

Landscape and identity around memorials and symbolic places representative of the Franco regime in Madrid

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This paper addresses the landscape work that surrounds some memorials and symbolic places from the Franco regime. In particular, it focuses on the construction of sceneries around the most significant monuments erected during the regime near Madrid, such as the Valley of the Fallen, the monument to the Sacred Heart in *Cerro de los Ángeles* or the Martyrs Cemetery in *Paracuellos del Jarama*. In these cases, reforestation was aimed at beautifying the surroundings, with the purpose of highlighting the constructions and perpetuating their purpose, to raise awareness and extol the virtues of the political order (Madrazo García de Lomana y Saez Pombo, 2018). With the same propagandistic goal, reforestation projects were carried out in some emblematic areas on the outskirts of the city that had been hit during the Civil War: *Ciudad Universitaria*, *Casa de Campo*, *El Pardo*.

Other reforestation projects in the area surrounding Madrid also have a scenic value, generic but explicit and of great symbolic importance. Among these, different types may be

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identified such as those undertaken to “enhance the landscape” on access routes to Madrid, whether by motorways or its airport, or initiatives called for by the city council to embellish new urban development plans, or actions taken further from the city in forest areas with the aim of completing Madrid’s forestland and landscape panorama.

From the landscape point of view, firstly, these reforestation works were carried out by the State Forest Heritage (*Patrimonio Forestal del Estado* - PFE) following similar technical guidelines to those applied for the massive reforestation drive implemented in rural and mountain areas of Spain. Forestry engineers’ landscape concerns are not new, having begun with the advent of modern forestry in Spain in the mid-19th century and its expansion in the 20th century, when engineers and other forestry advocates denounced the state of Spanish forests and the landscape in general (Gómez Mendoza, 1992). In line with this notion of a “forestry crusade”, in the PFE documents relating to these areas in the environment surrounding Madrid, the enemy threatening the woodlands and forests were no longer goats and livestock farming, but “the most undesirable low-class and villainous suburban inhabitants that (...) steal wire fencing, piping, plants (...) cause forest fires”.

Secondly, these landscape afforestations, being located in areas of symbolic interest to Francoism, were appraised according to scenic values and notions of a political and ideological nature. The Francoist regime’s passionate lectures on landscape and nature were a trait shared with other twentieth-century dictatorial regimes (McNeill, 2000; Bruggermeier, Cioc & Zeller, 2005; Brain, 2010; Armiero, 2011; Chapoutot, 2012; Box, 2016). It is interesting to draw a comparison between the general high esteem in which such ideals were held by Francoism, from a rhetorical outlook rather than a real ecological interest, and the distinct focus in each landscape project on extolling certain values or singing the praises of its specific usefulness.

This historical reconstruction, inventory and classification of afforestation projects in the area surrounding Madrid between 1940 and 1980 is a little-known chapter of great landscaping import. Moreover, the permanence or transformation of forests engulfed by the city's expansion and the footprint and present meaning of such reforestation initiatives, are key to understanding the significance of landscape heritage.

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