

Evolution of the urban profile of the city of Zamora: From cartography to an icon vision

The iconic image of the city of Zamora is undoubtedly the urban profile of the immediate vicinity of the Cathedral over the Las Peñas de Santa Marta ravine. The attractiveness of this scene lies in the composition of five fundamental elements: the mighty Douro river at the base, the water mills on the left bank, the medieval bridge on the right one, the extraordinary stone ravine, and standing out over all of them, the Wall, the

urban profile of the historic center and the Cathedral of the city.

It is intended to carry out the graphic analysis of the origin and evolution of the formation of this representative city scene. Also, the study of the representations throughout the history both cartographic and artistic of this relevant heritage landscape located between urban and natural environment.



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Keywords:
Zamora; Duero; urban profile; heritage landscape

1. INTRODUCTION: ORIGIN AND CREATION OF THE SCENE

The city of Zamora is located at the west of the largest region in Spain, the autonomous community of Castilla y León, in a border area of the Portuguese region of Trás-os-Montes. The origin of the first relevant settlement is very old, it is believed that it may be related to the pre-Roman culture of the vacceo people. This modest nucleus, and those that would follow it, took advantage of the unbeatable defensive characteristics of the place, since it would settle on the tip of a triangular plateau with pronounced ravines throughout the perimeter except at the eastern end (Fig. 1). As if that were not enough, there were two river channels surrounding the peninsula, in the north the Valderaduey and in the south the mighty river Duero, which in addition to offering defense provided the necessary water for the survival of the community. The first substantial modification of the southern slope of the ravines next to the Duero was the work of the Romans. These would build a settlement of small dimensions that they called Ocelloduri, a must stop on the Via de la Plata, one of the most important Roman roads of the Iberian Peninsula, which crossed it from north to south. The imprint on the landscape was the construction of a long bridge over the Duero that would condition the ascent to the urban plateau (Fig. 2). As the example of the original bridge of the nearby city of Toro (the Roman Tree), it was a bridge of ten spans saved with ashlar piles and wooden structure platform[1]. The small settlements at the top of the plateau would continue during the centuries of the Low Middle Ages without relevant alterations on the profile of the hill. It would not be until the year 893, just when Leon King Alfonso III would build the first walled nucleus as a bulwark on the banks of the Duero (Fig. 2). This sought to mark a new frontier within the reconquest of the Christian kingdoms over the Muslim territories of Al-Andalus.

The urban nucleus of the city remained in its origins linked to warlike motivations, maintaining its walled profile in front of the Duero as a defensive stronghold of the territories north of the city. With

the advance of the years and the withdrawal of the war front, these territories attracted new settlers and, in this way, the city progressively increased until the mid-eleventh century, when it became essential to build a new and expanded walled enclosure in Zamora (Fig. 3).

Concerning the study area, it is worth noting the construction of a long wall that adheres to the irregular shape of the ravines. It was at those moments when the numerous Romanesque churches were erected, serving as a meeting point for the

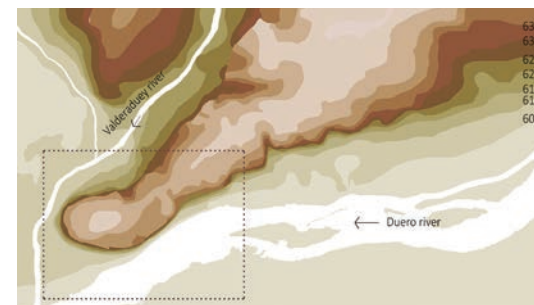
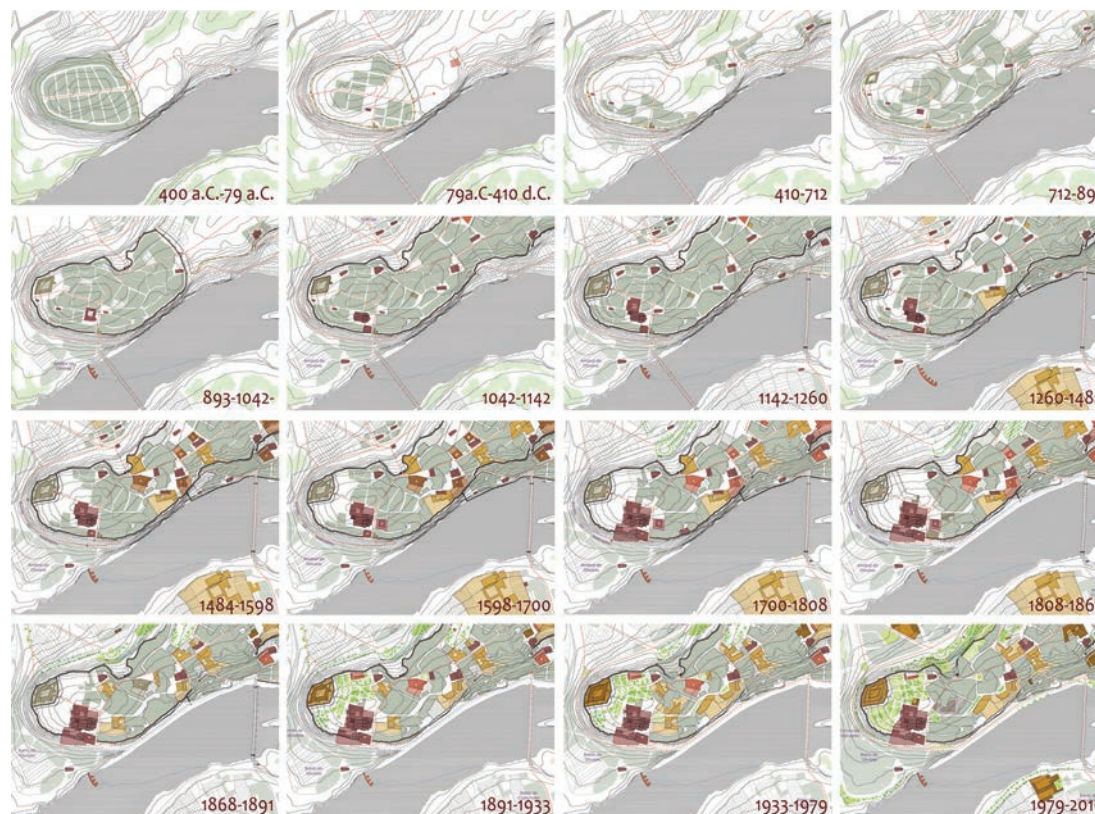


Fig. 1 - Topographic map of the city of Zamora (author's elaboration).

Fig. 2 - Urban evolution of the study area (author's elaboration).



different neighborhoods of the city. Within this constructive apogee the Cathedral of El Salvador was built, with its characteristic Byzantine dome similar to that of the cathedral of the nearby city of Salamanca. Although without a doubt, the element of greatest presence in this heritage landscape is the bell tower of the Cathedral. It is a prismatic volume of great dimensions and massive structure, which shows its defensive character as well as the religious one.

A primitive episcopal palace was built next to the walls next to the Cathedral, adjacent to the door of the wall that gave access to the suburb of Olivares, which was located next to the river at the north access of the bridge. This door was called from the past the Bishop's door, which will remain unscathed from then until today thanks to its relationship with the palace.

During the High Middle Ages social acceptance continued and the city increased its population, which led to the construction of two walled enclosures that would expand the original one. Also, a new bridge was built upstream of the Roman one[2]. Both bridges would cohabit for just one hundred and fifty years, until a flood brought down the oldest one. This fact partially isolated the suburb of Olivares, since between these two bridges there

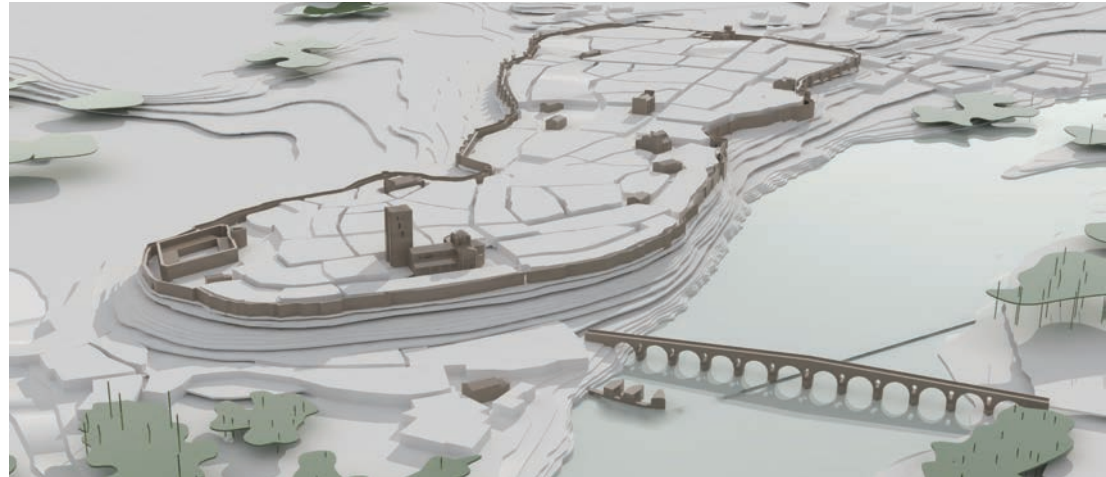
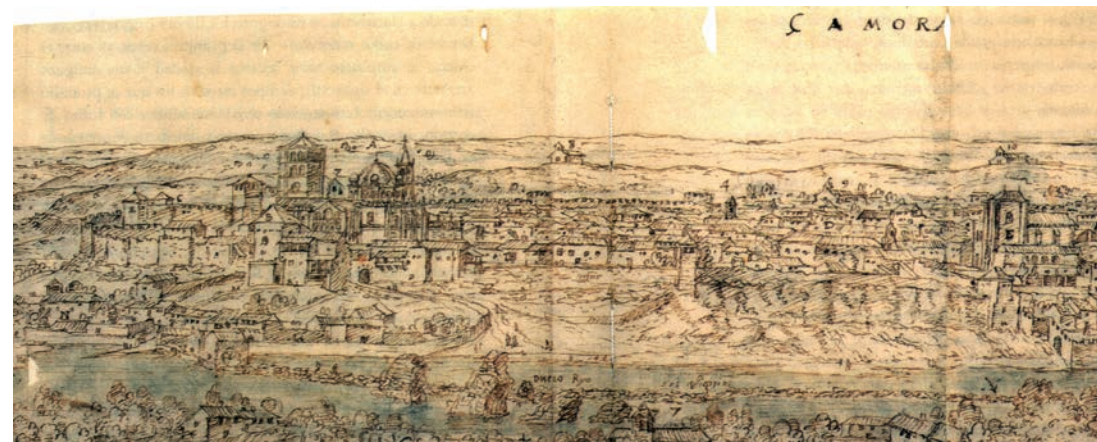


Fig. 3 - Virtual restoration of the city of Zamora in the eleventh century (author's elaboration).

Fig. 4 - Detail of the view by Anton Wyngaerde. 1570. Victoria and Albert Museum of London, inventory nº8455.



was no possibility of driving, just a pedestrian path within the steep and stony slope of the ravine that descended towards the Duero.

2. THE FIRST REPRESENTATIONS OF THE CITY'S PROFILE

The first representation of the city was made by Flemish cartoonist Anton van der Wyngaerde in 1570 as a result of the order of King Philip II (Fig. 4). It is a large panoramic drawn on a pen, in which the author recreates in details that are reflected minutely. Focusing on the study area, this graphic document represents the wall at the top of the ravine on which the hamlet of the moment appears, as the towers of the Cathedral of El Salvador do on the left and the church of San Ildefonso on the right. It should be noted the door of the wall under the Cathedral from which begins a path that descends to the suburb of Olivares, where a set of water mills or "aceñas" is located next to what would be the layout of the ancient Roman bridge, of which several ruined batteries are represented. Likewise, pedestrians can be seen circulating along the slopes of the ravine to enter the city through the port of San Simón, located in the lower wall, popularly known as "El Pescado", since the fishermen and

boats that caught fish in the Douro ran through it. As for the topographic description, the truth is that there are two zones delimited by a central tower: on the left side an area with a powerful wall piece that stands on a hill enabled for cars, leaving on the right one steeper area with a vertical cut of stone that barely has a wall in its coronation. This last area would be popularly referred to as the "Peñas de Santa Marta", mentioning the Franciscan female convent dedicated to this invocation, located on the edge of the singular precipice.

It would not be until the 18th century when the study area would be represented again. In this case, the foreground that is preserved in the city, prepared by the military engineer Juan Martín Zermeño (Fig. 5). It was done in 1766 to reinforce the walls, although in this area of the fortress no works were necessary because it was impregnable.

In this graphic document that encompasses the entire city, the study area is represented as a steep and difficult access area between the river wall on the right and the "aceñas" and the suburb of Olivares on the left, from which the access to the cathedral platform would take place, by means of zigzag ramps that would access the Bishop's door (in Fig. 5 it is called A). Finally, it must be noted that in front of the city, on the opposite bank of the Douro, stood the imposing monastery of San Francisco that controlled access to the medieval bridge from its southern access.

Ten years before the completion of this plan, Joseph Augier had made a view of the city from a point close to that which Wyngaerde made several centuries before. It is a pen drawing with a certain fantasy character since the reproduction of the buildings is not entirely literal.

3. THE ARRIVAL OF THE ROAD AND THE ALTERATION OF THE SCENE

Until the 19th century this area would not be affected by any relevant modification. However, the arrival of the National Highway Network of the State in Zamora would modify this stamp forever. The 1840 project, for the construction of the road that linked Villacastín with the city of Vigo, planned in



Fig. 5 - Detail of the plan by Juan Martín Zermeño. 1766. Cartoteca Histórica del Servicio Geográfico del Ejército. Sección de documentación. Plano de Zamora nº 339.

its way through Zamora, the use of the only bridge that existed without undertaking reforms or demolitions[3]. However, this document foresaw the demolition of the San Simón gate and the existing village in the area of the north access of the bridge [4]. But without a doubt, the substantial modification of this project was the authorization of the underpass of vehicles for which it was necessary to dynamite part of the Peñas de Santa Marta.

As a result of the performance in the study area, "El Pescado" door was built in 1849 (Fig. 7), replacing the old San Simón gate as part of the city's perimeter closure at night [5]. It must be kept in mind that Zamora was "Plaza Fuerte", and although the-

re was no evidence of danger, the city could not defend itself without a stretch of wall.

In 1868 Zamora abandoned the status of Plaza Fuerte, so the walls and their doors ceased to make sense. Within the process of eliminating these defensive elements, in 1908 it was decided not to tear down the door of the Fish, as it was taking place in other parts of the city, but to move it to reuse it, since the monument had only half a century of life and it kept in good condition. This operation was part of a larger modernization project in this part of the city. As one of these actions was proposed the reform of the medieval bridge and the demolition of its towers that prevented the correct circulation

of motor vehicles that already rolled through the streets of the city in an incipient manner [6]. In 1910 an extended ramp access to the Bishop's door was built, next to the cathedral, which meant a further demolition of the rocks of Santa Marta. Its scope was perfectly included in the project plans (Figs. 9 and 10).

4. ROMANTIC ILLUSTRATORS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: THE CREATION OF MYTH

After the French invasion and the confiscation of the properties of the Spanish clergy, a long work of compilation and cataloging of artistic heritage of the country began. This new perception mobilized a group of artists and scholars throughout the national geography in search of representative prints of the monuments of the cities.

These personalities would arrive at Zamora attracted, among other reasons, by the belief of the legend that ensured the identification of Zamora with the ancient Celtiberian city of Numancia, which had so valiantly defended the attack of the Roman armies. This theory was in place until 1860, at the time the archaeological excavations were carried out in Garray, on the outskirts of the city of Soria, which certified that it was there that legendary nucleus was located.

Romantic authors could not resist the beauty of this urban landscape that defines the city. Studious 19th-century travelers such as Valentín Carderera (Fig. 11) [7], Francisco Javier Parcerisa, Fernando Fulgosio or José María Avrial (Fig. 12) [8] were some of the artists who highlighted the passage of time and the poetic load of this Castilian landscape. These views enhance the verticality and the presence of the cathedral on the horizontality of the urban profile and the river channel, which is represented rugged, with wild vegetation and total absence of trees, since we must not forget that it was a defensive area that it must be cleared of vegetation for a better visualization of the possible enemies.

Almost at the same time as the construction of the road that ran through the study area, the Welsh



Fig. 6 - Detail of the view by Joseph Augier. 1756.

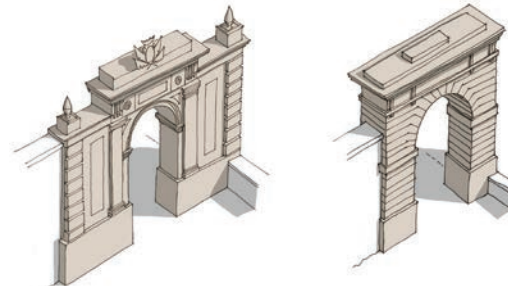


Fig. 7 - Restitution of the proposal for "El Pescado" gate by engineer José María Pérez and engineer Luis de Justo, option finally built (author's elaboration).

Fig. 8 - Road and "El Pescado" gate, in their original location.



photographer Charles Clifford (Fig. 13) would collect in 1854 the image of the profile of the precipice from its base, representing the medieval bridge with its tower and the ruins of the imposing convent of San Francisco on the opposite bank of the Duero during one of its many floods. This image represents the first photograph that is conserved of the city. Subsequently, the changes produced with the construction of the road and the blasting of part of the ravine in the study area would be portrayed. Examples are the panoramic view from the other side of the Douro by Frenchman Jean Lau-



Fig. 9 and 10 - Project for the modification of the Peñas de Santa Marta (before and after). 1910.



rent (Fig. 14), which provides an overview of the profile of the old city of Zamora. Although the one that best describes the study area is the photograph taken by the Portuguese António Passaporte, belonging to the photographic laboratory LOTY (Fig. 15). It shows the access ramp to the recently opened Bishop's door and the masonry retaining walls that had a huge visual impact within the coastal landscape of this area of the city.

5. LATEST PERFORMANCES ON THE STUDY AREA



Fig. 11 - Valentín Carderera. 1836.



Fig. 13 - Charles Clifford. 1845



Fig. 12 - José María Avrial y Flores. 1850.



Fig. 15 - António Passaporte. Ca. 1920.



Fig. 14 - Jean Laurent. Ca. 1866

The latest modifications that partially alter the physiognomy of the site are related to the improvement of mobility and the organization of green spaces. First, the construction of a new retaining wall of the slope that leads to the Bishop's door must be mentioned. For this, the engineer Frutos Santiago Luelmo devised in 1948 large masonry walls that generated two closed symmetrical staircases with two flanking towers, looking for certain similarities of the wall [9]. This area of the city, specially protected to maintain the emblematic urban landscape, had to wait a long time to see a new bridge built over the Duero. Opened in 2013, it was finally located downstream of the study area so that its visual impact was as small as possible. This new infrastructure favored the pedestrianization of the medieval bridge, which required special care due to having supported heavy vehicle traffic for many decades [10].

Complementing these actions, local authorities undertook at the beginning of the 21st century a long river walk of approximately five kilometers on the right bank of the river as it passed through the city. To do this, huge amounts of landfills were mobilized, slightly narrowing the riverbed.

6. THE LANDSCAPE AS A REFERENCE ELEMENT OF AN ENTIRE SOCIETY

After knowing the origin and historical development of the most photographed corner of Zamora, and how the cartographers and scholars of the past have represented it, it seems interesting to deepen the artistic interpretation developed by renowned authors about this heritage landscape of the Zamoran people.

Perhaps in ancient times it was not a daily vision of the day-to-day life of society, since this picture was difficult to achieve because it was on the other side of the wide river channel. This periphery environment is perfectly included in the work of Ildelfonso Acedo [Fig. 17], perhaps because the city is observed in the distance, and where the woodland and the riverbank landscapes begin to be habitual with distance from the defensive perimeter of the

city. However, throughout the twentieth century, and thanks to tourism development, an iconic image of the city linked to this view that combines the river and the presence of the city from a privileged location was consolidated. This aspect of recognizable stamp has been reflected in the protection legislation of the Historic District as a landscape to be preserved [11].

The revaluation of assets from the eighties caused a reverie of various artists who have represented this area of the city repeatedly from various points of view and with different objectives. It seems obligatory to make reference to the water-

colors of the Zamoran architect Juan Manuel Báez Mezquita. The author seems to be interested in the search for representation not so much of the place, but in highlighting the non-tangible elements, in the other part of the landscape, in its meteorological characteristics. This river environment is characterized by the existence of mists that appear during the winter season. In this picture it can be seen how the fog falls at sunset on a short afternoon in Zamoran winter.

A more analytical study is the one carried out by the also versatile architect Santiago Bellido [13]. In this graphic work on the different landscapes of the Duero river from its source to its mouth in

Porto, it provides a detailed pencil drawing on the study area, coloring only the reflection of the stamp on the water of the river, giving the latter a leading role over the rest of the landscape.

Synthetically it seemed essential to carry out a selection of the most relevant current artistic works that address the study area in one way or another. As can be distinguished in Figure 20, the objectives of each author are different. It is worth mentioning the thorough work of Charles Villeneuve, intimately related to the previously treated work of Juan Báez, since the author enhances the atmosphere of the river, the humidity, the freshness, the lights and the shadows of the sunset within a realistic

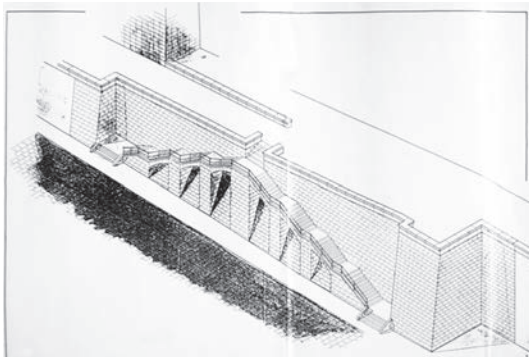


Fig. 16 - Stairway of the Bishop's Gate. 1948.



Fig. 17 - Ildefonso Acedo y Torres. 1874



Fig. 18 - Juan Manuel Báez Mezquita. 2001.



Fig. 19 - Santiago Bellido Blanco. 2005.

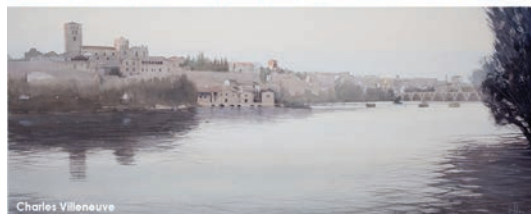


Fig. 20 - Some of the most important visions of this urban landscape.

technique. As part of the most figurative branch are the works of Francisco Segovia, although in them the light prevails over the drawing, where the tonalities of the rocks of the canyon of the rocks of Santa Marta are masterfully collected. Excessively bright colors are capable of transmitting the heat and light of summer in this unique corner of the city of Zamora.

7. CONCLUSION

The heritage landscape that concerns us remains clearly defined by the harmonious confluence of five elements. In the first place, the precipice of more than twenty meters of unevenness presented by the bare rock used as a natural defensive barrier and cause of the foundation of the city. On the other hand, and as a defensive support of the above, the Duero River is located at the foot of the cliff that, thanks to its wide channel, produces the sensation of a natural mirror, accentuated in the nights in which the river flows calmly. Fully ancho-

red to this sentimental landscape, there is the set of water mills that close the composition of this scene in the west. Similarly, the landscape remains bounded by the east thanks to the presence of the long medieval bridge. And finally, crowning the crest of the precipice, there are the medieval walls and the set of constructions of the historic center of the old city, on which it stands out, being arranged in the keel of the ship, the castle and the cathedral of El Salvador, jewel of the Spanish Romanesque.

The iconic vision from the left bank of the Duero River, appropriated by the current Zamora society and universal symbol of the city, is the result of a combination of natural elements modified by the human being, the passage of time and built elements that enhance the natural beauty of this great stage.

NOTE

[1] Álvarez Martínez, U. (2005), p. 125.

[2] Chías Navarro, P. (2004), p. 85.

[3] 24 El puente sufrió unas obras en 1883, por lo que se construyó un paso temporal por barca, con una plataforma de 10x6m (para capacidad de cuatro carros con bueyes) diseñada por Domingo de Muguza, con un ancho central de 3,20m para carruajes y dos andenes laterales. Estaba sobre dos barcos separados 1,50m (Gago Vaquero, 1988 p. 99).

[4] Seis años antes se había derribado el templo de San Simón (Pérez Martín, 2013 p.273).

[5] Hubo dos proyectos de puerta triunfal para la puerta del Pescado. Un primer proyecto del ingeniero José María Pérez (Archivo General de la Administración/Educación y ciencia/1849-8266). Pero el que finalmente se llevó a cabo fue la propuesta del ingeniero Luis de Justo, una propuesta más simplificada (Archivo de la Delegación de Zamora del MOPU. Sig 42. Leg. 358. Sección 1ª). Para volar las peñas de Santa Marta se contó con la mano de obra de los presos locales.

[6] Chías Navarro (2004), p. 85.

[7] Carderera y Solano, V. (2016).

[8] Pérez Martín, S. (2013).

[9] Archivo de la Delegación de Zamora del Ministerio de Obras Públicas, Sig 105, Leg. 1092. Sección 1ª.

[10] La peatonalización del puente medieval ha generado un cierto interés en que recobre su apariencia de finales del siglo XIX. Para ello se pretenden reconstruir las torres defensivas situadas en ambos extremos

del viaducto. Trabajos sobre este particular son los llevados a cabo por (Rodríguez Méndez, 2009). El estudio de arquitectura de Francisco Somoza prepara un documento al respecto.

[11] Plan Especial Del Casco Histórico de Zamora, aprobado definitivamente en el año 2000.

[12] Báez Mezquita, J.M. (2001).

[13] Bellido Blanco, S. (2005).

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