

## THE MANAGEMENT OF CULTURAL RESOURCES IN THE CREATION OF SPANISH TOURIST DESTINATIONS

Carmen MINGUEZ

Complutense University of Madrid, Department of Human Geography, Faculty of Geography and History,  
Avda. Profesor Aranguren s/n 28040

[cminguez@ghis.ucm.es](mailto:cminguez@ghis.ucm.es)

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### Abstract

Spain is one of the most important tourist destinations in the world due to the great stream of visitors that arrive seeking sun and sand, historical towns and the great cities such as Madrid, Barcelona, Sevilla or Bilbao. With more than 52 million foreign visitors and more than 150 million visits by nationals, tourism generates around 10% of the GNP. The relevance of cultural tourism in Spain and its multiple facets makes it interesting yet difficult to study. In this process it is considered of prime importance to identify how cultural resources in the destination are managed and to establish various types that reflect possible activities as well as those that are already in use. Better management patterns are being sought for destinations in order to achieve better quality in visits and a better position for these in an ever more competitive market.

*Keywords:* Spain, tourism, cultural, destinations, typology, innovation.

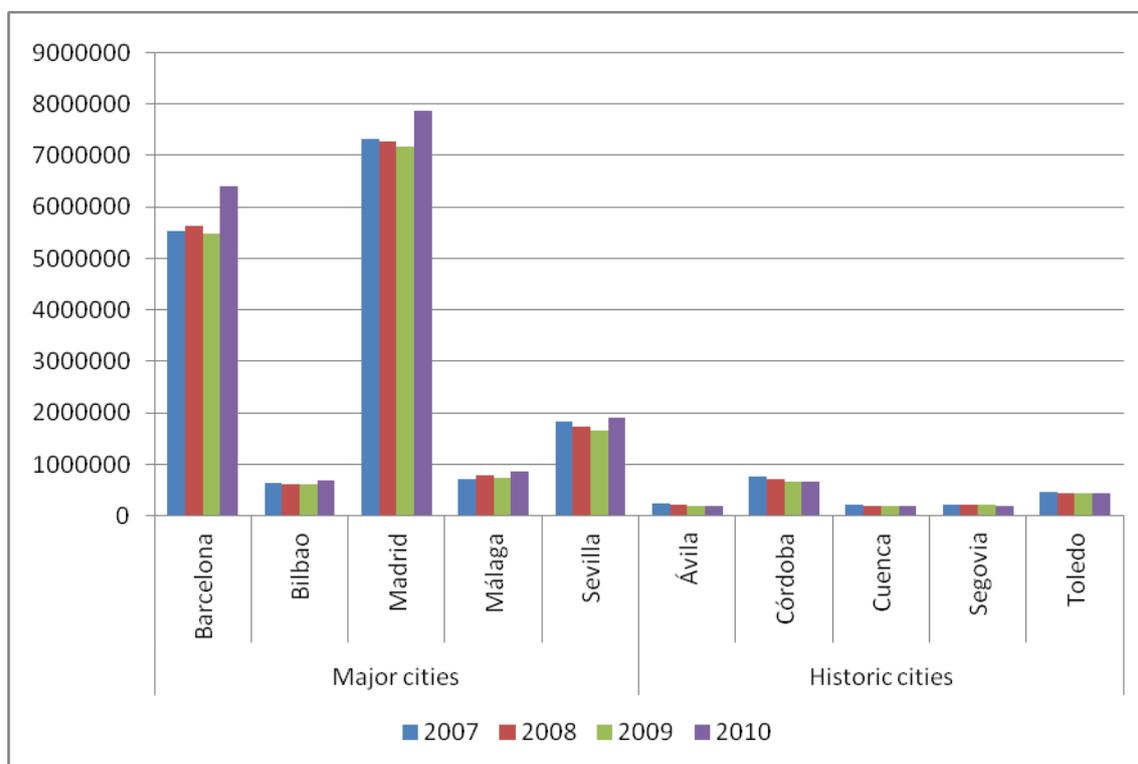
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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Spain stands out on the international scene as one of the main tourist destinations in the world; and tourist activity is one of its primary sources of income, bringing in 10-11% of the annual GNP (Institute of Tourism Studies, various years). All of this is due especially to sun and sand tourism which made this destination famous in the 1960s (Pellejero, 1999), and is still the basis of Spanish tourism today; however, Spanish tourism is presently experiencing changes due to more and more diversification in what is offered to tourists. Cities play a great role in this variety and their cultural and heritage resources, of which at the end of 2011 stood out 43 Sites written in the UNESCO World Heritage List, more than 16,000 Properties of Cultural Interest declared by the Law of Spanish Historical Heritage and over 1,400 museums. To this can be added a wide offer of gastronomy, culture and landscape recognized on the national as well as international scale (Troitiño & Troitiño, 2010).

However, not all city destinations are the same. On analyzing the situation of Spanish cities between 2007 and 2011, one sees how the big cities, in which the cultural attractions are greatest in number and variety and which have the principal tourism infrastructures, are the ones that have best adapted to the present economic recession (Fig.1). On the other hand, the medium-sized and small cities, though with a strong presence of heritage sites, have been harder hit by the recession and have even reached the point in some cases, such as Avila,

Cuenca and Toledo, of need to introduce changes in their tourism cycles. This fact makes one think about current management of these destinations and the pattern to follow in search of success in cultural tourism based exclusively on the adjustment in the value of these heritage resources.



Resource: INE

**Figure 1.** Evolution of visitor by typology

Modern tourism is inserted into a process of marketing in which culture is another consumer product of the “leisure society” (Watson & Kopachevsky, 1994). Consequently, culture is understood as the product of individual or group activities to which a specific meaning is attached and loses its value as an anthropological process and as a code of conduct integrated into a specific social group (Van Maanen & Laurent, 1993). Moreover, today’s postmodern society is selective and therefore not all cultural or heritage resources are equally attractive. Only some of them can be considered tourist resources (Jansen-Verbeke *et al*, 2008), that is, potential attractions that to be considered need a solid management model to which can be given great importance for public visit (Richard, 2001).

Equally, destinations are undergoing constant modifications since they have to adapt to new needs of a dynamic and changing market that demands that heritage meet criteria of conservation, authenticity and sustainability (MacCannell, 1976; Waitt, 2000). This makes it necessary for managers to innovate in order to make an attractive adjustment in value. In this process of adjustment to the necessities of leisure society, the destinations incorporate the new creations (museums, events, performances...) into the cultural offer, while respecting the idea that culture is an inalienable product of the place (Zukin, 1991:28). Likewise, the new cultural products end up becoming new symbols and the new image of the territory (Urbain, 1989).

## 2. STUDY OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

We present a trilateral relationship in which intervene cultural resources, a demanding society and the managers, who serve as a union between the first two of these components. Traditionally, the first two have received much greater attention on the part of researchers, leaving aside the connection between agents in charge of cultural management and the destinations (Calle & Garcia, 2010). This relationship has been taken as a departure point by the research projects “Recent Dynamics and Strategies of Intervention in National Heritage Destinations” and “Carrying Capacity as an Instrument for Planning and Management of Cultural-Tourist Resources”. Both have been carried out by the research group “Tourism, Heritage and Development” at the Complutense University of Madrid, who have spent over a decade analyzing tourism planning in Spanish and Latin American historical cities with the purpose of identifying urban dynamics caused by tourism.

In the first of the research projects a survey was designed and distributed to managers of the principal Spanish heritage resources. They were chosen because they were directly in charge of cultural policy and over the last years had shown great concern about the introduction of tourism in the destinations where the properties they managed were located. The managers, more than anyone else, were conscious of the role played by the institutions they represented and they knew very well the needs and problems of the cities termed as tourist destinations.

The questionnaire was made up of 18 questions and included the following subjects: the general management of the heritage property; the tourist management of the same; the visitors and the heritage property within the tourist destination. For its application, a first selection was made proportional to the number of properties located in each place, and it was necessary to distinguish among different types of heritage properties. Therefore, all those properties managed by the State through the National Heritage or the Ministry of Culture – State Museums – and also those Archeological Complexes that are open to the public were included in their entirety.

Finally, after a detailed culling, the total was established at 1,339 properties scattered irregularly across the national territory. Among them were 1,056 museums, 91 cathedrals and 177 archeological complex grounds and 15 monumental ensembles, constituted by palaces, walls... Of all these, 426 were chosen to receive the survey and in the period of one year 115 responses came back. Initially they were considered insufficient, but on analysis we observed that they offered a representation of the entire country and of all types of properties while they also included the principal attractions. In addition, the plentiful information obtained was complemented by personal interviews as well as already existing bibliography and documentation.

The survey revealed valuable and diverse information of which only a part is shown in this article and which defines the following two points: The first analyzes the direct data taken from the survey and the second interprets this information to establish types of destinations. This result could have been achieved with other methodology; however, innovative and first hand information was obtained. Thus the principal objective of this study is reached, that is to recognize how a model of management of cultural-tourist resources meets directly with the destination, generating different types that show their degree of accuracy.

## 3. CULTURAL ATTRACTION AND CULTURAL DESTINATION IN SPAIN

A great part of the literature relative to cultural tourism concentrates on cultural and heritage attractions as key components in the interpretation of and contact with cultural tourism (Prentice, 1993). Both are essential in consumption practices and in the make up of the landscape (Richard, 1996) and for that reason deserve the attention of geographers. Moreover,

we are interested in the close relationship that attractions maintain with the cultural destinations. This connection emerges when the destination has a heavy concentration of cultural resources that set a stage on which the attractions acquire such value that they may create a city-museum (Russo, 2002). This can be seen in the medieval and renaissance cities which are the basis for the European tourist industry and for the Spanish tourist industry as well (Toledo, Segovia, Salamanca...). However, attraction and destination also join forces when the monumental complexes are so powerful in physical dimension and image (symbology, historic-artistic representation) that they become a destination in themselves, eclipsing the town (Mínguez, 2007). This is the case of Granada and the Alhambra or San Lorenzo de El Escorial and the Royal Monastery.

In both cases cultural heritage attractions are the tourism axis of the destination and their actual tourist image, as can be seen in promotional activity, in motivational studies carried out and/or in processes of occupation of the area observed. Then the monumental area becomes a "touristification," that is, a heavy concentration of visitors and visitor services appear and alter the traditional functions in the historical centres (Troitiño, 1998). The success of the tourist destination is difficult to justify and can only be explained in quantitative terms by measuring the number of visitors. This is impossible in open areas; what is measured is the flow at the principal attraction linking the destination therefore directly to the cultural institution.

According to the survey presented, 65% of the monuments and museums in Spain received between 10,000 and 250,000 visitors a year and that the number of those that did not reach 5,000 was constant (6%) as was the case of those that received more than a million visitors a year (5.2%). These last were always the same (Fig.2): the Real Alcázar and the Cathedral of Sevilla, Prince Felipe Science Museum (Valencia), the Alhambra (Granada) and the Prado Museum (Madrid). Another point of information obtained was that the majority of the visitors were nationals and that only in very special cases did foreigners make up more than half of the total. This did happen in the Guggenheim (Bilbao); the Alhambra and the Cave of Sacramonte, (both in Granada); the Prado Museum, the Cathedral and the Alcázar of Sevilla, the Andaluz Centre of Flamenco (Jerez), the Church of Santo Tomé (Toledo); the Antoni Tapies Foundation (Barcelona) and the Museum of Segovia and the Museum of Zuloaga, (both in Segovia). For their part, local visitors made up the majority at the Provincial Museums that showed collections closely related to the region and where the presence of school visitors was high. Local visitors were also the majority at the Thyssen Museum or the Reina Sofía because the temporary exhibitions that they put on are an important component of the Madrid cultural offer. Moreover, it must be noted that they are located in a city with a metropolitan area of over six million inhabitants.



**Figure 2.** Visitors waiting to enter in Sevilla's Real Alcazar. Mínguez

### **3.1 Tourism According to Cultural and Heritage Agents**

Numerous authors, such as Smith in "Issues in Cultural Tourism Studies," think that cultural and heritage managers present a vision of culture different to that of tourism managers. The former believe that heritage is an asset to protect and they see art as a phenomenon of inspiration that enriches those who produce it or observe it. Tourism managers see culture and heritage as resources that should be converted into elements for entertainment and fun through a process of democratization that renders them accessible to the greatest possible number of people. Not only are these differences going to cause conflicts of interest among managers, but also for the most outstanding properties, they create different management patterns and distinct types of destinations (Smith, 2009; McKercher & DuCross, 2002).

For this reason, when various types of Spanish managers were asked for their opinion on tourism, it seems that they recognized the interest and importance of tourism in their properties. The majority (83%) thought that it was positive as long as it remained sustainable and 62% believed that tourism helped to increase the value of cultural components. However, the idea that tourism increased economic development had minor support (23%), made up of the great institutions with annual budgets of more than €1,000,000. These were The Alhambra, the Cathedrals of Córdoba and Sevilla and the Guggenheim, Thyssen, Prado and Art Nouveau (Salamanca) museums.

Of those interviewed 62% believed that cultural tourism would increase at a moderate rate in the destinations where it was found; this figure coincided with the 60.87% who believed that same growth would take place in the properties they managed as well. Among them can be noted, for example, provincial and municipal museums. Only four of the managers interviewed thought that in a moderate growth span they would be able to have a higher than average growth. These were the Archeological Museum of Murcia, The Birthplace House of Jovellanos (Gijón), the El Greco House (Toledo) and the Museum of the City of Baeza. The four have undergone renovations in the last five years and have received heavy investments from local and regional governments that wished to place them as major cultural institutions in their respective towns.

On the other hand, 21% of those surveyed considered the property they managed to be the most important feature at the destination. It is noteworthy that 50% were monuments (the

Alhambra, the Cathedrals of Santiago and of Sevilla, the Royal Palaces of Madrid and of La Granja and the Royal Monastery of El Escorial...); 40% were museums (the Prado or the Museum of Abstract Spanish Art in Barcelona) and 10% were Archeological Complexes (Baelo Claudia and Italica, both in Adalucia). On the other hand, 20.17% believed that they did not represent institutions with any tourism interest at all. These were City Museums (Avila, Segovia, Malaga, Valladolid...), Diocesan or Cathedral Museums and even some State Museums – the Cerralbo and the Decorative Arts Museum – located in Madrid, where what is on offer is quite impressive and varied. All except the Museum of Malaga believed that they would improve their position as a tourist attraction over the next five years. This was precisely the only museum that saw tourism as having only a trite influence on its heritage and thought that it produced more damage than benefit. This idea was possibly due to the fact that the museum is located in one of the most important sun and sand destinations in Europe.

Along with the above idea, most of the managers (81.21%) believed that the property they managed was the principal reason for the visit, followed by the enjoyment of the same (62.28%). On the contrary, filling empty time and socializing were two reasons managers hardly took note of (22.81% and 14.91%, respectively) and without any doubt they had greater importance than managers were willing to recognize since the social element is part of the mission of museums. Moreover, the European Union promotes this type of participation through programs such as Europe for Citizens (2007-2013).

### **3.2 Problems in Creation of Destinations**

The joint attraction-destination implies numerous problems stemming from the model of management of the attractions, which directly affect the management of the destination. This reflects problems in the inter-institutional collaboration and in the perception of tourism which cultural institution officers and those in charge of the city have. Likewise, conflicts arise originating from compatibility of the tourist visit with the original functions of the property (religious, institutional...) and the relationship existing between the property and its surroundings (crowds, rendering of services...).

Beginning with importance that managers of Spanish Heritage placed on tourism, it must be noted that the majority believed that the properties under their charge were distinguished tourist resources. To make this value correspond to reality and not be limited to an idyllic and personal viewpoint, there is need for a series of procedures, policies, tools, services and budgets that truly define their merit as a tourist attraction. On analysis of these elements we saw marked deficiencies, principally because there were few properties that had the tools, except those that were dedicated to the traditional mission of museums, such as conservation (conservation, restoration and/or museological plans) and cultural dissemination (teaching program and research plan). Only a minority could rely on tourism management tools (study of the public and a program of dissemination and communication), economic program (financing, marketing and sponsorship) or integral procedure (management and strategy). Furthermore, at times there was a lack of sufficient and qualified personnel or budget to put the tools to use.

Of all the properties that have participated in this research study only four had procedure plans and programs in all areas of management. These were recognized as cultural-educational areas with public visitors: the National Museum of Roman Art (Mérida), the National Museum of the Prado and the Royal Palace (both in Madrid) and the Guggenheim Museum (Bilbao). The first three are managed with state provided funds, while the last one depends on private sponsorship.

The greatest efforts are concentrated on studying crowd flow with the intention of increasing numbers (Moore, 1994; Sanguinetti & Garré, 2001) and they forget about the planning and tourism management tools that facilitate putting into action procedures to

improve the quality of the visit and that are key to the process of updating the museum. 52.17% used analysis systems and follow up on visitors and 26.96% had a use and management plan that included management of the visit.

Another element to take into consideration in the adapting of properties for tourist use is the availability of services dedicated exclusively to the public visit. Only 10% of the sites – principally museums – had all the services mentioned. These were the National Museum of Roman Art (Mérida), the Centro Bonastrucça Porta (Gerona), the Catalan National Art Museum (Barcelona), the Alhambra (Granada), the Guggenheim (Bilbao), the MUSAC (León) or the Thyssen and the Prado (both in Madrid). The rest were limited to offering general information services, rarely innovative or personalized.

If we look at special services on offer, the Web (71.93%), temporary exhibitions (55.26%), and cultural events (52.63%) were the most common, while at the extreme opposite were cocktail receptions and trips (5.26% and 2.63%, respectively). These figures, like those above, did not show a modern image of a heritage resource as a tourist attraction and for this reason the greater part of the managers were aware that they must increase and modernize their services in order to improve and facilitate visits. However, the introduction of tourist services was closely related to budget and the number of specialized employees such as public visits technician (17.5%); press and public relations agents (25%); guides and interpreters (45%); information personnel (56.6%); cultural promoter (21.6%); or technician for communication and dissemination (25%). This showed that most of the properties had a traditional visitor pattern and that there were few qualified employees to develop the tasks and services offered. These tasks were being carried out by individuals who were not trained for them and who were required to work in all of the activities.

The lack of and unbalanced distribution of budgeted funds has led to scant hiring of specialists, as shown in the survey responses. Therefore, although 56.51% considered that the funds which they had available annually to be adequate in general terms, this evaluation is skewed if we look at visit management and the incorporation of technology and qualified personnel for its development, in which more than half the subjects surveyed considered their budget to be inadequate. All of these features had a direct effect on the creation of the image of the destination, which was seen as impoverished as a consequence of lack of initiative and of budgets. Moreover, on rare occasions did management of the attraction depend on local government. Therefore, joint plans were seldom carried out between culture and tourism boards; nor were the local people taken into account; and decisions were made by administrators and/or private organizations.

#### **4. TYPES OF TOURIST DESTINATIONS.**

##### **4.1 Criteria for identifying the destinations.**

In order to identify a type of tourist destination the following two criteria must be taken into account:

- a) The weight of the properties: is the result of evaluating the flow of tourists, its evolution over the last five years and where visitors came from (local, national or international) as well as the reason for the visit. There were three levels. Prime properties: received more than 100,000 visits yearly and had a stable evolution. National and international visitors made up more than 50% and they were motivated mainly by cultural intentions such as to see and/or enjoy the property. Complementary properties: received between 10,000 and 100,000 visitors and they had an increasing or stable evolution. They were visited by a mainly national public and the visitors were motivated by diverse reasons such as to see and/or enjoy the property or simply “to fill time.” Accidental properties: received fewer than 10,000 visitors and

had an unstable evolution. These were basically local visitors who, in addition to seeing and/or enjoying the property and filling time, engaged in social practices since the properties also act as cultural centres (for exhibitions, concerts and conferences at the local level).

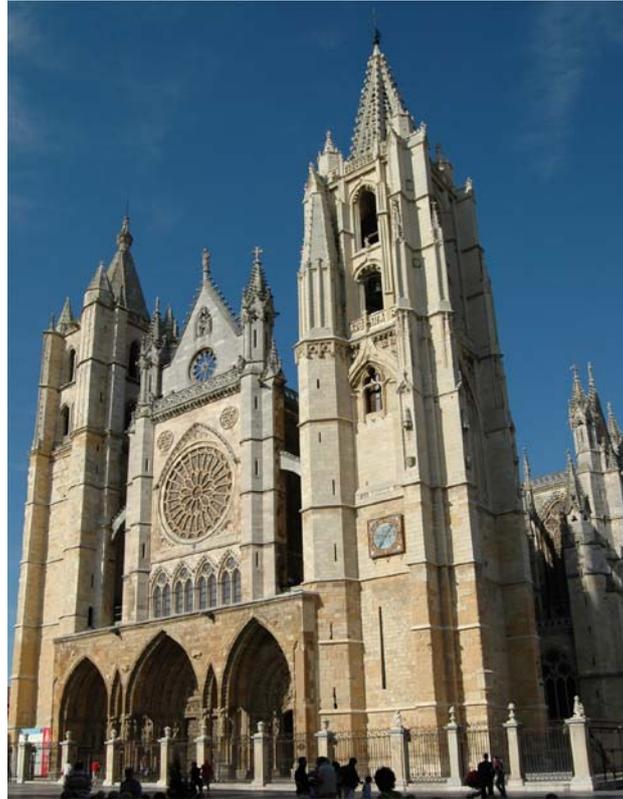
- b) Capacity for Innovation: looks at the annual budget, tools available, planned activities and the organizations that participate in these activities. Conservative Properties: had a budget that permitted only the conservation and management of visits, for which they had tools designed for the protection and dissemination of culture. The activities and services offered did not require hiring of specialized personnel or opening extra hours and they collaborated with public administration and the university. Innovative Properties: had a budget that permitted activities for different types of visitors, incorporation of new technologies and development of studies. In addition they used tools and services of all types and collaborated with the public administration, but also with private firms, cultural associations and universities.

## **4.2 Types of Destinations.**

The crossing of these levels made for six types of destinations, in which each one's character is reflected in its offer and capacity for adaptation.

### *4.2.1. Competitive Cultural Destinations.*

These had a strong cultural offer – at least one prime category property and another complementary – and fulfilled the same requirements as innovative properties. These were Barcelona, Bilbao, Granada, León, Madrid, Palma de Mallorca, Ronda, Santander-Santillana, Sevilla and Valencia. They were large cities or historical cities (León or Ronda) that had a rich heritage which has supported culture, with the help of local institutions (Fig.3 and 4). They have diversified the tourism offer and made cultural tourism a complement to urban tourism, business tourism or even that of sun and sand or cruises, as in the case of Barcelona. To this group we must add some of the cities that have been nominated candidates for European Capital of Culture 2016. These were Burgos, Córdoba, Segovia and Zaragoza. They have supported innovative artistic activities and were improving their strategies in communication, dissemination and merit.



**Figure 3.** Leon's Cathedral. Mínguez



**Figure 4.** MUSAC-Contemporary Art Museum of Castilla Mínguez

#### 4.2.2. *Non-Competitive Heritage Destination.*

They had a strong offer especially in heritage, having a least one prime category property and *another complementary*. They had a *limited capacity for adaptation and little vision toward the future*. All were historical cities that have been important destinations for cultural tourism or day visits. Their offer was limited to monumental heritage with resulting risks as seen over the last year making innovation necessary to make them competitive among themselves and to maintain possibilities in quality. These were Ávila or Toledo (Fig. 5).



**Figure 5.** Visitors on Avila's wall. Mínguez

#### 4.2.3. *Potential Cultural Destination.*

They had more than one complementary property and, on occasion, accidental properties and were of great capacity for innovation. Until now these have been rare since, although many institutions had budgets and institutional support, they did not carry out competitive innovative activities. In this group Málaga stood out, where both public and private funds were being heavily invested in culture, not only as a complement to other forms of tourism (sun and sand, urban or business) but also with the aim of turning the city into a true culture destination in Andalucía. In this context, the Film Festival played an important role that like other events of this type made up the character of the destination (Fig.6). In Andalucía there were also three destinations with important archeological complexes (Baelo Claudia, Carmona and Itálica where the regional government was investing to make Archeology more accessible to the public, a difficult task since these sites were hard to interpret.



**Figure 6.** Rodin's sculpture exhibition. Malaga, 2009. Mínguez

#### *4.2.4. Weak Cultural Destinations.*

They had an offer based on complementary and accidental properties and moreover their adaptation to new demands was limited. This was a heterogeneous group since some were in a transitional period with isolated cases in which there have been attempts made at innovation and modernization in the destination, as happened in Gerona, Gijón or Oviedo. Others, on the contrary, were lacking in resources for change such as Astorga, Cáceres, Caravaca, Pamplona, Úbeda or Valladolid (Fig.7).



**Figure 7.** Vazquez de Molina Square in Ubeda (Andalucia). Mínguez

#### *4.2.5. Tourist Destinations with Cultural Innovation as Added Value.*

These places had only one complementary property or several of accidental category and they were investing in improving and modernizing the cultural offer as the EU designates in the Work Plan of the Culture Fair (2011-2014). Sometimes they linked the offer with contemporary artists as in Figueres with Dali, in Lanzarote with Manrique or with intangible heritage such as in Jerez with flamenco or in Briones (La Rioja) or Elciego (Álava) with Rioja wine (Fig.8).



**Figure 8.** Wine cellar of Rioja wines designed by Frank Gehry. Mínguez

#### 4.2.6. *Tourism Destinations with Heritage or Culture as a Supplement.*

These, because of their location and characteristics, could not be considered cultural destinations. They had a single complementary property and/or various of the accidental type, but their ownership (generally private) prevented them from being attractions. At the same time there was no encouragement for activities to make them so. This offer was limited to being a setting for weekend destinations within a rural or sun and sand framework, such as Chinchón, Ecija, Huelva, Sagunto or Toro (Fig.9).



**Figure 8.** Chinchón's Main Square (Madrid). Mínguez

## 5. CONCLUSION

Spain possesses a great wealth of culture and heritage that on rare occasion generates tourist destinations of the same quality as that of the museums and monuments that they host due to lack of strategies of integral management. To this significant deficiency, we must note the absence of management models that are specific to each of the cultural destinations and that take into account features of current demand as well.

The present study shows an image of what is happening in Spain now and helps to identify which destinations compete among themselves, what their weaknesses are and which are the patterns of greatest and least success in each group. In this sense it can be seen how programs inserted into the European policies on aid and promotion of heritage, such as "Culture in the EU" or "European Capitals of Culture" have favoured the modernization of

the destinations and whose range of performance are as much the resources as the destinations.

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