

Preface by Ambassador Ana Martinho

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The Portuguese National Commission for UNESCO is pleased to give its support to the II International Conference on Tourism and History, a timely project that the University of the Algarve and the University of Caxias do Sul have jointly organised. This conference focuses on the role of tourism in the cultural and historical enhancement of Ibero-American space, especially those properties inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Although the main cultural objectives of the World Heritage Convention are to protect and promote monuments, groups of buildings and sites, the value of UNESCO properties to tourism has long been established and attracts increasing numbers of visitors. Whether buildings, historic centres, archaeological sites, cultural routes, landscapes or even natural properties, a site's inclusion in the World Heritage List is evidence of increased interest and quality, and becomes a place that deserves to be visited and enjoyed. The reason for this is clear. Only sites with outstanding universal value, authenticity and integrity are eligible to join this List after an extensive, detailed and demanding nomination process.

For a long time, culture and tourism were considered mutually exclusive and were managed separately, since it was believed that the interests of each sector were conflicting. At times, cultural heritage appeared to be an obstacle to the legitimate aspirations of tourism development and the use of cultural and natural resources. At other times, tourism projects were perceived as a real threat, a destabilising subject within communities that destroyed cultures and damaged cultural and natural heritage.

This is no longer the case. Today UNESCO recognises that the relationship between culture and tourism can be beneficial and that this connection may contribute to the protection and promotion of heritage. Since 2001, the Organisation has been developing a specific initiative on this subject called the "UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme". The Programme identifies tourism as a positive force that contributes to maintaining the value of sites on the World Heritage List and to mitigate potential threats by advocating sustainable tourism in these classified properties. This approach is based on dialogue and cooperation between stakeholders for better planning of tourism and more efficient heritage management, through which natural and cultural sites are valued and protected.

Portugal has currently 15 World Heritage sites: Central Zone of the Town of Angra do Heroísmo in the Azores; Convent of Christ in Tomar; Monastery of Batalha; Monastery of the Hieronymites and Tower of Belém in Lisbon; Historic Centre of Évora; Monastery of Alcobaça; Cultural Landscape of Sintra; Historic Centre of Oporto, Luiz I Bridge and Monastery of Serra do Pilar; Prehistoric Rock Art Sites in the Côa Valley and Siega Verde; Laurisilva of Madeira; Alto Douro Wine Region; Historic Centre of Guimarães; Landscape of the Pico Island Vineyard Culture; Garrison Border Town of Elvas and its Fortifications; University of Coimbra – Alta and Sofia. Nearly two dozen more sites have been included in the Tentative List of Portugal, which was recently updated through a collaborative process coordinated by the Portuguese National Commission for UNESCO, in which representatives of public and private entities and specialists in several areas participated and that will be submitted to UNESCO in 2017.

Portuguese heritage is also spread throughout the world, with more than 25 World Heritage properties of Portuguese Influence on four continents. This shared heritage is particularly rich in Latin America, where UNESCO has recognised ‘the outstanding universal value’ of 12 sites linked to the Portuguese Expansion in four countries. These are the Historic Quarter of the City of Colonia del Sacramento in Uruguay, the Jesuit Missions of La Santísima Trinidad de Paraná and Jesús de Tavarangue in Paraguay and the transnational site Jesuit Missions of the Guaranis: San Ignacio Mini, Santa Ana, Nuestra Señora de Loreto and Santa Maria Mayor (Argentina), Ruins of Sao Miguel das Missoes (Brazil). Also in Brazil are the Historic Centre of Salvador de Bahia; Historic Centre of São Luís; Historic Centre of the Town of Diamantina; Historic Centre of the Town of Goiás; Historic Centre of the Town of Olinda; Historic Town of Ouro Preto; Sanctuary of Bom Jesus do Congonhas; and Rio de Janeiro: Carioca Landscapes between the Mountain and the Sea.

The study of issues concerning the classification of heritage properties in Ibero-America is, therefore, quite important, since this may lead to the identification of shared solutions to concerns common to all these sites - such as its use and enjoyment, or physical and virtual accessibility - in accordance with the requirements of the World Heritage Convention. Other concerns are the impact of UNESCO recognition on heritage sites and their environment; economic, social and environmental sustainability; community participation; heritage public policies; and, of course, tourism and its benefits and risks. Many articles in this book focus on these issues, and it is useful to ponder on the different perspectives here presented.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the relationship between World Heritage and other UNESCO recognitions such as Intangible Cultural Heritage, Creative Cities Network, Biosphere Reserves, Global Geoparks and the Memory of the World Programme. The chapters in this e-

book published by the Interdisciplinary Center of Social Sciences of University of Minho may sow the seeds for future studies that will address globally and interconnectedly both tangible and intangible, cultural and natural heritage issues, thereby significantly contributing to the preservation, conservation and safeguarding of Ibero-America's valuable heritage.