

SPAIN

Poblet Monastery

Brief description

This Cistercian abbey in Catalonia is one of the largest in Spain. At its centre is a 12th-century church. The austere, majestic monastery, which has a fortified royal residence and contains the pantheon of the kings of Catalonia and Aragon, is an impressive sight.

1. Introduction

Year of Inscription 1991

Agency responsible for site management

Generalidad de Cataluña

2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C (i), (iv)

Justification provided by the State Party

Poblet a une signification extraordinaire dans le champ de l'art, de la culture, de l'histoire, de la spiritualité et du repeuplement de la Catalogne Neuve et dans le domaine de la Couronne d'Aragon, car il est le panthéon de la maison royale depuis Alfonso I (1196) et jusqu'à Joan II et Joana Enriquez, les parents de Ferran el Catòlic (1468-1479).

Du point de vue de l'art, il est l'un des monastères les plus importants et somptueux de l'ordre cistercien. Il a des éléments du XIII^e et XIV^e siècle qui échappent de l'austérité cistercienne, mais le plan et l'esprit fonctionnel du monastère sont présents dans toute sa structure.

La bibliothèque et le scriptorium de Poblet sont bien connus dès le XIII^e siècle par leur œuvres de Droit et d'histoire et par l'ensemble d'ouvrages donnés par le roi Pere III afin de faire le monastère dépositaire de l'histoire de la dynastie, car l'était aussi des dépouilles mortelles.

A partir de 1568 le monastère avait un collège universitaire à Lleida, transféré à Cervera en 1730. Ainsi, Poblet a eu toujours une activité culturelle importante comprenant des études philosophiques et théologiques et aussi des classiques latins, des œuvres de la Renaissance et toute sorte d'études historiques. Poblet a été aussi un centre important

d'exploitation agricole et d'élevage de bétail qui a contribué au repeuplement de la Catalogne Neuve.

Toutes les circonstances exposées, ajoutées à la qualité de vie spirituelle du monastère, ont fait qu'il devienne un centre très important dans la vie du pays.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

ICOMOS OBSERVATIONS: ICOMOS had previously recommended inclusion of this site on the condition that the proposed delimitation of the site be adjusted to include the outer enceinte of the monastery. This condition having been met and a modified restoration policy at the site having been adopted, ICOMOS is now prepared to recommend without reserve that this site be included on the World Heritage List. [...]

ICOMOS recommends that Poblet be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria (i) and (iv).

- Criterion (i). Poblet is a unique artistic achievement and one of the most perfect expressions of Cistercian style in the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries. The abbey contains masterpieces from every period such as the great alabaster retable by Damian Forment (1529).

- Criterion (iv). The Santa Maria of Poblet complex presents a unique blend of architectural forms generally reserved for distinct applications. Poblet has served as one of the largest and most complete of the Cistercian abbeys, as a massive military complex, and as a royal palace, residence and pantheon.

Committee Decision

Bureau (1989): The Bureau recommended that this property be inscribed, on condition that the Spanish authorities extend the perimeter of protection to the outer walls of the monastery and that they provide assurances on the adequate protection of the whole area nominated. Furthermore, the Bureau was worried about the restoration policy applied until now, and recommended that future restoration work should respect the original materials and forms.

Session (1989): The Committee decided to defer its decision on this property while awaiting the assurance that the protective boundaries be enlarged to encompass the outer wall of the monastery and that all of the nominated area be given adequate protection. The Committee took note of the intervention of the Spanish delegate informing it that the Catalan authorities were currently preparing a decree aiming to enlarge the

protective boundaries of this property and that, in liaison with the Ministry of Culture of Spain, they were going to follow a conservation policy which would respect the original forms and materials. The Committee was glad to note that, therefore, it would be able to inscribe this eminent property on the World Heritage List in the near future.

- Statement of Significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: adequate

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- State legislation; Law 16/85 on Spanish Historic Heritage; Autonomous Community legislation: Law 9/1993 on Catalan Cultural Heritage
- Government of Catalonia of the 'cultural one per cent', the creation of the Inventory of Catalan Cultural Heritage, promotion of citizens' participation in culture
- Cultural Heritage Advisory Council is set up as a consultative body of the public authorities
- Other related legislation: Law 13/2002 of 21 June 2002 on tourism in Catalonia
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction, religious use

Management /Administrative Body

- Formal steering group since 1986
- Site coordinator responsibilities added to an existing job
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national; regional; local
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

5. Management Plan

- No overall management plan but a management model implemented

- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: The Government of Catalonia and the Poblet Board of Trustees

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- The financial resources required for the conservation and protection of the site come from a range of sources. (2004) Government of Catalonia: Department of the Presidency, Department of Culture, Ministry of Housing, Barcelona Provincial Council, Admission tickets
- Sufficient

7. Staffing Levels

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

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

8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management

- Continuing training for staff in history and language skills. Training available for stakeholders on the site

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 160,957 (2004)
- Visitor facilities: parking, signs, guides with specific training; leaflets and publications, exhibitions. Respect in visitor management for the community of monks.
- Tourism management plan including the Cistercian Route promotion.

10. Scientific Studies

- Architectural and art history research publications

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, businesses, local authorities

- Museum/exhibition for schoolchildren, booklets, part of the Cistercian Route tourism promotion project
- Websites available:
Natural site of Poblet:
<http://www.parcscatalunya.net/poblet/cppoblet04.htm>;
Palau Robert Routes
<http://www10.gencat.net/probert/AppJava/ruta.jsp?id=343&comarca=16>;
Royal Monastery of Santa Maria de Poblet:
http://www.mhcat.net/design/mhc/monuments/videos/santa_maria_poblet.html
Poblet Monastery:
http://www.conca.altanet.org/consells/conca/es/es_1/es_1_3_2.html

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- Conservation; restoration works for restoration of walls, towers and the buildings. In addition, work has been undertaken to improve the access routes to the monastery and the circulation areas .Other work has been done to improve and modernise installations and services
- Present state of conservation: Good

Threats and Risks to site

- Specific issues: The building was unoccupied for a considerable period of time, resulting in deterioration in its state of repair

13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme through the legislation on cultural heritage, urban planning regulations, architectural work must be authorised

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: social
- Strength: The declaration has brought with it international recognition and further determination to maintain standards and increased number of visitors, particularly abroad