

Analysis of cultural management models in medieval castles in the province of Alicante (Spain) and the Pomeranian voivodeship (Poland)

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Abstract

This paper analyses the management of medieval castles in the province of Alicante (Spain) and the Pomeranian voivodeship (Poland) from the beginning of the second decade of the 21st Century to nowadays. In this sense, Atalaya Castle (Villena) and Castalla Castle have been selected within the Spanish context. They are of Muslim origin and were integrated into the Crowns of Aragon and Castile. On the other hand, Sztum Castle and Kwidzyn Castle, which belong to the Teutonic Order, have been chosen within the Polish context. The main purpose of this research is to know which models of cultural management are applied in the medieval fortifications of these administrative areas. Therefore, both qualitative and analytical methodologies have been used to this effect. As for the results, this research has allowed to know the positive and negative elements regarding the cultural management applied in these castles.

Keywords: cultural heritage management, medieval castles, Poland, Spain.

1. Introduction

The province of Alicante is located in the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula, on the Mediterranean coast. It makes up the Valencian Community together with the provinces of Castellón and Valencia. This administrative area is one of the 17 regions in which Spain was organised after the approval of the Spanish Constitution (1978) and the arrival of democracy.

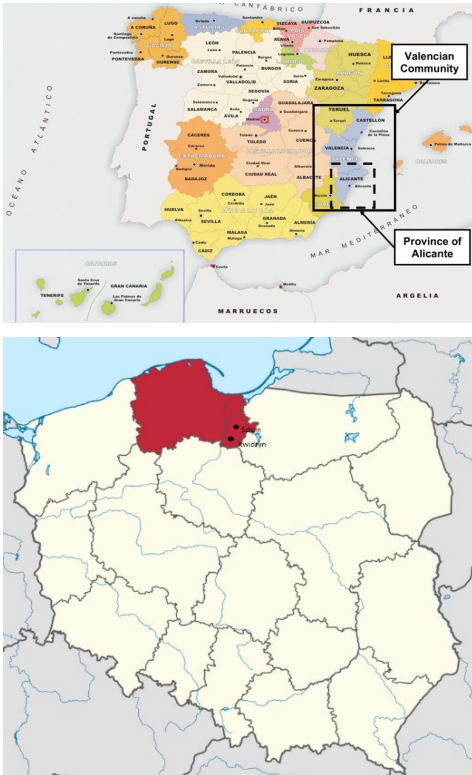
On the other hand, the province of Alicante is a land of castles due to some historical reasons (Mira, 2016). During the Middle Ages, this province was the border between *Šarq al-Andalus* and the Christian kingdoms, first, and the crowns of Aragon and Castile, later. For this reason, many castles were built during the Andalusian period (8th Century-middle of the 13th Century). Some Muslim fortifications were left after the Christian conquest, but others were reused to

defend the new borders of the Kingdom of Valencia.

The Pomeranian voivodeship is located in the north of Poland, on the coast of the Baltic Sea and the Bay of Gdańsk. This area is made up of several historical and geographical regions.

The central and eastern areas of the modern Pomeranian voivodeship belonged to the Teutonic Order in the Middle Ages, which was created approximately in the middle of the 13th Century. Its administrative and economic system required a space development with architectural structures that still influence the cultural landscape. This area was disputed by the Kingdom of Poland and the Teutonic Order between the 13th and 15th centuries. In the 15th Century, after the so-called Second Peace of Thorn (*Toruń*), this territory came under the

Kingdom of Poland rule. Therefore, the defensive architecture built during the Middle Ages was used for the needs of the Polish kingdom. This area remained under the Teutonic Order rule and Grand Master Albrecht Hohenzollern paid homage to the Polish king in 1525, turning it into the so-called Ducal Prussia. However, some of the buildings fell into ruin during the Polish-Swedish wars in the 17th Century.



Figs. 1 & 2- Spanish autonomous communities and province of Alicante and Polish voivodeships and Pomeranian voivodeship. Sources: Spanish Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and <https://commons.wikimedia.org> (with addition of Agnieszka Kowalska)

Although it can be affirmed that the knowledge of these fortifications is still based on the traditional approaches related to archaeology, architecture, history and art history, there are currently new approaches focused on knowing their cultural management (Mira, 2017). Taking as a starting point this new way of studying castles, this paper analyses the cultural management of medieval castles in the province of Alicante (Spain) and the

Pomeranian voivodeship (Poland) from the beginning of the second decade of the 21st Century to the present.

2. Methodology

In this work, the qualitative methodology (Flick, 2007, 2015) and the analytical methodology (Ros, 2009) have been used. In the first case, the techniques of the semi-structured interview with experts (responsible for the fortifications) have been used; participant observation, visiting the castles under study; and the search for cultural, written sources of interest for research. From the analytical point of view, the data collected has been studied based on the following points: heritage characterization of the fortifications, administrative management environment, cultural agents responsible for management, management typology and characteristics, management tools and management actions (research, conservation, restoration, didactics, dissemination and participation).

3. Purposes

On the other hand, the main objective of this work is to know what models of cultural management are applied in the medieval fortifications of said administrative territories. While the secondary objectives are the following: to know the similarities and differences, the weaknesses and threats and the strengths and opportunities of the different management models.

4. Management of medieval castles in the Pomeranian voivodeship: examples of Sztum Castle and Kwidzyn Castle

4.1. Heritage characterization of the fortifications

Castles are built following a similar architectural plan, which is a characteristic element of the cultural landscape in the former Teutonic Order. In this case, they were built by the Teutonic Order and catholic bishops. Teutonic castles had an irregular plan due to the previous wooden fortifications. In the second half of the 13th Century, brick castles with a square plan were developed according to the most important Teutonic officials' needs –commanders– (Stokowski & Trupinda, 2020; Wasik, 2019). Sztum Castle and Kwidzyn Castle are examples of constructions made by different owners and

with different functions. Kwidzyn Castle is an old structure dating from the beginning of the 14th Century: it was built by the Pomesan Chapter and remodelled according to brick castles of the Teutonic commanders. It was a four-wing castle with a square plan and a tower extending to the west (*gdanisko*). This tower was connected to the castle with a high arcade porch as well it was connected to the cathedral building (Trupinda, 2020; Wasik, 2022b). After 1525, Kwidzyn Castle was part of the border of Ducal Prussia and was originally preserved until the end of 18th Century. In 1798 it was decided to demolish the southern and western wings of the castle. A few decades later (approximately in 1850), some restoration works were developed (Wasik, 2022b) and nowadays it is protected.



Fig. 3- Kwidzyn Castle. Sources: Rafal Kowalski

Sztum Castle has an irregular plan with a large courtyard and it was built in the second half of the 14th Century according to the latest research. It was used as a seat of the Teutonic officials – mayors– and as a residence for grand masters until 1466 (Wasik, 2020b; Józwiak & Trupinda, 2017). Then, the castle came under the Polish king rule and it became the seat of royal officials (*starosta*).



Fig. 4- Sztum Castle. Sources: Rafal Kowalski

After the first partition of Poland in 1772, Sztum Castle became part of the Kingdom of Prussia. Like Kwidzyn Castle, the former residence of grand masters in Sztum was also partially demolished (towers and gates on the perimeter wall) and remodelled according to the needs of the Prussian administration in the 19th Century. These actions completely changed its architectural expression (Wasik, 2021).

4.2. Administrative context of management

After 1989 the ownership of cultural heritage in Poland is shared by central and local government institutions as well as private companies and individuals. Regardless of ownership, most architectural heritage is subject to legal protection under the Act on the Protection and Care of Monuments of 2003. Tasks related to the legal protection of monuments in Poland are carried out by provincial conservators of monuments. The owner is responsible for caring the monument, maintaining it in good condition and carrying out necessary works.

4.3. Cultural agents responsible for management

Kwidzyn Castle and Sztum Castle are nowadays managed by the Malbork Castle Museum, a state cultural institution supervised by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. Kwidzyn Castle Museum was created in 1950 and became a branch of the Malbork Castle Museum in 1973. The museum only owns the former castle of the Pomesan Chapter. For its part, the cathedral is managed by Saint John the Evangelist Parish. Sztum Castle was owned by the City and Commune Office in Sztum until 2018. Then, it became a branch of the Malbork Castle Museum too.

4.4. Management typology and characteristics

Both castles have a public and central management model since the owner –Malbork Castle Museum– is a public agent. As a public cultural institution, the museum is supervised by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

The basic tasks of the museum are defined in the statute granted by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. These tasks are aimed at ensuring the “*preservation of the historic substance*” of Sztum Castle and Kwidzyn Castle, among others. They are developed by the Castle Conservation Department, a team made up of

conservation, history of architecture, construction and monument studies experts, and the History and Archaeology Department made up of historians, art historians and archaeologists.

4.5. Management tools

The Malbork Castle Museum, as a state budget entity, operates on annual activity plans related to the financial plan. The annual activity plan includes tasks in Kwidzyn Castle and Sztum Castle.

These castles have programmes for permanent exhibitions based on the target exhibition programme and an ongoing monitoring of their conditions. Moreover, necessary investments are planned for the following years.

4.6. Management actions: research, conservation, restoration, didactics, dissemination and participation

The museum has identified different types of conservation problems as well as development tasks for each castle.

Apart from learning more about its history, Kwidzyn Castle requires solving the problem of excessive dampness in its ground floor and basements, which causes the destruction of the historic structure. For this purpose, a comprehensive conservation expertise was carried out to diagnose the causes of dampness in 2012 (Rudy, 2012). The conservation research was repeated in 2022. On the other hand, a project team has been working to collect and analyse data since 2019. The team's activities will result in guidelines to solve the problem.

In 2022, an archaeological research was carried out with the aim of identifying its stratigraphy and construction techniques, getting detailed information on the chronology and individual stages of its construction, as well as identifying the condition of the ground floor and basements because of the dampness. Therefore, new findings regarding the construction of the Pomesan Chapter were obtained (Wasik, 2022b).

Taking over the management of Sztum Castle in 2018, the Malbork Castle Museum prepared a programme of archaeological research in order to identify the history of its construction, as well as the development of the existing buildings and present changes in architecture. Both excavation research and non-invasive GPR research were developed in 2018, 2019 and 2021 to properly

locate subsequent excavations. These researches determined the chronology, which was approximately 50 years later than the previous researchers' findings (Wasik, 2020a, 2020b, 2021, 2022a).

In addition, the museum undertook some works to protect the castle against destruction. Between 2019 and 2022 the roofs of the southern, eastern and northern wings were repaired, and a retaining wall security design was developed by a technical expertise, which is currently being prepared to be implemented.

Both castles have temporary exhibitions on various topics –there is a temporary exhibition once a year.

On the other hand, educational activities take place in both castles focusing on their history and their museum collections.

5. Management of medieval castles in the province of Alicante: examples of Atalaya Castle and Castalla Castle

5.1. Heritage characterization of the fortifications

Atalaya Castle has a double enclosure around the Homage Tower. The lower one has a wall with semicircular and circular cubes and a possible barbican tower with a quadrangular plan. For its part, the main enclosure is rectangular and dominates the aforementioned tower. This element has a 27-metre quadrangular plan, four floors and eight small cylindrical towers (*escaraguaites*). The origin of the tower is Andalusian (end of the 12th Century) because of its intersecting vaults. All the elements belong to the middle of the 15th Century except the lower part of the Homage Tower, which played an important role between the 16th and 19th centuries.



Fig. 5- Atalaya Castle. Source: Manuel Vicedo Martínez

Castalla Castle is a fortification of Andalusian origin built in the 11th Century that preserves the cistern, some quadrangular and rectangular domestic structures located in the Lower Ward as well as the east wall from that period. It was peacefully occupied by Christians in 1244 but the most important changes in the castle took place during the War of the Two Peters (1356-1365). The Aragonese king Pere IV decided to donate it as a fief to Ramon de Vilanova i Lladró due to its deterioration. This act against the will of its inhabitants was done to keep the fortification in good condition due to possible Castilian attacks. In addition, it marked the start of important modifications that extended throughout the 15th Century, such as the construction of the Palace and the Lower Ward. The fortification was remodelled with the construction of the Large Tower in 1529 (16th Century). Then, it was completely left in the 18th Century, although it was used by the English as a checkpoint (March 1707) during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714). It also played the same role in the two battles that took place in Castalla during the War of Independence (1812 and 1813). It was owned by the city council in 1988. It is protected as an asset of cultural interest with the category of monument at national and regional level too (Mira, *et al.* 2017).



Fig. 6- Castalla Castle. Sources: Juan Antonio Mira Rico

5.2. Administrative context of management

Public administrations are in charge of cultural heritage in Spain like in other countries such as France and Italy. In this sense, article 46 of the Spanish Constitution states *“The public powers (central government and regional and local governments) will guarantee the conservation and promote the enrichment of the historical,*

cultural and artistic heritage of the Spanish people and of the assets that comprise it, whatever their legal regime and ownership (...)”. Therefore, three levels of management can be established: state, regional and local. The management of castles in the province of Alicante is developed at regional level since Spain is a decentralised country and each region has its own cultural heritage laws. However, it can also be developed at municipal level because people who live there can autonomously manage their common interests.

5.3. Cultural agents responsible for management

In both cases castles are owned by the city councils of Castalla and Villena, which become the cultural agents responsible for their management.

5.4. Management typology and characteristics

Castalla Castle and Atalaya Castle have a public, decentralised and simple cultural management model. It is public due to the cultural agents that take part in their management; it is decentralised because the initiative is carried out by the local administration; and it is simple because there is only one cultural agent in charge of each fortification. This situation is similar to that in other Mediterranean European countries such as Italy.

Castalla Castle management has changed regarding the second decade of the 21st Century: it was continued and was made by an interdisciplinary team (Mira, Bevià & Ortega, 2015) between 2009 and 2017 (and also at present). However, it was punctual and was developed by an interdisciplinary team between 2018 and 2023.

Atalaya Castle management has been continuous and has been developed by an interdisciplinary team of cultural heritage and tourism professionals since the beginning of the 21st Century.

5.5. Management tools

Atalaya Castle does not have any management tool although the expert responsible for it stated it was necessary from a technical point of view in 2015 (Mira, 2017). Castalla Castle had a management plan which was developed between 2009 and 2017, whose characteristics have

already been described (Mira, Bevià & Ortega, 2015: 384).

5.6. Management actions: research, conservation, restoration, didactics, dissemination and participation

Some of the most important actions developed in both castles from the second decade of the 21st Century to the present will be highlighted in this point. In the case of Castalla Castle and besides its management plan, the archaeological and historical research on materials found in archaeological excavations stands out (Mira, Cantarino & Ortega, 2022). On the other hand, there are other important actions like the regular conservation works to preserve it in good condition, its musealisation to turn it into a museum recognised by the regional government (Mira, Bevià & Ortega, 2017), as well as different dissemination actions (talks, publications on social networks, scientific publications, self-guided, guided and dramatised tours, etc.) to bring the castle closer to the scientific community, non-specialists and, above all, to people who live in Castalla. To date, participation actions have been carried out at a reduced level (Mira & Jover, 2022). In the case of Atalaya Castle, the archaeological excavations as well as the consolidation works developed in different areas stand out, like the restoration of the wall or the Lower Ward. Other actions can also be highlighted, such as its musealisation or some dissemination actions (talks, publications on social networks, scientific publications, self-guided, guided and dramatised tours, etc.) (Hernández & Roselló, 2022).

5. Conclusions

This paper has allowed to know which models of cultural management are applied in Atalaya Castle, Castalla Castle, Kwidzyn Castle and Sztum Castle (province of Alicante and Pomeranian voivodeship). Therefore, the general purpose as well as the specific ones have been met. In this sense, some similarities and differences, weaknesses and threats and strengths and opportunities have been identified regarding these castles:

Similarities

- Public and simple cultural management since cultural agents are public (city councils of

Castalla and Villena and Malbork Castle Museum). There is only one agent per castle.

- Existence of an interdisciplinary team of professionals in charge of their management.
- Polish fortifications have an action plan. Castalla Castle has a management plan but Atalaya Castle lacks a similar document.
- Research, conservation, restoration, didactics and dissemination actions have been developed in all the castles according to the needs. Participation actions have only been documented in Castalla Castle.

Differences

- The management team responsible for Polish castles is broader and more diverse than Atalaya Castle team and more stable than Castalla Castle team.
- The administrative contexts of both countries are different: local in Spain and central in Poland, which results in a decentralised management model and a centralised one. In fact, Polish fortifications depend on the Malbork Castle Museum, which is supervised by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.
- In the case of the Pomeranian voivodeship, there is a management aimed at using castles as museums with objects from these fortifications whilst a few castles are used as museums or musealised in the province of Alicante. For example, Castalla Castle was restored between 2003 and 2006 and its musealisation did not begin until 2017 (Mira, Bevià & Ortega, 2017).

Weaknesses

- No collaboration in the province of Alicante to develop joint management projects, unlike in Kwidzyn Castle and Sztum Castle.
- Actions without having a pre-established cultural use in Castalla Castle and other fortifications in the province of Alicante.
- Polish castles are far from large urban centres and communication roads.

Threats

- Public management can be hard-hit by the economic crisis with negative consequences.

- Urban development is a threat for Kwidzyn Castle and Sztum Castle since it can endanger their heritage values.
- Collaboration between castles to develop common beneficial activities, such as exhibitions, in Spain.

Strengths

- Castles are recovered as museums in Poland.
- In both cases, cultural management is developed in the studied castles becoming essential for the local community and its identity.

Opportunities

- Kwidzyn Castle and Sztum Castle are part of the Malbork Castle Museum (declared as a world heritage site) with all that it implies.

This study should continue with a joint collaboration. In this way, it could help to improve current cultural management models by incorporating the best ideas from both cultural contexts. Therefore, it is necessary to learn from the Polish example since castles are used as museums.

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