

INLAND TOURISM IN PENINSULAR SPAIN: TERRITORIAL HERITAGE AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

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Before carrying out an analysis of territorial heritage, we feel it is worth making an assessment of the research that has been done regarding the geography of tourism in Spain, including the recent contributions by Post-modern geography, which tends to develop tourism based on micro-spaces, short-term tourism, the relationship between the tourist and the location and, in sum, tourism that attempts to get closer to individuals, concerned with subjectivity, local places and products, alternative tourism that enables tourists to discover locations that are off the beaten track. Spanish geographic research projects have focused mainly on the coastal and urban and peri-urban areas. Rural, natural and mountain tourism became a topic of discussion in the early 1990s, when it was noted that these types of tourism have a significant impact on the areas involved. However, the perspectives it offered as a tool for development in depressed areas was acknowledged even then, which is why the first studies on tourism in rural spaces were conducted from varying perspectives. Since the mid-1990s, research has gathered pace due, above all, to the rural and territorial initiative known as LEADER. Compiling all the research conducted in the Autonomous Regions in Spain taken as a whole, it has recently become clear that in the Geography of tourism the role of *territorial quality* is becoming increasingly prominent as a factor of competitiveness for tourist destinations, while also placing the territory itself at the heart of the debate, at a time when tourism is even more competitive. All these aspects have made tourism Geography a booming discipline. The magazine *Cuadernos de Turismo* is a prime example of this.

We shall link the aforementioned territorial quality with territorial heritage, since the latter has been considered, according to Ortega Valcárcel, as an economic and cultural resource of the first order. Territories considered as a legacy or heritage are classified as having heritage value and are studied as a subject of Geography, amongst other disciplines, which entails multiple forms of heritage (natural, environmental, forestry, cultural, mining, and so on). Indeed, increasing numbers of geographers vindicate the relevance of this. We have recently linked *territorial heritage* with geographically-based shires, as the most popular divisions

made by the inhabitants of an area, thus transforming them into points of interest for inland tourism.

Within the field of inland tourism, rural tourism holds a prominent role. Since the 1990s, rural tourism in Spain has become an unquestionable reality, thanks to the LEADER initiatives and the PRODER programmes. Tourism in these areas is extremely seasonal during certain periods of the year and in specific areas. Therefore, diversification is necessary regarding both tourism itself and the area's business activities. The professionalisation of this activity is becoming increasingly important, and the role that women have in establishing rural tourism guesthouses must also be kept in mind, as they are the ones who implement all the logistics. The relationship between rural areas and tourism has resulted in a noteworthy development to the benefit of rural accommodations, the construction of rural guesthouses and second homes based on family ties in rural settings.

Furthermore, the origin of cultural tourism, as another form of inland tourism, is linked to the Enlightenment and Romantic travellers of the 18th and 19th centuries, respectively. The aim of tourism in those times was to reflect their experiences and perceptions in literary works, and in travel literature; they longed to discover Madrid, the imperial city of Toledo and end up in the typical and stereotypical Andalucía, where they could explore a magical world comprising the cities of Sevilla, Córdoba and Granada. At the start of this century, an experiment was also carried out with a Spanish novelist. With these works in mind, we wanted to depict our idea of Territorial Heritage by selecting a micro-space or region from each of the Autonomous Regions, as the most popular division made by the inhabitants of an area, which could be considered characteristic of the inland areas of the country. To do this, we needed to be familiar with or to have visited it beforehand. However, the greatest issue we encountered was that only two Autonomous Regions, Cataluña and Aragón, have had their local shire units officially approved. We, therefore, felt it more fitting to analyse two main categories of Territorial Heritage from a tourism perspective: firstly, inland tourism in two Autonomous Regions we have lived in, namely, the Comunidad Valenciana and the Region of Castilla-La Mancha, highlighting the beauty the former has to offer inland, since both have international declarations of or statuses as being of tourist interest. Secondly, a series of shires have been chosen considered to be representative of inland peninsular Spain in six Regions. From Northeast to Southwest, these are Cataluña, Aragón, the País Vasco, Castilla y León, Extremadura and Andalucía. We shall highlight their tourist attractions, studying the most important scientific literature as reference material beforehand, which we shall later refer to.

The tourist appeal of the selected territories, which we have linked to Territorial Heritage, lies in their natural beauty, the architectural heritage, both in groupings and individual buildings, as well as the importance of their craftsmanship and cuisine, not to mention the intangible heritage on show in traditions and customs. In the two Autonomous Regions, significant declarations have been made by the UNESCO.

In the Comunidad Valenciana, highly representative of sun and beach tourism, the prime example of which is Benidorm, the origins of rural tourism came about in the early 1990s under the LEADER initiative and, later, the PRODER programme. These not only fostered multifunctionality of rural settings, but also led to an influx of capital for rural territories, particularly as regards the creation of the supply of accommodations. Ever since the end of

the last century, these tourism and recreational activities have been highly valued, as agri-tourism, or rural tourism, is becoming an interesting alternative given the undeniable way in which it increases the value of heritage and breathes new life into rural settings. Rural tourism activities do not necessarily have to be construed as a complement or an alternative to the predominant supply of sun and beach options. Rather, it would be perfectly plausible as a tourism option differentiated from the coast. We must keep in mind that tourism in natural areas does not spontaneously lead to sustainability. It is, therefore, necessary to define general planning measures for rural and inland tourism, given that, up to now, there has been an overall lack of coordination between tourism and other policies affecting the territory and the environment. The Regional Government of Valencia has passed the *2011 Operating Plan for Tourism by the Regional Government of Valencia*, which contains a programme devoted to *Global Tourism: Inland Destinations*. This document offers a Master Plan for Inland Tourism 2011-2015 aimed at fostering the development of supra-municipal and public-private initiatives. At the same time, two lines of action are set forth, one aimed at preparing and advertising tourism resources by spotlighting monumental, cultural or landscape-related resources as essential pillars in the development and consolidation of tourism products in inland shires, and the second one being aimed at the development and consolidation of tourism products, especially the supply of accommodation.

As the law on shire units remains pending, we shall study three separate territories or parts of the Region: the north (Castellón), the centre (Valencia) and the south (Alicante), in order to interlink the most significant aspects of their nature, culture and festivities, as the most relevant issues for inland tourism. We shall consider these territories as Territorial Heritage of interest for tourism.

By the mid-1990s, Castilla-La Mancha was home to a series of important destinations such as two cities declared World Heritage sites, Toledo and Cuenca, as well as two National Parks, Cabañeros and Las Tablas de Daimiel, as well as six Natural Parks. All of this represents the first stage for inland tourism. Secondly, as a result of the rural tourism promoted under the LEADER initiative and the PRODER programme, three types of interlinked measures were set up in what we have referred to as a *territorial approach to tourism*, namely, rural tourism, the environment, and natural and cultural heritage. The most relevant innovative actions taken are as follows: rural guesthouses, farmhouses and cabins fitted as accommodations, tourist routes, museums and eco-museums, building restoration work, bolstering traditional ceramic work and cuisine, not to mention nature workshops and the conservation and inventory-taking of resources. In this regard, the areas most positively affected were those located in the hilly parts of the region. The current phase (2007-2013), commenced somewhat late, in 2010, provides support for the territories in peripheral and mountainous zones as regards the measures as a whole. Thirdly, as a result of the celebration, in 2005, of the 5th Centenary of the publication of the first part of *Don Quixote*, the Regional Government of Castilla-La Mancha implemented the *Route of Don Quixote*, distinguished as a European Cultural Route by the Council of Europe, making it the first route based on a fictional character. The *Strategic Tourism Plan (2010-14)* classifies the Route as a «Tourist Icon», but acknowledges that it has not managed to become a product capable of creating a niche on the tourism market. Therefore, it wisely champions the need to design *Quixote Stage Sets* that are able to create tangible ties between the episodes and specific places cited in this

masterpiece. By turning the *Route* into a tourist itinerary around Castilla-La Mancha, there is a risk of intermingling three different issues: first, places related to Cervantes; second, Quixotic places or places expressly mentioned in the novel; and third, municipalities with outstanding natural or cultural heritage.

Regarding the recognition by the Autonomous Regional Government of our local territorial shire units, we shall analyse the three main shire categories, namely the areas known as the Llanura, Sierra and Piedemonte or the transitional zone.

To conclude, we shall analyse examples of inland shire tourist destinations in several autonomous regions. The analysis of the chosen shires in inland peninsular Spain shall begin with two pertaining to the two autonomous regions with officially approved local territorial shire units, followed by four that, while not officially recognised, have popular or extra-official standing and, finally, an Andalucía shire shall be analysed, as an eternal destination for Enlightenment and Romantic travellers, particularly the latter. Before highlighting their elements of interest for tourism or their territorial heritage that is of interest to tourists, we feel it is appropriate to note the research projects that have assessed these areas in recent decades. We shall begin with a visit to *La Garrotxa*, a Cataluña shire in the foothills of the Pyrenees with marked levels of humidity. *La Jacetania* or *shire of Jaca*, located in the northwestern part of Aragón. *La Rioja Alavesa*, a region in the País Vasco. *El Bierzo*, a shire in Castilla y León at the crossroads between the plateau and the massif of Galicia. *Valle del Jerte*, a territory in Extremadura located between two mountain ranges within the Sierra de Gredos mountains, pertaining to the Sistema Central mountains. And *Campiña Sevillana*, a shire in Andalucía characterised by its fertile land and olive groves, located in the Guadalquivir river basin.

The Territorial Heritage related to these micro-spaces or shires includes the natural and cultural aspects of these territories, but we must also keep in mind other activities such as museums, festivities and cuisine, as well as intangible qualities.