



TRADITIONAL VESSELS ON THE RIVER DOURO

The safe, navigable river we know today is the result of the construction of several dams from the 1960s onwards, which altered its flow, signalling the end of the “treacherous waters” described by Alves Redol.

In the past, the Douro was a river fraught with hazards; its waterfalls, rapids and deep pools made for a difficult and daring journey.

Due to the topography and flow of the river, boats known as valboeiros were used between Porto and Crestuma, where the going was easier; rabões were used between Crestuma and Entre-os-Rios and rabelo boats were most commonly used between Entre-os-Rios and Barca de Alva, also carrying on to Porto.

Passenger ferries made crossings from one bank to the other along most of the length of the river.

This map of the river Douro shows the main traditional boatbuilding sites, as well as the points where passenger boats crossed the river, rabelo boat mooring sites and riverside places of worship, where the Men of the Douro once prayed.

Douro boats were traditionally built at improvised shipyards on small beaches along the length of the river. Today, just one shipyard remains in operation, in Vila Nova de Gaia.