

Entre margens / Between shores

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Abstract

“Un atlas de imágenes suele caracterizarse por la coexistencia, en la misma lámina, de maneras diferentes de representar un lugar: el paisaje se ve entonces “criticado” por la cartografía, y el propio mapa “criticado” por un montaje de detalles fotográficos inesperados. Es una manera de ver el mundo, de recorrerlo según puntos de vista heterogéneos asociados unos com otros” (Didi-Huberman, 2011).

The present essay starts from the concept of Atlas, under “a visual form of knowledge” in the words of Didi-Huberman (Atlas: Cómo llevar el mundo a cuestas? 2011). From a set of graphic elements, such as maps, drawings and photographs, different readings of the central theme – the territory – were established. The essay emerges from a work of analysis, understanding and interpretation of the different history layers inscribed in the Portuguese territory, read as a palimpsest, allowing us to look at and understand the territory, to perceive what identifies it, what characterizes it and transformed it. Analyzing the territory as a palimpsest, in the architectural discourse, means understanding it in all its plenitude, understanding each layer. As a tool for analyzing a place, it allows us to understand how we can use the knowledge obtained to design intervention strategies and produce architecture. The territory registers the human presence, and this knowledge endows the architect with a greater control over what existed and what exists. Through architecture, continuity can be established between the past and the present, by revealing aspects of the place that have been obliterated by time or human action. Architecture can thus be a mean for the qualification or regeneration of a place. The term territory assumes, therefore, a prominent place. We tried to understand it in its different dimensions: how we build it, how we represent it, how we relate to it and how we perceive it. In parallel to this understanding of the Portuguese territory, other approaches by different authors were considered. These authors used to travel as a way to understand Portuguese natural and cultural values by writing, photographing, portraying and publicizing it. These sources of information were essential instruments and the preliminary anchorages to understanding the Portuguese space and, ultimately, were the base for the present essay.

Keywords: Territory; Landscape; Palimpsest; Journey; Memory; Tagus River.