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8 Valaoritou Street Kolonaki, 10671 Athens, Greece www.atiner.gr

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Del Espino Hidalgo Blanca
Researcher, University of Seville, Spain
M Teresa Perez Cano
Professor, University of Seville, Spain
Ramila Arjona Rocio
Researcher, University of Seville, Spain

Historic Cities Conservation Throughout Cultural Heritage Laws: Andalusian Historic Areas

Andalusia, the most southerly region in Spain, is distinguished by a rich cultural heritage, which is particularly well defined by the quantity and variety of protected Historic Areas containing. From 1933 to now, four different laws (national firstly, regional lately) and a large number of ordinances, decrees and regulations have determined the definition and conditions under which historical settlements have been declared.

This paper aims to set up an interdisciplinary perspective on the protection of cultural and historical heritage, focusing on the 133 settlements declared as Historic Areas by the Spanish and Regional laws in Andalusia by a team formed by urban heritage experts, architects and lawyers. In order to reach this purpose, a deep research has been carried out, including the following stages:

- Historic Areas characters depending on the law under they were declared.
- Size, location and elevation of the cities whose Historic Areas have been declared.
- Historic Areas perimeter and shape as determined in their declaration documents, including or not buffer zones.
- Values detected and mentioned by the declaration documents of the Historic Areas, observing its variation in time and through the different laws under they were declared.

In conclusion, this research has shown that historical cities protection is closely to the laws which constitute a theoretical and practical framework to the values detected and the features that make an area worthy of the highest level of cultural protection, as well as determine the shape and conditions under they are declared, which certainly will define their future conservation.