

Alto Douro (Portugal)

No 1046

Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	Alto Douro Wine Region
<i>Location</i>	Douro Region, Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro
<i>State Party</i>	Portugal
<i>Date</i>	30 June 2000

Justification by State Party

The Alto Douro represents a unique example of people's relationship with the natural environment: it is a monumental combined work of nature and man. First, the river dug deeply into the mountains to form its bed. Then people adapted the steep hillsides for the cultivation of the vine. Using methods and means acquired over the ages, they scarified the land and built terraces supported by hundreds of kilometres of drystone walls. With great acumen and creative genius they mastered the physical constraints of the natural environment and exploited the opportunities presented by the climate and the nature of the soil. Thus was born one of the most ancient winemaking regions in the world, one that produces a universally acclaimed wine designated "Porto."

The justifications for the inscription that we feel are most relevant, are:

Natural elements: the narrow valleys, the steep slopes; the paucity of water, the scant rainfall; the diversity of natural habitats, the transition from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean; select Mediterranean crops: grapes, olives, and almonds; the ephemeral: light and colour, sound and silence and smells

Cultural elements: land-use: the structure of the landscape, the dominant vineyards, the human settlements and the fabricated soil, or anthroposoil; access (the river Douro and the railway); cultural landmarks (the *quintas* and the *casais*); religious structures; and the walls.

The boundaries of the nominated property define the exact territory that is simultaneously 1. truly representative of the nature of the Demarcated Douro Region and its three sub-regions, from the most Atlantic to the most Mediterranean, 2. most consistently enclosed the majority of the most significant assets, and 3. best preserved overall.

The Alto Douro's claim of outstanding international value is further supported by three of the six cultural criteria:

Alto Douro exhibits an important interchange of human values over a span of time within a specific cultural area. The property is a continuing, organically evolved cultural landscape, truly representative of the Demarcated Douro Region. It reflects specific techniques of sustainable land-use, those of both the past and the present, alongside a set of significant natural habitats typical of a Mediterranean environment. **Criterion ii**

Alto Douro is an outstanding example of a technological landscape that illustrates several significant stages in human history. Here, in spite of nature's hostility to human settlement, man adapted Mediterranean crops, particularly vines and olive and almond trees, and planted them on terraces fashioned from the steep rocky slopes. Changes in the several methods employed over the centuries are evident in the landscape. **Criterion iv**

Alto Douro is an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement and land-use that has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change. Although its geomorphological nature and its climate do not invite human settlement, the vine – as well as the olive, the almond, other fruits and cereals – has sustained a dynamic economic activity. **Criterion v**

Category of property

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *site*. In terms of the definition in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, para. 39, it is also a *cultural landscape*.

History and Description

History

Recent archaeological discoveries have revealed the presence of very ancient human settlements in the more sheltered valleys of the Douro and its tributaries and in neighbouring mountains. The great many Palaeolithic rock carvings found in the extreme eastern area of the Demarcated Douro Region between the valleys of the rivers Côa and Águeda and Douro represent a cultural aggregate that itself is of outstanding universal value.

Seeds of *Vitis vinifera* have recently been found at the 3–4 thousand year old Buraco da Pala Chalcolithic archaeological site near Mirandela. However, the more significant relics of viticulture and winemaking that have been uncovered date to the Roman occupation and particularly to the end of the Western Empire (3rd and 4th centuries AD). At the beginning of the Christian era, the Romans redefined all the land-use and restructured the economic activities in the entire valley of the Douro. From the 1st century onwards, they either introduced or promoted cultivation of vines, olive trees and cereals (the "cultural trilogy of Mediterranean agriculture"), exploited the numerous sources of mineral water, mined minerals and ore, and built roads and bridges. One of the most important rural sanctuaries in Europe (Panóias, near Vila Real) shows traces of native, Roman, and oriental religious cults.

From the beginning of the Middle Ages, until just before the birth of Portugal as a nation in the 12th century, the valley of the Douro was ruled in turn by the Suevi (5th

century), the Visigoths (6th century), and the Moors (8th–11th centuries). This opening of the region to a communion of assorted, continuously overlapping, cultures is reflected in the traditional collective imagination. The victory of the Christians over the Moors in Iberia does not appear to have interrupted the Douro valley's long-standing tradition of interracial cross-breeding and cultural acceptance.

The valley continued to be occupied. Viticulture increased during a period of the establishment and growth of several religious communities whose importance to the economy was especially noteworthy from the mid-12th century onwards, namely the Cistercian monasteries of Salzedas, São João de Tarouca, and São Pedro das Águias. They invested in extensive vineyards in the best areas and created many notable *quintas*. The end of the Middle Ages saw an increase in population, agriculture, and commercial exchange as towns and cities grew, particularly walled towns such as Miranda and Porto. Long-distance trade flourished, namely the shipping of products from the region down river to the city of Porto, linked with the major European trading routes. The rising demand for strong wine to supply the armadas led to a new expansion of the regional vineyards, particularly in those areas that were rapidly becoming famous for the quality of their wine.

From the 16th century onwards, the making of quality wines for commercial purposes assumed an increasing importance. Viticulture continued to expand throughout the 17th century, accompanied by advances in the techniques for producing wines and increased involvement in European markets for wine. The first reference to "Port Wine," in a shipping document of wine for Holland, dates to 1675. This period marked the onset of a great volume of trade with England that benefited greatly from the wars between Britain and France. Port rapidly dominated the British market for wine, overtaking those from France, Spain, and Italy. The 1703 Treaty of Methuen between Portugal and England set the diplomatic seal of approval on this trade and granted preferential rights to Portuguese wines. Throughout the 18th century, the fact that the sale of fortified wines from the Douro depended on the British market was reflected by adapting the product to the taste of this market and, at the same time, by a rapid increase in the number of British wine merchants. The British Factory House was founded in Porto in 1727.

Conflicts arose between these commercial interests and the Douro farmers. The latter were forced to accept continuously lower prices, together with the demand for darker, stronger, sweeter wines with a higher alcohol content. The State therefore regulated the production and trade of this vital economic product, initially with the creation, by Royal Charter on 10 September 1756, of the *Companhia Geral da Agricultura das Vinhas do Alto Douro*. The productive region was formally marked out. Its entire perimeter around the vineyards was carefully demarcated by 335 large rectangular, flat, or semi-circular granite markers. The word *FEITORIA* and the date on which each was placed *in situ* (usually 1758, occasionally 1761), was carved on the side facing the road.

This first demarcation represents an early manifestation of unmistakably contemporary practices. It included making an inventory and classifying the vineyards and their respective wines according to the complexity of the region. It created institutional mechanisms for controlling and

certifying the product, supported by a vast legislative framework.

The first demarcation enveloped the traditional wine-growing area, mainly in the Lower Corgo. Not until 1788–92 did the vineyards expand to the Upper Douro. The surge of commercial vineyards eastwards of the gorge, however, only occurred following epidemics of diseases of the vines (especially oidium in 1852 and phylloxera in 1863) that devastated the vines in the traditional wine-growing areas. The regime that relaxed control over production and trade (1865–1907) and the construction of the Douro railway line (1873–87) encouraged this expansion. When in 1907 the State undertook a profound revision of the legislation regulating the winemaking sector, the new demarcation covered the entire area under vines, including the Upper Douro, as far as the Spanish border.

Concurrently, in 1876, Douro farmers began to recover the vineyards that had been damaged by phylloxera. As throughout Europe, the definitive solution only appeared with the introduction of American rootstock on which domestic varieties of vines were grafted. Recovery of Douro viticulture and the introduction of new techniques for planting and training the vines has had a significant impact on the landscape due to the construction of wider *socalcos* with taller and more geometric walls that are distinctly different from the narrow pre-phylloxera terraces and their lower, tortuous walls.

Throughout the 20th century the Demarcated Douro Region has been subject to several regulatory models. The Interprofessional Committee for the Demarcated Douro Region (CIRDD) was instituted in 1995. The principal regulatory mechanism for production continues to be the system for distributing the *benefício*, according to which the amount of must that is authorized for making port wine is allocated according to the characteristics and quality of the respective vines. Mechanization was introduced, somewhat hesitantly, in the 1970s to help with some of the more arduous tasks in the vineyard such as the scarifying of the land and bringing with it new wide, earth-banked vineyards and "vertical planting" along steeper hillsides that no longer require building walls to shore up the terraces. The aesthetic impact of these new vineyards on the landscape varies, yet the mountain viticulture of the Douro continues to be carried out almost totally by hand. The rocky nature of the soil, the steep hillsides, and the existing terraces themselves are extremely difficult to adapt to the use of machines, though the product, port wine, is today mostly made in modern, totally mechanized wineries.

Description

Protected from the harsh Atlantic winds by the Marão and Montemuro mountains, the nominated property is located in the north-east of Portugal, between Barqueiros and Mazouco, on the Spanish border. The Mediterranean climate in this landscape of schist and steep hills far from the sea, adds a unique flavour to the feeling of *genius loci*. The popular saying about it is: "Nine months of winter and three months of hell."

The terraces, by blending into infinity with the curves of the countryside, endow this property with its unique character. Seen from above, the vineyards look like a series of Aztec pyramids.

The Douro and its principal tributaries, the Varosa, Corgo, Távora, Torto, and Pinhão, form the backbone of the nominated property, itself defined by a succession of watersheds. The Douro itself is dammed, so its valley through the property now contains a long reservoir 100–200m wide. However, although this change is important from the ecological and visual points of view, the flooded part of the valley was neither occupied nor cultivated. The boundaries correspond to identifiable natural features of the landscape – watercourses, mountain ridges, roads, and paths.

The area of nominated property is:

Alto Douro Wine Region	24,600ha
Buffer zone	225,400ha
Demarcated Douro Region	250,000ha

The landscape in the Demarcated Region of the Douro is formed by steep hills and boxed-in valleys that flatten out into plateaux above 400m. The Douro valley is now water-filled behind dams. Valley sides slope at over 15%, particularly in the Lower and the Upper Corgo. Soil is almost non-existent, which is why walls were built to retain the manufactured soil on the steep hillsides. It has been created literally by breaking up rocks and is known as “anthroposoil.”

The most dominant feature of the landscape is the terraced vineyards that blanket the countryside. Throughout the centuries, row upon row of terraces have been built according to different techniques. The earliest, employed during the pre-phylloxera era (pre-1860), was that of the *socalcos*, narrow and irregular terraces buttressed by walls of schistous stone that were regularly taken down and rebuilt, on which only one or two rows of vines could be planted.

The long lines of continuous, regularly shaped terraces date mainly from the end of the 19th century when the Douro vineyards were rebuilt, following the phylloxera attack. The new terraces altered the landscape, not only because of the monumental walls that were built but also owing to the fact that they were wider and slightly sloping to ensure that the vines would be better exposed to the sun. Furthermore, these terraces were planted with a greater number of rows of vines, set more widely apart, in order to favour the use of more technical equipment such as mule-drawn ploughs. The great majority of the hundreds of kilometres of walls that cover the riverbanks today date from that late 19th/early 20th century stage in the evolution of the Douro landscape. In the Lower and Upper Corgo a great many post-phylloxera terraced vineyards represent up to 50% of all the area under vine in each parish. Transforming the natural environment, clearing the land, and restructuring the hillsides required a great of labour that was brought in from outside.

The more recent terracing techniques, the *patamares*, and the vertical planting that began in the 1970s have greatly altered the appearance of this built landscape. Large plots of slightly sloping earth-banked land, usually planted with two rows of vines, were laid out to facilitate mechanization of the vineyard. Trials of other systems are continuing with a view to finding alternatives to the *patamares* and to minimize the impact of the new methods on the landscape. Among the expanse of vineyards remain areas, nevertheless, which have survived untouched since the days of the phylloxera, abandoned *socalcos* known as

mortórios. These have become overrun with native scrub or olive trees. More continuous, regular olive groves have been planted on either side of the land under vine. In the Upper Douro, olive and almond trees represent the dominant crops, although these are slowly being replaced by vines. Along the lower banks of the Douro or on the edges of watercourses on the hillsides are groves of orange trees, sometimes walled. On the heights, beyond that altitude at which vines can grow, the land is covered with brushwood and scrub and, here and there, a coppice of trees. Woods are still to be found in places on the ridges and amongst the crags.

During the long, hot, dry summers that afflict the region, water used to be collected in underground catchments located on the hills or even within a vineyard. From there it was channelled along stone gutters to storage tanks, usually made of granite, scattered throughout the *quinta*. In contrast, the winter rain gushes down the hills in torrents, so underground conduits and drainpipes attached to the top of retaining walls try to prevent it destroying the *socalcos*.

Grain-mills stood next to the watercourses but there are few settlements in such a disease-ridden location. Above, characteristically white-walled villages, medieval in origin, and *casais* are usually located midway up the valley sides. Around an often imposing 18th century parish church, rows of houses opening directly on to the street to form a web of narrow, twisty roads with notable examples of vernacular architecture, now occasionally tarnished by inappropriate recent building. The Douro *quintas* are major landmarks, easily identified by the groups of farm buildings and wineries that crowd around the main house. Although notably present throughout the region, they are particularly evident in the Upper Corgo and the Upper Douro.

No churches or shrines of any significant value lie in the nominated property, although the landscape is dotted with small chapels located high on the hills or next to manor houses. Some chapels and shrines were erected on the site of ancient settlements, usually hillforts. Furthermore, Douro folklore is a compendium of tales and legends that associate elements of Celtic, Arab, and Christian culture.

Management and Protection

Legal status

The cultural landscape of the Alto Douro is community property. The various elements that make up this landscape, however, are generally privately owned by a great many individuals, mostly local residents. Today, 48,000ha of vines are distributed over more than 100,000 plots, as well as many tens of thousands of hectares of olive groves and other crops.

The region does not enjoy a specific juridical protective statute, as Portuguese jurisprudence makes no mention of cultural landscapes. The instruments governing the land-use and protection of the landscape are the Municipal Master Plans, created under the terms of Decree-Law No 69 of 1990. All such Plans for all the townships in the municipalities in the Demarcated Douro Region are fully in force. These plans consist of three essential sections: the general cartographic map, the updated map of restrictions, and the regulations. It is now up to the Intermunicipal Plan for the Alto Douro Wine Region to integrate the various plans.

Management

Management interventions in the Demarcated Douro Region have rapidly increased over the past few years as it has come to be realized that increasing pressures require active management to preserve and safeguard the landscape over and above its function of producing wine. The regime currently regulating the region, as fine-tuned over the centuries, is centred on regulating, licensing, and controlling planting and cultivation of the vineyards. The process of progressively regulating local supervision and management of the land has culminated with the approval, during the 1990s, of the Municipal Master Plans. These are centralized and uniform instruments for regulating and managing the use and occupation of the land, at the county level.

Key elements are:

- The Intermunicipal Plan for the Alto Douro Wine Region (PIOT), directed at conserving and improving the living, evolving cultural landscape;
- Alto Douro Bureau, consisting of a technical management assistance staff, who will act in close co-operation with an Association to Promote the Alto Douro World Heritage;
- The Association to Promote the Alto Douro World Heritage, an entity devoted to encouraging private and public entities interested and/or involved in the ownership of assets, in preserving, safeguarding, improving, and promoting the Alto Douro.

Responsibility for the management of the territory and the management and protection of its territorial assets and local infrastructures rests with the municipalities. The proposed property covers thirteen municipalities, plus an additional eight that are part of the buffer zone. Responsibility for the management of the vineyards and all agricultural and forestry land, as well as private buildings, rests with their owners.

When it is created, the Alto Douro Bureau will undertake to safeguard and protect the cultural landscape of the Alto Douro by co-ordinating the technical management assistance that is given at a local level, in direct collaboration with the municipalities and the Association to Promote the Alto Douro World Heritage.

Several EU-based plans currently in force directly address the Alto Douro landscape. Municipal Master Plans exist for each of the eight municipalities in the buffer zone and several Urban Plans, namely for the county seats. Furthermore, three major Plans are currently in the final stages of their preparation: the Plans for the Carrapatelo Reservoir, the Bagaúste Reservoir, and the River Douro River Basin. The Intermunicipal Plan for the Alto Douro Wine Region is expected to be concluded by the end of 2001.

Finance, and the resources funding makes available, come from a mixture of European, state, and local sources. It is anticipated that current programmes will be completed and similar funding will enable similar programmes to continue in future. The PRODOURO Programme (1996–99), for example, will continue from 2000 to 2006 through the Third Community Support Framework. Similarly, the Operational Economic Programme will undoubtedly, as part of the section for tourism, aim to strengthen the Douro's position as an alternative tourist destination.

The process involved in nominating the Alto Douro for the List of World Properties has itself stimulated interest in developing facilities for tourism. This will most probably result in the creation of an Integrated Structural Programme for Regional Tourism in the Alto Douro that will supply a structure for the many private and public projects for tourism to be developed in the region over the next few years. In effect, some of these projects have already been put into practice, such as the Port Wine Route, Medieval Routes, and the Route of the Romanesque, Tourist and Historic Trains of the Douro, among others. The flow of visitors to the region, although significant, is attenuated by the size of the property and, according to the nomination, has so far not created any major problems (though four are incidentally explicit and others well known elsewhere are implicit), but there is no serious discussion of the likely nature of an expanded tourism or of its long-term impact on the character of the area and on management requirements.

The Alto Douro already offers some facilities for visitors, such as Municipal Tourist Bureaux. It is, however, essential that the Alto Douro Wine Region Landscape Management Programme address the creation of an integrated network of all these services. From the viewpoint of the tourist market, the Douro has gradually acquired a degree of national and international fame as a new destination, and the number of visitors is consistently rising at 10–20 % per annum. Cruises to the Douro Valley, for example, are attracting 100,000 users annually; Mateus Palace is attracting 40,000 visitors/year; the Festival of Our Lady of Remedy, Lamego, attracts 10,000 visitors. Local promoters have substantially increased the local hotel facilities, especially at the top of the range. Existing structures can, however, support a sustained growth in tourism if all-year-round use is promoted.

The principal objectives of the Alto Douro Wine Region Landscape Management Programme are to improve the landscape and its patrimonial assets, minimize all interference with the landscape, and raise the quality of the environment and the standard of living in the area. It includes schemes, for example, to improve features of the landscape such as walls and terraces, to survey the heritage, to stimulate rural activities such as crafts, to facilitate the reception of visitors, to organize festivals and country fairs, and, under "Research and Development, Education, Training and Support," to provide local courses on how to interpret the landscape. The Plan also entails the Alto Douro Bureau's implementation of more specific management and conservation tasks, including monitoring. The Intermunicipal Plan for the Alto Douro Wine Region will reveal and formulate a series of relevant steps to monitor the state of conservation of the landscape. Amongst the principal indicators, the physical ones are the most noteworthy: the walls and their state of conservation, the methods for creating vineyards, the associated planing of other crops, the trees that are used to edge properties with vertical vines, the elimination or reduction of intrusions on the landscape, and the registration and conservation of the vernacular heritage.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

Conservation as a "heritage concept" has scarcely been carried out in this area until recently. With everything

subordinate to wine-growing, functional need has driven maintenance. As a result, the state of conservation of the Alto Douro, in particular of the majority of supporting walls, is remarkably good, and clearly superior to that of the buffer zone. There, although a considerable amount of land under vine in *quintas* and *casais* and considerable vernacular heritage exist, the settlements in particular have suffered the loss of much of their original character.

Authenticity and integrity

The cultural landscape of the Alto Douro is an outstanding example of humankind's unique relationship with the natural environment. Its nature is determined by wise management of limited land and water resources on extremely steep slopes. It is the outcome of permanent and intense observation, of local testing, and of the profound knowledge of how to adapt the culture of the vine to such extremely unfavourable conditions. The landscape is an expression of people's courage and determination, of their acumen and creative genius in understanding the cycle of the water and the materials, and of their intense, and almost passionate, attachment to the vine. The setting, in the landscape of several forms of training the vines, is an outstanding example of human ability to master physical constraints, here actually creating the soil and building an immense and extensive construct of buttressed *socalcos*. It is this acumen that enabled a multitude of anonymous artists to create a collective work of land art.

This landscape, however, is a whole and it is in constant evolution, now with new terrace-forms reflecting the availability of new technology. It is a diverse mosaic of crops, groves, watercourses, settlements, and agricultural buildings, arranged as *quintas* (large estates) or *casais* (small landholdings). Today they maintain the landscape's active social role in perpetuating a prosperous and sustainable economy. Popular identification with the Region is reinforced by the congruence between its area now and that of the original demarcation.

The Alto Douro Wine Region has, and undoubtedly always had, a different meaning according to the perspective of each interest group. It is not looked at in the same manner by the parishioner who lives in the middle of the vineyard that has shaped his horizon since birth and which provides his sole source of income, or by the man from the mountain who remembers the days when the *roga* joyfully descended the hills to the *Terra Quente* to spend a few weeks working for the vintage. The Douro equally belongs to the small shopkeepers and middlemen in the region, to the owners of the *quintas* – both Portuguese and foreign – who stay there at different times in the year, to the shippers in the Douro and in Vila Nova de Gaia who are engaged in the wine trade, and to all those people in Portugal and the world over who have learnt to celebrate each great moment in their lives or in the destiny of nations with a glass of port wine.

Yet the man-made landscape of so many significances is visibly there, a series of impressive views but also a seriously complex machine, still working. The Alto Douro is of outstanding universal value both as a monumental construct in a demanding environment and as the unique setting for an exceptional product. The general state of preservation of this historic landscape is good. Alterations do exist, but they do not seem of sufficient importance to impair its integrity. Some terraces suffered badly during torrential rain in the later part of January 2001, and a

special effort will be needed to restore parts of vineyards to working order.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

An ICOMOS expert mission visited Alto Douro in February 2001. ICOMOS also consulted the ICOMOS-IFLA International Scientific Committee on Historic Gardens and Landscapes.

Qualities

The landscape is visually dramatic, a very unnatural creation. It is witness to the huge efforts of many generations of almost entirely anonymous farmers and winemakers to master the physical constraints of a natural environment in order to create conditions favourable to the production of wines (and other crops) whose quality and distinctive characteristics have enjoyed worldwide acclaim since the 17th century. Specialization in the making of quality wines and the early assimilation of Douro wines by international circuits exposed, early on, the Douro valley to a cosmopolitan system of relations.

Wine from the Douro, especially port wine, represents a collective cultural creation. For countless generations, the inhabitants of the Alto Douro developed specific techniques for cultivating the vine and making wine, many of which were introduced in Roman times and had been perfected by the Middle Ages by religious communities. From the Middle Ages onwards the Douro valley has attracted huge numbers of outside workers, and it is in part very much their monument. The role of the Douro valley as both destination and corridor of peoples and cultures endures to this day, not least in the traditional visual and oral manner of expression of its people.

Comparative analysis

The Demarcated Douro Region is one of the oldest of all the historic winemaking regions in the world. It was the very first institutional model for organizing and controlling a winemaking region. Contrary to that which occurred following earlier demarcations of other winemaking regions (Chianti 1716, Tokay 1737), demarcation of the Alto Douro was accompanied by mechanisms for controlling the quality of the product supported by a legislative framework and a system for classifying and qualifying the wines. In many ways, the winemaking legislation of this region led the way for the modern legislation adopted by many wine-producing countries.

All the major mountain winemaking regions of the world, including the Demarcated Douro Region, are members of the *Centre de Recherches pour la Viticulture de Montagne et/ou en Forte Pente* (CERVIM). In comparison with them, Alto Douro is the most extensive, the most historical, and the one with the greatest continuity and the greatest biological variety in terms of the vines that have been perfected there.

Of all the historic mountain vineyards in Europe, the Alto Douro with its 36,000ha of steeply sloping vineyards is the most significant example of this type of viticulture. It represents about 18% of all European mountain vineyards registered with CERVIM.

Other winemaking regions already inscribed on the World Heritage List are Cinque Terre (Italy), Saint-Émilion (France), and the Wachau in Austria, all cultural landscapes. Future likely nominations are the Pico Wine Region in the Azores (Portugal) and Le Vignoble Champenois (France).

The Alto Douro demonstrates, particularly as regards the *socalcos*, its original formula for terracing to create vineyards. Motivation was functional but, particularly in this case, the resultant landscape, as at Cinque Terre, can be seen as the expression of a centuries-old toil transforming an inhospitable land of rock and shrubs into a fertile winemaking region.

All the CERVIM vineyard areas share – Alto Douro dramatically – the guideline for quality winemaking rooted in Roman viticulture and best-expressed in the saying "Bacchus loves rugged hillsides." The Douro valley is in fact universally acclaimed as the source of one of the finest fortified wines on earth, port wine.

Yet, while wine-production has contributed significantly to the national and regional economy, paradoxically the locality only benefits from one-fourth of the added value generated by this product. This, as compared to the majority of other winemaking regions, explains the marked dissimilarity between the opulence of the landscape and the humble buildings in the settlements.

As an agricultural landscape, Alto Douro demonstrates its own unique process for optimizing the ecological conditions under which water resources are very carefully controlled to produce a crop. In that sense, it is comparable to another World Heritage cultural landscape, the rice-growing terraces of Banaue in the Philippines, a masterpiece of simple montane hydrology producing a dramatic landscape.

ICOMOS comments and recommendations for future action

ICOMOS considers that the Alto Douro does not particularly exhibit "an important interchange of human values" (criterion ii). Much more appropriate is criterion iii, for it very much provides an exceptional testimony to a living cultural tradition. While undoubtedly an outstanding example of a type of landscape, it does not, however, illustrate particularly well "significant stages in human history" (criterion iv) because, despite the length of history which has passed in this area, much of the visible physical landscape is of late 19th/20th century date. On the other hand, it could still qualify under criterion iv if the phrase 'technological landscape' is allowed from the wording of the criterion, for that is exactly what it is, a landscape reflecting responses to changing technology in the context of an evolving relationship between man and the natural elements. ICOMOS therefore recommends that this nomination should be considered, as was that of the closely comparable St Emilion, under criteria iii, iv, and v.

ICOMOS appreciates the attractions of promoting tourism as a relatively new phenomenon in the area, and would encourage the authorities to be proactive as well as well informed and as sensitive as possible about the range of possible consequences arising from such promotion. Critical are such concepts as, for example, Planning Control and "appropriateness" in terms of scale, design, and materials for the various new facilities like hotels and visitor centres envisaged as necessary in the visually dramatic and sensitive landscape of this nomination.

However, as many other areas have experienced, tourism can bring far more than ugliness to a landscape; it can also erode the social fabric, something of great concern when a cultural landscape such as this needs large numbers of local residents, together with their skills and dedication, to keep the landscape working. Without a firm grasp of such consequences of tourism in a poor, deeply rural area, and a well informed management sensitivity about, in effect, sociology and the aesthetics of landscape development, experience suggests that this area might well be seriously compromised in 25 years' time. That the process, of both degradation and management reaction has started is acknowledged in the nomination, and it is crucial that, should this nomination be approved, local awareness and resources are ready to deal with the extra pressures.

No management plan specific to the nominated area accompanied the nomination nor was one proposed in the nomination but the ICOMOS mission found that one was in active preparation. ICOMOS recommended that this address the issues of controlling development in the buffer zone and maintaining the characteristic features of the infrastructure of the landscape, notably the narrow, stone-paved local roads, the vernacular architecture, and, above all, the ability to maintain and rebuild the stone revetments of the terraces. So far the changes in viticultural practice, including making fields up and down rather than always along the contours, have not affected the landscape adversely; indeed, they have added to its time-depth and visual variety. It is crucial that the further development of this "continuing landscape," for example in response to technical change, occurs in the same mode.

At its meeting in June 2001 the Bureau recommended that this nomination be referred back to the State Party, to allow ICOMOS an opportunity to review the recently received integrated management plan. This review has been carried out and ICOMOS is very impressed by the care that has been taken over its preparation, which takes into account the points raised above. The Alto Douro Plan, which is very similar to that for the Côa Valley National Park, establishes regulatory mechanisms for the municipalities concerned and coordinates their individual local plans. It also includes a well devised action programme and a financial plan.

There is one element, however, that is missing. The plan refers only to the core zone nominated for inscription and makes no provision for protection and management of the buffer zone. Whilst ICOMOS does not wish to make this a reason for recommending deferral of this nomination, it suggests that the Committee request the State Party to provide a situation report for its meeting in 2003, commenting on the implementation of the plan and its effectiveness and also setting out details of the measures applied in the buffer zone.

Brief description

The Alto Douro wine region produces a world commodity, port, a wine of a quality defined and regulated since 1756. Centred on the valley of the River Douro, now flooded, the region is characterized topographically by sloping vineyards arranged in various terraced configurations. Most date from after the phylloxera disease of the mid-19th century, but some are earlier – wine-growing here goes back at least to Roman times – and the 20th century added to the range of types of vineyard and terrace in response to changing

technology and the constant needs to control water and prevent erosion. The result is a visually dramatic landscape still profitably farmed in traditional ways by traditional landholders.

Statement of Significance

Wine has been produced in the Alto Douro for some two thousand years, and since the 18th century its main product, port wine, has been famous for its quality throughout the world. This long tradition has produced a cultural landscape of outstanding beauty that is at the same time a reflection of its technological, social, and economic evolution.

ICOMOS Recommendation

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria iii, iv, and v*:

Criterion iii The Alto Douro Region has been producing wine for nearly two thousand years and its landscape has been moulded by human activities.

Criterion iv The components of the Alto Douro landscape are representative of the full range of activities associated with winemaking – terraces, *quintas* (wine-producing farm complexes), villages, chapels, and roads

Criterion v The cultural landscape of the Alto Douro is an outstanding example of a traditional European wine-producing region, reflecting the evolution of this human activity over time.

It is suggested that the Committee request the State Party to provide a situation report for its meeting in 2003, commenting on the implementation of the plan and its effectiveness and also setting out details of the measures applied in the buffer zone.

Bureau Recommendation

That this nomination be *referred back* to the State Party, to allow ICOMOS an opportunity to review the recently received integrated management plan for the Alto Douro Wine Region.

ICOMOS, November 2001