

**Identification**

<u>Nomination</u>	The Royal Monastery of Santa Maria de Guadalupe
<u>Location</u>	Autonomous Community of Extremadura, Province of Cáceres
<u>State Party</u>	Spain
<u>Date</u>	25 September 1992

**Justification by State Party**

The Monastery of Santa Maria de Guadalupe was the principal house of the Order of St Jerome, which founded the Royal Monastery of San Lorenzo del Escorial, as a result of which the Order acquired great importance.

The Monastery is an exceptional example of an ensemble comprised of widely differing architectural styles, including in particular the 14th/15th century Mudéjar church and cloister.

It played a very influential role in the history of medieval and modern Spain, being associated by the Crown with important historical events, notably by Los Reyes Católicos with the Conquest of Granada and the discovery of America in 1492. Its influence on the evangelization of America was substantial, the statue of Santa Maria de Guadalupe becoming celebrated in the New World. The Monastery was, and remains a centre of pilgrimage.

Guadalupe was a cultural centre of the highest order. Its hospitals and its medical school were renowned, as was its scriptorium. The library contains a very rich collection of illuminated manuscripts and other historical documents. Many famous artists were attracted to Guadalupe, including Juan de Sevilla, Francisco de Zurbarán, Vicente Carducho, and Luca Giordano. The harmony between the buildings and the works of art that it contains confers an outstanding value upon the ensemble. The site is one of great beauty, overlooking a valley surrounded by high mountains, notably the Villuercas, and containing abundant vegetation.

**History and Description**History

The history of the sanctuary began at the end of the 13th century, when a Cáceres shepherd, Gil Cordero, discovered close to the river Guadalupe a statue of the Virgin Mary that had been buried by Christians from Seville around 714 when they were fleeing before the Moorish invaders. The shepherd built a chapel

near the river to house the statue. A few years later it became a church, which was enlarged in 1337 by command of Alfonso XI, who visited it on several occasions.

This king invoked the protection of Our Lady of Guadalupe for the battle of Salado in 1340 and, following his victory, declared the church to be a Royal Sanctuary, founding a secular priory there. Shortly afterwards, he conferred the temporal overlordship on the prior and ordered the church to be further enlarged. Reverence for the statue of the Virgin became widespread, but particularly in the kingdoms of Castille and Portugal.

In 1389 the Order of Saint Jerome took over the sanctuary and with it the pastoral care and secular overlordship of the village. For 447 years under the Hieronymite Order the Monastery was the most important in Spain and one of the most famous in all Christendom. With the General Secularization of 1835 the Order passed responsibility for the sanctuary to the Archdiocese of Toledo, which handed it over to the Franciscan Order in 1908. The Royal Palace, built on the instructions of Queen Isabella in 1487-91, was demolished in 1856. Pope Pius XII conferred the title of Minor Papal Basilica on the main church in 1955.

### Description

The ensemble of the Royal Monastery of Guadalupe, which covers over 20,000 sq m, comprises the following main buildings:

- The main church or Templo Mayor (Gothic: 14th-15th centuries) The facade is notable for its doors ornamented with finely worked bronze plaques of the late 14th century. The interior has a nave and two side aisles with fine ornamented vaulting, and contains many richly decorated tombs and altars.
- The sacristy Built between 1638 and 1647, and exuberantly decorated, the sacristy is best known for the series of paintings by Zurbarán on its walls.
- The Chapel of Santa Catalina This square building was constructed in the 15th century and links the Sacristy with the Reliquaries Chapel. It has an octagonal cupola lit by a lantern and contains some outstanding 17th century tombs.
- Reliquaries Chapel This octagonal-plan chapel was built at the end of the 16th century. The lower part houses many elaborate reliquaries and other works of art in its arcaded alcoves.
- Camarín de la Virgen This small octagonal building of 1687-96, situated behind the presbytery of the basilica, is in highly decorated Baroque style. Of especial interest is the upper storey, the "Chamber of the Virgin" proper, in which the vaults are richly decorated in plaster and stucco and the walls covered with paintings, among them nine by Luca Giordano. It houses the famous statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe, on a magnificently ornamented throne.

- The Mudéjar cloister Built between 1389 and 1405, it is situated to the north of the main church and is constructed in brick, in the Mudéjar tradition, painted in white and red. The small chapel in the centre dates from 1405, and there is an impressive portal of 1520-4 in Plateresque style.
- The Gothic cloister This dates from 1531-33 and has galleries on three sides; there are three tiers of arches. Since it belongs to the hospice of the Monastery it does not contain any important works of art.
- The New Church One of the descendants of Christopher Columbus, who had a special affection for the Monastery, promoted the construction of this building in 1730-5. It is in modified Baroque style, with three naves.

## **Management and Protection**

### Legal status

The Monastery is the joint property of the Spanish Government and the Baetic Province of the Minorite Order, as set out in Royal Orders of 20 May 1908 and 22 May 1915 and a Canonical Decree of 8 August 1908.

### Management

Overall management of the Monastery is the responsibility of the Government of the Autonomous Community of Extremadura, acting on behalf of the Spanish Ministry of Culture and in association with the Franciscan community of Guadalupe. Management is in conformity with the General Management Plan for the Monastery of Santa Maria de Guadalupe, prepared for the Ministry of Culture, and covers all the restoration work currently in progress. The installation of a modern security system forms part of the present phase of works.

## **Conservation and Authenticity**

### Conservation history

Restoration work has been carried out on the Monastery continuously since 1908. Between 1908 and 1924 this was carried by the Franciscan Order, with financial support from benefactors. Between 1924 and 1972 the work was funded by the Spanish Government, under the direction of the conservation architect, Luis Menéndez Pidal, and since 1972 it has been the joint responsibility of the Ministry of Culture, the Government of Extremadura, and the Franciscan Order.

### Authenticity

Like any religious establishment that has been in use constantly since its construction (in this case at several different periods), the Monastery has seen a number of episodes

of restoration and reconstruction. However, the ensemble retains its original form and appearance and the most recent restoration work has been to approved modern conservation standards.

## **Evaluation**

### Qualities

The Monastery is of significance not so much for its individual features (though its art treasures are of the highest quality) as for its organic growth over some six centuries, which means that it contains architectural elements from the Mudéjar period to the late Baroque.

Its associative value is great, in view of the profound influence of the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe throughout much of Spain and, more especially, in the New World. It also has great symbolic value by virtue of its association with the two important historical events of 1492, the expulsion of the Moors from the Iberian peninsula and the discovery by Columbus of the New World.

### Comparative analysis

The obvious comparison is with the Monastery's daughter house, Philip II's great foundation of the Escorial (already on the World Heritage List). In architectural terms Guadalupe is less impressive, having gradually been extended over several centuries rather than being a single monumental conception, but its associative value is much greater.

### Additional comments

An ICOMOS mission visited Guadalupe in April 1993 and toured the monastery with representatives of the Ministry of Culture, the Comunidad Autonoma of Extremadura, and the Franciscan community of Guadalupe. The lack of a defined buffer zone was discussed, and it was explained by the representatives of the competent authorities that the legislative protection under Spanish law extends to the ensemble of the monastery and the town. Precise information about the extent of this area was subsequently supplied to ICOMOS in confirmation.

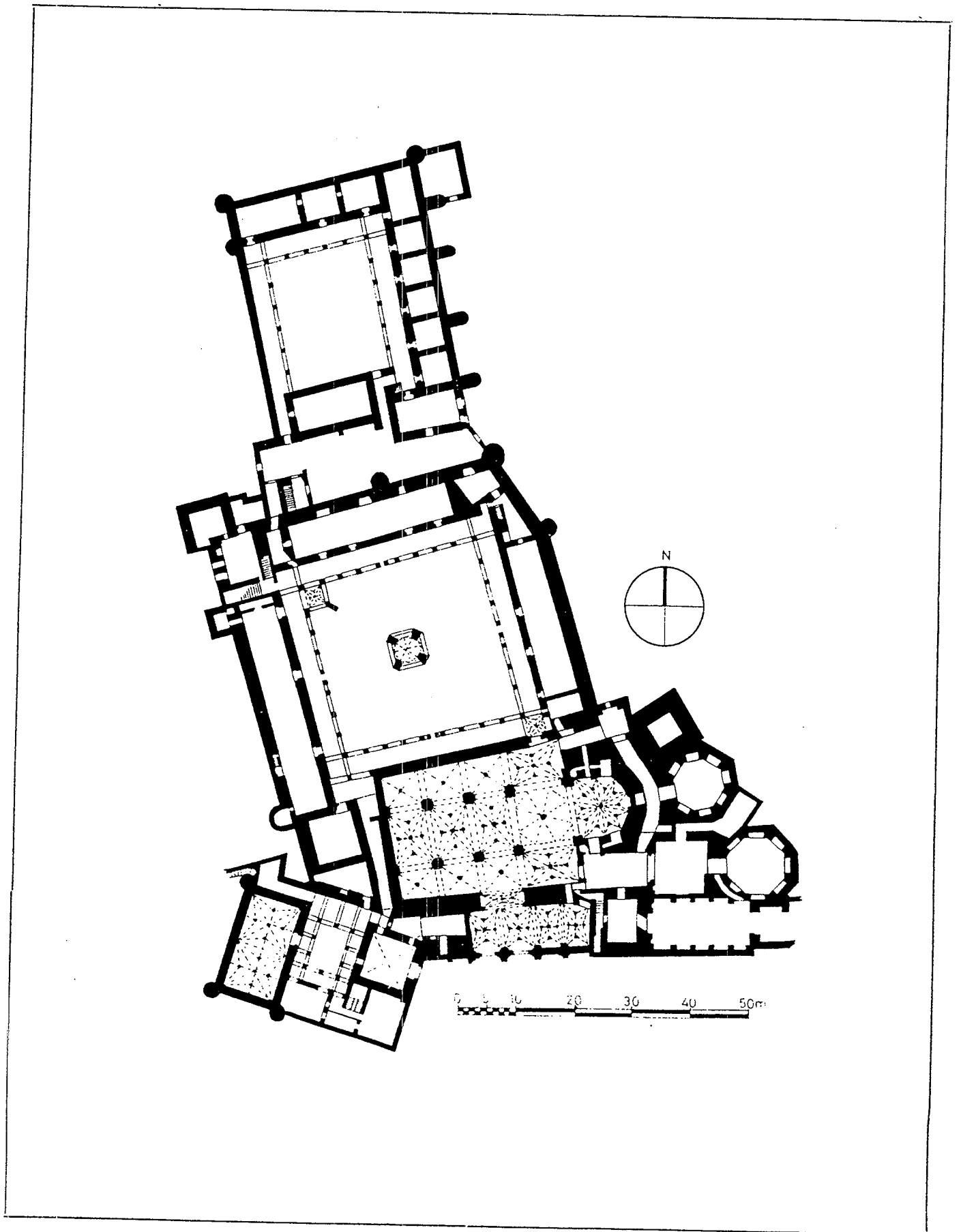
## **Recommendation**

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria iv and vi:

- Criterion iv The Monastery of Guadalupe is of exceptional interest as an ensemble of religious architecture spanning some four centuries.
- Criterion vi The Monastery symbolizes two significant events in world history that both occurred in the same year, 1492, namely the final expulsion of the Moslem power from the Iberian peninsula and the discovery of America by

Columbus. Its famous image of the Virgin also became the pre-eminent symbol of the christianization of much of the New World.

ICOMOS, October 1993



Monastère royal de Sainte-Marie de Guadalupe : plan /  
Royal Monastery of Santa Maria de Guadalupe : map



Monastère royal de Sainte-Marie de Guadalupe :  
vue du monastère et de son environnement /  
Royal Monastery of Santa Maria de Guadalupe :  
views of the Monastery and its environment

