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Arturo Cerdá y Rico's photography as a landscape interpretation and enhancement tool

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The landscape spotlighted in this project is located in a rural setting, namely Cabra del Santo Cristo, one of the new villages created after peace was achieved on the border between Castile and the old Nasrid kingdom of Granada. Located in the southeast of the province of Jaén, between the Subbetic region and the Guadix-Baza depression, it is therefore a peripheral municipality of the Sierra Mágina region, to the south-east, where it borders with the neighbouring regions of the Sierra de Cazorla and the Eastern Mountains of Granada, two regions with which there have always been close ties. It was towards the end of the 19th century, and just before the 20th century, when Arturo Cerdá y Rico, an amateur photographer who took many of his photos here, arrived in this village, leaving behind a rich photographic legacy that bears witness to an activity that has largely shaped this landscape (Jiménez, 2018; López, 2018).

Arturo Cerdá y Rico was born in 1844 in Monóvar, a town not far from Alicante, and moved to the village of Cabra in Jaén in 1871 to look after a sick brother who was working on the railway construction works (Cerdá *et al.* 2001). Cerdá was a bourgeois who took up photography at the end of the 19th century and became so fond of it that he built a house that was in itself a photographic studio and laboratory. A highlight of his artistic production is its ethnographic component, so his legacy portrays everyday life in the village at the dawn of the 20th century.

Today, these landscape values are seriously threatened by the developing urban fabric and changes in the traditional agricultural system. The serious harm that has been caused –especially to the urban landscape– is why everything that has been damaged needs to be recovered and what has been preserved needs to be protected. This photographic legacy (which is already regarded as one of the village's key cultural treasures), could therefore be an essential tool for interpreting the landscape, and this same cultural landscape could be the



setting where a large part of Arturo Cerdá y Rico's photographs could be put to good use. At the same time, his pictures could be used to design a sightseeing tour that lets visitors and villagers alike understand how the village's landscape has evolved and see what its urban and landmarks rural looked like before and now.

This research pursues two main goals. Firstly, to put Arturo Cerdá y Rico's photographic legacy in the spotlight, as a tool for analysing how Cabra del Santo Cristo's geographical landscape has steadily changed since the end of the 19th century to the present time. Secondly, to use his photographs as a tool for mapping out a tourist trail that contributes to this village's heritage conservation and economic diversification, by attracting tourism. So the idea is to create an interpretation trail that passes through these scenarios and provides an overview of this unique landscape. This would recover some of the most endangered areas, while helping to enhance the landscape nearest the village centre, tracing a sort of line that defines and acts as a transition between the urban and rural areas. If properly planned, this could be an interesting project that would not only become a tourist attraction, but could also bring leisure and recreational infrastructure for the villagers, prompting stronger ties between the village's heritage and its inhabitants, and subsequently reaffirm the collective identity. In other words, "if heritage is an extremely fragile and essentially non-renewable resource, it should be managed intelligently to make it a key element that contributes to greater social, economic, environmental and cultural cohesion" (Checa, 2009, p.25).

The proposed tour or trail runs through different areas, ranging from exclusively urban to rural stretches, passing through the spots that are at this village's origin (its spring, which irrigates its fields), but always sticking to the area closest to the village's centre. The trail moves from inhabited spaces to archaeological areas and other, highly valuable ethnographic and landscape areas. Table 1 shows how that anyone who follow the trail will gain first-hand insight into this rich tangible and intangible heritage.

Table 1. Cabra del Santo Cristo's heritage resources

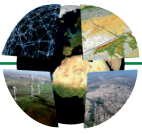
The inhabited space	Urban layout, heritage buildings, popular architecture. Archaeological remains.
El Ager	Water culture (irrigation systems, mills, washing areas...), the orchards, the arenas and other farmland. The olive oil mill, the threshing floor, the mill, etc.
El Saltus	Livestock, and the mountain's resources (esparto grass, grazing, firewood, aromatic herbs, etc.).
Organised space	The plots of land, roads and paths.
Tradition and other forms of intangible heritage	Festivals and fêtes, popular religiosity, gastronomy. The current cultural scene (exhibition spaces and cultural events).

Source: Own elaboration.

A cornerstone of this research project has been the bibliographical study of the role played by visual sources, and photography in particular. This has evidenced just how important and essential this source is both for understanding the geographical space and as a tool for embarking on other economic activities linked, in this case, to tourism.

The project maps have been produced with ArcGis Software (ArcMap) version 10.2 and Google Earth software, which provides satellite images for viewing and generating maps. Wikiloc, a Spanish mashup, has been used to design the sightseeing trail. Mashups are a Web 2.0 product that put users at the centre of everything and harvest content from more than one source so that anyone can use it. Wikiloc lets you create, store and share geo-referenced outdoor routes.

The 5.5 km trail, marked with a total of 45 signposts, has been divided into 10 sections, each with its own explanation (figure 1). An information board has been produced for each signpost with a map of the location, a historical photograph of the place and a brief explanation. Subsequently, 45 information sheets have been designed for each signpost, featuring the geographical coordinates, the signpost number, the signpost altitude, a historical photograph from the Arturo Cerdá y Rico Collection and an explanation of what



the site looked like before, a modern photograph showing its current state, the plans for the signposted site and proposed improvements. The trail starts at Arturo Cerdá y Rico's house and moves from one heritage site to another, each of which is a hallmark of Cabra del Santo Cristo. Each major landmark is marked with a photograph of it that he took more than a century ago. In selecting these landmarks, priority was given to the most recognisable scenarios (yet where the impact of human activity can still be noticed), and to any highly valuable ethnographic and landscape sites that need to be preserved, restored and enhanced.



Figure 1. Sightseeing trail route. Source: Cayetano Martínez García: Own elaboration

Pictures are so valuable that photography is a key resource for heritage interpretation and, in this case, observing and analysing historical photographs gives one far greater insight into how a landscape has changed over time than if one consults other written or visual sources (Díaz *et al.*, 2016). Any photographic collection that shows not only what places were like, but also how people went about their daily lives, becomes a valuable asset per se (Brogiato & Horn, 2003) and is an ideal document for any sightseeing project that, apart from becoming a tourist attraction, can play a key role in preserving the existing landscape and heritage and in conveying cultural values about them. In this regard, Cerdá y Rico's photography in Cabra del Santo Cristo plays a prominent role, as it analyses not only the ethnographic approach and the urban landscape; but also, in this case, the rural landscape, which appears far less frequently in the photography of this historical moment. This makes this documentary collection and this project even more relevant. The landscape depicted in these photographs could be turned into an asset that both visitors and residents alike can use and enjoy, thereby ensuring at last that the inhabitants recognises themselves in their heritage.

As we have seen, photography can serve as a tool for creating specific tourist products, in this case a sightseeing trail. The successful implementation of this project in Cabra del Santo Cristo could enable us to achieve other objectives that could be extrapolated to other similar regions; and to initiatives being taken to foster the socio-economic development of a rural environment that is languishing economically and socially, and which in some cases is doomed to abandonment, and in the worst case scenario, to disappear.