

PORTUGAL

Monastery of Alcobaça

Brief description

The Monastery of Santa Maria d'Alcobaça, north of Lisbon, was founded in the 12th century by King Alfonso I. Its size, the purity of its architectural style, the beauty of the materials and the care with which it was built make this a masterpiece of Cistercian Gothic art.

1. Introduction

Year of Inscription

1989

Agencies responsible for site management

- Comissão Nacional da UNESCO
Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros
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- Instituto Português do Património Arquitectónico - (IPPAR)
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1349-021 LISBOA
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Web-site: www.ippar.pt
- Direcção Regional de Lisboa do IPPAR
Avenida de Berna 13
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Web-site: www.ippar.pt
- Mosteiro de Alcobaça
2461-901 ALCOBAÇA
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2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria

C (i) (iv)

Justification provided by the State Party

Le Monastère de Santa Maria de Alcobaça est, dans le cadre du patrimoine culturel portugais et

européen, un monument dont l'importance est internationalement reconnue, notamment dans le domaine historique et artistique. Cependant, la profondeur de son action dans le pays, depuis la formation de la Nation et en liaison avec l'Europe cistercienne de l'époque, dans les domaines d'activité les plus divers, s'est faite sentir de façon toute aussi importante dans le domaine économique et social. Sa contribution à l'organisation du territoire, non seulement de la région, mais encore en de nombreux autres endroits du pays qui, pour certains d'entre eux étaient situés hors de sa juridiction directe, est bien connue.

Comme le reconnaissent les spécialistes d'Histoire de l'Art, l'Abbaye d'Alcobaça constitue le meilleur, le plus expressif et le plus beau document de l'architecture cistercienne de toute l'Europe chrétienne.

Il conjugue le plan de l'Eglise de Clairvaux, dont il reproduit fidèlement le frontispice, avec un type de piliers, de plans verticaux et de combinaison de volumes qui semblent accuser en même temps l'art des grandes cathédrales et l'art du sud-ouest de la France.

Liée à l'art bourguignon, l'Eglise, avec ses dépendances, forme un ensemble particulier qui en fait l'un des monuments les plus importants dans l'histoire de l'architecture médiévale.

Issue du même plan que Clairvaux et Pontigny, elle se trouve dans un meilleur état de conservation que l'un quelconque de ces monastères, à tel point que, si la France veut rechercher aujourd'hui l'art qui a incarné le mieux l'esprit de Cîteaux, elle le trouve intact, et mieux qu'en Bourgogne, à Alcobaça.

C'est, selon E. Bertraux, « la plus pure et la plus majestueuse Abbaye qu'ont construit les Moines Blancs dans toute l'Europe ».

En égard à la chronologie et au style des monuments portugais d'architecture ogivale, l'Abbaye d'Alcobaça se dresse comme une initiatrice de l'Art Gothique au Portugal.

N'ayant aucune affinité avec les églises d'architecture ogivale du pays, elle devient un cas unique dans l'architecture médiévale portugaise, sur laquelle elle viendra plus tard exercer son influence.

Ses solutions, sa grandeur, son austérité et sa pureté font de l'Abbaye d'Alcobaça un document unique et de la plus grande importance pour l'étude de ladite architecture cistercienne de l'Europe. Elle

traduit, dans toute sa pureté, l'esprit de citeaux et de Saint Bernard qui en a inspiré la réforme.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

ICOMOS recommends that the Monastery of Santa Maria of Alcobaça be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (I) and (IV).

- Criterion (I). By virtue of its magnificent dimensions, the clarity of the architectural style, the beauty of the material used and the care with which it was built, the Cistercian abbey of Alcobaça is a masterpiece of Gothic Cistercian art. It bears witness to the spread of an aesthetic style that developed in Burgundy at the time of St Bernard and to the survival of the ascetic ideal which characterised the order's early establishments like Fontenay (included in 1981 on the World Heritage List).

The tombs of Dom Pedro and Doña Inês de Castro are among the most beautiful of Gothic funerary sculptures.

- Criterion (IV). The Abbey of Alcobaça is an outstanding example of a great Cistercian establishment with a unique infrastructure of hydraulic systems and functional buildings. D deservedly renowned, the 18th-century kitchen adds to the interest of the group of monastic buildings from the medieval period (cloister and lavabo, chapter room, parlor, dormitory, the monks' room and the refectory).

Committee Decision

The Committee made no statement.

- Statement of Significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site
- No need to seek a decision from the Committee on changes to the statement of significance

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone has been defined, but is being revised; no need to seek a decision from the Committee on changes to the buffer zone

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- Regulation of the Municipal Director Plan: certain chapters can be found specifically

concerning classified heritage, the protection of heritage (alteration of buildings and materials, etc.); Resolution of the Council of Ministers n° 136/95, of the 11 November; Basic law of Cultural Heritage: notably controlling alternations made on classified buildings, as well as the archaeological excavations when necessary; Law n° 107/2001, of the 8 September; Protected zones of architectural heritage DG 223, of the 23 September 1967; DR 268, of the 19 November 1977; J. O. 223, of the 23 September 1967; J.O. 268, of the 19 November 1977

- Protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

Actions taken/proposed

- Elaboration of a new proposition for the protected zone of the abbey. Timeframe: 2007

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction, religious use

Management/Administrative Body

- No steering group
- Site manager/coordinator on full-time basis
- Levels of public authority primarily involved with the management of the site: national
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

5. Management Plan

- Management plan is being implemented
- Implementation commenced in 01/2005
- Management plan is considered to be adequate;
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: Direcção Regional de Lisboa do IPPAR; Mosteiro de Alcobaça

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- Funding provided by: State Budget; European Union Funding Program
- Extra funding through World Heritage status
- Funding is sufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 15

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- Average : conservation, management, promotion, interpretation, education, visitor management

8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques

- No information

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 177,326 in 2004 (computer generated)
- Visitor facilities: Excluding the church, the entire Medieval zone which surrounds the Cloister of D. Dinis and also the 18th century kitchen built on the old Scriptorium

10. Scientific Studies

- Risk Assessment; studies related to the value of the site; monitoring exercises
- The studies aim to diagnose the situations through realizing the posterior interventions made during the Baroque Period. Concerning the visitors, specifically school children and students, we are trying to offer better information on the monument

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention emblem used on publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage site among visitors, local communities, businesses and local authorities
- Written information can be found throughout different areas of the monument. There is also a explanatory brochure available for sale in several languages and a bibliography on the monument, the tombs, and the region
- Web site available
- Involvement of local population: The monument is the main point of monumental tourist interest in the region and attracts many visitors. However, the local population does not generally participate in the cultural initiatives of the monastery.

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- World Heritage Committee sessions: 14th (1990)

Conservation interventions

- Restoration of the 18th century granary; electrical and audio installations; restoration of terra cotta and wood sculptures from the Baroque period; construction to avoid infiltrations into the monument; construction of the southern area for the construction of the Saint Bernard exhibition gallery
- Present state of conservation: good

Threats and Risks to site

- Natural disasters, visitor/tourism pressure
- Problems caused by chemical pollution ; Problems caused by rising humidity and other outside aggravations resulting from the added noise and vibrations from shows or parties organized near the monument

13. Monitoring

- No formal monitoring programme
- The mission of the IPPAR, the organization responsible for this building, is to protect and value heritage, as in the case of this monastery

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, economic and management
- Strengths of management: The nomination of a director who coordinates the daily management of the monument ; the implementation of multiple cultural activities for visitors and the local population, notably exhibits in the Gallery : Heritage-themed conferences ; concerts which take place in different areas of the monument ; European Days of Heritage (each year) ; the 8th centennial of Saint Bernard ; Celebrations for the 750 years since the consecration of the Monastery's church, the 850th anniversary of the foundation of the Abbey and the 850th anniversary since the death of St. Bernard of Clairvaux ; a conference sequence entitled, "Cîteaux and the Affirmation of Nationality/ Saint Bernard and the art of the Cîteaux"; Sacred art of the ancients "COUTOS of Alcobaça"; the Colloquium, "Art and Architecture of the Cistercian Abbeys in the 16th,

17th, and 18th centuries; the international Colloquium "Cister: Spaces, Territories, and Landscapes"

- Weaknesses of management: lack of human resources ; insufficient training ; the allotted budget is insufficient