

Pilgrimage shrines in Portugal according to natural and cultural characteristics, with a view to their comprehensive protection

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Abstract

This article focuses on catholic pilgrimage shrines in Portugal, filling a gap regarding their defining natural and cultural characteristics. These are viewed jointly and interpretively: nature shaping culture and culture shaping nature. The urgent relevance arises from an analysis of the basis of the classifications of 25 shrines (those classified by Património Cultural, I. P., Ministério da Cultura), in which we raised the hypothesis that their landscape values were not recognized. After researching the literature, we visited these places to observe and analyze the landscapes where they are located and the places they constitute, seeking to identify the factors that are fundamental to them. The subspaces that contribute to their spatial diversity were subsequently characterized. As icons of landscape heritage, each pilgrimage shrine is the combined reflection of its surrounding landscape, the particularities of its site, the Church's investment in the implementation of a religious and recreational program, its historical course and the influences it has received, the functions it performs, and its design. We find an interpretative matrix of pilgrimage shrines in the building and churchyard/viewpoint combination, a consistent way of presenting certain subspaces with different articulations; 50% of these places have this typology and are located in a situation of visual predominance, with regional or local significance. With this article, in which we identify a set of basic criteria for study and analysis, we hope to contribute to the effective and comprehensive protection of these places.

Keywords: pilgrimage shrines, place, landscape, protection

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1. Introduction

The aim of this text is to continue the research presented by Ilídio Alves de Araújo in the 1962 study *Arte Paisagista e Arte dos Jardins em Portugal*. Inventorying and reflecting on many places of landscape interest, the book covers pilgrimage shrines located in Alto Minho, Ribeira Lima, Cávado Basin, Ave Basin, Terra de Basto, Sousa and Ferreira Basins, Leça Basin, Porto and Gaia, Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro, Beira Alta and Beira Litoral. They are described in a comprehensive way that reflects the relationship between function, constituent elements, and landscape value.

Other works on pilgrimage shrines have more recently appeared, such as the 2015 book *Santuários de Portugal: Caminhos de Fé* by Maria do Rosário Barardo, in which all the shrines in Portugal are presented as a particular religious type.

Many shrines also have monographs covering their historical and religious aspects published by the municipalities, parishes, or brotherhoods to which they belong.

Guias de Portugal, coordinated by Raul Proença (3rd edition, 1996, published by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation), also contain very detailed descriptions of this heritage.

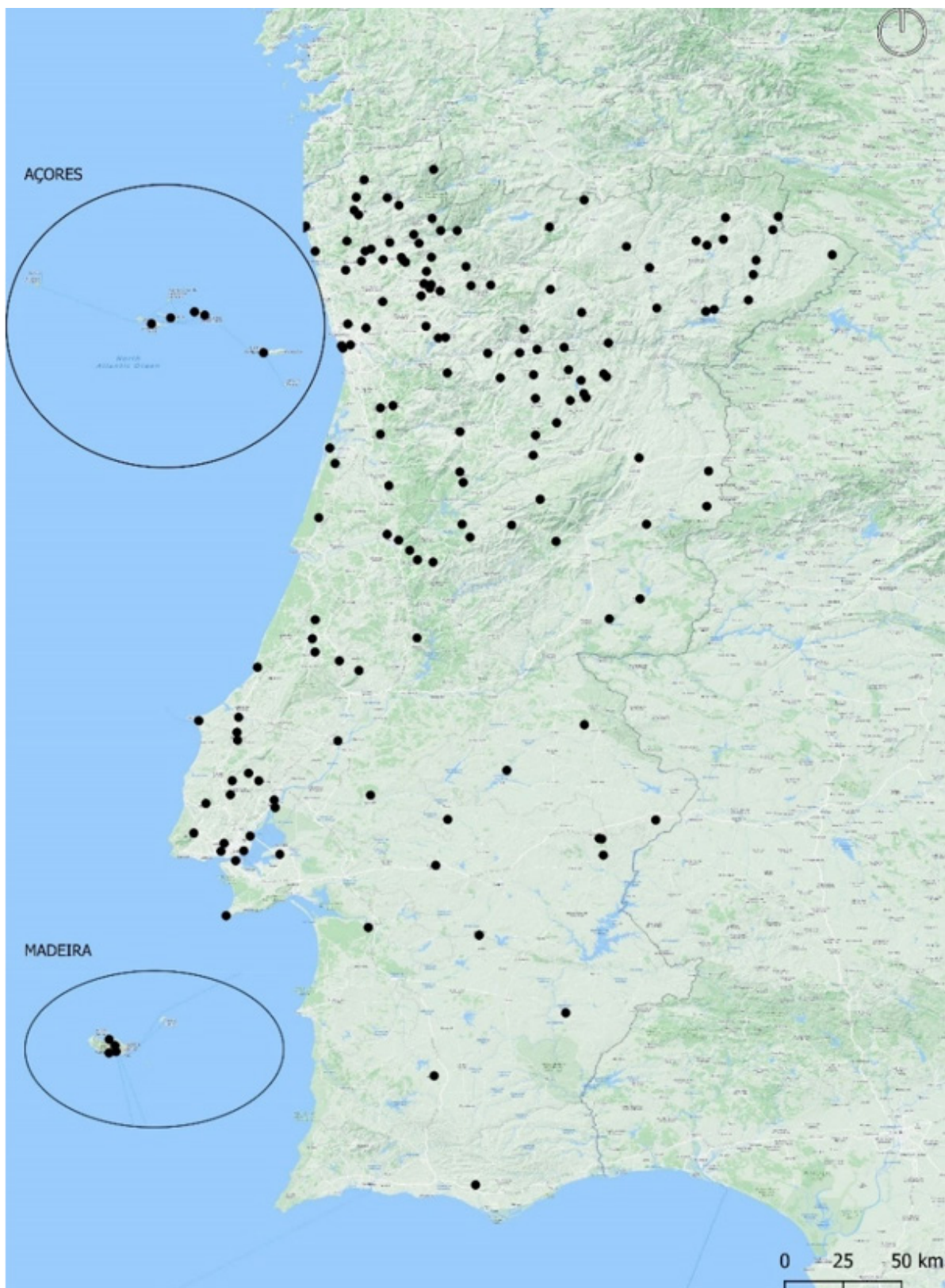
Património Cultural, I.P., a public institute that deals with heritage, building on the work produced by the now defunct *Direção Geral do Património Cultural*, continues its research with the creation of inventories that include several pilgrimage shrines.

The *Associação Portuguesa dos Jardins Históricos* (Portuguese Association of Historic Gardens), whose aim is to contribute to the study, defense, preservation, and promotion of landscape heritage, has inventoried 56 pilgrimage shrines, whose information is available on its website: Description, Bibliography, Location, along with other useful information for visitors. The exhibition, descriptions, and bibliography associated with each place are ample and full of detail.

However, only rarely have we come across articles on pilgrimage shrines in conferences, symposiums, or lectures written by landscape architects, focusing directly on their landscape aspect. Teresa Portela Marques, a landscape architect and assistant professor at the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Porto, stands out in this field. This theme is the focus of her 2009 doctoral thesis, *Dos Jardineiros Paisagistas e Horticultores do Porto de Oitocentos ao Modernismo na Arquitetura Paisagista em Portugal* (From the Landscape Gardeners and Horticulturists of Oporto in the 1800s to Modernism in Landscape Architecture in Portugal). She also took part, together with landscape architect Teresa Andresen, in the proposal to classify the shrine of Bom Jesus do Monte, Braga. She later published the texts: *Jardim do Senhor dos Aflitos: projetos, obra e planos (1888-1949)*, as well as *Santuário ou Monte do Senhor dos Aflitos, Lousada* and *Santuários do território de Braga: Paisagem, devoção e ordenamento do lugar*, the latter also with Teresa Andresen.

At the moment, Portugal has 161 pilgrimage shrines, according to the *Associação de Reitores de Santuários* (Association of Shrine Rectors) (Barardo, 2015, p. 13), with the distribution depicted in figure 1.

Figure 1. Location of catholic pilgrimage shrines in Portugal's mainland and islands



Source: Author elaboration.

Based on the texts and explanatory drawings included in the classifications of 25 pilgrimage shrines, we found discrepancies in the institutional recognition of their relationship with the landscape. The problem is more serious in the older classifications. Specifically, we found:

- that the sites of pilgrimage shrines are often not selected for comprehensive classification. Sometimes only the church, chapel, hermitage, or other isolated elements are classified. Areas of vegetation or forests are often not included alongside other buildings or other inert constructions. Rather, they are disaggregated, disregarding the overall nature of the site and the relationship between the different subspaces;
- the generalization of the 50-metre distance as a protection zone is a mechanical approach that is insufficient.

Although recent classifications have expanded special protection zones, along with this progress, there are still classifications that in no way reflect this holistic vision. It is therefore common for the classification not to cover all the values and attributes present (their biophysical component is often not integrated into the classified property or its special protection zone), showing a partiality that is out of step with the intrinsic whole of the landscape. It almost always fails to be perceived as an interactive system of natural and cultural elements, which often was what first led to the emergence of these places. We conclude that the institutional approach to pilgrimage shrines does not reflect a unified approach, but is rather at the mercy of the sensitivity and knowledge of those who propose and those who analyze.

As we intend to deepen the study of the pilgrimage shrines, this article begins with their analysis as sacred places, insofar as religiosity/spirituality constitutes their foundation. This is followed by the identification of their essential material and immaterial factors, in terms of natural and cultural characteristics.

The diverse character of the pilgrimage shrines is discussed, with an explanation of their initial ideological program and spatial composition: the subspaces that make them up are the church/chapel/*ermida* (hermitage), woods, forest, park, garden, via-sacra, stairway, boulevard, courtyard, churchyard, viewpoint, picnic area. The presence of other elements such as water and sculpture, which give a decisive importance to the functional, artistic, and symbolic dimensions of the places, are also addressed.

In the conclusion we point to an outlook necessary for sustained protection, with a view to preventing the irretrievable loss of essential components.

2. Pilgrimage shrine, a sacred place

Pilgrimage shrines, endowed with an enormous spiritual significance, establish an intimate relationship with the landscape and are important examples of the architecture of the soul. They promote the “encounter”:

- with Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, or the Saints;
- with the landscape, where we can see it in all its splendor;
- with ourselves, where an understanding or equilibrium emerges;

The relationship between the spiritual world and the landscape makes pilgrimage shrines special places that bring people together in the search for values of identity and connection to nature. They transcend the banality and monotony that surrounds them, standing out for their location, shape and cultural significance. With their tremendous endurance (seeming as if they’ve always been there, “almost eternal” compared to brief human lifespans) and tranquility, they offer moments of reflection and observation of the landscape (“where the landscape regards itself”).

The *Enciclopédia Luso-Brasileira de Cultura* (1965, p. 1359), defines a shrine in history as a “place where a divine manifestation took place (Ex., 20, 24; Deut. 12, 5.11), e.g., in Sinai/Horeb, Ophrah (Judg., 6, 24-28 8, 27), Bethel (Gen., 28, 11-19)”. In the Catholic religion, there are countless sacred spaces linked to extraordinary events in elevated places.

If a society's culture is strongly influenced by its religion (and given that there are no a-religious societies), it is possible to broadly foresee the importance of pilgrimage shrines. In the context of Catholicism, many people seek them out for love, forgiveness, gratitude, supplication, promises, and support; they are divine places of faith expression, essential to human life. Belonging to another order, that of the numinous, they invite prayer, meditation, reflection, and transcendence. This intense connection between the believer and the devotional figure finds its place of connection at the pilgrimage shrine.

The idea that Christians should visit Jerusalem gained relevance after the conquest of Constantinople (1453) and the occupation of Palestine. As it subsequently became more difficult to travel to the Holy Land, substitute pilgrimages were born. The iconography of the *via crucis* emerged on mountains, with the reproduction of the Stations of the Cross of Christ (from the moments before his arrest in the city of Jerusalem to the crucifixion on Mount Golgotha), giving rise to the Calvaries and Mounts of the Cross around the world, especially in Piedmont and Lombardy (Italy).

In Portugal, climbing to the top of a mountain for religious or spiritual purposes is also an ancient activity. According to Eliade (2004, p. 142), "the ascent has its own symbolism, and as the obstacles and difficulties of the climb are overcome, the human being passes from the secular world to the sacred world, thus abandoning his human condition."¹ Initially, as well as for the pilgrim, nature was not seen as exclusively natural, but was associated with the transcendent, the sacred. However, today, in the context of a rational and generally profane society, the sacred is no longer considered synonymous with the religious, but with the spiritual, in which nature can play an important role. Contemporary society, believing that man is the main driver of humanity's evolution, endowed with infinite capacities, now tends to see pilgrimage shrines as suitable places for other activities. The intimate relationship they have with nature, with an emphasis on their added landscape and environmental value, combined with their isolation, have clear effects on people's minds and bodies in terms of a sense of well-being and harmony. In a deeper sense, being associated with the open and infinite landscape, as far as the eye can see, they offer a vast array of thoughts to the human being. Many pilgrimage shrines contain within them solitude, seclusion, simplicity, devotion, and sacrifice, which together generate an enormous spiritual charge. The very concept of enclosure (as a retreat from the "noise" of the world) presupposes sacred and mystical feelings, in a serene atmosphere close to heaven. These are constant religious repercussions in pilgrimage shrines, exemplifying architectures of the soul, referring to the Latin word *stabilitas*, which evokes firmness and security.

But there is also another apparently antagonistic facet that is intrinsic to them: that of sociability. Pilgrimage shrines are, and always have been, not only places of manifestation of faith, but also of union and joy. The annual pilgrimage, as a religious journey, is at times difficult to distinguish from the *romaria* and cultural tourism. In this sense, pilgrimage shrines "(...) are an orderly reality that seems empty without the pilgrimage that disorganizes it."² (Barardo, 2015). The Church, as a prestigious social institution, has always known that pilgrimages, *romarias*, and festivals are essential regulators that unite and strengthen the population, counterbalancing the hardships of day-to-day life, relieving tensions, and settling difficulties and problems. It has also always been aware of the importance of these celebrations for its own spiritual supremacy - the pilgrimage thus needs the *romaria* to "exercise a socially recognized cult, just as the Church needs it to acquire an effectively social dimension"³ (Sachis, 1986, p. 135). In the many Portuguese *romarias* it is possible to see competitions, sales and auctions, musical bands, traditional dances, parades, animal exhibitions and sales, traditional games, festivals, and gastronomic tastings.

1 Original text: "a ascensão possui um simbolismo próprio e há medida que são ultrapassados os obstáculos e dificuldades da subida, o ser humano passa do mundo laico para o mundo sagrado, abandonando, assim, a sua condição humana."

2 Original text: "... são uma realidade ordenada que parece vazia sem a peregrinação que a desorganiza."

3 Original text: "exercitar um culto socialmente reconhecido, assim como dele precisa a Igreja para adquirir dimensão efetivamente social."

3. Essential features: materiality and immateriality

NATURAL	LANDSCAPE (biophysical component) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physiography/relief, geology, soil, hydrography, climate, flora and fauna
CULTURAL	LANDSCAPE (human component)
	RELIGIOSITY, SPIRITUALITY, RECREATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legends, apparitions, traditions, symbolism, rituals, interpretations, ancient pagan beliefs and festivities
	HISTORY, MEMORY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past occupations, historical events, influences • Archaeological elements: fortifications, citânias, other remains
	PROGRAM (CHURCH)
	SPATIAL COMPOSITION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings (church, chapel, hermitage, pilgrim house, lodging, print house, etc.) • subspaces forest, park, garden, Way of the Cross, stairway, boulevard, courtyard, churchyard, belvedere, picnic area • Circulation
	OTHER PLACES AND RELATED ELEMENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilgrimage routes, other routes in the landscape
	SCOPE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International, national, regional, local
	CONTEXT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban, isolated
	USES AND FUNCTIONS
	SYSTEM OF VIEWPOINTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual basins; visual axes
	DESIGN

Straddling the boundary between the natural and the cultural, pilgrimage shrines demonstrate the inseparability of these realms. As constructions of human design, they are erected out of a unique natural support, which is decisive for them, justifying their emergence and subsequent development. Ideologically, under their designation, all their sites give meaning to the shrines, transforming them into proper places, complex and artful systems of architecture and landscape, compositions blending inert and vegetal elements, symbolic of man's relationship with the landscape and the divine. The factors that are fundamental to this are:

- The landscape, in which the physiography/relief is decisive. Installation in solitary and topographically decisive places is at the service of religion, according to an evangelizing discourse that is intended for materialization. In a broad sense, since it is the result of continuous human action and perception of the territory, the landscape is intrinsically cultural, mirroring the values of society. Thus, the variation of the Portuguese landscape, influenced by natural and cultural characteristics, lends the individual

pilgrimage shrines their specific features. The northern landscape, which is more voluminous, complex, and even confusing, where the relief is more abrupt, is generally matched by shrines that are more contrasting in themselves, with a greater number of subspaces and greater compositional plasticity. They are often terraced, overcoming the existing gradient with slopes that are more or less steep depending on the inclination of the terrain and with supporting walls made of granite stone, to which fountains and tanks equipped with complex hydraulic systems are attached. The use of the region's characteristic granite helps this more ostentatious formal language. This is the case in mountainous Minho, where height is always present. Rising in a vigorous relief, in a dynamically baroque landscape, the shrines display elaborate shapes with a greater plasticity of composition, where it is almost always necessary to build staircases to access the church. This constructive exuberance in the north of Portugal may be compared to the simplicity of the south, where many of the aforementioned elements are unnecessary. The calmness of the southern landscape, with its flatter terrain, produces a formal simplicity in the places of the pilgrimage shrines. The simplicity of this landscape makes it easier to grasp morphologically, allowing for less artificial places. While the landscape influences the composition and spatiality of pilgrimage shrines, human characteristics are also a determining factor: 70% of the existing shrines are located in the north of Portugal, compared to 30% in the south. And because the human being is intrinsic to the landscape, shaping it, there is room for the question: "Is the Transmontano different from the rest of the Portuguese?" with the following answer: "I believe so"⁴ (Carvalho, 2017, p. 35). Further, "the land, culture and climate have a powerful influence on the human type; the landscape also conditions it. Thus the Alentejano was formed within the dictates imposed by its 'habitat'. The vast horizons make one contemplative and withdrawn"⁵ (Sequeira, 1944, p. 8);

- The religious, spiritual, and recreational dimensions, depend on the programs they are subject to. Some pilgrimage shrines are subject to very demanding recreational programs, resulting in a "significant influx of pilgrims and *romeiros* all year round, being incorporated into organized tourism structures, providing regular religious services, or even providing complementary services of a non-religious nature such as accommodation, catering, commerce, and leisure" (Silva, 2011, p. 7). These new aspects, with the subsequent increase in pilgrims and *romeiros*, leave a mark on the expression of the landscape;

- The historical context and the influences they have received. Understanding the historical evolution of these places is very important for understanding their current form, even if it has undergone considerable changes. Also noteworthy are those influenced by admiration for the shrine of Bom Jesus do Monte, Braga; many parishes expressed an interest in having their own shrine, resulting in major diffusion throughout the north of Portugal, with changes to structure and less iconographic expression. The political and ideological changes that have taken place in Portugal since the 18th century have also provoked specific responses from the Church in the affirmation of Catholic worship, with direct effects on pilgrimage shrines;

- The scope, which is directly linked to their religious, spiritual and recreational dimensions, almost always depends on the number of devotees and the range of programs offered. In general, national and international pilgrimage shrines have a more erudite, theoretical character. They present greater richness and complexity, a diversity of ambiances, differentiated spatial organization, greater decorative value, and programs for recreation and comfort. Their spaces have richer architectural and decorative languages, and the form of the vegetal material shows greater openness to innovation. As a result, their designs are more sophisticated, varied, complex, and dynamic, owing to the contrast between the parts. They are notable for the presence of subspaces that generate marked, purposeful multifunctionality. These are polyvalent spaces, very flexible as a whole, allowing for a variety of appropriations. They display a greater profusion of abstract artistic codes, the result of greater freedom of composition. The international shrines that attract the most pilgrims worldwide are Bom Jesus do Monte, Braga and Fátima. Notable among the national shrines – sought out by pilgrims who are mainly Portuguese – are the Remédios in Lamego, the São Bento da Porta Aberta in Terras de Bouro, the Santa Luzia in Viana do Castelo, the Penha in Guimarães and the

⁴ Original text: "É então o transmontano diferente dos mais portugueses? Creio que sim."

⁵ Original text: "A terra, a cultura e o clima influem poderosamente no tipo humano; a paisagem condiciona-o também. Assim o Alentejano se formou dentro dos ditames impostos pelo seu 'habitat'. Os vastos horizontes tornam-no contemplativo e recolhido."

Sameiro in Braga. These are also the places where the landscape heritage is of significant value – the touristification they have undergone has meant that their spaces have had to be upgraded, with the introduction of parks and gardens.

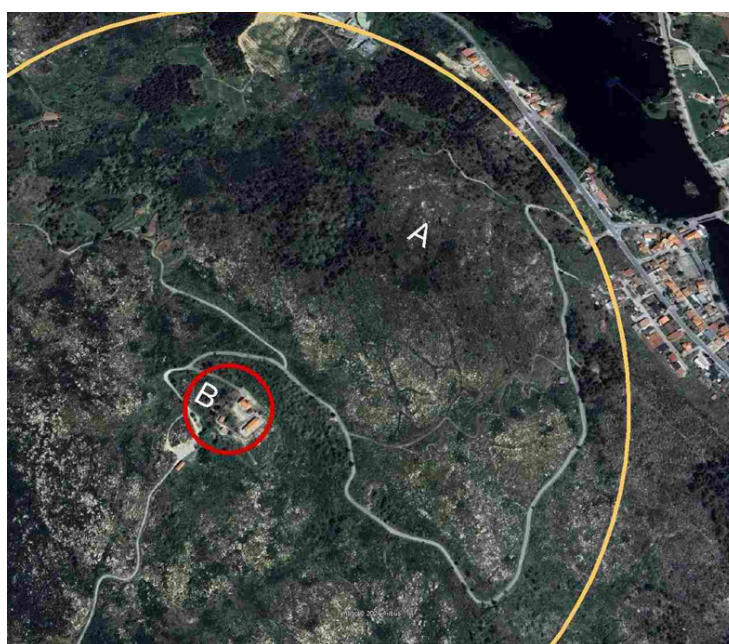
The remaining pilgrimage shrines, predominantly regional or local, have simpler, less erudite compositions and layouts. In general, in a situation of isolation, the initial design persists with little modification over time, and the geometry is easy to grasp. There is less functional diversity, and simplicity of form is apparent, which we grasp almost immediately when we look at the whole. The churchyard and the courtyard, which receive the annual pilgrimage, are constant in these buildings, taking on the role of a viewpoint when the terrain allows it. With less decorative ornamentation, these places are less allegorical and symbolic. They are more empirical, almost spontaneous. Compared to international or national pilgrimage shrines, they are almost monovalent spaces, allowing people to use them more restrictedly for one or two activities. When they are large in size, they become multifunctional and multipurpose spaces. However, these are not the differentiated and intentional uses of the international and national shrines - they happen to the extent that the size of the place allows for differentiated activities that bring together large masses of people. It should be noted, finally, that 50% of Portuguese pilgrimage shrines are local (the majority of pilgrims come from urban areas or nearby parishes), small in size, appearing in situations of isolation and visual predominance, as is the case below.

Figure 2. Nossa Senhora das Necessidades, Sernancelhe, Lamego



Fonte: autora, Município de Sernancelhe.

Figure 3. Nossa Senhora das Necessidades, Sernancelhe, Lamego



Caption: A Mount B Social area of the shrine
Source: author.

- Their setting, in an urban agglomeration or in isolation. In the past, many shrines may have been far away from the town, but over time this has moved closer, altering their characteristics. In general, we can still see today that shrines in situations of isolation and visual dominance are better suited to the experiences desired by pilgrims or *romeiros*, as they don't have the restriction of space that urban agglomeration implies. Their amenity, being in greater contact with nature and free open space, makes them very attractive and therefore preferred, with a large number of devotees. In these we can observe the most expressive experiences of rural and popular religiosity, their isolation favouring the attraction of worshippers from more a wider area beyond a single parish.
- The uses and functions they have and perform as religious, spiritual, and recreational places;
- Human design, which has a direct influence on the shape and organization of the place, giving rise to the great multiplicity of existing compositions.

4. Multiplicity and diversity

4.1 Initial ideological program

Pilgrimage shrines, places where heaven is close to earth and earth to heaven, were often located in remote places, on steep, unwooded, rough, rocky hillsides, unsuitable for human settlement. However, they were endowed with sweeping views of the landscape, viewpoints *par excellence*. They were thus, at their foundation: inhospitable spaces, but ones loaded with symbolism and meanings that promoted behavioral change, impelling penance, suffering, and withdrawal from earthly life⁶.

This is attested to by Leite's question (2004, p. 83): "Who would climb to the top of that steep mountain?"⁷ regarding the moving of the image of Nossa Senhora do Sameiro from Monte Espinho, Braga, to the current Sameiro shrine.

Also notable are the accounts by Oliveira (2021, p. 20), about the journey to the Nossa Senhora da Boa Morte shrine, in Correlhã, Ponte de Lima:

"This notion of ascent is all the more deceptive because it is made through a canopy of greenery and bordered by one or two houses that help to distract the eye. But if you look at the shrine from a distance, you'll discover that it's located at a relatively high point, that the greenery only covers a relatively small area of the hill, and that the rest of the slope is completely covered in trees. In the same way as Bom Jesus do Monte - the shrine that served as an example to all these sacred mountains, be they Christological or Marian in significance - it too is now covered in dense groves that shelter pilgrims and visitors from the strong rays of the sun. Before, there were only a few oak trees, which were certainly magnificent, but which only occasionally covered the inclement sun that was falling. There might have been one or two cork oaks and a rarer chestnut or olive tree or some other species of local flora. But there was no continuous vegetation, more often than not made up of the exotic trees we see today, and even less of the enclosed and organized parks that now always surround these chapels and churches."⁸

And in his work *Memórias do Bom Jesus do Monte*, Pimentel (1844, p. 1) refers to the slope where the shrine is located as a landscape marked by the presence of rocky outcrops, contrasting with the

⁶ However, they were different from the "deserts". The "deserts" were silent, isolated, and otherwise uninhabited places, hermitages, where friars and ascetic monks lived. "*locus eremus*" points to solitary existence, the search for the perfection of the soul.

⁷ Original text: "Quem subiria até ao cimo daquela serra escalvada?"

⁸ Original text: "Esta noção de subida é ainda mais enganadora porque é feita segundo um dossel de verdura e marginada por uma ou outra casa que nos ajuda a distrair o olhar. Mas se vírmos o santuário de um local distante, descobriremos que está colocado num ponto relativamente elevado, que a verdura apenas cobre uma área relativamente pequena do monte e que a restante encosta é absolutamente escalvada. Da mesma forma que o Bom Jesus do Monte - o Santuário que serviu de exemplo a todas estas montanhas sagradas, sejam elas de sentido cristológico ou mariano - também este se encontra agora coberto por densos arvoredos que apaziguam os romeiros e os visitantes dos fortes raios de sol. Antes só havia algumas carvalhas, sem dúvida magníficas, mas que apenas cobriam pontualmente o inclemente sol qua caía a pique. Poderia haver um ou outro sobreiro e um mais raro castanheiro ou oliveira ou outra qualquer espécie da flora local. Mas nada de vegetação contínua, na mais das vezes composta pelas árvores exóticas que hoje vemos e, menos ainda, dos parques cerrados e organizados que agora sempre rodeiam estas capelas e igrejas."

mildness of the valley at its feet: “(...) a sloping and rugged plane, partly still covered with jagged boulders, which extends and softens little by little to the borders of the parish of S. Victor.”⁹

In his work *O Minho Pittoresco*, Vieira (1886) reinforces the arid, bare aspect of Bom Jesus do Monte, Braga, whose presentation of bushes and granite rock gives it a harsh, rough image. The site of the Penha shrine, Guimarães, was also dominated by large boulders, of incredibly hard, almost penitential density.

More broadly, the transformation of these hills or ridgelines, devoid of any layer of vegetation, into wooded hills, took place from the 19th century onwards, profoundly changing the landscape. In specific ridge and hillside situations, the pilgrimage shrines became, from the time they were built and forever after, places of psychological reference. But just as the image of the high mountain fostered religious fear: “The rocks became combatants in an enormous cosmic conflict: the great cliffs to the right leaned menacingly over the illuminated valley” (Schama, 1996, p. 436), people also felt protected and guided. This intense relationship that shrines establish with the geographical site and their involving landscape, regardless of their grandeur, monumentality or sophistication, makes them places of identity, fundamental to our perception and memory, essential to life.

The formation of a pilgrimage shrine usually begins with the placement of a cross on top of a hill and the subsequent construction of a hermitage or chapel, which is almost always associated with a legend that emphasizes the place. With the materialization of the cult and the large influx of pilgrims, a need would arise to transform these sites, making them more imposing and complex, promoting their pleasantness and safety, aiming for an idealized landscape, with parks and gardens. But this evolution did not take place in the same way in all the shrines. It was and is subject to the recognition of the spiritual importance of the place, very much dependent on the presence of apparitions, relics, images of saints, tombs, and associations with the granting of miracles. Overall, it depends on the strength of the sacred message, which makes it possible to identify, maintain, and heighten the extraordinary and unique character of the place.

4.2 Spatial composition: subspaces

As landscape is culture even above being nature, the analysis of the 161 Portuguese catholic pilgrimage shrines revealed an immense spatial diversity. Characterized by their strong visual unity, which is not unrelated to their robust construction, there are very complex shrines, of which Bom Jesus do Monte, Braga, is the leading example, and others with a simpler design, such as the Nossa Senhora da Guia, Esposende. In the former, there are woods and forests, a playground, a garden, a Way of the Cross, a staircase, a churchyard and viewpoint, a boulevard, and a picnic area, where the watercourse, the sculpture, and other decorative elements are the result of intense work to develop the landscape and are of decisive importance in the religious narrative of the place. In the latter, a chapel supported by a churchyard is the main element. While the former sought “spectacle”, to which the baroque style responded effectively (materialized in the exuberance, plasticity, architectural staging, sculpture, expressive vegetation, and stunning landscape), the latter saw the insertion of a small, simple building accompanied by sculptural elements on a platform halfway up the hill’s rocky outcrops, materializing the devotional motifs.

⁹ Original text: “(...) um plano inclinado e escabroso, em parte ainda coberto de encasteladas rochas, e apicadas penedias, o qual se vai extendendo a adoçando pouco a pouco até aos confins da freguesia de S. Victor.”

Figure 4. Bom Jesus do Monte, Braga



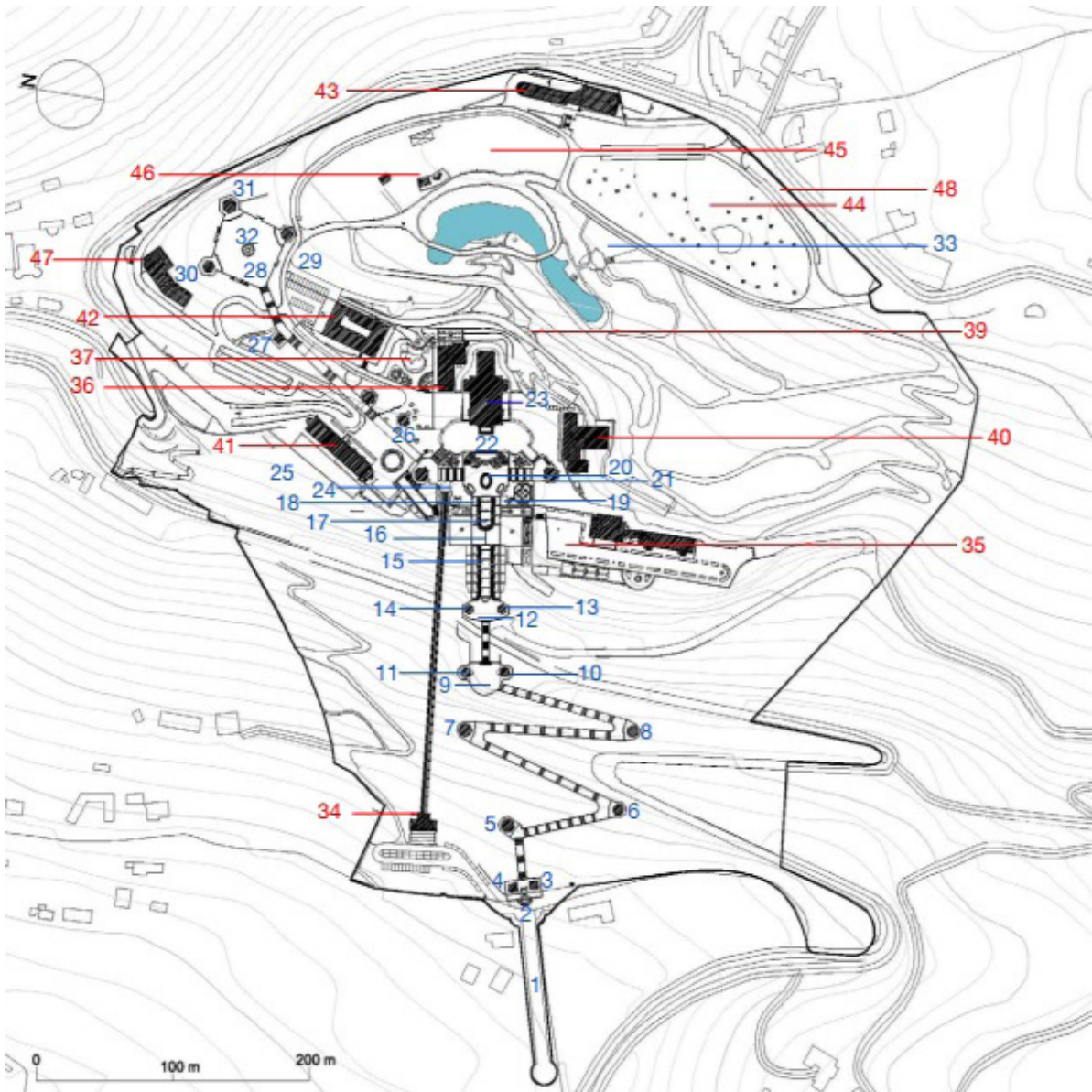
Source: Pinterest.

Figure 5. Nossa Senhora da Guia, Esposende



Source: Municipality of Esposende.

Figure 6. Bom Jesus do Monte, Braga



Distribution of constructed elements (chapels, stairways, patios and yards, fountains and statues), main buildings and recreation areas (see appendix A for detailed locations)

Source: Sanctuary of Bom Jesus do Monte In Braga Nomination to the World Heritage List, 2018.

To better understand the place of the pilgrimage shrines, we shall analyze each of these subspaces in the following points, remaining aware that they are interrelated and contribute to the whole, in the contrast that the parts establish between each other: Church, chapel, hermitage, other buildings; “Sacred forest” and woodland; Park and garden; Way of the Cross; Stairway; Courtyard, churchyard, viewpoint; Promenade; and Picnic Park.

4.2.1 Church, chapel, hermitage

The church stands in its churchyard in a situation of visual predominance, through an axial composition from which various constituent elements are organized and the design of the place is generated. Its prominent position constitutes the focal point of the space, and it may be a sophisticated or a popular building. With its specific and distinctive construction, the solidity it conveys sets it apart

from the “earthly” buildings prevailing in the landscape (at the time it was erected, as well as now and in the future).

When it features monumental forms, the architectural styles are more readily apparent, allowing them to be dated. If it is simple, of a popular nature, small in size, with harmonious and humble volumes, in a situation of isolation, it constitutes a chapel or hermitage, appearing in association with local or regional pilgrimage shrines. Other accommodation buildings (guesthouses, inns, hotels, pilgrim quarters) and eateries (cafés, restaurants) are also common.

4.2.2 “Sacred forest” and woodland

One frequently finds that leafy deciduous trees have been planted in the “sacred forests” and woodlands of the pilgrimage shrines, forming ensembles of great significance for the landscape; from the religious perspective, their growth (annual leaf fall and emergence) exhibits the rhythm of life, making allegorical reference to death and resurrection. These forests have an intense spiritual charge, so much so that Camilo Castelo Branco remarks: “The trees must know the secret of their lives, that they seemed to have come there to penance themselves. To weep in the woods of Bom Jesus is to weep in the presence of God. Penance is to love him: to weep is to win his love and mercy.”¹⁰ (1984, p. 48).

Depending on the geographical area in which a shrine is located, the existing trees and shrubs may belong to native plant species, determined by soil and climate conditions, or they may be exotic. In any case, they are almost always imposing specimens, evoking a sense of sobriety and integrity, conveying the idea of solitude, with no visual intrusions to disturb the quietness of the space. On the whole, they constitute tree masses of appreciable beauty, creating places that respond well to the spiritual ideals of many religious orders. The forest or woodland is associated with silence, humidity, shade, and fresh, clean air.

Pilgrimage shrines with international and national prominence have large areas of woodland and forest surrounding them, some of which are enclosed by walls, alluding to the sacred enclosure of monasteries and convents with their chapels, ornamental and vegetable gardens, agricultural fields, orchards, fountains, ponds, fountains, and paths. They embody the idea of a “sacred” and sublime woodland, a leafy forest that serves as protection and shelter. Their ecological functions include: maintaining biological equilibrium, increasing soil fertility, regulating the climate, defending against erosion, retaining water in the soil, sheltering from the wind, among other benefits. As attention is turned to pilgrimage shrines of less grandeur, complexity, or attractiveness, devotional spaces of regional or local scope, the forests and woodlands lose their prominence. Even in these, however, the tree is always present, appearing regularly.

4.2.3 Park and garden

Pilgrimage shrines are places that, due to the experience they provide and the expression they acquire, embody the idea of a park and garden, and there are several reasons why some of them became well-known travel destinations in the 19th century:

- Those responsible for them promoted pilgrimage as a religious phenomenon, seeking to attract new pilgrims. To do this, they had to carry out work to improve their places, which lacked revenue;
- Romanticism, the cultural situation of the time, generated new trends and dynamics, to which were added the progressive secularization of society, a new political ideology and the emergence of the bourgeoisie, who were wealthier and dedicated to entertainment and the enjoyment of new experiences. The “taste for nature”, the enjoyment of the countryside and of travel, promoted the transformation of pilgrimage shrines into leisure spaces:

“Bom Jesus do Monte continues to have powerful traditional features. The hustle and bustle of the festival, now with other frameworks and attractions, would grow alongside the religious phenomenon. Even though it is increasingly seen and appreciated from the “outside”, Bom

¹⁰ Original text: “As árvores devem saber o segredo das suas vidas, que pareciam ter vindo ali penitenciar-se. Chorar nas matas do Bom Jesus é chorar em presença de Deus. A penitência é amá-lo: chorar é conquistar-lhe o amor e a misericórdia.”

Jesus becomes a privileged place from many of these points of view. Here, naturally, much of this romanticism flowed.”¹¹ (Oliveira, 2014, p. 86)

In fact, as already mentioned, Bom Jesus do Monte is the ultimate exponent of the transformation of its site. It was a long-standing intention to provide the religious shrine with a tourist complex for the summer. Several gardens and a large park were subsequently built, and lots of exotic specimens of sequoias, Brazilian pines, cedars and Douglas-firs were planted. As a whole, they contributed to outlining a new spatial ideology, the aesthetic value of which was widely disseminated, acting as an element of attraction. The various gardens still today use design principles typical of northwest Portugal, such as annual plants and boxwood designs. The interior of the planting beds is filled with violets, daisies, and pansies, emphasizing the value of flowers. The plant cast takes center stage in a geometric design, presenting a chromatic explosion.

- The forests and woodlands, the isolated and remote spaces with broad and distant views, the bucolic atmosphere, the countryside, are all settings privileged by the Romantic movement. The shrines were thus privileged because they were located in pleasant places of great scenic beauty;
- Prominent recreational parks and gardens became tourist and leisure resorts in the 19th century. This occurrence is associated with the aforementioned Bom Jesus do Monte, Braga; Nossa Senhora dos Remédios, Lamego; and Nossa Senhora do Carmo da Penha, Guimarães, which exemplify the work of important landscape gardeners and horticulturists in Porto, namely Jeronymo Monteiro da Costa and Jacintho de Mattos, through the *Real Companhia Hortícola-Agrícola Portuense* (Marques, 2009, p. 232). They were responsible for the design and execution of naturalistic, classicist and vernacular parks and gardens, with formal and conceptual typologies following similar European models, up until the introduction of modernism in landscape architecture in Portugal. Depending on the physiognomy of the hill on which they are located, these parks and gardens can be very variable. When the hill is easily circumscribed, the park or garden can occupy its entirety, offering a wide variety of uses and functions to the site. When the hill is very large, the garden areas are more restricted and demarcated, occupying only a part of it, beyond which are the forest and agricultural areas. But they all reflect the principle of transforming these hills into softened landscapes, whose slopes are cultivated according to aesthetic and recreational principles.

4.2.4 Way of the Cross

The way of the cross is the subspace of the pilgrimage shrines that most reminds us of their evangelizing and doctrinal meaning. The chapels depicting scenes from the Passion of Christ – with pieces of sculpture, between which there is a pedestrian route taken during the annual pilgrimage – are associated with the stairway that makes it possible to surmount the existing slope. In contrast, the Way can also appear in flat areas, which are physiographically easier and therefore less complex.

Many shrines follow the “Bom Jesus, Braga model”, whose way of the cross, stairway, and chapels were built at the beginning of the 17th century. In the archdiocese of Braga, considered the religious center of the country in the 17th and 18th centuries, “a good part of the success of the introduction of shrines of the way of the cross in high places was the work of the devotion and effort of Bishop Rodrigo Moura Telles and some of the prelates who followed him.”¹² (Penteado, 2000, p. 172) The descendant shrines of Bom Jesus do Monte, Braga are, according to Andresen & Marques (2014, pp. 42-44), Abadia in Terras do Bouro, Franqueira in Barcelos, Pilar in Póvoa de Lanhoso, Falperra in Braga, Porto d’Ave in Póvoa de Lanhoso, Peneda in Arcos de Valdevez, Cambeses in Barcelos, Socorro in Ponte de Lima, Monte de Faro in Valença, Calvário in Vila Praia de Âncora. Further south, there are Castelo in Mangualde, Salvador do Mundo in São João da Pesqueira and Remédios in Lamego. This influence was materialized in the construction of stairways, ways of the cross, and chapels with figures of the stations of the passion of Christ, acquiring importance in the landscape.

¹¹ Original text: “O Bom Jesus do Monte continua com poderosas marcas tradicionais. O bulício da festa, agora com outros enquadramentos e atrativos, cresceriam ao lado do fenómeno religioso. Mesmo que seja cada vez mais para ver e apreciar de ‘fora’, o Bom Jesus torna-se um lugar privilegiado sobre vários desses pontos de vista. Aqui veio desaguar, naturalmente muito desse romantismo.”

¹² Original text: “uma boa parte do êxito da introdução dos santuários de via-sacra em locais elevados foi obra da devoção e do esforço de D. Rodrigo Moura Telles e de alguns dos prelados que se lhe seguiram.”

Many pilgrimage shrines tried to follow in these footsteps and achieve the same success. Not merely copies, they adopted the essence of the configuration by adapting it to the site.

4.2.5 Stairway

The stairway transmits the symbolism of the “elevation” of the human being, who, led to heaven, participates in the divine condition. The physical need to overcome the rugged topography where most of the pilgrimage shrines in the north of Portugal are located (in a situation of visual dominance, making the church accessible to those who climb the hill), makes the stairway an important subspace of the pilgrimage shrines. In the south, the access stairs to the church or churchyard, which are less prominent, often appear as its extension.

The stairway may thus be endowed with various degrees of physical maturity and formal qualities: it may be monumental, enriched with magnificent works of sculpture, endowed with complex symbolism and iconography, alluding to various religious motifs, or it may be very simple, going almost unnoticed in the whole.

4.2.6 Courtyard, churchyard, viewpoint

The courtyard, churchyard, and viewpoint are spaces for meeting, socializing, and welcoming those who come to the pilgrimage shrine. The church stands here, displaying all its importance. These are also the most constant subspaces of the shrines: even when the shrine is formally very simple, the courtyard, churchyard, and viewpoint will be there, not missing from the whole. These are versatile spaces, with a geometric design, apparently empty of elements. Mass can be celebrated there, as well as recreational activities. The size suggests that an important and decisive role is played in welcoming pilgrims and *romeiros*. It can also be seen that the larger the shrine, the larger the courtyard, which holds many people. The courtyard, churchyard, and viewpoint can all be the same space or different spaces.

Figure 7. Nossa Senhora das Necessidades, Sernancelhe, Lamego – subspaces



Caption: A Church B Other buildings C Churchyard D Viewpoint E Playground F Picnic area. Scale 1/1000.
Source: author.

4.2.7 Promenade

The frequency with which the promenade participates in the composition of the pilgrimage shrines grants it autonomy as a type of space, contributing to the touristic well-being that the shrines have acquired. The avenue emerged in the 18th century, playing a fundamental role in their design (e.g., reinforcing perspectives). The procession came to be framed by large trees that made it more pleasant under their shade.

4.2.8 Picnic Park

The picnic area also came about as a result of tourism to the shrines in the 19th century, being associated with a range of activities that allow the area to be used for recreational purposes. It takes advantage of the vast shaded areas, which can take the form of woods or forests, or even a more formalized recreational park, making the space fresh and pleasant. By allowing meals to be taken outdoors in a healthy environment, it is a welcoming feature that has spread to many shrines, augmenting their religious dimension.

4.3 Other elements (water, sculpture, decorative elements)

The presence of water in the pilgrimage shrines heightens the artistic and symbolic dimension of their places, being fundamental to the interpretation of the religious message: in biblical terms, water is the source of life, an essential element for human existence. It has the power to generate abundance and virtue. In its allegory, drinking water purifies the body and spirit. Throughout history, the religious cult of water has worshipped its natural forms: rivers, streams, fountains, springs, through frequent celebrations. Water is therefore an element of connection between nature and man, and in many shrines it participates in a silent discourse that contributes to the spirituality of the place. As well as quenching thirst, together with the scenic potential of architecture, sculpture, and vegetation (aromas, ambience), it serves as a compositional element, with its hydraulic devices, which are both ornamental and utilitarian.

Statues, fountains, porticoes, gates, and crosses are also a constant feature of pilgrimage shrines, participating in their evangelizing vocation. These are allied to the architecture, water, and vegetation, in scenographic symbioses designed to guide pilgrims on their religious journey. Many stairways are flanked by sculptures depicting biblical episodes, offering innumerable clues and iconographic evocations in their design. Masterfully crafted stones representing this ancestral knowledge exalt the birth of Jesus, the Last Supper, the Resurrection, and other scenes. They may also evoke important dates in the life of a shrine.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to deepen the study of the places of Portuguese pilgrimage shrines, allowing us to understand the factors that are essential to them and the sub spaces that make up their composition. These could act as a set of basic criteria with decisive importance in the classification and effective protection of these places. Our analytical intention reverses the trend of not recognizing the places of pilgrimage shrines, making an approach to the places operational for later synthesis on the importance of landscape heritage. The aim will be to help identify alterations/transformations of these places that could be undertaken without compromising them irretrievably, as is sometimes the case.

The adequate appraisal of Portugal's pilgrimage shrines contributes to our knowledge of the landscape in a way that counteracts the standardization of places today. We bear in mind Edward Relph's remark that "one thing at least is clear – whether the world we live in has a placeless geography or a geography of significant places, the responsibility for it is ours alone" (1976, p. 147).

We are reminded of our responsibility towards the landscape – in it we find our autobiography, a faithful mirror that says almost everything about us.

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Appendix A

Figure 6 caption with detailed locations

1. Avenue
2. Portico
3. Chapel of the Last Supper
4. Chapel of Agony of the Garden
5. Chapel of Betrayal and Fountain of Apollo or Diana
6. Chapel of Darkness and Fountain of Mars
7. Chapel of the Flagellation and Fountain of Mercury
8. Chapel of the Coronation and Fountain of Saturn
9. Circular Patio
10. Chapel of Pilate's Praetorium
11. Chapel of the Ascent of Calvary
12. Patio of the Five Senses
13. Chapel of the Falls
14. Chapel of the Crucifixion
15. Stairway of the Five Senses

Fountains: Five Wounds, Vision, Hearing, Smell, Taste and Touch

Statues: Jeremiah, Moses, Spouse of the Songs, Kind David, the Shunammite, Noah, Ezra, Jonathan, Isaac, and Isaiah

16. Patio of the Virtues
17. Stairway of the Virtues

Fountains: Faith, Hope and Charity

Statues: Confession, Meekness, Faith, Glory, Confidence, Hope, Peace, Kindness and Charity

18. Chapel of Mary Magdalene
19. Chapel of Peter
20. Patio and Fountain of the Pelican
21. Chapel of the Descent of the Cross
22. Churchyard

Statues: Pilate, the Centurion, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Annaz, Pilate, Herod, and Caiphaz

23. Church
24. Statue of Longinus
25. Chapel of the Raising of the Cross
26. Chapel of the Anointing
27. Chapel of the Resurrection
28. Yard of the Evangelists
29. Chapel of the Encounter at Emmaus

30. Chapel of the Ascension
 31. Chapel of the Apparition of Christ to the Saint Mary Magdalene
 32. Fountain of Tears
- Statues and fountains: St. Matthew, St. John, St. Luke and St. Mark
33. Statue of Moses
 34. Funicular
 35. Colunata de Eventos (Conference Center)
 36. Casa das Estampas (Shop)
 37. Entrance to the Park: grotto and belvedere
 38. Café
 39. Fountain of D. José de Bragança (Fountain of Hercules) or Shell Grotto
 40. Hotel do Templo
 41. Hotel do Elevador
 42. Hotel do Parque
 43. Hotel do Lago
 44. Picnic area
 45. Children's playground
 46. Lakeside café
 47. Locker rooms and warehouses
 48. Horse Boxes