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Landscape of vineyards as touristic and territorial resource in Lanzarote (Canary Islands, Spain)

INTRODUCTION

The present study proposes a reflection on the relationships between landscape of vineyard, spatial planning and tourism, and its influence on social and economic development in island territories.

Hypothesis: strategies of spatial planning and land management contribute to the creation of artificial landscapes. At the same time, these also are related to the dominant activities. Tourism, as an emerging and fully established activity, takes advantage of landscapes as a resource, while contributing to their formation.

The wine landscape is especially unique on the island of Lanzarote, where it becomes a tourist resource of the first order. This landscape is also an important factor in spatial planning and land management strategies.

LANDSCAPES OF VINEYARD AS A TOURIST RESOURCE AND AS AN OBJECT OF SPATIAL PLANNING

Vineyard-based agriculture contributes to the formation of unique landscapes that are the result of the coexistence of the natural characteristics of the environment and a specific socio-economic structure, so landscapes of vineyard stands as a relevant element in planning strategies.

In a traditional rural wine-growing space, tourism breaks out as a new factor and takes advantage of this landscape as a tourist resource. In this sense, the territorial planning must consider in its planning both the pres-

ervation of the landscapes of vineyard, and the tourist activity, resulting in a new opportunity to enhance the traditional space.

In the Canary Islands, this relationship between rural space, landscape and tourism is transferred to the very conception of the territory as heritage from which protected natural spaces are defined, specific management instruments and mechanisms derived from tourism management. From this derives the proposal of development models based on “preservation”, “conservation” or “mixed” (Simancas, 2006), being the island of Lanzarote a paradigmatic example.

AREA OF STUDY

The island of Lanzarote, located at the northeastern end of the Canary Archipelago, has an area of 845 km². It is of volcanic origin and its geological age is around 15 m.a. In 1730 the greatest historical eruption of the Canary Islands took place, that of Timanfaya or Montañas del Fuego, whose episode lasted for 6 years, in 5 different periods and defined the recent volcanic landscape of the Island.

The climate is sub-desert and arid, with little rainfall, thus limiting agricultural uses, among which crops such as cereals, forage, potatoes and sweet potatoes and, above all, grapes.

The wine landscape of Lanzarote is the area of study of this work and especially the regions of La Geria, Masdache-Montaña Bermeja, El Grifo, Montaña de Tisalaya, Tiagua, Valle de Temisa and La Corona, where the crop

area is concentrated of vine, distributed among the municipalities of Tías, Tinajo and Yaiza.

THE WINE LANDSCAPE OF LANZAROTE AS A TOURIST RESOURCE

The wine landscape of Lanzarote is the result of a unique symbiosis between the geomorphologic, soil, climate, settlement and culture conditions of the use of land for productive purposes and economic development. The result is a singular landscape on *lapilli*, of great ethnographic value, but also scenic and tourist.

This is a fragile and vulnerable landscape whose survival depends on its productivity. But to the direct economic profitability, agriculture should also add value as a touristic resource, because this landscape “en geria” has become a representative value of the destination. Therefore, the protected natural space, the territorial planning and the patrimonial tourist resource constitute a trio of inseparable territorial entities. The relationship between these three aspects is associated with strategies and policies aimed at the protection of their heritage values, avoiding possible risks of inadequate urban development and inappropriate productive activities for their preservation.

CONCLUSIONS

The wine landscape is a traditional resource of strategic agricultural value that has recently become a tourist resource. Therefore, territorial tourism resources of Lanzarote have great importance both in the development of leisure activities and in the evocation of the island’s tourist image. In this sense, the landscapes of vineyard are one of the fundamental elements that contribute value to the destination.

La Geria and the rest of the wine-growing landscapes of Lanzarote have a high environmental value, it is explained that they have protective figures such as Protected Landscape (the case of La Geria) or Natural Monument (fundamentally La Corona), but in the spaces of the wine there is also an important cultural component that helps to increase the interest of the tourist agents to exploit these spaces as a resource.

Lanzarote presents a series of environmental, cultural and strategic singularities that significantly affect the configuration of the island’s tourism system. In effect, all this series of factors justify, from the point of view of geographic analysis, its role in the development of the tourism model and its consideration in territorial management strategies.