

# Monastic Buildings: A Review About New Uses on Former Monasteries. The Portuguese Cistercian Case

Ana Maria Tavares Martins <sup>1</sup>, Maria Teresa Perez Cano <sup>2</sup>, Eduardo Mosquera Adell <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> UBI, Lab2PT, CIDEHUS. Department of Civil Engineering and Architecture, University of Beira Interior, Calçada Fonte do Lameiro, 6200-001 Covilhã. Portugal

<sup>2</sup> DUOT, ETSA, US, Department of Urban and Territorial Planning, Higher Technical School of Architecture, University of Seville, Avenida Reina Mercedes, 2 – 41012 Sevilla. Spain

<sup>3</sup> DHTCA, ETSA, US, Department of History, Theory and Architectural Composition, Higher Technical School of Architecture, University of Seville, Avenida Reina Mercedes, 2 – 41012 Sevilla. Spain

amtfm@ubi.pt

**Abstract.** This paper aims to present a review contribution to the history of the reform and renewal in the Portuguese Cistercian monasteries, throughout nine centuries of cultural and architectural history, but focusing on the new uses on former monasteries. The monastic Orders had a vital importance, both temporal and spatial, in the development of the urban fabric of cities. It must be considered that the transformation and development of the territory have been responsible for isolated buildings and settlements which have gradually been absorbed by the expansion of the urban fabric. The Cistercian Order played a remarkable role in the affirmation of Portugal (1143) and had an unquestionable position, since the medieval period, in the construction of a significant part of the Portuguese culture. The first Cistercian monasteries appeared in Portugal, in the 12th century, far from the urban context. Portuguese Cistercian monasteries became worthy examples of the European Cistercian architecture, although, over the time, they have been adapted, enlarged and transformed according to the styles of each epoch. The disappearance of the religious Orders, in 1834, and the successive owners adapted the monastic buildings to new uses. 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 and conversion. These are new spaces which adapt to new situations and new uses, thus updating themselves, so that the values of the present can be included and integrated into its history. Therefore, this paper aims to discuss, in which way the ideals and the realities of these monastic buildings and related urban spaces are divergent, but also a factor of city growth and cultural development.

## 1. Introduction

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, and conversion, amongst other possibilities [1]. These are new spaces which adapt to new situations and new uses. In short, they update themselves, so that the values of the present can be included and integrated into its history.



History is an instrument of analysis and criticism which allows different readings of the buildings, continuously renewed. Besides History, which allows a critical mode transformation, as Castillo understands it, it also allows the “socialisation” of the historical building facing territorialisation that involves many different levels and disciplines, as well as the participation of sciences such as geography, economics, sociology, anthropology, among other social sciences [2].

The city is a place of meeting and reunion, in which various interests and elements interact. These interests are economic, cultural or even ideals, and they allow, through the remaining architectural heritage, to provide for the contemporary city a possible and positive response to the demands of the contemporary age might they be physical, social or cultural. It is necessary to provide contemporary uses for protecting the historical heritage and transfer this attitude and new life to these buildings in order to carry them to the future generations [3]. The Cistercian legacy in Portugal was concisely discussed in Martins and Carlos [4] based in Martins [5].

We must not forget the vital importance, both temporal and spatial, of the monastic Orders in the development of the urban fabric of a city which, in turn, is included in a country. However, the first Cistercian monasteries appeared in Portugal, in the 12th century, far from the urban context. The foundations of the Cistercian order in this country, especially in the first centuries of its history, were associated with occupation and land management objectives [5] as a strategic way to transform the context of territories under precedent Islamic rule. After the disappearance of the Orders, in 1834, the country underwent numerous transformations and the Cistercians moved out of Portugal never to return. However, their architectural legacy was recovered and rehabilitated [6], thus evoking the ideals and the Cistercian spirituality, and it does not let us forget the importance of the Cistercian Order in Portugal [7]. The monastic building must be considered not only as an integral part and of development of an urban environment, but also as an element of construction and management of the territory.

In the 20th century, the campaigns of restoration, reconstruction, renewal, and rehabilitation began under the responsibility of the DGEMN (Directorate General for National Buildings and Monuments) as well as the IPPAR (Portuguese Institute of Architectural Heritage) [6], [7], [8]. When the restoration of religious buildings came into practice, it became even harder than restoring another kind of monumental buildings. So, the researches to be made and the ways to be followed can be described in a systematical manner as a re-functioning process when faced with the examples of adaptive re-usage of religious buildings [3]. On the other side, as Cubero Hernández and Pérez Cano [9] refer, from a heritage perspective, the continuity of historical use in a building expresses more about the achievement of the social and architectural function for which was designed.

The DGEMN (General Directorate of National Buildings and Monuments) applied these ideals at the beginning of the 20th century according to the theories in vogue. Several of the Cistercian monasteries were restored using the romantic ideals of restoration. Some of the Cistercian examples of this kind of restoration are S. Pedro das Águias (o Velho), in Tabuaço, or Santa Maria de Aguiar in Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo. Later, entities incorporated the IPPC (Portuguese Institute of Cultural Heritage) and then the IPPAR (Portuguese Institute of architectonic heritage), followed by IGESPAR (Management Institute of architectonic and archaeological heritage) which also intervened in the Cistercian heritage including the work done in the monastery of Santa Maria de Alcobaça and in the various rescue operations in the Monasteries of S. João de Tarouca and Salzedas. The monastery of Santa Maria de Alcobaça was declared a world heritage site by UNESCO in 1989 [6], [10].

The IGESPAR evolved into the DGPC (General Directorate of Cultural Heritage) and the Varosa’s Valley Project, which involves the open-air museum of the ruins of the first Cistercian Monastery of S. João de Tarouca and the cultural use and rehabilitation of the Monastery of Sta Maria de Salzedas, both in the cradle region of the Portuguese Cistercian monasteries, should be especially considered [6].

We must also highlight what Galvão [11] mentions when she relates to the inheritance, testimony and emblematic heritage resources of the identity of cities, communities and regions. There is increasingly an agenda of clear choice for management based on a sustainable development. In addition, the knowledge and the use of heritage are, currently, essential elements for their safeguarding, sustainability and evaluation as well as factors of progress in various aspects of development, in

particular, when underlining the interdependence between culture and the qualification of community life [7].

## **2. New uses in former Portuguese Cistercian Monasteries**

The measures of the Portuguese liberal Government to modernize the country, especially agriculture, corresponded to numerous political actions and legal regulations. After the Napoleonic war and the Portuguese Civil war, the main owners in Portugal were the religious and military masculine orders, the crown and the House of the Infantado, if we take into account the figures of the sales result of national properties in the period 1835-43[12]. Among them, it is necessary to highlight the role of the Disentailment of properties that were in ecclesiastic hands that implied the dissolution of the monasteries. The 19th century was characterized by a growing anticlericalism which culminated with the extinction of the religious Orders, by decree of May 28th, 1834, then signed by the Minister of the Justice of the liberal government Joaquim António de Aguiar. This decree determined the total and immediate extinction of the monasteries, convents, schools, hospices and all the religious houses and regular orders, independently of its denomination, institute or Rule. To the nuns, unlike the monks, it was allowed to stay in their monasteries until the death of the last religious of each monastery [5]. The availability of these big architectural structures, approximately 500 monasteries, resulted in very diverse situations, in an epoch in which the modern patrimonial awareness emerged and the real-estate market started to evolve. The monasteries, many of them of medieval origin - being the relevant Portuguese case that of the order of Cîteaux - had evolved autonomously through the Middle Ages and the Modern Age, according to the functional needs which derived from their religious protagonism in the cities or environments, where they were placed, as well as due to the evolution of the productive sector and the activities that the own religious communities were also developing inside the fences and in other properties (mills, gardens, orchards, and other land fields, urban properties among others).

In this sense, the complex and evolved functional organigram of the typology of the Cistercian monastery was experimenting different variations in the respective houses. The new uses were related not only to immediate governmental needs (military uses, hospitals and educational or administrative centres) but also to private uses (industry, stores, dwellings), partly or in the whole monastery. The losses of religious objects dedicated to worship, works of art, archives and libraries also cleared these monasteries of considerable richness. So, they turned into coldly available architectural containers. There was not a coherent or homogeneous policy. Case to case, monastery to monastery, the situation was different and in some buildings the ruin and the oblivion contrasted with other monasteries with intensive uses, in invasive and parasitic occasions with regard to the architectural and spatial concepts that characterized them before the measures of the Secularization.

The new uses had a very different stability. It was certain, though, that with the 20th century, the idea of architectural rehabilitation joined that of the monumental restoration so that the treatment of the uses has created a new complexity for the architectural task that acquired many shades in occasions deeply related to the personalized practice of the architects who designed the interventions. In a sense, some rehabilitation of Cistercian monasteries reflects the state of health of the culture and of the Portuguese architecture (table 1 and table 2). A reflection that takes to us to the connection between tourism, trip and religious experience, which Thomas S. Bremer [13], among other has studied, is the one that points out that these Cistercian monasteries represent a fundamental segment.

**Table 1.** New uses in former Portuguese Cistercian Monasteries (male monasteries)

MONASTERY	NEW USE(S)					
	Foundation/ filiation	Extinction	Church	Monastic Building	Contemporary architectural intervention	Architect(s)
- Santa Maria de Fiães	1194	1775	Parish	Inexistent (destroyed)	-	-
- Santa Maria do Ermelo	1271	1560	Parish	Inexistent (destroyed)	-	-
- Santa Maria do Bouro	1195	1384	Parish	Pousada	Pousada (monastic building)	Eduardo Souto de Moura and Humberto Vieira
- Santa Maria das Júnias	1248	17 <sup>th</sup> century	None	Ruins	-	-
- São Pedro das Águias (old)	1170	1834	None	-	-	-
- São Pedro das Águias (new)			Cellar	Dwellings	-	-
- Santa Maria de Salzedas	1196	1834	Parish	Museum, Dwellings	Museum	Varosa Valley Project /Gabriel Andrade e Silva (DRCN – DSBC)
- São João de Tarouca	1144	1834	Parish	Open-air Museum, Ruins	Open-air Museum	Varosa Valley Project
- Santa Maria de Aguiar	1165	1834	Parish	Ruins, Dwellings	-	-
- São Cristovão de Lafões	1162	1834	Parish	Dwellings, Rural Hotel	Dwellings Rural Hotel	Margarida Osswald
- Santa Maria de Maceira Dão	1188	1834	None	None	-	-
- São Paulo de Almaziva	1221	1834	Parish	Inexistent (destroyed)	-	-
- Espírito Santo	1545	1834	Dwellings	Dwellings	Monastic enclosure of São Bernardo: Theatre	João Mendes Ribeiro
- Santa Maria de Seça	1195	1834	None, Rice husking factory	None, Rice husking factory	In study	Atelier 15 (Alexandre Alves Costa and Sergio Fernandez)
- Santa Maria de Alcobaça	1153	1833	Parish	Museum, Theatre, Town Hall, Jail, home to a sports group, military barracks, asylum, shops, stores, dwellings	Museum, Parochial rooms	Gonçalo Byrne and João Falcão de Campos
- Nossa Senhora do Desterro	1591	[1834?]	Hospital	Hospital	In study	Pedro Domingos, João Favila Menezes

**Table 2.** New uses in former Portuguese Cistercian Monasteries (female monasteries)

MONASTERY	NEW USE(S)					
	Foundation/ filiation	Extinction	Church	Monastic Building	Contemporary architectural intervention	Architect(s)
- São Pedro e São Paulo de Arouca	1224	1834	Parish	Museum	-	-
- N. Sr <sup>a</sup> da Assunção de Tabosa	1685	1834	Parish	None (Ruins)	-	-
- São Mamede de Lorvão	1206	1834	Parish	Museum, Psychiatric Hospital	Museum	João Mendes Ribeiro
- Santa Maria de Celas	1214	1834	Parish	None (Partially destroyed)	-	-
- Santa Maria de Cós	1241	1834	Parish	Ruins	-	-
- São Dinis de Odivelas	1294	1834	Parish	Intern school	-	-
- N. Sr <sup>a</sup> da Nazaré do Mocambo	1654	1834	Multi-purpose room of the Puppet Museum, Orchestra, Theatre, Cinema, furniture shop, storage	Puppets Museum, Dwellings, Centre for the elderly, Social club, Restaurant, hosted shops and stores	Puppets Museum, Dwellings, Centre for the elderly, Social club, Restaurant	ARCHI III
- Santa Maria de Almoester	1287	1834	Parish	Ruins, Agricultural school	-	-
- São Bernardo de Portalegre	1518	1834	Museum	Practical School of the National Republican Guard (GNR).	-	-
- São Bento de Cástris	1275	1776	None	None	-	-
- N. Sr <sup>a</sup> da Piedade de Tavira	1509	1834	Dwellings	Dwellings	Private Condominium	Eduardo Souto de Moura

The Municipalities also invested in the rehabilitation of the Cistercian monasteries as in the case of Lisbon and in the Monastery of Our Lady of Nazaré do Mocambo, also known as Bernardas' Convent [8], [14], [15], [16]. Today, it is the Puppets Museum, 34 dwellings, shops and a restaurant with a rehabilitation project of ARCHI III [8, 14]. The Cistercian legacy was also taken into consideration by the City Hall of Coimbra that was interested in the revitalization and landscape reconversion of the encircling walls of the São Bernardo's College (as it is known), also called College of Espírito Santo, that are integrated into the city's urban fabric, in Rua da Sofia. Nowadays, it is used for residential and commercial purposes. The Architect Mendes Ribeiro was in charge of the landscape redevelopment [5], [6].

The contemporary rehabilitations are sometimes executed by a few private institutions and persons as it was in the case of the Monastery of S. Cristóvão de Lafões, which was acquired by the Osswald family that rehabilitated it, rescuing it from ruin. The Church of the monastery was given to the parish. Regarding S. Pedro das Águias (the new), it had a project for a rural hotel [5], [6]. At the Monastery of Santa Maria de Aguiar, dated from the 12th century and located in Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo, there is a Rural Hotel exploited by a family. Both the family housing and the rural hotel accommodations coexist in the building which used to be the monastery guesthouse. The land, which it is settled in, is linked to

the production of wine. The Church has free access to visitors, as well as the remaining part of the monastery, which is currently a ruin and a private property.

In other situations, the contemporary rehabilitation, usually integrated into a historical building or built from the remains of one, has the support of the State and it is 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). The rehabilitation project, of the Portuguese architects Eduardo Souto de Moura and Humberto Vieira, 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 mentions: "I'm not restoring a monastery; I'm building a Pousada with the stones from a monastery" [6], [17]. It should be highlighted that the Monastery of Santa Maria do Bouro, as well as the Monastery of Nossa Senhora de Piedade de Tavira (also known as Bernardas' Convent of Tavira) were both rehabilitated by the Portuguese architect, and awarded Pritzker Prize, Eduardo Souto de Moura [6]. The Monastery of Tavira, after the disappearance of the Orders, was used as a milling and steamed dough factory and was later transformed into a residential condominium by the architect Eduardo Souto de Moura. However, this was not the only monastery which had industrial use. Another Monastery, the Monastery of Santa Maria de Seíça, had a factory installed in its interior. It was a rice husking factory and it had such importance, as an industry, that it even had a railroad passing next to it with the privilege of having a private specific wayside-station for its own purpose.

Others were adapted to schools or to State institutions: Monastery of Odivelas (for several years was a school for the daughters of militaries) or the Monastery of S. Bernardo de Portalegre, which is currently the Practical School of the National Republican Guard (GNR). There are certain parallelisms related to its initial use, i.e., the church continues to be a church and a museum, the dormitory gave place to the soldiers' quarters and the Chapter-house is the room assigned to the officials' meetings [5].

Others were adapted to hospitals, like the Hospital of Desterro, or as it was the case of the Monastery of Lorvão (now empty since 2007) and nowadays a museum with the rehabilitation project by the architect João Mendes Ribeiro. M. Quinta-Ferreira et al. [18] mentions that seeking new utilizations for the Lorvão Monastery, in Penacova, the construction of a museum gallery was planned on the west and south courtyard of the cloister. The archaeological surveys required by the project owner, before construction, revealed buried ancient walls dating from the 16th to the 18th centuries. These walls, considered an invaluable heritage had to be preserved and made available for exhibition. The new museum gallery was intended to be both a purpose built exhibition space for the vast collection of valuable masterpieces related to monastery life and its occupants, and as a way to provide funds to reduce running and maintenance costs [18].

### **3. Monastery of Nossa Senhora da Nazaré do Mocambo as a study case**

Although the Cistercians were an Order demanding solitude and isolation, established away from the urban context, overtime the transformation and development of the territory have been responsible for isolated buildings and settlements which have gradually been absorbed by the expansion of the urban fabric [5]. This is, the monastery once isolated becomes integrated, interacting and forming part of the urban fabric of the contemporary [4], [5], [6].

With the age of the great expansion of the cities, and at a time in which the periphery begins to reach significance, comes the time of reordering. This is, a time to allow a new development with a new emerging perspective, a culture of retrofitting and rehabilitation, in short, of the transformation of the existing built historic buildings and heritage. As Capitel [19] says, projecting on existing architecture becomes reflective and eclectic, in search of the suitability for specific purposes, relating to the original building in a way deep from the point of view of discipline. The problem of continuity or figurative discontinuity between the new and the old loses its most superficial interpretation to become a diverse compositional tool [19]. As a result, the link between the old and the new translates into the "memory" of the new which is simultaneously a dialectical link between the past and the future that is embodied in the present. As Torsello [2] tells us, the opposition declared between the old and new, between

conservation and innovation, is the very nature of the intervention, its constant and renewed historic condition.

As it was referred, the Municipalities also invested in the rehabilitation of the Cistercian architectures as it is the case of the City hall of Lisbon with the Monastery of Our Lady of Nazaré do Mocambo, better known as Bernardas' Convent and a former Cistercian foundation, located in Madragoa, a neighbourhood in Lisbon. This neighbourhood was a prolific area with monasteries and convents located outside the city walls. Over the time, around the convent, the city had been built [7]. It was founded in 1653 over pre-existences but, in fact, this Monastery has a much more recent foundation because it was initially a place of gathering of penitent and devoted women and then later became a monastery [7]. In 1755, the Bernardas' Convent was totally destroyed during the earthquake and later reconstructed by the Italian architect Giacomo Azzolini. After the extinction of the religious orders, in 1834, the convent was preserved until the death of the last nun and then was sold. The Bernardas' Convent has had several uses since then. There were several schools inside the historical building: The Academico Lisbonense, the Senhora da Conceição and Luis Rodrigues Polytechnic [5], [7].

In June 1924, the Convent's church was used as a cinema and a theatre (the apse was even replaced by a stage) and it was called "Cine-Esperança". In addition, this space was used by an orchestra and later transformed into a furniture shop and storage [5], [7]. A significant population lived, in precarious conditions, in the monastic building. On the ground floor, there were taverns and coal storages. The Bernardas' Convent was used as a "Vila Operária" a kind of labour dwellings inside a pre-existing building [A]. In 1996, there was an architectural competition promoted by the City Council regarding the rehabilitation of the Bernardas' Convent. The winners were ARCH III and the awarded project included the rehabilitation of the Convent's space distributed in 34 residences, a restaurant, 4 shops, a centre for the elderly, a social club and the Puppets Museum, as well as a multi-purpose room, originally the Church which was connected with the Museum. The works of retrofitting and rehabilitation of the convent were initiated in 1999 and were finished between 2001 and 2002 [5], [7].

The new uses are not the only way of reviving the monastic buildings but also a way of new research. The Architectures of Cîteaux in Portugal [5], and its heritage legacy is a full field of research, connected with the engineering sciences such as the thermal comfort [8], [14] acoustics [20], [21], [22] and the natural light [15], [16]. Interdisciplinarity and connection are the lever to produce scientific knowledge [4], [6], [23], [24]. Research projects are also a way of connecting education and research as it is considered an important output in thematic dissertations.

#### **4. Alcobaça: Urban rehabilitation in the city centre and the world heritage monument**

Concerning the rehabilitation of the monastic heritage, we must not forget that each case is a different case and that there are specific singularities which have always a place. A monastic building, or a historical building, which is integrated into an urban context or simply in its periphery, has always been an element of influence and transformation [25], [26]. In fact, this happens because it can be understood as an urban aggregator or element of renewal of the urban fabric (like the Bernardas' Convent in Lisbon) or it can be just the opposite: it can be understood as a barrier to the expansion of the city. A monastic building or a historical building can also be a generator pole of new agglomerates like the Cistercian farm buildings at the "Coutos" of Alcobaça which generated settlements [4], [5], [6], [7]. The monument–document is configured into an analytical and interpretative attention, but at the same time, it is a place for a new usage, a forum of innovation, advanced technologies, or contemporary spatial conception [2]. This is what has happened to the Cistercian Monastery of Santa Maria de Alcobaça and the city where it is located (especially after the extinction of the religious orders in 1834).

The Monastery of Alcobaça was created under the image of Clairvaux's, but because of the conditions of the land, the plan was rotated so the Church was facing south and everything else was facing north as we can see in a layout of Korrodi dated from 1928 [5], [27]. Over the time, the monastery has been seen in different ways and has had various uses (was a theatre for almost 100 years, Town Hall, jail, theatre, home to a sports group, military barracks, asylum, hosted countless shops, stores, and dwellings, the

continuation of this list is virtually endless). However, it was this different occupation that avoided the complete destruction of the monastic building [27].

The enclosure in-between the encircling walls of the monastery and the monastery itself were initially an agricultural territory. Later, in the 15th century, when the monastery was led by the commendatory abbots, it was the place which sheltered an increasing community of fugitives from the royal justice or people seeking donations granted by the Abbey. This was the beginning and it was here, between the encircling walls and the monastery, that the village of Alcobaça was born. The creation, in 1567, of the Autonomous Congregation of Alcobaça, places the Commendatory Abbot Cardinal and Prince D. Henrique in the leadership of the Abbey. It was, by this time, in the 16th century, that Cardinal D. Afonso redesigned the encircling walls of the monastery leaving the dwellings of the gathered population outside them. This rearrangement of the layout of the encircling walls allowed the existence of a small urban nucleus (Foral Charter conceded by the king D. Manuel) born from the gathered dwellings. The “Rossio” is the open field between the urban nucleus (in the limit of the first encircling walls) and the monastery facade. With the second layout of the encircling walls, the monastery had doors facing this open space and this was a space for gatherings, trade, or religious events [5].

The Abbey was seriously damaged during the earthquake of 1755 and in the tragic floods of 1772. Since then, the monastic layout multiplied the number of cloisters (as well as the cloister of King D. Dinis, the cloister of the Cardinal emerged and also the cloister of the Rachadoiro) and new wings were increased adding a greater number of cells: the new monastic dependencies and its great library. William Elsdon has the authorship of the first plan of the village of Alcobaça - “Planta da Villa de Alcobaça” - in 1775, after the earthquake, where it is identifiable the castle, the monastery, some urban appointments and the so-called “New church”, a parish church, dated from 1648, to serve the population of Alcobaça. Here, the built construction appears clearly related to the streets that cease to be mere rural paths, to turn into urban streets with clearly defined limits [27].

In 1810, the Abbey was invaded by French militaries with pillages and fires in the monastic building. It was also in the 19th century that the monastery was actually inserted in the historical centre of Alcobaça of which stands out the Rossio's importance [5]. This kind of public space evolved into a multifunctional space, but also into a social space which played an important part in the life of the city. This was the area in front of the monastery between the encircling walls and was not only a place of trade, but also of a public walk, which was “The” public space, a space of the city and for the city. However, there began to appear an estrangement of the city in relation to its historical centre when the northwest area was beginning to be conquered. It is from this moment on, that the monastery was assumed fundamentally as a historical and cultural landmark. Consequently, after 1834, the “Rossio” was an experimentation area, as Tavares [27] mentions, “with trees, no trees, with a new church, without the new church, with school, without school, with different landscape layouts”, among many other experiences.

The Rossio, at the beginning of the 20th century, is presented as the “Alameda dos Plátanos” which was the public space. Then, in 1930, the “Rossio” was deprived of its trees and the topography was regularized with the plan of improvements of Miguel Jacobetty and six years later another study and landscape project by Tertuliano Lacerda Marques was applied. It is also in the 20th century that the urbanization plans for the expansion of the city were executed by Faria da Costa in the 40's and by Vaz Martins in the 50's, who also redesigned the “Rossio”, just in time to receive the visit of Queen Elizabeth II during her visit to Portugal [27]. By then, numerous works were implemented with the scope of the internal arrangement of the monastery of Alcobaça and a visiting circuit was created (only in the medieval part of the monastery) [5]. With this new layout, a parking lot emerged from the Rossio and this space changed its social function of gathering and promenade achieved in the 19th century. Since 1989, the Abbey of Alcobaça is considered as World Heritage by UNESCO and with the 21st century, a new layout was thought to rehabilitate the Rossio and the surroundings of the Abbey. At the beginning of the 21st century, the South Wing of the Monastery was rehabilitated and transformed into a cultural space, where there were temporary exhibitions. The architects Gonçalo Byrne and João Pedro Falcão de Campos were the authors of this minimalistic rehabilitation, thus consolidating the ground floor, creating



versatile spaces and a space on the first floor for parish usage. The rehabilitation was extended to the surroundings of the Abbey, to the city and its public spaces beyond the “Rossio”, to the place of confluence of the two rivers Alcoa and Baça [5]. In fact, the work of Architects Gonçalo Byrne and João Pedro Falcão de Campos covered a broad multidisciplinary perspective aggregating a distinct knowledge in the form of a criticism which continues examining "time and space of a heritage as rich as vulnerable" as Byrne [28] mentions.

## 5. Conclusion

In the middle of an intense debate in Portugal on the endowment of uses to some of them, included in the UNESCO World Heritage List (the case of Alcobaça and the question of hotel use), it is found that the spaces of the churches, cloisters, auxiliary elements, gardens, walled enclosures and fences are inspiring very different opportunities in which a unit of criterion not always exists on the former monastic group. Nonetheless, the Cistercian architecture will still continue doing in it the future with its old architectures that test the most recent trends of the Portuguese architecture. These are spaces which can be adapted to new situations, to new use. To sum up, these are spaces which are updated to include and integrate the values of the present in its history. The transformation of historic buildings and its consequent adaptation to contemporary living needs are nowadays one of the major concerns in the field of the construction of the contemporary city.

## Acknowledgment

This work has the financial support of the Project Lab2PT - Landscapes, Heritage and Territory laboratory - AUR/04509 and FCT through national funds and when applicable of the FEDER co-financing, in the scope of the new partnership agreement PT2020 and COMPETE2020 - POCI 01 0145 FEDER 007528. This work is also financed by FEDER funds, under the new PT2020 partnership agreement and by national funds FCT/MEC – Foundation for Science and Technology under the UID/HIS/00057/2013 – POCI-01-0145-FEDER-007702 project.

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