

1808
1809

Los Sitios de Zaragoza

Stone bridge

The city's most emblematic bridge has undergone numerous misfortunes throughout its history. During the sieges which Zaragoza suffered from the Napoleonic armies during the War of Independence, it was also the scene of numerous battles and atrocious events.



View of the Stone Bridge. In the background, the Basilica of Our Lady of Pilar from the left side of the river. L. Escolá. Before 1907. Archivo Municipal de Zaragoza, 4-1_02929.

THE BRIDGE IN THE SIEGES

During the first siege in 1808, the Lieutenant Luciano de Tornos managed to halt a popular stampede on the bridge which had fled towards the outlying district of the city which took place after a harsh French offensive on 4 August. Lt. Tornos, threatening them with a cannon from the convent of San Lázaro, managed to convince them to return to the city to fight.



The Macanaz grove, with the Princess fountain, commonly called the Neptune fountain. 1935.

The bridge was the only connection between the city and the Rabal district. If that district fell, the bridge would be occupied by the enemy, leaving the city unprotected. And this is what happened during the second Siege when on 18 February 1809, the French artillery batteries destroyed the San Lázaro Convent and bombarded the bridge to hinder all help for the city. Zaragoza would capitulate three days later.

Very near the stone bridge, there is the Macanaz grove, a place for strolling and recreation enjoyed by Zaragoza citizens for centuries and after the sieges in 1809, it is the site where the remains of thousands of defenders were buried in a common grave.



Puente de Piedra y vista del Pilar. Archivo Municipal de Zaragoza, 4-1_07813.



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CAJA RURAL
DE ARAGÓN



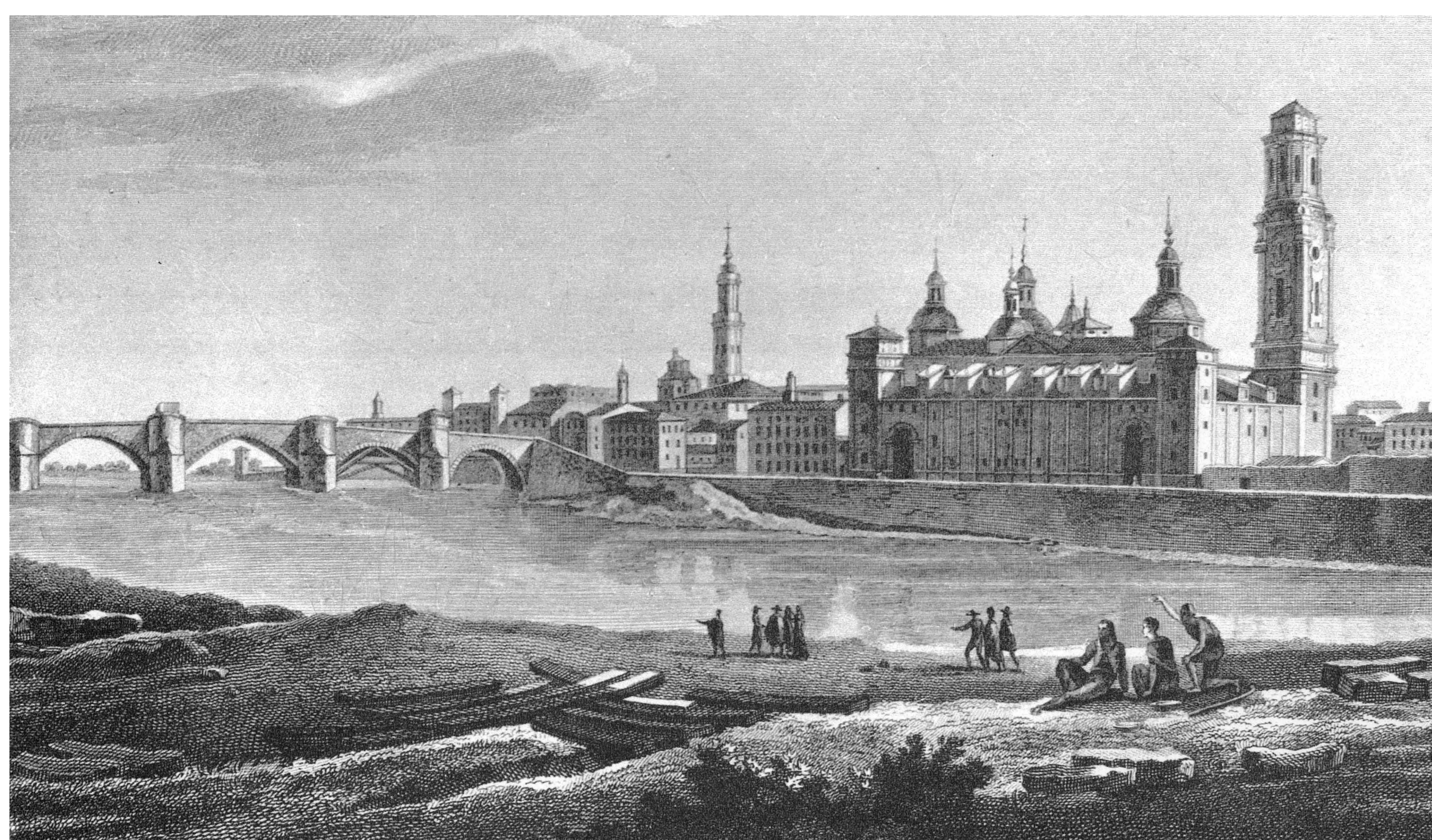
Zaragoza
AYUNTAMIENTO

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The stone bridge of Zaragoza was built in the 15th century, in the same site as the former Roman bridge from the 1st century A.D. The current bridge has a Gothic style and it is older than the one which is conserved over the Ebro River.



Exterior view of Our Lady of Pilar Cathedral in 1806, taken from the left side of Ebro River (Drawing by Luis Fernando Le Jeune and engraved by Robert Daudet, for the "Viaje por España" ("Trip through Spain") by Alejandro Laborde).

THE EBRO IN THE SIEGES

The Ebro River also played an outstanding role in the defence of the city. In addition to its merit as a communication channel in the French advance towards the Capital city, it also had major strategic importance. In the second Siege, troops from Murcia and Cartagena came to assist Zaragoza's defence; with their gunboats, they patrolled the river ensuring the defence of the Ebro and controlled the enemy's movements.



View of the Cross which indicates the site of the assassination of the priests, Boggiero and Sas.

COMMEMORATIVE CROSS

A stele crowned by a stone cross placed in the archway of the stone bridge, indicates the place where the priests and advisers of Palafox, Basilio Boggiero and Santiago Sas were assassinated and thrown into the Ebro by the French when the city had already capitulated, infringing the agreements of said capitulation.

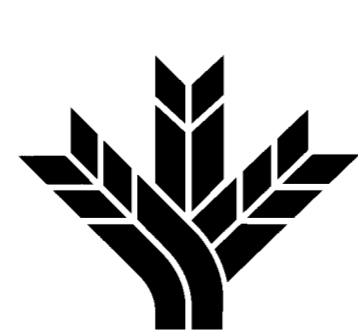
The monument also pays tribute to the Baron of Warsage, who was in charge of the Arrabal defence during the second Siege and who was mortally wounded by a French cannonball on 18 February 1809 when he attempted to reach the Arrabal district to assume command of its defence.



Anónimo. General José de L'Hotellerie de Falloise, barón de Warsage.



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