

MONASTERIES  
-  
WORLD HERITAGE

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## WORLD HERITAGE

The World Heritage Convention (1972) is ratified as part of an international community to identify and protect the world's most significant natural and cultural heritage. The Convention integrates ideas of protecting cultural assets and nature. The Convention, which focuses on local communities' roles, is an instrument for resolving current issues such as climate change, increasing urbanisation, mass tourism, sustainable socio-economic development, natural catastrophes, and other challenges.

Since 1972, UNESCO has collaborated with nations worldwide to identify and safeguard World Heritage sites for future generations. In three categories - cultural, natural, and mixed - there are more than 1,000 sites on the World Heritage List. They show the diversity of the world and its people celebrating all aspects through art, architecture, religion, and industry while tracing the evolution of human history. They share values and honour.

### THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

The World Heritage Convention was created to safeguard World Heritage Sites as an international agreement. Its formal adoption was at the 1972 General Conference of UNESCO as the "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage." It was established on the idea that some geographical locations should be included in the collective history of humanity because they meet certain criteria for "Outstanding Universal Value." The term refers to a cultural and/or natural significance that is extraordinary and with common relevance to all human beings beyond national boundaries, present and in the future. The international community places priority on ongoing cultural heritage. The Convention is ratified by 193 countries (state parties), who are members of an international group committed to identifying and preserving the world's exceptional natural and cultural resources.

Sites may be proposed for the World Heritage List by nations that have ratified the World Heritage Convention. The site needs a management plan outlining it, besides the nomination. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) are the international advisory bodies for the nomination evaluation after UNESCO's putting it together. The Intergovernmental World Heritage Committee will decide on its inclusion in the World Heritage List after its nomination and appraisal. The 21 elected members of the Committee meet once a year to select new locations. Local communities, site managers, and national authorities participate in ongoing management and preservation initiatives.

## THE “FIVE CS” (STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES)

- c. **Credibility:** Strengthen the credibility of the World Heritage List as a representative and geographically balanced testimony of cultural and natural properties of outstanding universal value.
- c. **Conservation:** Ensure the effective conservation of World Heritage properties.
- c. **Capacity-building:** Promote the development of effective capacity-building measures, including assistance in preparing the nomination of properties to the World Heritage List, for the understanding and implementation of the World Heritage Convention and related instruments.
- c. **Communication:** Increase public awareness, involvement, and support for World Heritage through communication.
- c. **Communities:** Enhance the role of communities in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

## THE SELECTION CRITERIA

Sites must be of Outstanding Universal Value and satisfy one of the ten selection criteria on the World Heritage List. The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, in addition to the Convention text, serve as the primary working document on world heritage and explain these criteria. The Committee updates the requirements to reflect changes to the World Heritage designation itself. World Heritage sites were chosen using six cultural and four natural criteria until 2004. One set of ten criteria has been accepted.

- (i) to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- (ii) to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
- (iii) to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is living or which has disappeared;
- (iv) to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
- (v) to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
- (vi) to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The

Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);

(vii) to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;

(viii) to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant ongoing geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;

(ix) to be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;

(x) to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

## CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Many types of landscapes are typical of various parts of the world. Nature and humanity convey a long and close connection between humans and their natural surroundings. Some locations show particular land-use methods that ensure and perpetuate ecological variety. Others represent people's spiritual connection with nature and are associated with communities of beliefs, artistic creations, and traditions. These locations, referred to as cultural landscapes, have been included on the World Heritage List to show and conserve the diversity of interactions between people and nature, safeguard existing traditional cultures and preserve the remnants of those that have vanished. Cultural landscapes, such as terraced fields on high hillsides, gardens, and holy sites, bear witness to the human race's inventiveness, social progress, and creative and spiritual life. They contribute to our shared identity. 121 properties are designated as cultural landscapes, including six transboundary properties and one delisted property on the List.

## HISTORY AND TERMINOLOGY

The World Heritage Convention was the first worldwide legal framework to designate and safeguard cultural landscapes in 1992. At its 16th session, the Committee set rules for their inscription on the World Heritage List. Cultural landscapes are the "combined works of nature and man" in Article 1 of the Convention. They serve as how human society and settlement have changed over time due to physical limitations and/or opportunities given by their environment, as well as internal and external social, economic, and cultural pressures.

The phrase "cultural landscape" refers to the various ways people and their surroundings interact. When considering the qualities and constraints of the natural area they were

established in and a particular spiritual affinity to nature, cultural landscapes often reflect strategies for sustainable land management. Preservation of cultural landscapes can contribute to contemporary methods of sustainable land use and preserve or improve the landscape's natural values. In many parts of the world, biological variety is supported by persistent land use practices; thus, preserving traditional cultural practices is beneficial for keeping biological diversity.

#### CATEGORIES AND SUBCATEGORIES

According to the Operational Guidelines 2008, Annex 3, there are three basic categories for cultural landscapes: First, the landscape with distinct boundaries that has been purposely built and created by man is the easiest to recognise. It includes landscapes designed as gardens and parks for aesthetic purposes, which are frequently (but not always) connected to religious or other monumental buildings and ensembles.

The terrain that changes naturally falls under the second group. It is the product of an initial social, economic, governmental, or religious imperative, taking on its current shape via interaction with and adaptation to its natural surroundings. These landscapes' forms and individual traits are evolutionary reflections. They can be divided into two groups: A relict (or fossil) landscape is one where an evolutionary process has stopped, either abruptly or gradually, through time. However, it retains its key differentiating characteristics in its physical shape. Today, an ongoing landscape plays a social function and is linked to the conventional way of life. It also displays substantial physical proof of its historical evolution.

The related cultural landscape is the last category. Instead of material cultural evidence, which may be negligible or non-existent, the inclusion of such landscapes on the World Heritage List is supported by the religious, artistic, or cultural connections of the natural element.

#### MONASTERY'S LANDSCAPE

God-seeking is the goal of the monastic lifestyle. Monastic societies have frequently sought some level of seclusion from the outside world to do this. Cloister walls and the severe vigilance of monastic discipline were built structures that enforced this struggle against the world. However, it was also manifested in the environment that a contemplative hermit or monastic group chose to settle in. Monastics fled to the desert, the wilds, or the woods to find themselves alone with God. In the Old Testament, the term "wilderness" referred to a variety of social-ecological contexts, including uncultivated terrain close to a settlement. Wilderness or desert areas could potentially be abandoned ruins or conflict zones. These were dangerous locations filled with demons and primal turmoil, where survival was

precarious. The arid wilderness is a transitional area. Furthermore, the desert was a place of encounter with God rather than a place of punishment (Hosea 2:14; Matthew 4:1).

The surrounding landscape continued to provide nutrition and significance to medieval monasteries. Their cloisters developed into a crucial component of the monks' spiritual and physical well-being. It is because the conflict between the body and the soul, between the earth and heaven, and between the paradise-garden and the desert-wilderness was captured in the cloister. In contrast to the early hermits, who lived in the desert-wilderness, monasticism in Europe strove to transform the forested 'deserts' into agrarian paradise-gardens, a process that mirrored the work they were performing within their own souls. Theological abstractions have been grounded in the earth in the cloister. The cloister garth, which was frequently found at the spatial core of the monastery, also served as its theological hub, symbolising the liberty of the soul, the union of earth and heaven, and the long-desired restoration of the monks' connection with God.

In the Christian universe, monasteries essentially became the Axis Mundi, or world centre. Each monastery served as a liminal threshold that straddled the border between the two, bringing the Paradise-garden and the Desert-wilderness together. The monastery and the surrounding landscape were fused with the monastic vocation of prayer and the Christian cosmological ontology of heaven and earth. In contrast to the desert fathers, who sought God in the apophatic silence of the harsh desert, medieval monks looked for their own "deserts" in Europe's still-wild rural areas. Rural and untamed environments served as a buffer between the monks and the outside world, a source of income from farming and collecting rent from tenants, and a peaceful environment for meditation.

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Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran: [Iran, Islamic Republic of 2008 \(ii\) \(iii\) \(vi\)](#)

Assumption Cathedral and Monastery of the town-island of Sviyazhsk: [Russian Federation 2017 \(ii\) \(iv\)](#)

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 Sansa, Buddhist Mountain Monasteries in Korea: **The Republic of Korea 2018 (iii)**  
 Studenica Monastery: **Serbia 1986 (i) (ii) (iv) (vi)**  
 The Historic Centre (Chorá) with the Monastery of Saint-John the Theologian and the Cave of the Apocalypse on the Island of Pátmos: **Greece 1999 (iii) (iv) (vi)**

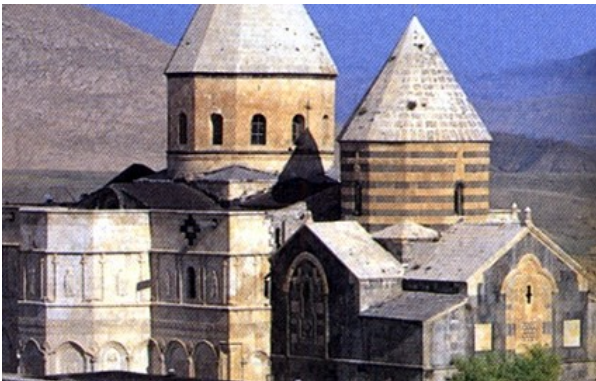


Abbey of St Gall **Swiss 1983 (ii) (iv)**

**Criterion (ii):** The Abbey of Gozbert 816-837 exerted a great influence on the development of monastic architecture following the Council of Aix-la-Chapelle, as demonstrated by the famous plan of St Gall of the ninth century which comprises architectural drawings of 341 inscriptions on parchment that may be perceived as the ideal layout for a Benedictine abbey.

**Criterion (iv):** The Abbey of St Gall may be considered a typical example of a large

Benedictine monastery, a centre of art and knowledge, with its rich library and scriptorium.



Qara Kelisa (“black church”, Sourp Thade in Armenian), Chaldoran, West Azerbaijan, Iran (image: Zereschk)

Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran **Iran, Islamic Republic of 2008 (ii) (iii) (vi)**

**Criterion (ii):** The Armenian monasteries of Iran illustrate the Outstanding Universal Value of Armenian architectural and decorative traditions. They bear testimony to very important cultural interchanges with the other regional cultures, in particular Byzantine, Orthodox and Persian.

**Criterion (iii):** Situated at the south-eastern limits of the main zone of Armenian culture, the monasteries were a major centre for its diffusion in the region. Today they are the last regional testimony of this culture in a satisfactory state of integrity and authenticity.

**Criterion (vi):** The monastic ensembles are the place of pilgrimage of the apostle St. Thaddeus, which bears an outstanding living testimony to Armenian religious traditions down the centuries.



Sviyazhsk Assumption Monastery (image: Shelkovnikov Evgeny Anatolievich)

Assumption Cathedral and Monastery of the Town-Island of Sviyazhsk **Russian Federation 2017 (ii) (iv)**

**Criterion (ii):** The Assumption Monastery with its Cathedral is real evidence of cardinal historical and geo-political interchanges in Eurasia at a time when the Rus State undertook its expansion eastwards. The

architecture and Mariological cycle of wall paintings of the Cathedral exceptionally reflect the interaction of the Christian-Orthodox and Muslim cultures and interchanges with Western Christian religious iconographical themes, e.g., the Creation or the Proto-evangelical and Evangelical cycles. The unique style of wall painting and icons of the Assumption Cathedral iconostasis resulted from the fusion of artistic forces of large artistic centres of the Russian state, such as Novgorod, Pskov and Moscow, as well as of masters of the Volga region towns and artists working in the Rostov and Suzdal regions. The Iconostasis pictorial complex is part of the whole artistic system of the Cathedral.

**Criterion (iv):** The Assumption Monastery with the Cathedral illustrates in its location, layout, and architectural composition the political and missionary programme developed by Tsar Ivan IV to extend the Moscow state from European lands to the post-Golden Horde Islamic states. The architecture of the Assumption Cathedral embodies the synthesis of traditional ancient Pskov architecture, a monumental Moscow art of building, and construction traditions of the Volga region. The Assumption Cathedral frescoes are among the rarest examples of Eastern Orthodox mural paintings. The iconographic program of the cathedral includes themes of the Creation and iconographic interpretations of traditional



cycles of Proto-evangelic and Evangelic history, reflecting absolutely new trends for Russian religious art and expressing new theological concepts and Tsar Ivan IV's political programme.



Canterbury Cathedral from the south-west  
<http://www.wyrdlight.com> (image: Antony McCallum)

Canterbury Cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey,  
and St Martin's Church **United Kingdom of  
Great Britain and Northern Ireland 1988 (i) (ii)  
(vi)**

**Criterion (i):** Christ Church Cathedral, especially the east sections, is a unique artistic creation. The beauty of its architecture is enhanced by a set of exceptional early

stained-glass windows which constitute the richest collection in the United Kingdom.

**Criterion (ii):** The influence of the Benedictine abbey of St Augustine was decisive throughout the Middle Ages in England. The influence of this monastic centre, and its scriptorium, extended far beyond the boundaries of Kent and Northumbria.

**Criterion (vi):** St Martin's Church, St Augustine's Abbey and the Cathedral are directly and tangibly associated with the history of the introduction of Christianity to the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.



The Popocatepetl volcano seen from the Paso de Cortés (image: Jakub Hejtmánek)

Earliest 16th-Century Monasteries on  
the Slopes of Popocatepetl **Mexico  
1994/2021 (ii) (iv)**

**Criterion (ii):** The considerable influence exercised by the architectural model of the earliest 16th-century monasteries on the slopes of Popocatepetl, which spread over a very wide

area, is incontestable. They operated not only in the second half of the 16th century in the centre and south-east of Mexico but continued with the expansion of colonisation and evangelisation of the lands to the north in the 18th century, reaching the present-day United States of America from the Atlantic to the Pacific coasts, in the form of a large number of smaller establishments known as "missions" rather than monasteries.

**Criterion (iv):** The Earliest 16th-century monasteries on the slopes of Popocatepetl is a group of monasteries selected as being representative of a large total. They bear characteristic witness to a certain type of structure, architectural as well as urban, which served as the centre of new human establishments for the reorganisation of an enormous territory and for the introduction of new social and cultural elements.



Gelati Monastery (image: Ilan molcho)

**Gelati Monastery Georgia 1994/2017 (iv)**

**Criterion (iv):** Gelati Monastery is the masterpiece of the architecture of the “Golden Age” of Georgia and the best representative of its architectural style, characterised by the full facing of smoothly hewn large blocks, perfectly balanced proportions, and the exterior decoration of blind arches. The main church of the monastery is one of the most important examples of the cross-in-square architectural type that had a crucial role in the East Christian church architecture from the seventh century onwards. Gelati is one of the largest Medieval Orthodox monasteries, distinguished for its harmony with its natural setting and a well-thought-out overall planning concept. The main church of the Gelati Monastery is the only Medieval monument in the larger historic region of Eastern Asia Minor and the Caucasus that still has well-preserved mosaic decoration, comparable with the best Byzantine mosaics, as well as having the largest ensemble of paintings of the middle Byzantine, late Byzantine, and post-Byzantine periods in Georgia, including more than 40 portraits of kings, queens, and high clerics and the earliest depiction of the seven Ecumenical Councils.



Serra do Pilar church, Porto (image: Diego Delso)

**Historic Centre of Oporto, Luiz I Bridge and Monastery of Serra do Pilar Portugal 1996 (iv)**

**Criterion (iv):** The Historic Centre of Oporto, Luiz I Bridge and Monastery of Serra do Pilar with its urban fabric and its many historic buildings bears remarkable testimony to the development over the past thousand years of a European city that looks outward to the sea for its cultural and commercial links.



Saint Sophia Cathedral (image: Rbrechko)

## Kyiv: Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra

### Ukraine 1990/2005/2021 (i) (ii) (iii) (iv)

**Criterion (i):** Kyiv: Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra represents a masterpiece of human creative genius in both its architectural conception and its remarkable decoration. Saint-Sophia Cathedral is a unique monument of architecture and monumental art of the early 11th century having the biggest preserved collection of mosaics and frescoes of that period. The Cathedral's architecture is distinguished by supplementary naves added to the five-nave core and pyramidal spatial composition of the cross-dome church. The monumental decoration of the Cathedral composes an ensemble unique for its conceptual design that reflects the major theological ideas of the time and is an outstanding example of Byzantine art. The huge pantheon of Christian saints depicted in the Cathedral has an unrivalled multiplicity among Byzantine monuments of that time. The mural paintings of the Cathedral also include a complex of unique secular frescoes in the stair towers made in the tradition of Byzantine art. The ensemble of Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra is a masterpiece of Ukrainian art that was definitely formed during the Baroque period. It integrates unique surface and underground buildings and structures of the 11th-19th centuries combined with a rich landscape.

**Criterion (ii):** The property is a result of the cultural interaction of the Kyivan Rus', the Byzantine Empire and Western Europe. Architecture and monumental painting at the property reflect the changes of Byzantine architectural and artistic traditions that acquired a new sense under the influence of local vision. It revealed, in spiritual tradition as well as in architectural planning, encompassing the tradition of underground Orthodox cult architecture of Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. The Dormition Cathedral was an example for the construction of similar churches in the Eastern Europe region during the 12th to 15th centuries.

**Criterion (iii):** Kyiv: Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra bears exceptional testimony to the centuries-old Byzantine cultural traditions of neighbouring countries in general and of Kyivan Rus' in particular. Over the centuries the property had a major spiritual influence in Eastern Europe.

**Criterion (iv):** Saint-Sophia Cathedral is a unique edifice that reflects in its architecture and mural decoration the peculiarities of churchwarden order. The construction of the Cathedral laid the foundation of an architectural school that influenced the cult architecture and monumental art of Kyivan Rus' and then of Eastern Europe. Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra is an exceptionally valuable architectural ensemble formed over the course of almost nine

centuries, which reflects changes in stylistic trends in architecture, as well as the process of the improvement of engineering structures.



Benedictine monastery - Pannonhalma (image: Unknown author)

Millenary Benedictine Abbey of Pannonhalma and its Natural Environment **Hungary 1996 (iv) (vi)**

**Criterion (iv):** The Monastery of Pannonhalma and its surroundings illustrate in an exceptional manner the characteristic setting, the connections with its environment, the specific

structure, and the organisation of a Christian Benedictine monastery that has evolved over a thousand years of continuous use.

**Criterion (vi):** The Benedictine Monastery with its location and the early date of its foundation in 996 bear special witness to the diffusion of Christianity in Central Europe, which is enriched by the continuing presence of the Benedictine monks who have worked towards peace among countries and people for one thousand years.



Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial (image: Turismo Madrid Consorcio Turístico)

Monastery and Site of the Escorial, Madrid **Spain 1984 (i) (ii) (vi)**

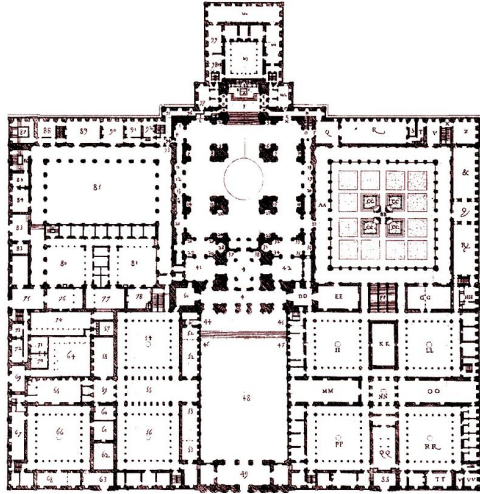
**Criterion (i):** The Monastery and Site of the Escorial, Madrid, represents a masterpiece of human creative genius, where the great collective work of

important artists was subject to the will and orders of the historic figure of King Philip II.

**Criterion (ii):** The Monastery and Site of the Escorial expresses an important interchange of human values and symbolises the ideological and artistic expression that influenced developments in architecture, monumental arts, and landscape design during the Spanish Golden Age. The architectural ensemble is an example of the palace convents and their urban and landscape design built by the European Christian monarchies its final layout of the

18th century makes it one of the most representative examples of the Real Sitio - the courtiers' residential town - developed by the monarchy as a seat and reflection of its power.

**Criterion (vi):** The Monastery and Site of the Escorial, Madrid is directly associated with very important historic personalities in European history and the world, such as the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and all his descendants from the House of Austria and the House of Bourbon who occupied the Spanish throne, in particular Philip II. It embodied, in an exemplary way, the ideology of the society and the austere pomp and ceremony with which its divine and worldly majesty was represented.



Floor plan, based on the floorplan of Solomon's Temple



Main façade of the Monastery of Alcobaça (image: Alvesgaspar)

### Monastery of Alcobaça Portugal 1989 (i) (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 Monastery of Alcobaça is a masterpiece of Gothic Cistercian art. It bears witness to the spreading 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. The tombs of Dom Pedro and Dona Inês de Castro are beautiful examples of Gothic funerary sculptures.

**Criterion (iv):** The Monastery of Alcobaça is an example of a great Cistercian establishment with a unique infrastructure of hydraulic systems and functional buildings. Deservedly renowned, the 18th-century kitchen adds to the interest of the group of monastic buildings from the medieval period (cloister and lavabo, chapter house, parlour, dormitory, the monks' room, and the refectory).



Main facade of Monastério da Batalha (image: Alvesgaspar)

Monastery of Batalha **Portugal 1983 (i) (ii)**

**Criterion (i):** The Dominican Monastery of Batalha is one of the absolute masterpieces of Gothic art.

**Criterion (ii):** The Monastery of Batalha was, for more than two centuries, an important workshop of the Portuguese monarchy. The most characteristic features of a national art were determined here, both during the Gothic and the Renaissance periods.



Nea Moni consists of the katholikon, two smaller churches, the dining hall, the monks' cells, and the reception hall (image: Flioukas)

Monasteries of Daphni, Hosios Loukas and Nea Moni of Chios **Greece 1990 (i) (iv)**

**Criterion (i):** The monasteries at Daphni, Hosios Loukas and Nea Moni of Chios represent, with their admirable mosaics on a gold background, unique artistic achievements. On this basis each

one of these indisputable masterpieces of Byzantine art could have been included on the World Heritage List on its own merits.

**Criterion (iv):** These three monasteries are outstanding examples of a type of construction characteristic of the middle period of Byzantine religious architecture. Nea Moni illustrates the simplest expression: an octagonal church with no added spaces. Hosios Loukas and Daphni are more complex. They have a central octagonal space surrounded by a series of bays that form a square. This more elaborate structure defines a hierarchy of volumes and functions and enables the implementation of an extensive iconographic and decorative plan.

It is typical of other churches, like Christianou near Kyparissia, Panaghia Likodimou in Athens or Saint Sophia in Monemvasia. The two examples included in the property are, along with Saints Theodoroi of Mystras (the World Heritage List 1989), the most representative by the virtue of the perfection of their architecture, the beauty of their mosaics and paintings and their more satisfactory state of conservation.



Geghard Monastery (image: Diego Delso)

Monastery of Geghard and the Upper Azat Valley **Armenia 2000 (iii)**

**Criterion (ii):** The Monastery of Geghard, with its remarkable rock-cut churches and tombs, is an exceptionally well preserved and complete example of medieval Armenian monastic architecture and decorative art, with many innovatory features which had a profound influence

on subsequent developments in the region.



The belltower and the Church of Sourb Nshan (image: Diego Delso)

Monasteries of Haghpat and Sanahin **Armenia 1996/2000 (ii) (iv)**

**Criterion (ii):** The monasteries of Sanahin and Haghpat are unique by virtue of their blending of elements of both Byzantine church architecture and traditional vernacular building styles of this region.

**Criterion (iv):** The monasteries of Sanahin and Haghpat are outstanding examples of the ecclesiastical

architecture that developed in Armenia from the 10th to the 13th century.



Horezu Monastery, Vâlcea county, the main church (image: Alexandru Baboş)

Monastery of Horezu **Romania 1993 (ii)**



The Jerónimos Monastery or Hieronymites Monastery (image: Heartshade)

Monastery of the Hieronymites

and Tower of Belém in Lisbon **Portugal 1983/2008 (iii) (vi)**

**Criterion (iii):** The Monastery of the Hieronymites and Tower of Belém are a unique and exceptional testimony to a 15th and 16th-century civilisation and culture. They reflect the power, knowledge, and courage of the Portuguese people at a time when they consolidated their presence and domain of intercontinental trade routes.

**Criterion (vi):** The complex of Belém is directly associated with the Golden Age of the Discovery and the pioneer role the Portuguese had in the 15th and 16th centuries in creating contacts, dialogue, and interchange among different cultures.



St. Georg, Reichenau-Oberzell (image: Pjt56)

Monastic Island of Reichenau **Germany 2000 (iii) (iv) (vi)**

**Criterion (iii):** The remains of the Reichenau foundation bear outstanding witness to the religious and cultural role of a great Benedictine monastery in the early Middle Ages.

**Criterion (iv):** The churches on the island of Reichenau retain remarkable elements of several

stages of construction and thus offer outstanding examples of monastic architecture in Central Europe from the 9th to the 11th centuries.

**Criterion (vi):** The Monastery of Reichenau was an important artistic centre of great significance to the history of art in Europe in the 10th and 11th centuries, as is superbly illustrated by its monumental wall paintings and its illuminations.



Courtyard facade of the Maulbronn Monastery (image: H. Zell)

Maulbronn Monastery Complex **Germany 1993/2019 (ii) (iv)**

The Cistercian Maulbronn Monastery in southern Germany (1147) is regarded as the most comprehensive and best preserved medieval



monastic complex north of the Alps. The property, which includes several locations and various linear component pieces, most of which are connected to a water-management system, is situated within the Salzach river valley with its surrounding hills. The monastery's architectural design shows changes that occurred within the Cistercian Order (12C-16C), as well as the impact of secularisation and conversion to Protestant use. Its defensive walls and its placement on the outskirts of the town distinguish and divide it from the town.

The church has a two-story Romanesque nave and a modest chevet leading to a transept with three rectangular chapels opening off each arm, typical of first-generation Cistercian architecture. The church at the monastery constructed in transitional Gothic style had impact on how much of northern and central Europe adopted Gothic architecture. The church is a component of a group of structures centred on a cloister. The monastic outbuildings are from the 16th century and later, while they still contain medieval structure elements. Several post-monastic structures are present on the land.

The Maulbronn Monastery Complex exemplifies how the Cistercian Order made contributions to hydraulic engineering. Along the river valley and in the hills around, there is a complex network of reservoirs, irrigation canals and drains used to supply water to the neighbourhood, raise fish and irrigate agricultural holdings. The water management system is one of the largest Cistercian water systems despite the alterations (19C), including the drainage of multiple reservoirs and the construction of the town of Maulbronn.

**Criterion (ii):** The construction of the transitional Romanesque-Gothic church at Maulbronn was of fundamental importance in the dissemination of Gothic architecture over much of northern and central Europe.

**Criterion (iv):** The Maulbronn Complex is the most complete survival of a Cistercian monastic establishment in Europe, in particular because of the survival of its extensive water-management system of reservoirs, irrigation canals and drains.



Monasterio de Poblet (image: Jose Goncalves)

### Poblet Monastery **Spain** 1991 (i) (iv)

The Poblet Monastery situated in the municipality of Vimbod is in the southern part of Catalonia and northeast of the Iberian Peninsula. It is one of the world's biggest and most

comprehensive Cistercian abbeys. Around a 13th-century church, it was constructed (12C-15C). It is notable for the grandeur of its construction and houses the pantheon of the kings and queens of Catalonia and Aragon in addition to a fortified royal home. The Monastery is set up as three enclosures secured by a wall. Buildings from the 16th century, including storehouses, workshops, lodging for lay workers, and other locations related to the community's financial activity, are found in the first outer perimeter. In this area is also the Gothic chapel of Sant Jordi (1452). The second enclosure accessed through the fortified Golden Door comprises the Plaça Major, or Main Square surrounded by the remains of the poor people's hospital, the Romanesque chapel of Santa Caterina, and the Treasury. The church, cloister, and monastic quarters are in the third and innermost walled enclosure. Two of the square or polygonal towers flank the Royal Doorway and are part of the defensive wall's crenulations, which fortify it.

The church has a three-aisled basilical layout with transepts and an ambulatory at the apsidal east end. The ceiling is made up of ribbed vaults on the side aisles and a pointed vault in the centre aisle. The Renaissance retablo and the royal tombs are elements of the church's interior. The large cloister is dominated by mature Gothic elements. The oldest parts of the building are the south gallery and the lavabo, around which are arranged the chapter house, the refectory, the kitchen and calefactory, the library, the old scriptorium and the dormitory constructed over the library and chapter house (12C-13C).



Fountain for ablutions in one of the cloisters (Image: Jordi),

In art, culture, history, and spirituality, Poblet Monastery is of utmost significance. It played a crucial part in the Crown of Aragon's efforts to populate and exploit New Catalonia's agricultural resources. The monastery acted as a keeper of the dynasty's history as well as the Royal remains, and its library and scriptorium gained notoriety for their writings on law and history starting in the 13th century. It is also one of the most opulent Cistercian monasteries where the structural layout reflects the monastery's functional philosophy and ethos. Since the time of its founding till the present, the spiritual quality of Poblet Monastery's life has made it an important centre in the life of the nation.

**Criterion (i):** Poblet is a unique artistic achievement and one of the most perfect expressions of Cistercian style in the 12th, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 14th centuries. The abbey contains masterpieces from every period such as the great alabaster altarpiece by Damià Forment (1529).

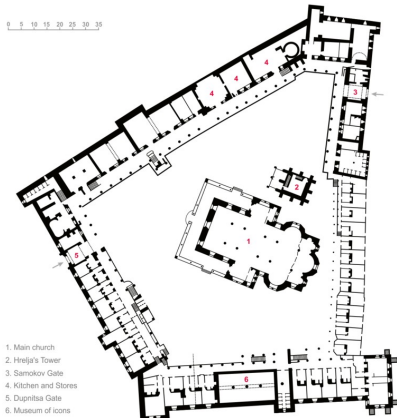
**Criterion (iv):** The Santa Maria of Poblet complex presents a unique blend of architectural forms generally reserved for distinct applications. Poblet has served as one of the largest and most complete of the Cistercian abbeys, as a massive military complex, and as a royal palace, residence, and pantheon.



Main Church "Nativity of the Virgin Mother" (image: Daniel Petrov)

Rila Monastery **Bulgaria 1983 (vi)**

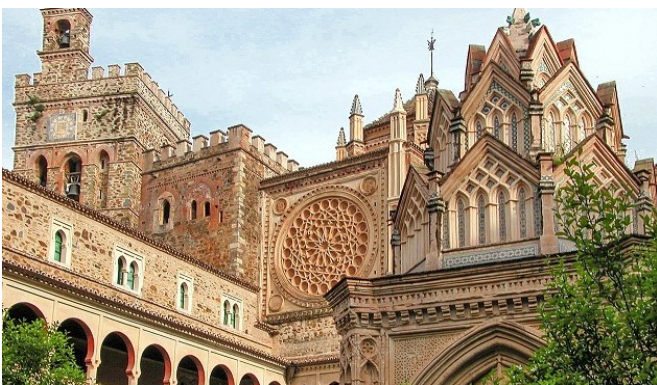
**Criterion (vi):** Rila Monastery is considered a symbol of the 19th Century Bulgarian Renaissance which imparted Slavic values upon Rila in trying to reestablish an uninterrupted historic continuity.



Plan (Image: Kandi)

West portico frescos (Image: Raggatt2000)

Claustro mudéjar en el Monasterio de Guadalupe (image: Jörn Wendland)



Royal Monastery of Santa María de Guadalupe **Spain 1993 (iv) (vi)**

**Criterion (iv):** The Monastery of Guadalupe is of exceptional interest as an ensemble of religious architecture spanning some six centuries.

**Criterion (vi):** The Monastery symbolises two significant events in world history that occurred in the same year, 1492, namely the final expulsion of the Muslim power from the Iberian Peninsula and the discovery of the American continent by Christopher Columbus. Its influence on the evangelisation of the Americas was substantial; the statue of Santa María de Guadalupe became a powerful symbol of the Christianisation of much of the New World. The Monastery was, and remains, a centre of pilgrimage for the Western world and Latin America.



Los orígenes del Monasterio de Suso (image: aherrero)

### San Millán Yuso and Suso Monasteries

Spain 1997 (ii) (iv) (vi)

**Criterion (ii):** The monasteries of Suso and Yuso at San Millán de la Cogolla are exceptional testimony to the introduction and continuous survival of Christian monasticism, from the sixth century to the present day.

**Criterion (iv):** Because of the identification and relationship of the two monasteries with elements of the Moorish, Visigothic, Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque styles, the architecture and the natural landscape exemplify highly significant periods in the history of Spain.

**Criterion (vi):** The property is also of outstanding associative significance as the birthplace of the modern written and spoken Spanish language.



Bongjeongsa (image: Unknown author)

### Sansa, Buddhist Mountain Monasteries in Korea The Republic of Korea 2018 (iii)

**Criterion (iii):** Buddhism has a long history that has traversed a number of historical eras in the Korean Peninsula. The seven mountain monasteries - Tongdosa, Buseoksa, Bongjeongsa, Beopjusa, Magoksa, Seonamsa and Daeheungsa - offer a distinctively Korean instantiation of

Buddhist monastic culture from the seventh century to the present day. These mountain monasteries are sacred places and provide an exceptional testimony to their long and continuing traditions of Buddhist spiritual practice.



Studenica monastery (image: Pudelek (Marcin Szala)

Studenica Monastery **Serbia 1986 (i) (ii) (iv) (vi)**

**Criterion (i):** The King's Church houses the most beautiful frescoes painted by Michael and Eutykhios, the famous painters from Salonica. Not long after the church was built, they painted the Cycle of the Life of the Virgin Mary, which is among the leading works of Byzantine art. After having worked at the Church of Peribleptos in Ohrid and having painted a series of Serbian churches for King Milutin (those of the Virgin of Ljevisa, Zica, Staro Nagoricino, Gracanica, etc.), these painters found the most perfect expression of their style in the Studenica King's Church. With highlighting in bright colours, shadows and light executed a secco, the density of forms and volumetric rendering of faces are combined with an astounding execution, the perfection of which is very close to that of icons,

**Criterion (ii):** The Church of the Virgin served as a model for other churches built in a distinctive style called the Raška School, which constitutes a special branch in eastern medieval church architecture. This royal mausoleum was imitated at Banjska, Dečani and the Holy Archangels of Prizren. The wall paintings of the naos and the sanctuary, executed in 1208-1209, are among the first examples of the "monumental style" which emerged in various regions after the fall of Constantinople in 1204 to the Crusaders. These paintings, which are characterised by a new concept of space and a new expressiveness, are an essential milestone in the history not only of Byzantine art, but also of Western art. Cimabue, Duccio and Giotto were also a part of this trend in the second half of the 13th century.

**Criterion (iv):** Studenica is an outstanding example of a monastery in the Serbian Orthodox Church. It has had the good fortune of preserving not only an array of exceptional monuments (churches, refectories, monks' quarters from the 13th to the 18th centuries) inside its circular wall, which has two fortified gates, but also extremely significant surroundings. In the protected zone there is a host of churches and hermitages, the marble quarries from which the blocks for the Church of the Virgin Mary were drawn and the remains of a medieval settlement for the quarry workers and stonecutters.

**Criterion (vi):** Studenica represents the high point of Serbian history. The monastery contains the remains of the first Serbian ruler and the Studenica founder, Saint Simeon, the remains of his wife Anastasia, and also the remains, shroud and coffin of the first Serbian king, Stephen the First-Crowned (Stefan Prvovenčani). This is where Saint Sava Nemanjić, the founder's youngest son, wrote the first literary work in the Serbian language. From here he also founded the Serbian Orthodox Church, which gained independence from the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Up until the 19th century, Studenica remained the symbol of this

culture, in somewhat the same way that Rila Monastery (included on the World Heritage List in 1983) was that of Bulgarian culture.



Exterior view of the monastery walls (image: Valeria Casali)

The Historic Centre (Chóra) with the Monastery of Saint-John the Theologian and the Cave of the Apocalypse on the Island of Pátmos  
Greece 1999 (iii) (iv) (vi)

**Criterion (iii):** The town of Chóra on the Island of Pátmos is one of the few settlements

in Greece that have evolved uninterruptedly since the 12th century. There are few other places in the world where religious ceremonies that date back to the early Christian times are still being practised unchanged.

**Criterion (iv):** The Monastery of Saint Ioannis Theologos (Saint John the Theologian) and the Cave of the Apocalypse on the Island of Pátmos, together with the associated medieval settlement of Chóra, constitute an exceptional example of a traditional Greek Orthodox pilgrimage centre of outstanding architectural interest.

**Criterion (vi):** The Monastery of Saint Ioannis Theologos and the Cave of the Apocalypse commemorate the site where Saint John the Theologian (Divine), the “Beloved Disciple”, composed two of the most sacred Christian works, his Gospel, and the Apocalypse.

### ANALYSIS

An effort was made to observe the inscription criteria of the monastery heritage in terms of the World Heritage List.

(i) to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius; **8 monasteries**

(ii) to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning, or landscape design; **13 monasteries**

(iii) to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living, or which has disappeared; **7 monasteries**

(iv) to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history; **17 monasteries**

(v) to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change; **none** (vi) to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria); **11 monasteries.**

Inscription name	Country	Year	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi
Abbey of St Gall	Swiss	1983		x		x		
Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran	Iran	2008		x	x			x
Assumption Cathedral and Monastery of the town-island of Sviyazhsk	Russia	2017		x		x		
Canterbury Cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey, and St Martin's Church	UK	1988	x	x				x
Earliest 16th-Century Monasteries on the Slopes of Popocatepetl	Mexico	1994, 2021		x		x		
Gelati Monastery	Georgia	1994, 2017				x		
Historic Centre of Oporto, Luiz I Bridge and Monastery of Serra do Pilar	Portugal	1996				x		
Kyiv: Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra	Ukraine	1990, 2005, 2021	x	x	x	x		
Millenary Benedictine Abbey of Pannonhalma and its Natural Environment	Hungary	1996				x		x
Monastery and Site of the Escorial, Madrid	Spain	1984	x	x				x
Monastery of Alcobaça	Portugal	1989	x			x		
Monastery of Batalha	Portugal	1983	x	x				
Monasteries of Daphni, Hosios Loukas and Nea Moni of Chios	Greece	1990	x			x		
Monastery of Geghard and the Upper Azat Valley	Armenia	2000			x			
Monasteries of Haghpat and Sanahin	Armenia	1996, 2000		x		x		
Monastery of Horezu	Romania	1993		x				
Monastery of the Hieronymites and Tower of Belém in Lisbon	Portugal	1983, 2008			x			x
Monastic Island of Reichenau	Germany	2000			x	x		x

Maulbronn Monastery Complex	Germany	1993, 2019		x		x		
Poblet Monastery	Spain	1991	x			x		
Rila Monastery	Bulgaria	1983						x
Royal Monastery of Santa María de Guadalupe	Spain	1993				x		x
San Millán Yuso and Suso Monasteries	Spain	1997		x		x		x
Sansa, Buddhist Mountain Monasteries in Korea	South Korea	2018			x			
Studenica Monastery	Serbia	1986	x	x		x		x
The Historic Centre (Chorá) with the Monastery of Saint-John the Theologian and the Cave of the Apocalypse on the Island of Pátmos	Greece	1999			x	x		x
			8	13	7	17	0	11

Of the analysis results from 26 monasteries, Criterion (iv) is the foremost reason for the UNESCO World Heritage inscriptions; then Criterion (ii) and Criterion (vi) whose characteristic is a meeting point between tangibility and intangibility.



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