordesa, Doñana, Hernández-Pacheco.

Resumo: A PERSISTÊNCIA DAS IDEIAS ROMÂNTICAS E AS ORIGENS DA POLÍTICA DE PARQUES NATURAIS EM ESPANHA – A circulação das ideias geográficas não interessa exclusivamente às grandes correntes de pensamento, mas à transferência do mundo das concepções e representações para o das práticas. Este artigo estuda a influência da ideia romântica de natureza e paisagem nas primeiras classificações de parques naturais em Espanha. O caso deste país é particularmente interessante pela diversidade de meios e paisagens. Além disso, Espanha foi um dos primeiros países europeus a pôr em prática uma política de protecção da natureza, ligada aos movimentos românticos “regeneracionistas” e de renascimento regional do fim do século passado. Finalmente, é interessante pelo papel que os geógrafos e os argumentos geográficos tiveram nesta etapa inicial. A hipótese avançada é de que a sobrevivência das imagens românticas explicaria, pelo menos em parte, a escolha dos primeiros parques e sítios e a preferência pelos meios atlânticos e florestais de alta montanha em desfavor da montanha mediterrânea. O simbolismo paisagístico e geológico, com raízes românticas, prevaleceu sobre critérios ecossistêmicos. Outras razões, ligadas à identidade e à história, favoreceram também os lugares de cariz romântico. Argumentos de carácter social ou produtivo, nomeadamente a colonização agrária, teriam retardado a classificação de meios de grande riqueza biológica como Doñana.

Palavras-chave: Conservação da natureza, parques nacionais, romantismo, Espanha, *regeneracionismo*, Covadonga, Ordesa, Doñana, Hernández-Pacheco.

INTRODUCTION

The romantic concept of nature and of landscapes had an obvious influence on the initial decisions and practices of conservationists. The selection of the earliest parks and national sites was directly related to the preferences of romantic travellers, naturalists and geographers with a special predilection for high mountain landscapes and mesophile forests. These relationships will be analysed here with reference to Spain. Other countries' histories of conservation have already taken into account these ties, such as the U.S. (DEMARS, 1990), especially interesting since American parks were the model which other countries, starting with Spain, aimed to imitate.

The circulation of geographical ideas is interesting to note, not only within intellectual currents, but also their transfer from the plane of conceptualization, representation and sensibilities to practices of management of nature and society with the subsequent thematic and temporal adjustments and gaps which they produced. Spain is of particular interest in a review of these links: first, because of its landscape and environmental diversity; second, because it was one of the first European countries to establish park policies, with as much enthusiasm as lack of resources, a problem that made it necessary to restrict the number of declarations. Finally, because of the role played by certain geographers: among the foreigners, Humboldt, Ramond and Schrader; among the Spaniards, Eduardo Hernández-Pacheco, responsible in the first third of this century for nature conservation policy.

It can be argued that the link between the survival of romantic notions and subsequent national park policy explains, in part, the fact that, in the chronology of the declarations, the Atlantic mountains preceded the wetlands and the Mediterranean mountains. On the other hand, geological and forestry symbolism prevailed over criteria on the biodiversity richness of the wetlands, and above all, of the Mediterranean ecosystems. Therefore landscape symbolism antedated the criterion of ecosystem representation.

The process we are analyzing began in Spain in 1911 when the Royal Commission of Tourism was given the mission of “effective conservation” as well as the assignment of promoting “the adequate exhibition of artistic, monumental and picturesque Spain”. In 1916, the Spanish National Parks Law was passed, inspired by pioneer examples on the U.S. and by existing precedents in Argentina and Switzerland. In this law, parks were understood as “gea, flora, fauna and landscape” reserves. The first generation of parks included Covadonga and Ordesa (1918) both in humid forest mountains, a choice that clearly fit the Alpine image.

No new declarations were issued until the 1920's and 1930's when, instead of parks, more limited areas were classified as Natural Sites of National Interest, extending protection to some coastal and Mediterranean areas. Nevertheless, the reasoning continued to be based on picturesque, lithological, cultural and forestry criteria rather than on biodiversity. In the 1950's, the volcanic parks on the Canary Islands became classified according to their tourist value and feature richness. But the marshlands of Doñana, one of the first European biological reserves – if not the first one – did not obtain a declaration until 1969 and Cabañeros, the first Mediterranean park classified as such, had to wait until the last decade of this century to obtain it.

In what follows, I will try to demonstrate the responsibility of the persistence of romantic landscape archetypes in the assignment of priorities and the frustrating delays. This responsibility is shared with a determined willingness to colonize and increase productivity in reputedly sterile and unhealthy environments.

THE ROMANTIC NATURE AND THE INSTITUTION OF EMBLEMATIC LANDSCAPES

To begin, I would like to recall here the organic and essential aesthetic dimension of the romantic conceptualization of nature. Romanticism supposes, in the first place, the rejection of previous mechanistic conceptualizations and the affirmation of life. That is, the presentation of nature as an organic entity. Under this conception, nature is conceived and felt to be a living organized totality of which human beings are a part. Life is not a neutral space, it is oriented and organized; this organism has a form and places become meaningful (BESSE, 1992: 107).

But, additionally, the romantic conceptualization includes the aesthetic experience as a means of knowledge. It was Kant who established, in his "Criticism of Practical Knowledge", the autonomy of aesthetic judgement by pointing out the link between "the starry sky above my head" and "the moral law within me". The concept of "naturelandscape" originated in this way and landscape was apprehended as an aesthetic representation of nature, which is revealed to anyone who contemplates it with feeling. That way of seeing is charged with theory, and this theoretical contemplation becomes an aesthetic spectacle (RITTER, 1997: 51).

Alexander von Humboldt proved to be one of the great theorists of the aesthetic mediation of knowledge when in the first chapter of *Cosmos* speaks about "the different degrees of enjoyment offered by nature, and the study of its laws" (HUMBOLDT, 1874: 1-39). Human beings and nature cannot be conceived of as separate realities. Humboldt had previously said in the introduction to his *Aspects of Nature* that "the external physical world is reflected as in a mirror into the internal moral world" (HUMBOLDT, 1964: 4). In *Cosmos*, moreover he speaks of "the mysterious analogies and the moral harmonies which unite man with the external world" (HUMBOLDT, 1874: 7). Accordingly, Carl Gustav Carus (1789-1869), doctor, naturalist, painter and a good friend of Friedrich's, dedicates an appendix to his *Letters on Landscape Painting* (1815-1835) to "the correspondence between human moods and nature's moods" (CARUS, 1992).

Humboldt considered it a "temerity" to break the physical world down into its various elements "because the great character of a landscape, and all of nature's scenery, depends on the simultaneousness of the ideas and feelings which agitate the observer" (HUMBOLDT, 1874: 14). The power of nature is revealed in the *Tableau* as a set of impressions and emotions whose effects are manifested all at once.

Through the dual paths of organicism and aesthetic comprehension, the morphological perspective and the emergence of landscape as a place of meaning, are imposed. From this point of view, art and science provide mutual support and become complementary. The emergence at the same time of scientific objectivity and the aesthetic representation of nature is by no means fortuitous. Humboldt combined artistic intuition with scientific observation and presented an unified vision of art and science (BUNKSE, 1981). Carus, as Goethe's collaborator in the journal *Zur Morphologie*, writes that the principle of the unity of nature should dominate. Each individual

element can refer to the whole nature's life. Therefore, the landscape painter should be faithful to the whole as well as to the individual elements, with the same solicitous loyalty as the geologist, the geographer or the botanist, "The eye, free and spiritual, which contemplates unity, along with a faithful, simple and orderly observation". The study of landscape combines art, its contemplative display, with the scientific, objective interpretation of nature (ARNALDO, 1992: 12).

This complementary aspect of art and science permits us to speak of the survival of romantic notions far beyond what happened in literature and fine arts. It would be erroneous, according to Alvin Gouldner's study on the deep structures of the social sciences, to consider romanticism and positivism as separate and opposite responses to the crisis of the times (GOULDNER, 1973: 314).

It is important to add to the morphological dimension previously mentioned the historicity of nature. Nature as a totality spreads out, including human history in its temporal dimension. Humboldt stated in *Cosmos* that "what should seduce us in the study of life and the forces which control the universe, is not so much the knowledge of the essence of beings, but their law of development, that is, the successive forms that they adopt".

Although Goethe was careful to separate his morphology from geology, both Humboldt and Carus brought them together. "The shapes of rocks contain their history" said Humboldt. And Carus, in his letter on "The physiognomy of mountains" – which parallels Humboldt's text "The physiognomy of plants" included in his *Aspects* – is very extensive in organology, which reminds us of Schelling's observation "nature is a ruin", and it is a clear demonstration of the romantic's sensitivity towards geological forms. In any case, the romantic's method of knowledge is both morphological and genetic: everything that exists must manifest itself through forms and their successive transformations. This is Goethe's posture in one of the most important and conspicuous romantic formulations.

The romantic way of seeing is, therefore, morphological, landscapist and synthetical, with a tendency towards sites of choice, predilections, "sites in common". "There are chosen places which sum up very well the general movement of the world. Landscape should be understood, according to Goethe's concept, as a symbol" (BESSE, 1992: 111). Goethe himself wrote, after his visit to Switzerland in 1787, that "space in its wholeness is contemplated through the prism of the immediacy of the surroundings".

George Simmel, in a much later text on the feeling for landscape, understood clearly the all encompassing effects of concrete and well-defined landscapes. It is consciousness which creates a new unity beyond isolated elements. The feature of landscape is that an individualized and clearly-defined section of nature functions as a unit and is defined by its borders. Landscape is part of a greater whole which becomes an "independent totality". Nature as a whole is so to speak "transported" in the individuality of each landscape (SIMMEL, 1913).

The meaning of romantic travel should be understood from the viewpoint of sites of choice with their own cult following. Direct contact with nature and landscapes, at

the same time, will be the source of knowledge and moral well-being. One of the best expressions of an invitation to travel is the Alpine pilgrimage. The experience goes all the way back to the intellectual and spiritual plenitude experienced by Petrarch on ascending Mont Ventoux in 1335, and whose story was celebrated in a commentary by Jacob Burckhardt. But it was Rousseau who began the itinerary, followed by such eminent personalities as Goethe, De Saussure, Ramond, Jean Paul Tieck and Humboldt, among others.

The high mountain became an expression of moral content, of the symbolic value of landscape and of the formalization of the sublime (MARTÍNEZ DE PISÓN, 1998). The silent austerity of the mountain provokes the expansion of thought in Senacour's *Obermann*: "On the mountain tops, all of them, peace reigns" according to Goethe's poem, and Humboldt continues: "Freedom is found in the mountains! (...) Everywhere the world is perfect except where man takes his troubles with him" (HUMBOLDT, 1808: 4). The great Spanish writer Unamuno wrote from the top of the Peña de Francia in the Iberian Central Range of the impression made on him by Senancour's book on landscape romanticism: "The *Obermann* is not a book, it is a soul, a soul as vast as that of the mountain". Undoubtedly, the image of the mountain as a spiritual as well as a tourist destination has been one of the most solid and lasting constructs of romanticism (CRUZ OROZCO, 1998).

Along with the high mountain, the original Atlantic forests appear in romantic sentiment; areas without vegetation cannot be comparable in beauty to areas of dense forest. Rousseau expressed this concept clearly: "On sait déjà ce que j'entends par un beau pays. Jamais pays de plaine quelque beau qu'il fût ne parut tel à mes yeux: il me faut des torrents, des rochers, des sapins, des bois noirs, des montagnes, des chemins raboteux à monter et à descendre, des précipices à mes côtés qui me fassent bien peur" (quoted by CRUZ OROZCO, 1998: 68). The words of Pedro Pidal – as we shall see the founding father of Spanish parks – are similar: "A landscape without trees, besides being ugly, is also uninteresting" (PIDAL, 1917 quoted in GÓMEZ MENDOZA, 1992: 186)

THE ROMANTIC SENSIBILITY OF THE SPANISH "REGENERACIONISMOS" ON THE EVE OF CONSERVATION MEASURES

The romantic concept of nature and knowledge of its landscapes was extensive in Spain throughout the 19th century, with relatively late and modest literary and pictorial manifestations. The scholars on the field of comparative literature delay (VAN TIEGHEM, 1948: 188) have pointed out the delay of the Spanish romantic movement (not clearly defined until the 1830's), its inspiration in national history, and its imitation of the French. This relatively modest movement, however, is balanced by the splendid travel literature (Richard Ford, Borrow, Gautier, Hugo), Spain being a favourite destination of romantic travellers.

Within this panorama, two facts become particularly important. The philosophy of nature, not widely-known until then, finally obtained recognition through the anachronistic version of one of the last epigones, Karl Krause, incorporated to the

modernizing reformation represented by the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (Free Teaching Institute, ILE). It has been pointed the deep romantic roots of the ILE (JOBIT, 1936: 282). Krausism, interpreted as harmonic rationalism and christened as a “*novísima* philosophy”, encouraged the movement of intellectual and cultural agitation of the last third of the century. At the same time, some of the linguistic and cultural reservations towards Germany collapse and a certain Germanophile admiration replaces the following that France had up until then (GÓMEZ MENDOZA, 1999).

The other incisive event is that the national regeneration and nationalist movements recover and insure the survival of romanticism’s landscape archetypes, as part of their identifying claims. This survival is indeed paradoxical. As with Taine in France, the intellectual reaction to defeat and decadence is search for renewal in the return to the most genuine reality, one’s own identity. That is what occurred with Spanish *Regeneracionismo*, but also with the *Renaixença* in Catalonia, the more modest Valencian movement, and the all too easily forgotten *Rexurdimento* in Galicia. More than anywhere else, the Catalonians became aware of their own mountainous territory. However, the strength of Swiss myths and mountain imagery beyond the Pyrenees is such that many mountainous regions gain prestige by being called Spanish (or Catalanian, Valencian ...) Switzerlands. The Swiss stereotype continued to be very much alive at the beginning of this century.

Since its creation in 1876, the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* played a fundamental role in affirming the educational function of direct contact with nature. The members of this institution made considerable contributions towards modernizing the cultural value of Spanish landscapes. The founder, Giner de los Ríos, exalted in his article “Landscapes” in 1916 (GINER DE LOS RÍOS, 1916: 58) “the purifying contact with nature” which favours “the expansion of fantasy, the nobility of the emotions, the dignity of our fondness and love of things moral”. “Landscapes teach us”, Ortega y Gasset would say.

The landscape sensibility of “institucionistas” shows up particularly in the Guadarrama Range in Madrid. The Guadarrama for Giner is a vital experience, according to Altamira (ORTEGA CANTERO, 1998). Within the Institution, in 1886, the Society for the study of the Guadarrama was founded, with encouragement from geologists, botanists, zoologists and geographers. The Guadarrama became the Institution’s choice for teaching and reformation projects. It was there that Giner affirmed that “all landscape is geology” and that there is a “geological aesthetic”. This geologism is maintained intact in that great specialist in conservation in its early period, Eduardo Hernández-Pacheco, who affirms that “landscape is the synthetical manifestation of geological and geographical conditions and circumstances that occur in a place. Accordingly, landscape is the result of the geographical environment and of the geological milieu” (HERNÁNDEZ-PACHECO, 1934).

At the same time, the influence and responsibility of the forestry engineers (trained in Saxon schools) towards nature conservation contributes to the consolidation of the favoured image of the Euro-Siberian deciduous forest as well as the primeval

forest. The aesthetic and symbolic appreciation of the Mediterranean evergreen forest will take even longer to consolidate than Mediterranean forestry itself. At the same time, the myth and fashion of the steppes retarded knowledge and evaluation of maquis and chaparral.

COVADONGA AND ORDESA: TWO SANCTUARY PARKS

As I mentioned before, the first two parks created in Spain, based on the 1916 law, were those of Covadonga or Peña Santa in the Cantabric Range and Ordesa in the Pyrenees, as it was said, one in a mountainous area and the other in a high mountain valley. In 1917, a national site (an unusual, ambiguous category) was declared in San Juan de la Peña, in Aragon, in the pre-Pyrenees, home to a monastery, and a place of great symbolic history.

It has been said, justly, that in those first declarations there was a predominance of all that was wild, picturesque, sublime and natural. But, above all, it was a transfer of a history and landscape conceptualization to the area of practical conservation (LLORENS I RODRIGUEZ, 1991).

There were not many European precedents. In the first decade of this century the Picturesque Germany Conservation League and the Swiss Alpine and Nature Protection Leagues were founded. The *Commission Géologique* had made an *appel aux suisses* to protect the erratic blocks, fragments of the “Alpine heart of the Fatherland”. But the model used was that of a reserve excluding of intensive farming following the U.S. example of cultural and recreational use by the general public, as Yosemite Grant and Yellowstone National Park, created in 1864 in 1872, respectively. Following the Alpine, naturalist and patriotic discourse, the Engladine and Gran Paradiso parks were created in 1916. Hence, both Switzerland and Sweden were ahead of Spain.

In Spain, the promoter of parks and legal initiatives was Pedro Pidal, marquis of Villaviciosa in Asturias, aristocrat, a great hunter and a mediocre politician. He very obviously followed the American model; the geologist Juan Vilanova was among the first to point out the expediency of following the American model, and Pidal had visited both Yellowstone and Yosemite during his trip to the U.S.

Covadonga was Pidal's great obsession. His ideas were clearly naturalist and patriotic. The fact that Covadonga was the mythical site where the Christians began their re-conquest of Spanish lands lost to the Moorish invasion must be taken into account. So it is not surprising that the inauguration of the park on 6 September 1918 by the monarchs coincided with the 12th anniversary of the Battle of Covadonga. From this vantage point, Peña Santa is more than just a park.

But Picos de Europa in the Cantabric Range was also a favorite site of European mountain climbing and hiking for personages such as Roberto Frasinelli (“the German from Corao”), Paul Labrousche and the Count of Saint-Saud. It was the subject of one of the pioneer studies of modern Spanish geology, led by one of its founding members (PRADO, 1860). Finally, it was a royal game reserve.

Thus many elements converged to make Covadonga the priority of the national conservation policy. The aristocratic taste for nature (well represented in the Marquis of Villaviciosa) is felt, as well as the patriotic tendency to convert the Spanish Reconquest into something sublime, and at the same time to stage a “forestry re-conquest”. This was an attempt to create a “nature sanctuary”. “Are there not art sanctuaries? Why not nature sanctuaries?” asked Pidal in the defense of the declaration in the Senate. As in the U.S. case (DEMARS, 1990: 20), the exaltation of patriotic history and religion were added to the love of nature.

But one aspect was different from the American model. The State was not the owner of the land and Covadonga has had, since its inception and throughout its existence, administrative difficulties due to the hostility expressed by the local population and the municipalities, owners of the property. Later there were conflicts due to the limitations imposed on mining and hunting, even endangering the place of the Picos de Europa in the European network of nature reserves.

Less symbolic, from a historical viewpoint, than Covadonga, and less conflictive, Ordesa is a romantic discovery which complements the other park very well, being in a valley, as mentioned previously. The geologist Ramond de Carbonnières was the first to ascend Monte Perdido in 1802; Victor Hugo and Jules Verne celebrated its beauty; Schrader shared his knowledge of the other side of the range, and Lucien Briet promoted its official protection in 1913, in a text which the Aragon authorities were quick to publish.

The terms in which both Pidal and Hernández-Pacheco expressed their viewpoints on Ordesa correspond exactly to the landscape archetypes promoted by Humboldt and other romantic naturalists. Pidal states, in the preamble of the legal decree on cataloguing: “Covadonga is a mountainous park, for excursions, for contemplating rocks and crevices, of narrow peaks (...) and the Ordesa Valley is a valley rather than a mountain park, of withdrawal rather than of expansion, Paradise rather than Olympus; one need not ascend in order to encounter that overwhelming aesthetic feeling (...). In exalting the country’s land as it deserves, we can say, Sir, without hyperbole, that if Peña Santa is Olympus, then the Ara River Valley in Ordesa is Paradise”.

Hernández-Pacheco states: “Unlike Covadonga, Ordesa is a valley park, of majestic serenity, in which rocks and forests alternate in perfect harmony, which makes this place one of the most beautiful on earth (...). Immediately the work of nature can be seen; the vast plain gives way to dense forests (...). The river meanders through the center of the broad valley, among the vegetation or through placid and delightful prairies (...). The most outstanding feature of Ordesa National Park is the verticality of the imposing majestic cliffs which surround it (...). The Arazas river descends (...) in cascades to the cirque”.(HERNÁNDEZ-PACHECO, 1921: 88-90).

For reasons which do not concern us here, this first stage of declarations was limited to those two parks already mentioned. In spite of being a favorite of the “institucionistas” – his leader, Giner, upon arriving at the top had “the impression of

deep introspection, very solemn, truly religious” – neither the Guadarrama Range nor the Gredos Range (royal game reserve and another favorite of the “regeneracionistas”), both in the central system, nor Sierra Nevada were recognized as parks during this period, although the subject was discussed. Nor was Montserrat declared a Catalanian National Park, in spite of numerous petitions.

Not until the second stage, beginning with the diversification of the 1920’s and 1930’s, were these areas protected, not as national parks but as national sites. Interestingly, from the point of view we are analyzing here, the discussion is practically identical to the earlier ones: wilderness, preferably mountain and forest areas (although some coastal areas were included) with notable lithologies and with a historical or identity significance. Hernández-Pacheco admitted that “those Spanish sites under official protection and which are better cared for, happen to be, for the most part, in mountain and forest areas with special attention given to rocky formations, vegetation and fauna” (HERNÁNDEZ-PACHECO 1933: 6-7).

At any rate, the reasons that certain areas of the Guadarrama Range were declared to be Natural Sites and Monuments of National Interest contain several new aspects: “In addition to the beauty of the abrupt rock formations of the crests, there is the placid serenity of its ample valleys, its green meadows, the delightfully dense pine forests which extend along the mountainsides and the high valleys, the evergreen oak, oak, broom, lavender and thyme in the maquis. Picturesque mountain villages and ancient structures of architectural beauty harmonize with the natural elements of the landscape” (Royal Decree, 30 September 1930).

The initial park policies contain modern as well as traditional political elements. As already mentioned in this article, Pedro Pidal sums up these contradictions very well: “Giner, the teacher, took his students to the Picos de Europa. Alphonse XIII, the politician, takes the Spaniards by his example to the Gredos Range. The archbishop of Tarragona leads the people of Aragon through the Ordesa Valley on a visit. Education, politics and religion march together in unison” (PIDAL, 1917 quoted by GÓMEZ MENDOZA, 1992: 191).

DOÑANA: A ROMANTIC MYTH WHOSE CONSERVATION IS POSTPONED BY EXPLOTATION

For many years the Doñana marshlands were without a place in history, a primitive unknown corner about which everything was imagined but nothing was proven (OJEDA, 1998). What makes it interesting is the hunting aspect, at least as intense as that of Picos de Europa or the Gredos Range, but at the same time different; in Doñana, the archaeological richness of Tartessos is being uncovered, and there is a distinct classical and cultural myth at work there. Abel Chapman, the naturalist and hunter, and his partner Walter Buck, contributed to that myth. In their book *Unexplored Spain* (published after *Wild Spain*), they describe Doñana with its exotic African characteristics, the desolation of its lovely landscapes, the wandering herds, the sterile splendor, the oasis. On this border land, hunting expeditions are viewed somehow as an epic poem (CHAPMAN and BUCK, 1910).

Why, with all that recognition and appreciation, was the classification of Doñana as a national park not completed until 1969? In my opinion, it was due to the priority given to Alpine archetypes as well as to its consideration, from a colonization point of view, of an unhealthy countryside which should be drained and put to productive use.

The process of draining marshes began around the middle of the 18th century reaching the 20th century, associated with agricultural reform initiatives. The production front, explicitly or implicitly opposed to protection, has been made up of local populations struggling with poverty, politicians in favor of progress, and engineers and technicians in general. Opposed to them, an even more heterogeneous conservationist alliance: aristocratic land owners, the wine-making elite in Jerez, intellectuals and naturalists, hunters and sportsmen, European celebrities and entities and researchers from all over the world.

Let me give an eloquent example of the contradictions and tardiness linked to the protection policy: in 1918, the same year that Ordesa and Picos de Europa were declared national parks, a law was passed which allowed lagoons, marshes and swamps to be drained. Under this law some excellent wetlands all over Spain have been drained (euphemistically, “improved”). Doñana was subjected to disgraceful interventions from an ecological viewpoint.

At the same time, we can see in this anachronism the slowness of ecological intervention in continental wetlands and the survival of landscape and historical priorities as far as parks declarations is concerned. Only one lagoon area was protected before Doñana: that of the Ruidera Lagoon in 1933. This case was an exception, based on biological concerns, and predicted the tendencies, in the second half of the 20th century, of biological conservation.

In any case, the defense of Doñana was slow and required the intervention of Spanish ornithologists and zoologists as well as European authorities. In the 1950's, the zoologist Francisco Bernis clearly expressed the real value of Doñana, opposed reforestation with foreign species and set the stage for a change in conservation policy: “Doñana is, above all, a precious relic of pure nature which contains the most formidable and well-known zoological community surviving in Europe (...). Doñana represents a wonderful triple value, natural, aesthetic and biological within Spanish territory. It is not a wasteland among others in the Iberian Peninsula (...). Along with the establishment of Alpine reserves and high mountain forest reserves, we must also create reserves of mountains with evergreen vegetation in the central area, in bird colonies on keys, in lagoons or marshes rich in aquatic birds, and finally in the rich maquis. Only such a diverse set of reserves will forever protect the complete range of Iberian wildlife (FERNÁNDEZ and PRADAS, 1996: 214-215).

CONCLUSION

The complex and contradictory phenomenon of the national parks cannot be exclusively interpreted on the basis of its links to the ideas and the preferred landscapes of the romanticists. But the romantic legacy stands out in this matter by its

capacity to direct general policy and specific decisions. The persistence of romantic landscape imagery is noteworthy. This is one of the conclusions of this text, as it was that of Demars in the U.S.

As I pointed out at first, in my opinion, the complex world of concepts and values based on the romantic view of nature and landscape, along side with traditional and identity claims, explain the fact that geological and forestry symbolism, prevailed, in the origins of conservationism, over more recent biological concerns.

To explain the relatively late arrival of biological concerns, we must consider that – in some areas and for some species – conservationist ideas were up against ideas of productivity and hygiene, such as agricultural reform and land division. Not unrelated to this theme is the older distinction between harmful species as opposed to useful species, which can be extended to the Illustration concept of unhealthy versus thriving environments. The best example of this is that the same year, 1918, that laws were passed to begin draining marshes and wetlands, coincided with the declaration of the first national parks.

In any case, the practice of declaring parks as landscape reserves contributes to their symbolic and even mythical character, as Mircea Eliade emphasized when he spoke of sacred space as separated from the surrounding profane space.

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