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Review of Portuguese Cistercian Monastic Heritage

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Abstract. This paper aims to present a contribution to the history of the reform and renewal in the Portuguese Cistercian monasteries throughout almost nine centuries of cultural and architectural history in this Country. The Cistercian Order played a remarkable role in the affirmation of Portugal (1143) and had unquestionable position, since the medieval period, in the construction of a significant part of the Portuguese culture. The reform of many Monasteries came with the Autonomous Congregation of Alcobaça (1567). In fact, the Portuguese Cistercian Monasteries absorbed the regional ways of construction with masonry (granite in the north and limestone in the south) but it is without a doubt in its architecture that change and renewal can be found as strength and a tool for achieving a status of cultural landmarks. The renewal and reform in the Portuguese Cistercian Monasteries was not restricted to the styles in vogue but also was related to the physical expansion of the monasteries. This could be achieved by adding new aisles and cloisters like in Alcobaça or Salzedas Monasteries. Though there are cases of unconventional renewals and reformations such as the existence of two churches in the Monastery of Salzedas and the example of the open air Museum of the Monastery of S. João de Tarouca were can be found the former medieval monastery, as a result of new archaeological research and a prospective hypothesis of its volumetric layout, in between the walls of the 17th century dormitories and the Church. This continuous architectonic renewal is still being carried out in the 21st century either by the Portuguese Government, through several heritage institutes since the 20th century, or a few individuals on their one.The history of the Portuguese Cistercian Monasteries blends itself with the history of Portugal as the continuous architectonic renewals and reforms were also a result of nine centuries of events and changes in this Country.

1. Introduction

The Cistercian Order was introduced in Portugal in the 12th century and its monasteries were from the beginning associated with the development of the nation. The first monastery is traditionally appointed, as the Monastery of S. João de Tarouca (1143-1144) according to Cocheril [1] despite playing the primacy with the Monastery of Lafões [2]. The new monasteries were deployed to the image of Monastery of Clairvaux, from which branch they provide, defining a typology of the place. The last was the Monastery of Nossa Senhora de Tabosa (1692).

As Martins [3] as well as Martins and Carlos [4] argue, the foundations and affiliations of the Cistercian Order in Portugal were associated from the beginning with the objectives of occupation and administration of the territory, mainly during the birth and creation of the Portuguese nationality. These objectives joined a cohesion and interconnection, not only territorially but also cultural and civilizational, being the Cistercian monasteries, in the Portuguese context, also a mean of assertion and defence of the territory. This fact allows understanding the vast scale of a territorial occupation, the

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extent of its domains and areas of influence (figure 1). It should be taken into consideration that the Cistercian monasteries in Portugal were mainly bound to Clairvaux, thereby defining a typology of insertion in the territory in all monasteries (either of nuns or monks) [3]. However, in 1567, the Portuguese Cistercians separated from the obedience to Clairvaux when they were elevated to the category of Congregation, in short known as the 'Autonomous Congregation of Alcobaça', and they then owed their obedience to the great Abbey of Alcobaça [3].

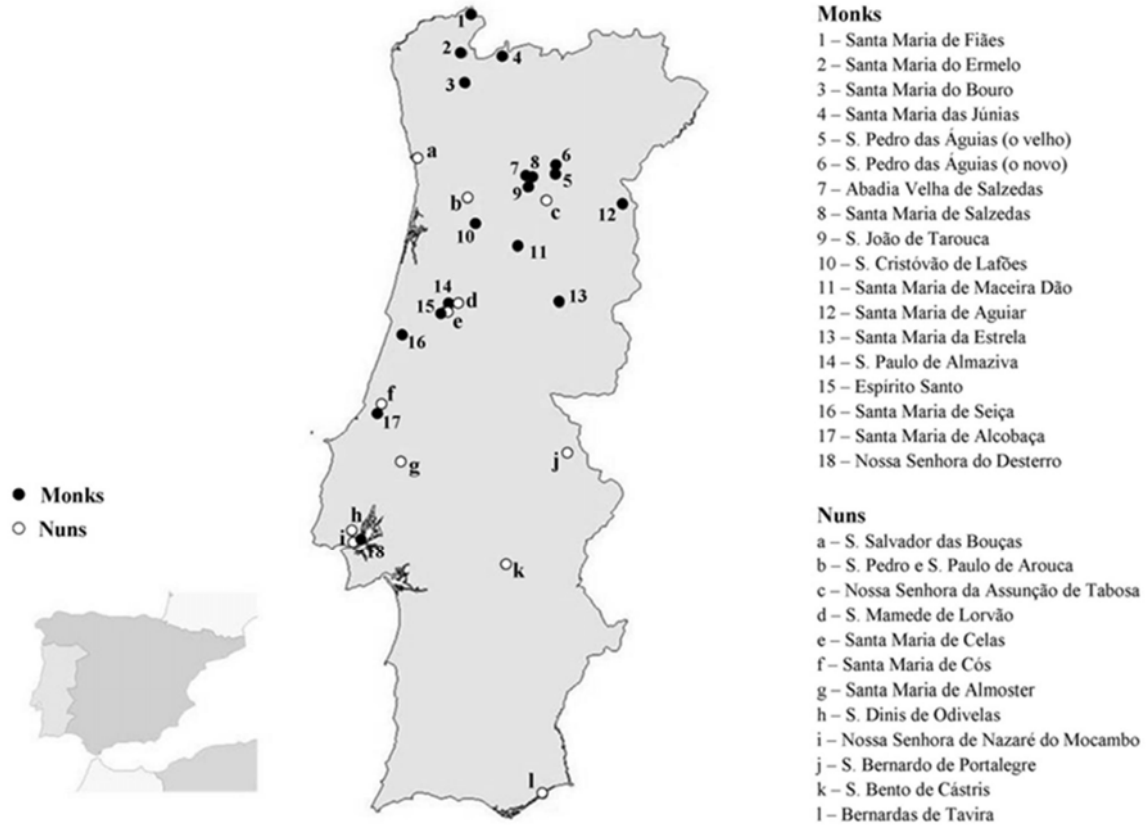


Figure 1. Portuguese Cistercian Monasteries (Monks and Nuns)

2. Three basic moments and cycles

Three fundamental existential cycles existed and contributed to the consolidation of Cistercian Order in Portugal (figure 2), to retain: (1) *the Cycle of Tarouca*, associated with the Beiras' Region and the beginnings of the Cistercian Order in Portugal; (2) *the Cycle of Alcobaça*, associated with Alcobaça's Region, with the development of the Cistercian Order in Portugal, but also the separation link with Clairvaux, and consequently with the Cistercians, through the creation of the Autonomous Congregation of Alcobaça; (3) *the Royal Feminine Cycle*, linked to the establishment of the Cistercian Order, in its feminine version, overwhelmed and made possible through foundations and affiliations of monasteries held by female members of the Portuguese royalty [3].

The Monasteries of S. João de Tarouca and of Santa Maria de Alcobaça are both highlighted for being the birthplace of a large number of monasteries. As a result, the Portuguese Cistercian monasteries can be mainly divided into two geographical and temporal cycles. Therefore, there is the cycle of S. João de Tarouca, associated with the early days and the birthplace of the Cistercians in Portugal; and furthermore there is the cycle of Alcobaça, which also encompasses the foundations of the Congregation of Alcobaça, associated with the development and expansion of the Cistercians in Portugal. For the same reason we must highlight the 'Coutos' of Alcobaça and the 'Coutos' of S. João

de Tarouca, each one with their granges. The 'Coutos' were lands given to the church (in this case, the abbey) by the king. The abbot protected and assisted the settlers, who would farm the land, raise cattle, build bridges, open routes, and generally occupy and defend the territory during and after the Christian Reconquest.

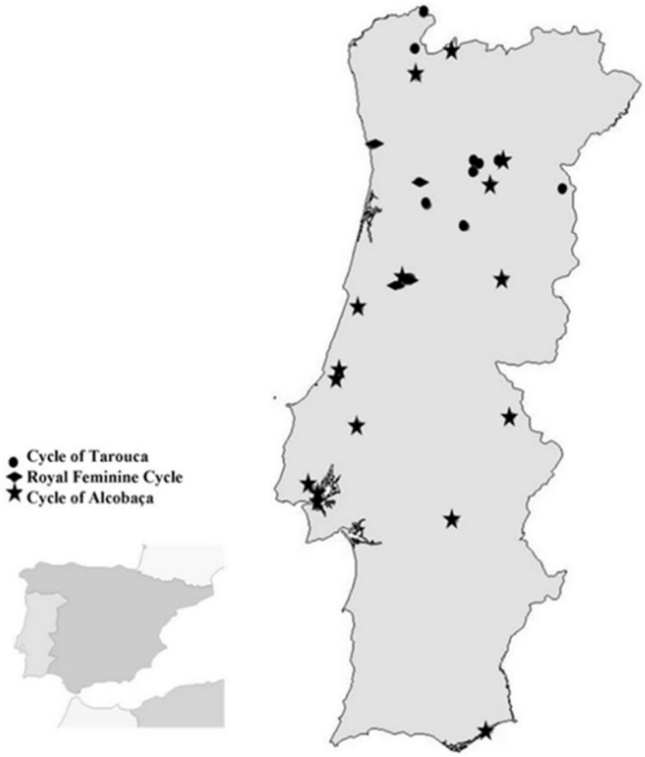


Figure 2. Portuguese Cistercian Monasteries Cycles

From the 13th century, the feminine branch of the Cistercian Order associated with the Royal House gained importance. Nevertheless, the history of the Cistercian Order in Portugal is divided into three basic moments: (1) At first, the period from 1143-1567, that corresponds to the Union with the Cistercians, namely, the initial phase of the Order in Portugal (with foundations and affiliations in Clairvaux); (2) A second period, from 1567-1834, that corresponds to the Separation, from the Cistercians of Clairvaux, through the creation of the Autonomous Congregation of Alcobaça; (3) the period post-1834, which corresponds to the Extinction: the Cistercians departed but their legacy, whether material or immaterial, remained.

2.1. The Cycle of Tarouca

The beginning of the Cistercian Order in Portugal took place when a small group of hermits, from S. João de Tarouca, affiliated at the Abbey of Clairvaux during the first half of the 12th century (1143-44) [5]. From this monastery remains the Church, which is still in use and can be visited, furthermore the sacristy is highlighted; there are also the monumental dormitories, dated already from the 16th and 17th centuries, (unfortunately in ruin), and the vestiges of the elaborated hydraulic system. Archaeological excavations have been accomplished and uncovered the original 12th century cloister, as well as traces of the chapter room, refectory, kitchen and latrines. Today the original layout of the former monastery can be seen in an open air museum [3].

Some examples of the cycle of Tarouca are Santa Maria de Aguiar which was initially linked to Moreruela), Santa Maria de Fiães (which later depended on Santa Maria do Ermelo and S. Pedro das

Águias – the old). Furthermore, Santa Maria de Salzedas, S. Cristóvão de Lafões and Santa Maria of Maceira Dão were also directly dependent on Clairvaux. Due to its proximity and relations with the monasteries from the cycle of Tarouca, those monasteries also entered that cycle [3]. The monasteries of Santa Maria de Salzedas and S. Pedro das Águias, also inserted in the Beira region, have improved the Cistercian action in the Country; provided the development of vineyard culture and the fomentation of the wine trade. Both are examples of settlement transfer practices practice which happened sometimes with the Cistercian monasteries (figure 3).

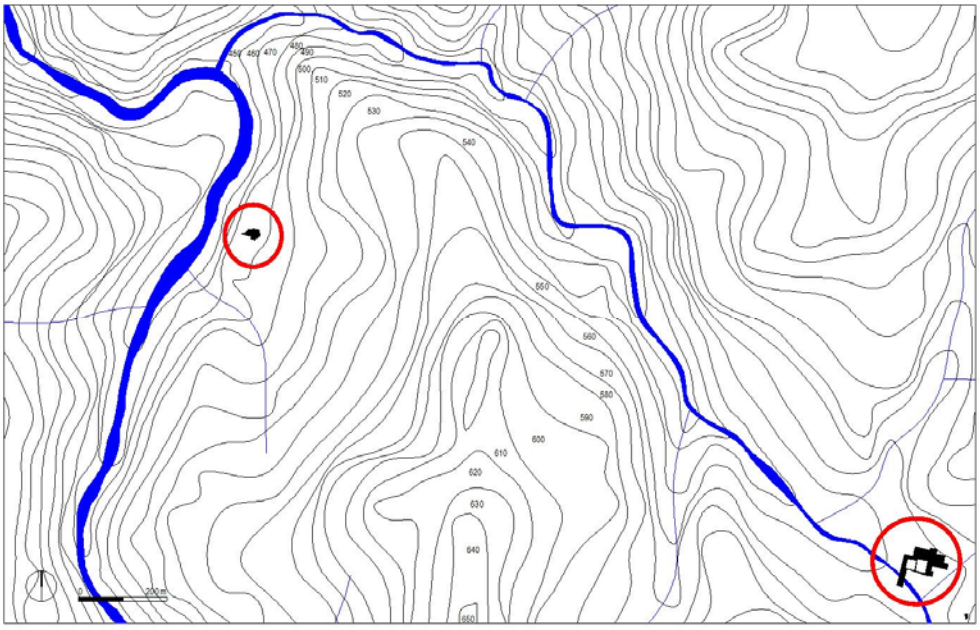


Figure 3. Transfer of Settlements: Old Abbey of Salzedas on the left and Monastery of Salzedas on the right [3]

The Monastery of Santa Maria de Salzedas corresponded to an initial insertion in the Northwest, from which there are significant archaeological vestiges of the Old Abbey of Salzedas, in private land (the 'Quinta da Abadia Velha' which means literally Old Abbey's Farm). The Monastery of Salzedas is highlighted not only by its grandeur but also because it uncovered the original church during the restoration works, engaged by the Directorate General for National Buildings and Monuments (DGEMN).

2.2. The Cycle of Alcobaça

A second pole of implementation of the Cistercian Order in Portugal is the region of Alcobaça. From the second half of the 12th century to the beginning of the 14th century, the Cistercians had a vast domain called the "Coutos of Alcobaça". Due to this domain, the proliferation of Granges occurred (the Farm of Valado dos Frades came to be the Agricultural School of the Monastery) which had a leading role in the cultivation and in the settlement of vast territories donated to the Abbey and which were devastated by the struggles of the Christian Reconquest. Later, those farms turned into flourishing towns.

Therefore the following monasteries are linked to the Cycle of Alcobaça truly depending on it: S. Pedro das Águias – the new (as mentioned previously), Santa Maria do Bouro (to which Santa Maria das Júnias depended on, belonging to Oseira at its beginnings), Santa Maria de Seiça, Santa Maria de Tomarães, Santa Maria da Estrela, S. Paulo de Almaziva, S. Bento de Cástris, Santa Maria de

Almoster, S. Dinis de Odivelas, S. Bento de Xabregas, Nossa Senhora da Conceição de Portalegre, Santa Maria de Cós, Nossa Senhora do Desterro.

With the Portuguese untying from the Cistercian Order and the birth of the Autonomous Congregation of Alcobaça (1567) new foundations directly linked to Alcobaça Abbey arise: Nossa Senhora da Piedade de Tavira, Nossa Senhora da Nazaré do Mocambo, Nossa Senhora da Assunção de Tabosa and the affiliation of Nossa Senhora da Nazaré de Setúbal which welcomed the nuns of Tabosa and Mocambo for a brief period of time during the Liberalism (ephemeral affiliation) [3].

2.3. The Royal Feminine Cycle

Initially the Cistercian Order did not provide for the existence of the Cistercians in the feminine version, but from the 13th century the female Cistercian branch arises. These monasteries had a strong connotation with royalty, having been founded by the daughters of D. Sancho and granddaughters of D. Afonso Henriques: Teresa, Mafalda and Sancha. Soon the Cistercian Order became the order of election for women of Royal blood and high nobility, giving rise to the third cycle: the 'Royal feminine'. The monasteries associated with this fact are S. Mamede do Lorvão (1200-06), Santa Maria de Celas (1214) and S. Pedro e S. Paulo de Arouca (1223) [3].

3. Cistercian Order in Portugal according to an architectural perspective

The architectural language associated with the beginnings of the nationality was the Romanesque and, on its side, the expansion of Romanesque architecture, in Portugal, coincided with the reign of D. Afonso Henriques, 1st King of Portugal. The importance of the Cistercian Order should be pointed out not only for increasing the Romanesque style but also for introducing the Gothic, in Portugal, with the Monastery of Santa Maria de Alcobaça which was founded in 1153 and is associated with the foundation of nationality well as the remarkable figure of D. Afonso Henriques. As a result, at first, the Romanesque and then the Gothic, adjusted to the Cistercian austerity, were presented in response to the demands of the Cistercians decoding perfectly the spirituality of the Order. The initial spirit of the Cistercian Order was being lost gradually and this is perceptible already during the 13th century [3]. The monastic buildings began to require conservation and/or remodelling works which were done at the taste of the epoch and according to new requirements. Over time the ideals and reality changed as well.

Starting from the 14th century, a certain change in the orientation underwent the Cistercians. In Portugal during the 15th century, the Monastery of Santa Maria de Alcobaça already had a vast domain. It was the time of Reform, of various religious conflicts and the existence of Commendatory Abbots ahead of the management of the Abbeys. For all Monasteries which could have new construction it was in accordance with the new Renaissance style [3]. In fact, in the 15th century, with the dawn of the modern world, weaknesses in the General Chapter's actions and authority started to emerge, favoured not only by an exacerbated nationalism which marked this epoch but also by the wide renovation campaigns.

On the 26th of October of 1567, the Pope Pious V, elevated the Portuguese Cistercian monasteries to the category of Congregation, with the official designation as "*Congregação de Santa Maria de Alcobaça da Ordem de S. Bernardo nos Reinos de Portugal e do Algarve*" (this is Congregation of Santa Maria de Alcobaça of St. Bernard's Order in the kingdoms of Portugal and the Algarve) [6].

In its origins there was no explicit attempt to cut with the authority of the General Chapter of the Cistercian Order, but it was a fact that the Portuguese Abbots had not participated in the Abbots' General Chapter from a long time. Cardinal D. Henrique obtained from Pope Gregory XIII the privilege to be responsible for the Monastery of Santa Maria de Alcobaça and to be the first General Abbot of the Congregation [3].

With the Portuguese untying from the Cistercian Order and the birth of the Autonomous Congregation of Alcobaça (1567) some monasteries were incorporated, others supressed and new foundations directly linked to Alcobaça Abbey arise: Nossa Senhora da Piedade de Tavira (1530), Nossa Senhora da Nazaré do Mocambo (1653), Nossa Senhora da Assunção de Tabosa (1692). This was a time of spiritual renewal, of great works and renovations, investment in education. Therefore, the Cistercian Order endeavoured a new period of construction and renovation of its monasteries according to the new Baroque's taste distinguishing its architectures from the architectures of protestant nature and simplicity which began to flourish in Europe. The Cistercian Romanesque and Gothic legacies were obscured, or even destroyed, by the new imposed Baroque. From the 17th century until the end of the 18th century, there was a brief period of relative peace and prosperity [3].

The extinction of a small number of Portuguese Cistercian monasteries began long before 1834. After the euphoria and desire of renewal, caused by the creation of the Autonomous Congregation of Alcobaça, many monasteries were suppressed and their incomes attached to other monasteries of the same Congregation (such as the Monastery of Stª Maria das Júnias). After the great earthquake of 1755 it was necessary to carry out works on many of the monasteries destroyed greatly by the tragic event. The destruction of this earthquake was inexorable, reaching the Congregation everywhere but especially in the monasteries closest to the epicentre of the tragedy: Nossa Senhora do Mocambo, Nossa Senhora do Desterro, S. Dinis de Odivelas, Santa Maria de Alcobaça and the College of Conceição. The interest showed in the reconstruction of this last College was high. Consequently, on the 2nd of December of 1775, by Royal Charter, D. Manoel de Mendonça is honoured with the title of founder of the Real Colégio de Nossa Senhora da Conceição, with authorization (confirmed by the Pope), to unite and extinguish monasteries and incomes to each other. The powers he was invested on were unlimited and applied not only to what was mentioned above, but also applied to visitations and reforms of all the Cistercian monasteries, that is, to the Autonomous Congregation of Alcobaça [3].

As a result, in 1775, the monasteries of small incomes (as S. Pedro das Águias, Lafões, Seiça, Maceira Dão) [7] were extinct and the income attached to the College of Conceição so it could be rehabilitated. By using the argument to reduce expenses and concentrate monks and nuns in larger monasteries, D. Frei Manoel de Mendonça, General Abbot of the Autonomous Congregation of Alcobaça and nephew of the Marquis of Pombal, also extinguished the monasteries of S. Bento de Cástris, S. Bernardo de Portalegre, Santa Maria de Almoster, Nossa Senhora do Mocambo and Nossa Senhora da Assunção de Tabosa [7]. However, in 1777, with the enthronization of Queen D. Maria I and fall of D. Manoel de Mendonça, the monasteries extinguished two years before, were restored [3].

As a consequence of the civil war between Liberals (supporters of D. Pedro) and Absolutists (supporters of D. Miguel), the Cistercian monks from Alcobaça left the Monastery in 1833, anticipating all the suffering caused by the extinction of the Religious Orders in one year. This extinction happened by Decree, on the 28th of May of 1834, destined to the secularization of ecclesiastical possessions. To the nuns, unlike the monks, they were allowed to remain in their monasteries until the death of the last religious woman of each monastery [3].

Since the introduction of Constitutional Monarchy until the 1st Republic, the times lived in Portugal were to some extent troubled regarding the Religious Orders and Congregations, either by the concomitant contradiction between the persecution and destructive impulses of power and politics of that time; or by a dynamic which was at the same time apologetic and restorative committed to revitalize the Church. The last Cistercian nun was Madre Carolina, who died in 1909, with 93 years of age. She was a nun from the Monastery of Mocambo in Lisbon and with her death, the Cistercian Order in Portugal also disappeared. To Portugal, the Cistercian monks and Nuns, never returned as a result the Cistercian architectures stayed in possession of private individuals, the State, or were simply abandoned.

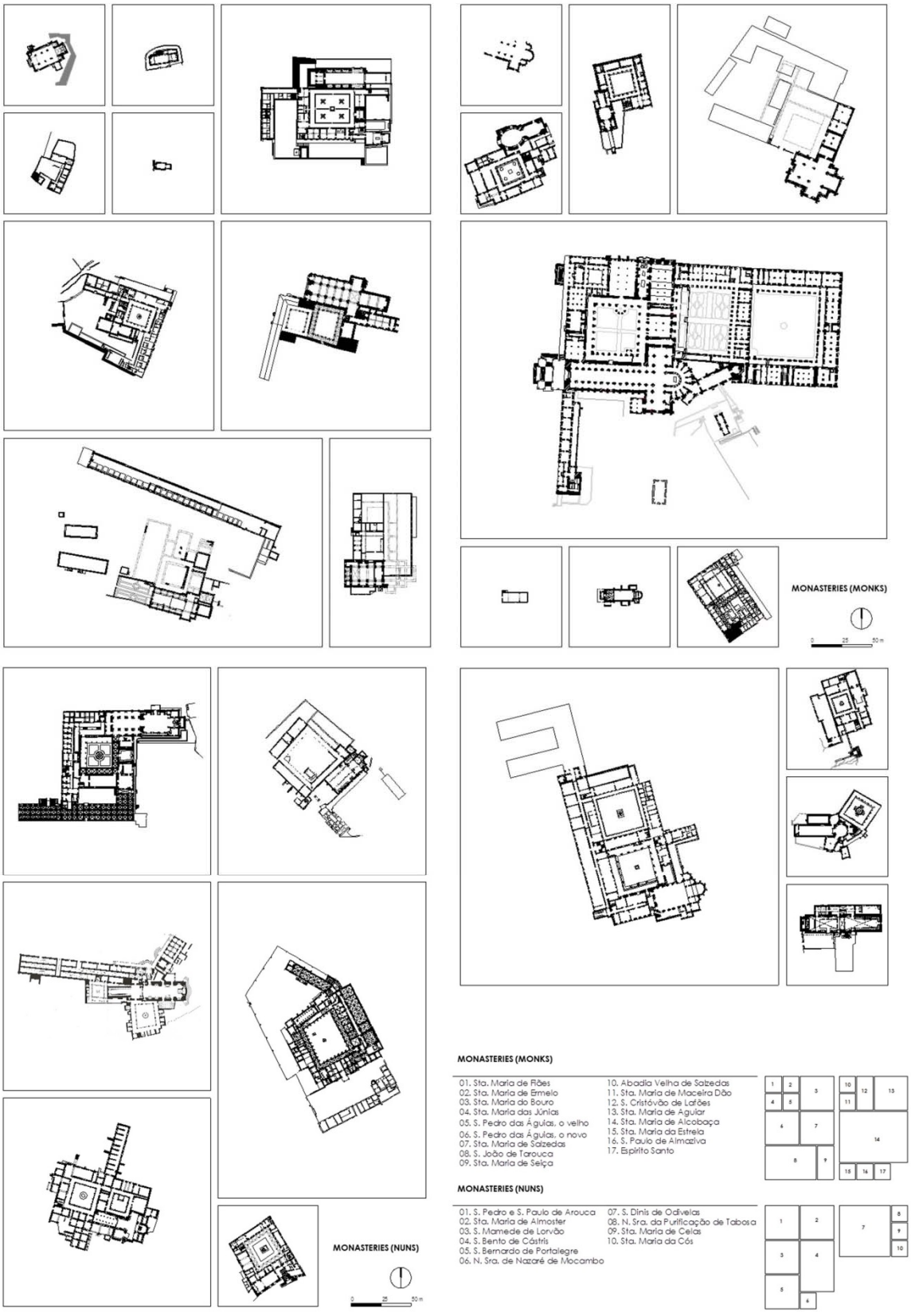


Figure 4. Portuguese Cistercian Monastic Heritage layouts [3]

4. The Cistercian Monastic Heritage in Portugal from 1834 until the dawn of the 21st century

The Cistercian legacy in Portugal was concisely discussed in Martins and Carlos [4] Cistercian Monasteries were the target of numerous renovations, extensions and improvements. They also suffered from national events and disasters. In the 19th century and at the dawn of the 20th century, in Europe, the monks returned and the taste of Romanticism for ruins generated a new feeling and awareness for the Cistercian Abbeys, inhabited again by monks or simple ruins to the delight and admiration of the 19th century and 20th century populations [3]. Several of the Cistercian Portuguese monasteries were restored using the romantic restoration ideals at the beginning of the 20th century according to the theories in vogue. Some examples of this kind of restoration are S. Pedro das Águias (the old), or St Maria de Aguiar. Later entities such as the Portuguese Institute of Cultural Heritage also intervened in the Cistercian heritage as in the case of the monastery of Alcobaça, the various rescue operations in the Monasteries of S. João de Tarouca and Salzedas. The monastery of St Maria de Alcobaça was declared a world heritage site by UNESCO in 1998 [3].

The monasteries have provided the contemporary city, especially from the 19th and 20th centuries, with expectant spaces or new fields of experimentation as diverse as: rehabilitation, reuse, renovation, conversion [8]. These are new spaces which adapt to new situations, new uses, in short, updating, including and integrating, in its history, the values of the present (figure 4).

With the 20th century the campaigns of restoration, reconstruction, renewal, and rehabilitation begin under the responsibility of the DGEMN (Directorate General for National Buildings and Monuments) as well as the IPPAR (Portuguese Institute of Architectural Heritage) highlighting the cases of the monasteries of Arouca, Santa Maria de Salzedas, S. João de Tarouca, Santa Maria de Aguiar, Lorvão and Alcobaça. This action was extended to this century, through IGESPAR (Institute of Management of the Architectonic and Archaeological Heritage) and now through the DGPC (Directorate General for Cultural Heritage).

The Municipalities also invested in the rehabilitation of the Cistercian monasteries as in the case of Lisbon and the Monastery of Our Lady of Nazaré do Mocambo, also known as Bernardas' Convent [9, 10, and 11]. Today it is the Puppets Museum, 34 dwellings, shops and a restaurant with a rehabilitation project of ARCHI III [9, 10]. The Cistercian legacy was also taken in consideration by the City hall of Coimbra that was interested in the revitalization and landscape reconversion of the encircling walls of S. Bernardo's College integrated in the city's urban fabric, in Rua da Sofia. Today it is used for residential and commercial purposes. Architect Mendes Ribeiro was in charge of the landscape redevelopment [3].

The contemporary rehabilitations are sometimes executed by a few private institutions and persons as it is the case of Monastery of S. Cristóvão de Lafões, having been acquired by a family that rehabilitated it, rescuing it from destruction. The Church of the monastery was given to the parish. In what S. Pedro das Águias (the new) is concerned, it had a project for a rural hotel [3].

At the Monastery of Santa Maria de Aguiar, dated from the 12th century and located at Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo, there is a Rural Hotel explored by a family, where both the family housing and the rural hotel accommodations coexist in the building which corresponded to the guesthouse from the monastery. The Church is visitable. The land on which it is settled is linked to the production of wine. The remaining part of the monastery is a ruin, also visitable, although being private property.

In other situations, the contemporary rehabilitations have the support of the State and they are assigned to private entities as in the case of the Monastery of Santa Maria do Bouro, now a 'Pousada' (which is a State-owned hotel of very high standard usually integrated in an historical building or built from the remains of one) with rehabilitation project of the Portuguese Architects Eduardo Souto de

Moura and Humberto Vieira. The rehabilitation project was designed in order to adapt the stones of the old monastery, which were available, to build a new building. This means a new structure in which various assertions and functions intervene as Souto de Moura says: “I’m not restoring a monastery; I’m building a Pousada with the stones from a monastery” [12].

Others were adapted to schools or to State institutions: Monastery of Odivelas (for several years was a school for daughters of militaries) or the Monastery of S. Bernardo de Portalegre which is nowadays the Portalegre’s Practical School of the National Republican Guard (GNR). There are certain parallelisms related to its initial use, that is, the church continues to be a church, the dormitory gave place to the soldiers’ quarters and the Chapter-house is the room assigned to the officials’ meetings [3]. Others were adapted to hospitals as it was the case of the Monastery of Lorvão (now devolute).

The Tavira’s Monastery, after the extinction of the Orders, was used as a factory and was transformed in a residential condominium by the architect Eduardo Souto de Moura. However, this was not t the only monastery which had industrial use. Another Monastery, the Monastery of Santa Maria de Seiça, had a factory installed in its interior. It was a rice peeling factory and it had such importance, as industry, that it even had a railroad passing next to the monastery with the privilege of having a private specific wayside-station for its own purpose. It should be highlighted that not only the Monastery of Santa Maria do Bouro but also Tavira’s Monastery were both rehabilitated by the Portuguese architect, and awarded Pritzker Prize, Eduardo Souto de Moura.

The Cistercian monastery, of which Stª Maria de Alcobaça is an example, was born from an ideal of a monastic life, being assumed as an ideal city by a plan of unity and simplicity [13]. In the dawn of the 21st century the Monastery of Alcobaça was object of rehabilitation in its southern wing and was transformed into a cultural space where temporary exhibitions take place. This rehabilitation has a minimalist feature and is work of the Portuguese architects Gonçalo Byrne and João Pedro Falcão de Campos. However, it will never cease to cause admiration and its ideal remains alive, in the present times, for the whiteness of its stones, for the grandeur of its configuration and for the functionality of its spaces which still subsist today, having been even adapted the actual times, carrying out other functions but not preventing he affirmation of its almost minimal origins [3].

As Martins and Carlos [4] referred and based on Martins [3], at a time when the great Cistercian heritage intervention programs were being abandoned at a national level there is a growing interest at European level by the legacy of this Order in Portugal (note that since 1998 to the present day the Cistercian Portuguese heritage tried its insertion into a comprehensive and trans-european plan). 'European Charter of Cistercian Monasteries and Sites' emerged from the need to fill a void, under the interest generated by the European legacy of the Cistercian Order, with regard both to the general public, as historians and scholars. Portugal is part of the 'European Charter of Cistercian Monasteries and Sites', since 2009, being represented by the monasteries of Alcobaça, Arouca, St. Cristóvão de Lafões, Salzedas and Tabosa. Consequently, the Portuguese Cistercian architectural heritage is also part of the 'European Route of Cistercian Abbeys' to which it was assigned, in 2010, by the mention of 'the Council of Europe Cultural Itinerary'. The main objective of the 'European Route of Cistercian Abbeys' is to demonstrate of the importance and significance of the Cistercian legacy. The route presents the work of a monastic Order which was able to develop the European territory, attending not only to regional particularities of each site but also for being able to create a trace of familiarity in their architectures as well as a model of architectural and spatial development [3, 4].

5. Conclusions

The Portuguese Cistercian architectural legacy is part of the 'European Charter of Cistercian Monasteries and Sites' and consequently it is also part of the 'European Route of Cistercian Abbeys'. It

is now up to the 21st century to demonstrate what this legacy has best to offer, preserving its memory as a national asset which deserves to be valued and preserved. The Cistercian architectural legacy continuously reminds us of the importance of the Cistercian Order in Portugal, accompanying as it did the beginning, maturation and affirmation of a country. This is a line of up-to-date multidisciplinary research [4, 14] which is being achieved and will bring to future discussion further studies on Portuguese Cistercian Monastic Heritage.

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