

RURAL TOURISM ATLAS OF CASTILLA LA MANCHA

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ABSTRACT

The rural tourism atlas of Castilla La Mancha is a singular contribution due to its novel treatment of the contents as well as the technical level of its edition. The atlas is a collaboration of the Ministry of Education and Science, the National Centre of Geographic Information- National Geographic Institute, the Junta de Comunidades de Castilla La Mancha, the University of Alcalá and the University of Castilla La Mancha.

The atlas is structured in seven main chapters. In the first one, the fundamental concepts and the methodology used for the elaboration of the atlas are shown. The second chapter establishes the general Geographic frame of Castilla La Mancha. Chapter 3 studies the current and potential resources for the rural tourism, namely the natural and cultural patrimonies. Next, these resources are synthetically exposed by a 3D representation of the territories of the tourism". Chapter 5 is dedicated to infrastructures and present tourist activities, while chapter 6 is dedicated to the rural development programmes. These programmes have an enormous importance in the promotion of the tourism. Finally, the map 1:200000 of Castilla La Mancha and a Landsat TM image of the area are shown.

This work can be considered as to be in the vanguard of the Tourist Cartography. It is not a typical representation of infrastructures and services, but it has a rigorous scientific approach, which gives a solid thematic representation. The characteristics of the cultural and natural patrimonies are analysed exhaustively, the thematic maps composition shows an excellent result, not only by their base maps but also by the symbols employed. Therefore, this atlas can be considered as a "useful and friendly" work.

INTRODUCTION

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The development of tourist industry-related activities involves the arranged of a great diversity of resources in conjunction with a multidisciplinary-based management approach. It could be described as a true transversal activity possessing a high degree of complexity.

An image, both as a communication resource and as a methodological support tool, constitutes one of the aspects to be considered in any kind of tourist promotion or scientific analysis regarding the industry. In the context of the project presented here, the thematic map is the key element for the analytical representation of tourist resources, recreational infrastructures, environment-based activities or economical requirements to support tourist industry activities. Maps are extremely adaptable when it comes to face demands emanating from synthetic representations. The map being useful to show global appreciations or to express trends in land management.

More so, a tourist Atlas perfectly links with potential users' requirements for tourist information within the image. This is partly explained by the long tradition in image use in tourist guides and brochures. The brochure has always included some kind of sketch or even maps. Therefore, a great gap between tourist guide and atlas must be recognized. In the

second there is a scientific approach, a methodological application which provides rigor, accuracy and objectivity in the treated theme and a coherent sequence that pursues a series of general and specific objectives that animate the consistency of the atlas as a whole.

Finally it is worth to outline the great technical complexity, accompanied by a significant institutional activity, involved in the production of an atlas. The preparation of materials for printing requires a long process in which the adoption of new technologies has resulted in a notorious improvement in the final product quality. This application, however, does not respond to a simplistic approach; the scientific component still plays a key role to obtain the most appropriate cartographic representation. Regarding the institutional action, it must be highlighted that it constitutes the manifestation of multiple interests. Without its financial support, the completion of a piece of work of this kind would never had been possible. This is not the forum to for an extended discussion on European Union concerns to support recreational and tourist activities in rural environments. These environments are often threaten by serious social and economic problems in parallel with agricultural decline and increasing economic diversity. National, regional and local governments too show their concerns to conduct the increasing demand of tourist space in rural environments in a sensible manner. Universities and research institutions find in tourism in general and in rural tourism in particular a significant challenge: to assess its origin trends, to accurately measure territorial, social and economic impacts, to foresee a sustainable management of heritage resources, to study, as a whole, tourist industry and behaviour, types of demands and tourists satisfaction. Society itself is, in the end, a great supporter of products such as atlases that illustrate not just a tourist destination but offers a scientific explanation contributing to a better understanding of the place.

This paper focuses in the three axes that guided the production of a Rural Tourism Atlas: the potential of the Castilla-La Mancha country side as tourist destination; the methodology adopted in the production process; and the thematic structure and technical choices. In consideration to the international context of this conference, a first section introducing the Spanish autonomous region of Castilla-La Mancha from a geographical point of view is also presented.

I.- CASTILLA-LA MANCHA: GEOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND TOURIST POTENTIAL

The region has a land surface area of about 80,000 sq km which explains its remarkable geographic diversity; one of its main resources for tourist activities. Extended plains and some important valleys occupy the highly populated central sector of this region, which is surrounded by a rangers belt. Mountainous landscapes and abrupt topography, valleys and plains, provides a rich and varied region in human and physical aspects.

Regional differentiation factors which tourist potential has been evaluated here are of diverse nature. Orography is constituted by lithology, structural forms and types of landscapes that ranges from sculpted folds of abrupt form in the eastern alpine sector, to old eroded materials at the western Hercynian plain. In between we find clay formations, sands and marls from the Tertiary and Quaternary sedimentary central plain.

The area has diverse climate and geomorphology. Rainfall is more abundant towards the northeast section while more irregular and scarce in the southeast. There are also important thermal contrasts between the internal basin, possessing accentuated seasonal contrasts, and mountainous areas. The mountainous areas are colder with altitude increase while the protected valley areas have milder temperatures.

Vegetation formations vary along with other elements of the physical environment, this reinforces landscape diversity. Subhumid forest and bush located in the most western mountainous sector contrast with interior steppes and with sclerophyllous Mediterranean forests at the limits of oriental mountains.

The cultural heritage determines the formal structure of the region. It is necessary to look back at historical processes of occupation to understand typologies of its current organization. The middle age model for settlement has given origin to a great number of little towns that make up the social network in the regions located at the Tagus River. However, in "La Mancha" and in mountainous areas of southern periphery, in which aristocracy, Church and particularly Military Orders fought for land. Thus the landscape and the economic systems are different; there is a predominant agricultural activity, settlement is concentrated and properties are organised in a large state manner. These characteristics have prevailed in the regional organization. In the previous centuries, productive structure modernisation and technological and social changes have modified the referred historical structure of the land. The emigration movement in the second half of the 20th century has been followed by a strong immigration movement at the beginning of the 21st century, which has reanimated country style of life and tertiary activities in some small and medium size towns which are now presiding their own urban hierarchy. Their ruling class is promoting and supporting local action groups that have in the tourist promotion one of their more significant areas of work.

The interaction of all these evolving factors has facilitated emerging and well differentiated geographic units. Periphery rangers work as a first type amongst those one. Within the Iberian rangers of Guadalajara there is the region of *Molina o de Aragón* which follows by *Serranía de Cuenca*. Over there settlement is extremely weak and local council structure is very atomised, yet its landscape is truly spectacular. This area land extends towards the South until reaching on the first foothill of *Sistema Bético* where we can also find the depopulated pre-betic Albacete units, land of the *Sierras de Alcaraz* and *de Segura* regions. These mountains, consist of splendid alpine structures supported by the Meseta, open up towards the southeast by a large corridor-depression of very old settlements; the regions of *Campo de Hellín* and *Corredor de Almansa*, where the region has traditionally maintained its historic communication system with coastal plains on the east side of the Iberian Peninsula.

On the west side there are other mountainous regions over the paleozoic massif. All of them are scarcely populated. In the *Sistema Central* is located the *Sierra Norte* of Guadalajara, these contain black slate, that gives the area a characteristic architecture. On the left side of the river Tagus basin, granites of the crystalline Toledo Meseta allow the individualisation of *La Sisa* sprinkled by island-hills. Towards the West we first find the quartzites and slates of *La O Jara*, covered by the bush type that gives it its name and secondly the rugged *Montes de Toledo and Ciudad Real*, possessing an appreciated fauna which is subject of intensive hunting activity. In the province of Ciudad Real, already at the verge of *Sierra Morena*, there is the spectacular *Valley of Alcudia*, a traditional winter pasture area for Meseta cattle.

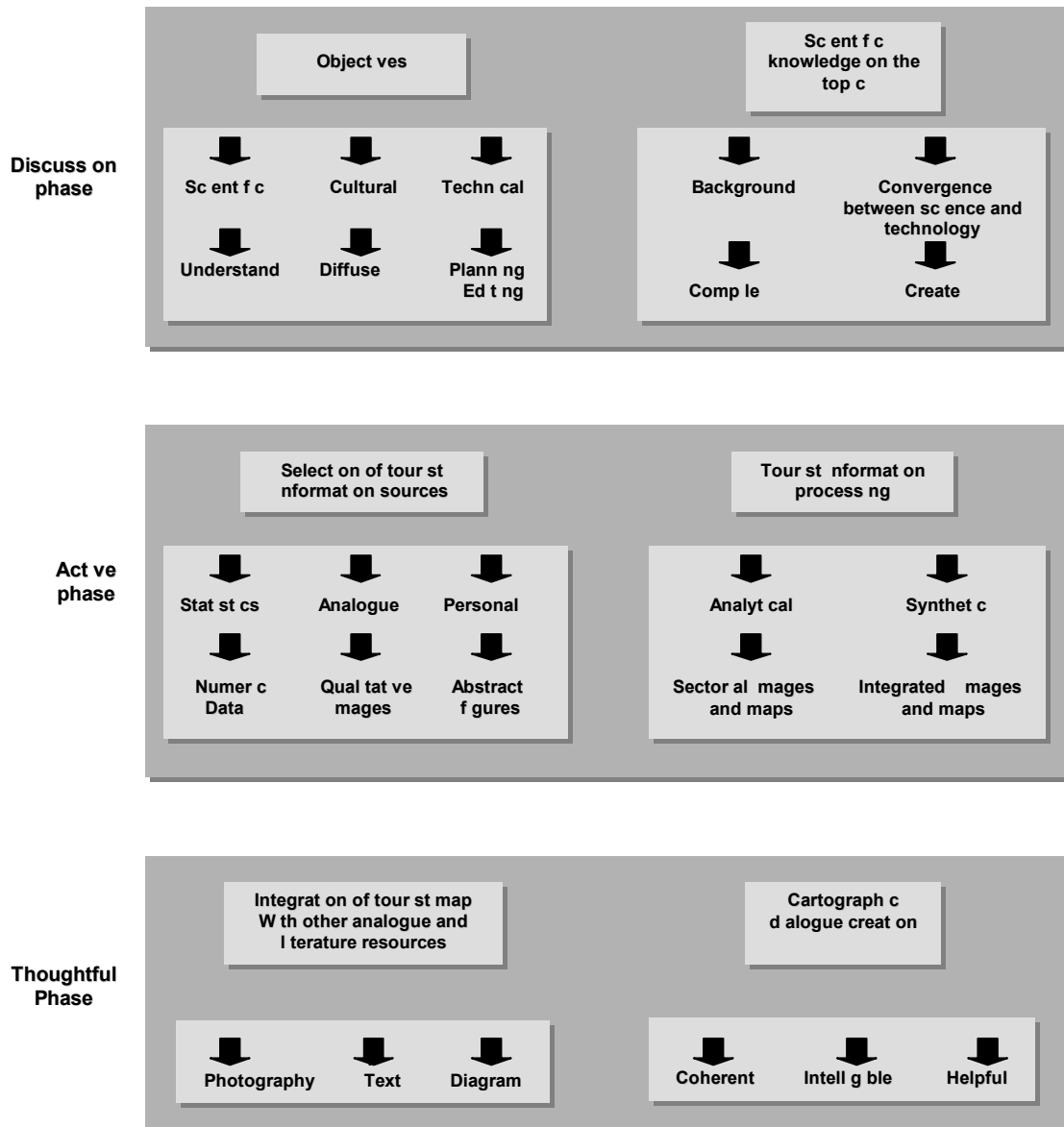
The transition between southern mountainous boundary and interior plains is occupied by the *Campo de Calatrava* to the west and the *Campo de Montiel* to the east. The first is located over the afore mentioned hercynian quartzites yet its most accentuated geographic personality comes from the tertiary volcanic traces at the soil level. The landscape of the second responds to a horizontal structure of Mesozoic limestone that supports large extensions of bush and open forest in which appreciated species of minor hunting live. Finally, the eastern section of the region also presents sub-regions of intensive agricultural activity. These are *La Machuela*, located between the provinces of Albacete and Cuenca, the *Tierra de Alarcón* and further North the *Alcarrias de Cuenca y Guadalajara*, extending their platforms from the boundaries of Sistema Ibérico to the interior depression of La Mancha.

The sedimentary basins constitute the last of the regional geographic units. On the northern half, open fields and fertile low land of the Tagus basin make up several sub-regional units in which the natural environment has been replaced by human activities. In Guadalajara, the *Campiña del Henares* is developed over tertiary materials at the foothill of *Sistema Central*. In Toledo we find *La Sagra* and the *Tierra de Torrijos* over the right margin of the Tagus River and the *Vegas* of the regional capital and the *Tierra de Talavera* with very diversified economic activities. On the southern half, we find the immensity of the *La Mancha* plain, land of Don Quixote, split between the provinces of Ciudad Real, Albacete, Cuenca and Toledo. Traditional crops of the Mediterranean trilogy extend here in all directions, as well as old roads and modern communications ways, promoting the settlement in concentrated and far apart towns.

While areas in the mountainous sectors have their principal tourist attraction in the natural landscapes, still yet well preserved, the plain offers its tourist interest from culture and heritage dating from the 16th to 18th centuries.

II.- METHODOLOGICAL PROCESS AND INSTITUTIONAL ACTION - PARALLEL APPROACHES

Firstly the methodological framework is defined. Three phases have been defined: the first phase a thoughtful character in which a review on scientific knowledge on the topic and objectives were defined. The second one, more active and instrumental, in which tourist information was collected and a first processing for its best visual representation was conducted. A third phase, perhaps quieter and more thoughtful, in which the tourist map was integrated in a very varied context in terms of the analogue and literature resources managed in order to create an eminent cartographic discourse resulting in coherent, intelligible and helpful to the future reader.



The objectives that guided our work are divided into three groups: scientific, cultural and technical. The first derives from the natural competence of the institution in which the work was developed: the university. In our case, we aim at understanding phenomena present in reality, in particular those related to rural tourism: their origin, factors contributing to their development, the stakeholders implied in its promotion, the impacts received in the territory and in the socio-economic tissue, the immediate future, etc. The cultural objectives are referred to the diffusion amongst the general public of the obtained conclusions as well as of the intermediate products. In this case it does not simply consist on an academic projection but on a true diffusion for the cultural enrichment of a very diverse audience. The technical objectives refer to a double function: land management and the application of new technologies to Atlas production. One of the eventual benefits of an Atlas of this kind is its potential as a decision supporting tool. This is the conception, design and execution of operative planning policies. On the other hand, it includes as part of the objectives, the incorporation of the most suitable technology at every stage, in order to achieve the printed and electronic versions of the Atlas.

All of the above would not be possible without a certain amount of scientific knowledge on Rural tourism in Castilla-La Mancha. A thematic Atlas cannot be approached as a *strictu sensu* research project. This means production is only possible when accurate material, managed by scientists, exists. This is the first condition. The second one refers to the need for the cartographer to have a high degree of scientific knowledge on the topic. Excellence in cartographic technology is not enough. This must be combined with in depth and specific intelligence on the contents which will allow for a meaningful treatment of each of the aspects presented in the Atlas. In order to start up with a minimum degree of foreseen success, there is a double demand: previous knowledge and convergence, in an individual, of cartographic skills and scientific knowledge.

The second phase of this Atlas production responds to an active participating approach. This phase includes two different moments: choice and treatment of tourist information.

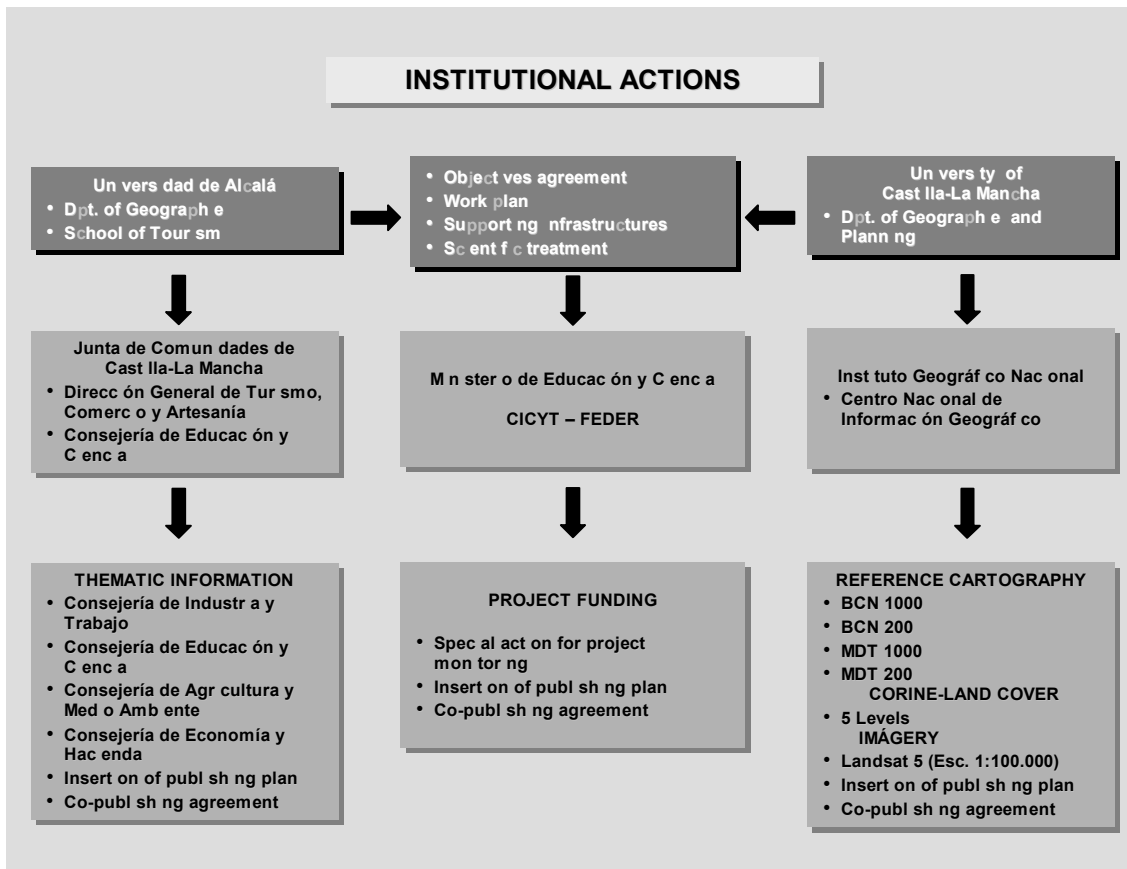
Fortunately, researchers today can easily access a large range of tourist information resources. These are the statistics on areas related to tourism (hotel capacity, nights spent, accommodation types, investments and so on). Other sources are mostly linked to images or maps. There are also numerous personal resources, this is those that result from direct observation or qualitative valuation of tourist commodities (i.e. cultural heritage sites, satisfaction indexes, etc.). This source diversity can be regarded as potential wealth only when the Atlas responsible persons have determined a clear objective and, as it was mentioned above, have acquired the pursued balance between scientific knowledge and technical experience.

Once the sources have been chosen and their correspondent tourist information collected, processing the information is the next step. This involves, within the predominance of an active job, a minimum amount of reasoning work. Usually, there are two ways: either segmenting the represented theme to elementary levels of easy intelligence of strong significance value, or joining together, by means of high level of abstraction, a more globalizing knowledge. In the first case we use qualitative or quantitative reference maps (rural housing distribution, tourists frequentation, roman heritage location, etc.); in the second we use synthetic maps (civil architecture, tourist interest itineraries, cultural interest commodities, etc.).

A tourist map within an atlas must be integrated together with a range of heterogeneous communication resources. Today the classic definition of a thematic Atlas as a series of organically inter-related maps in a system is determined by its purpose and use, and does not make sense any more. In addition to this, we must outline the significant amount of images and texts that, necessarily, constitutes the Atlas. Texts and images are not simply additions to the map and these are neither simple illustrations of the text: all of them are designed and written in a perfect assembly, strongly bonded by relationships and dependencies, which made it work as a new and true entity. If in the past it was difficult to name as Atlas a collection of maps, today it is even more difficult to do the same with the diversity of visual and textual documents that made up an Atlas.

Nevertheless, this is the challenge we face. In this "thinking" phase and as a result of this creative work, it has shaped what we call "cartographic discourse". This is because the thematic map is the key element and it provides, as conducting thread, sense to the whole communication process. Coherence, intelligibility and helpfulness are the three qualities that must be attributed. Thus the cartographic discourse must be coherent with the objectives of the Atlas as well as with it self. This means it will not distort the scientific, cultural and technical aims that we are talking about. On the other hand it will seek for the necessary balance between heterogeneity of managed communication resources. If the contents of an atlas are not easily assessed by the user, then failure is guaranteed. Intelligibility does not mean arduous reading but clear, easy and unambiguous reading. More so, the reading must be done with pleasure; our speaker, the atlas, possessing an aesthetic value makes reading it easier.

This methodological itinerary flows in parallel to a necessary institutional action. The Departments of Geography at the Universities of Alcalá and Castilla-La Mancha, supported by their own resources, made a work plan and determined the specific objectives. The institutional action was next. This was developed along the six years the project lasted. Details follow:



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Firstly it is worth outlining that the European Fund for Regional Development has included rural tourism amongst its priority funding streams. We were granted funds under the umbrella of the 30th June 1997 resolutions (7th August 1997 BOE) from the Universities, Research and Development State Secretary for the realisation of projects aiming at promoting R+D and Innovation in regions included in objectives 1 and 2. The Inter-ministerial Commission on Science and Technology monitored the project while it was undertaken. At the end, this work was included in the publishing plan of the Ministry of Education and Science. This Ministry signed a co-publishing agreement and took on board part of the funding of the Atlas through a "Special Action".

The Autonomous region of Castilla-La Mancha is the main source of information related to tourist activity arranged within its boundaries. By means of an agreement information was made easily accessible and progress work was demonstrated and discussed with responsible staff from government agencies. The Regional Office for Education and Science took the Atlas within its publishing plan, thus participating in its publication with a significant money under the umbrella of the established co-publishing agreement.

The National Center for Geographic Information (CNIG) provided the cartographic layers 1:1.000.000 and 1:200.000, the satellite imagery TM and the biophysical land cover (CORINE LAND COVER 1:100.000). By means of agreement we accessed the afore mentioned information because the CNIG showed an interest in the publishing of the Atlas. The CNIG has become a fundamental agent in the execution of the Atlas; it always showed extreme diligence and care in the preparation of the requested information. The CNIG endorsed the co-publishing agreement taking responsibility for the printing of the Atlas, by including this work in the publishing plan of the Instituto Geográfico Nacional (Ministerio de Fomento).

In summary, in addition to the scientific and technical complexity of a work of this kind, laborious and necessary institutional actions were undertaken in order to lead the project to its natural end: the publication.

III.- RURAL TOURISM ON THE MAP: BETWEEN TRADITION AND INNOVATION

One of the first matters to clarify at the initial stage of an Atlas project consists of determining whether to adopt a traditional content structure or a more innovative one. This is the thematic sequence from the beginning to the end.

Classic perception is basically analytical and it firstly pays attention to the physical aspects of the theme (natural heritage resources in our case), then it pays attention to the aspects related to human activity (cultural and historic-artistic heritage), to finish with a range of infrastructures made available for the tourist. The most innovative presentations highlight the synthetic aspects and derive from it the ones of most interest.

Out of a predominantly analytical and sector-based concern, today we assist to trials more closely related to the intrinsically complex territorial themes and the attention to integral issues such as the environment and development. In our case, the choice is based on a combined sequence that integrates an analytical presentation of traditional nature with another more synthetic, more globalizing profile. In this regard, *mutatis mutandi*, it does not feel strange the trend established by a well known fashion designer: we must break with convention in order to innovate yet necessarily conservative in order to be understood.

The advantages and constraints relating to both options are well known. In classic presentations the reading custom agrees in an easier way; a predetermined sequence, usually from physical to human themes is expected. It is the readers mind which makes up the synthetising task. The most significant constraint is the effort required for the reader to synthetise and re-make a highly complex reality. In the innovative presentations the translation of the reality in the most accurate manner is pursued. It aims at avoiding singular aspects to get out of context and simultaneously looks at new and current concerns of transversal character. The advantage seems obvious: representation is more factual. The same for the constraint: it does not exist a reading custom as developed as to make perception easy.

In our case, the combined option, has tried to keep the advantages but to avoid the constrains. It seems relevant at this stage to reveal the thematic logic inherent to the Atlas and, through examples, to show cartographic analytical and synthetic compositions.

To start it is always convenient to frame the phenomena within its geographic reality; for this reason physical and human information acts as a base for tourist information. It is not the purpose to include comprehensive information on topography, climate, biogeography, population, economic structure etc., although it is worthwhile to include those aspects of relevance to tourism.

Afterwards, it seems logical to present a territory's potential as a tourist destination. In this section we must consider two key ideas: firstly not all natural, historical or cultural heritage is of tourist interest and secondly potential resources are usually larger than ones currently used.

Potential tourist resources must unite a number of criteria: accessibility, identity, singularity and easy visual perception. This disregards a substantial part of natural and cultural heritage in regions that, far from being worthless from the scientific point of view, do not necessarily need to be viewed. On the other hand the selection of the potential resources, should be filtered using their current assests.

All of the above will require, from a practical point of view, a thematic segmentation in which the sequence would be a classical one; starting with nature and followed by the history.

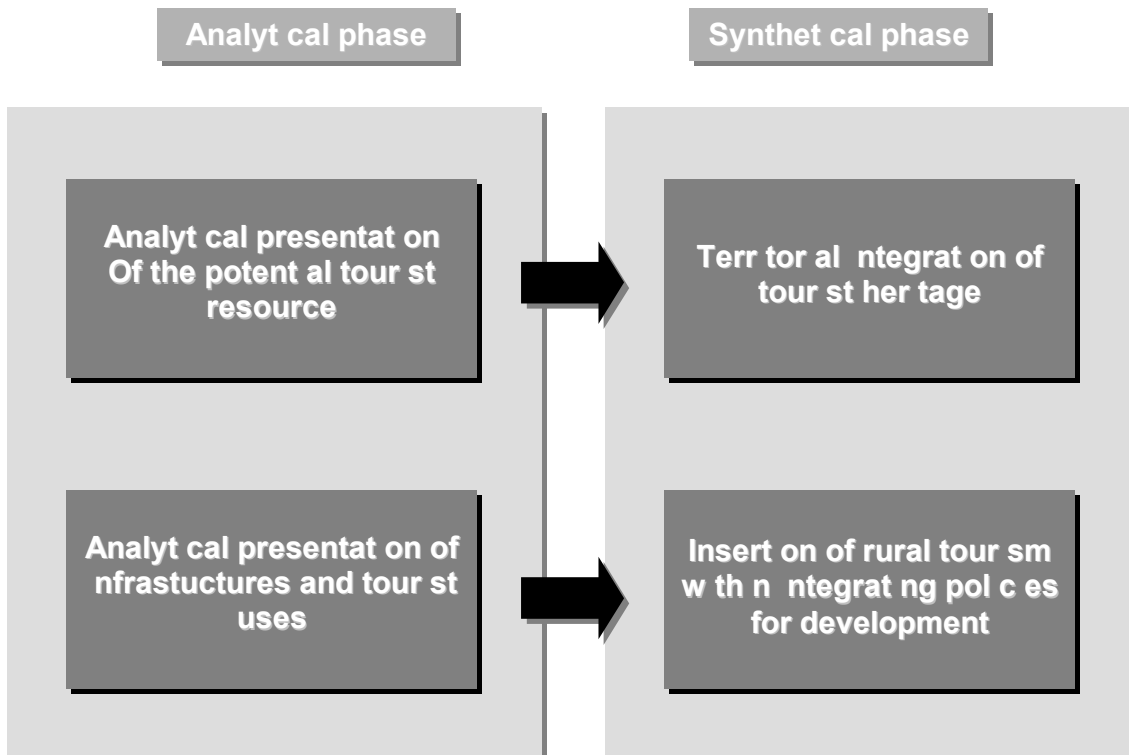
For this reason, the analytical presentation is followed by the synthetically created presentation. What we can call "Land of Tourism" embeds symbolic representation, usually of a high degree of abstraction, based on 3D views derived from digital elevation models.

Finally, we ought to address two significant issues. The first one possesses a long tradition in tourist cartography and the second one is of more recent interest. We refer here to the cartography of infrastructures, the activities and events that are participated in by tourists. On the other hand we refer to the promotion of tourism in rural areas, with obvious integration dominant, as one of the pillars of development programs implemented in underdeveloped regions.

The aspects to highlight within the infrastructures section has progressively increased. Rural accommodation has been diversified to contain a large range of classifications; new activities such as different mountain related sports and contact with nature have required specialised commodities of diverse condition; local cuisine also constitutes a powerful sector and, at the same time, consists of a great variety.

Rural development cannot elude tourism in the context of a weakened economy such as the one of the country side. At the same time, those development policies embrace the strong social demand of tourist products within rural environments. These two reasons make it necessary to produce a Thematic Atlas on Tourism. Funding provided from Rural Tourism development programs are significant. The impact of those initiatives are also significant; catering, rural accommodation, heritage art restoration, environmental protection, etc. Rural tourism, in all, as an engine of

recreational function and as a bridging function, between resources and tourists, deserves to be recognised in an integrating and synthetic section.



Thus, in the sequence briefly described the dual move analysis-synthesis, we consider convenient in the presentation of a theme related to the complexity of rural tourism, is perceived: From the analytical presentation of the potential resource, to its synthetic presentation, and from the analytical presentation of the infrastructures tourist use, to its inclusion in the frame of rural development. This is the conducting thematic thread and this is also the way it is perceived from the technical perspective which that has chosen analytical maps in the first movement and synthetic representations in the second one.

As an illustration of the first one, let's see an example of two maps; the first one related to tourist potential and the second one with the infrastructures and tourist use. As demonstrated in the second we will do the same with a model of representation of general tourist heritage and with a tourist itineraries map that provide access to the whole diversity of tourist resources.

Historic and artistic heritage are amongst the best kept resources in rural areas. In Castilla-La Mancha, the Renaissance period has left a priceless trace that, besides its civil and religious meaning, it is understood as an important tourist resource. A map at scale 1:1,000,000 shows the diversity of religious buildings, public works and civil architecture dating from 16th century that can be visited today by tourists. As cartographic base layers we have adopted the following composition: administrative boundary, hydrography network, communications, settlements, toponomy, hypsometry and shade relief. The thematic layer adopts colour to represent three types of buildings (blue for religious, red for public works, and maroon for civil architecture in addition to those towns that are classified as historical-artistic centres in purple); the visual variable "shape" allows for the differentiation of up to seventeen types of heritage resources within the afore mentioned types. The map is placed on a double page supported by seven pictures and a brief text.

Mountain, aquatic, aerial, hunting and fishing sports are amongst the open air activities available. For instance, let's pay attention to the first one. Base cartography is a similar characteristics shown for the first case. Thematic information is organised in two big blocks: point-based activities (rock climbing, rafting, mountaineering and orienteering), resolved by means of different symbols, and linear infrastructures (green corridors, biking tracks, long and short walks), resolved by lines of different colour. This map is presented at 1:1,500,000 scale and it is accompanied by text and five pictures.

Both maps show sectorial aspects, very specific even, of resources, activities or tourist infrastructures. Thus, there are both analytical maps which are part of the blocks possessing descriptive sequence, located respectively in chapters three and five.

Alternatively and after the two chapters mentioned above, there are two other chapters of a more integrating character. The first one named "Tourist interest milieus" under the umbrella of a historic or geographic denomination, reunite the most significant milestones from a tourism point of view. A 3D view including hypsometry, shade relief, zenith and azimuthal angles as formal elements, and derived from a digital terrain model, is adopted for its representation. Settlements, communications, hydrography and toponomy are superposed. The thematic layer possesses a well stressed abstraction, as it differentiates natural and cultural heritage resources.

The second of these chapters, possessing a clear integrating character, is dedicated to rural tourism promotion policies. Amongst them it is worth to highlight the Junta de Comunidades de Castilla-La Mancha. The eleven corridors present in the Rocinante Network go through locations of high natural, landscaping and heritage value. This initiative has set up the bases to establish *The Quijote Routes*, promoted by the Castilla-La Mancha government. These routes are included within the programmed activities to commemorate the IV Century of the "Prince Edition" of the first part of Miguel de Cervantes famous novel. Each of these corridors integrates two different lines, more or less parallels: the named CIP (roads of landscape interest) and those named INMOS (engine free roads). In the first one there are itineraries proposed for vehicles, well integrated within the environment local roads, which allows for tranquil trips. The second alternative seeks at recovering old communication axes, they imply a different way to understand travelling. The aim is basically to link natural environments by gullies and other cattle tracks or even abandoned rail tracks, in order to establish routes to travel across on a bike, walking or riding. The network possesses a significant length of over 3,000 km with an average of about 300 km each. The establishment of parking spots seeks at combining both ways of visiting, alternating sections by car with others walking in order to enjoy the most attractive sites calmly. The cartographic base includes external administrative boundary, provincial boundaries, hydrography, settlements, toponomy, shade relief, and a faint yellow background. The thematic information is resolved by linear implantation with specific colour for each of the eleven corridors, differentiated by different symbols (diverse types of dotted lines). The engine free roads and from the vehicle ones, include a symbol at the beginning and at the end of each line as well as geographic vertices of tourist interest or natural interest sites.

These last representations are clearly integrating. They show either resources within general like denominations or infrastructures (*embedding despair tourist offer in Castilla-La Mancha*).

CONCLUSION

The realisation of a work of this kind has allowed us to highlight the heritage wealth of the Castilla-La Mancha country side and its potential for transformation into a tourist resource. This task has not been easy given the complex thematic and technical complexity. The first was resolved with the excellent support of prestigious researchers from, mainly, the universities of Alcalá and Castilla-La Mancha; the second one required our own accumulated experience of more than 25 years as well as the support of private and public institutions. This is in all a truly multidisciplinary piece of work.

After six years of work, The Rural Tourism Atlas of Castilla-La Mancha is today a reality. Researchers, academics, politicians, technical staff of land management and the general public posses, at their fingertips, a polyvalent document that would be a decision making support tool for some, a pedagogical resource for others or a text book. For the majority it constitutes a piece of work that open doors to cultural enrichment. It is not a tourist guide neither an accompanying book for potential tourists but an Atlas than can be thought about by the large diversity of readers.

To the purely scientific, pedagogical or cultural interest, it is added its technical value. We hope that the solution to issues related to cartographic representation, at both the basic and thematic levels, the application of technology and the presentation of the Atlas in both electronic and analogue formats, have made of it a "useful and pleasant" document; adjectives adopted by Emmanuel Kant when referring to geographic science.