



Apse in the Cathedral



The Cathedral seen from the Palace



Burial place of King Frederik IX and Queen Ingrid

The cathedral is built almost exclusively of red brick, a building material that was establishing itself in Denmark at the time. It is assumed that the church, which was built from east to west, was completed around 1280. The most significant change subsequently made to the exterior of the church itself was Christian IV's new spires mounted on the two western towers in 1635.

The red-brick façades of the royal chapels respect the character of the building materials of the church. Architecturally, these additions each reflect the time at which they were created, and they are rated among the masterpieces of Danish architecture. The sarcophagi executed by leading sculptors of the time, are also of outstanding quality.

The cathedral fulfils the World Heritage List authenticity criteria to the full. Repairs and changes made down through the ages have been considerate to this unique building.

In Denmark, the Heritage Agency of Denmark is responsible for submitting new proposals for inclusion on the World Heritage List. A special committee under UNESCO decides whether to include the proposed candidates on the list. Being nominated for inclusion on the World Heritage List does not in itself imply any new form of protection, but it does provide additional recognition and status.

A worldwide presentation of the cultural and natural heritage of mankind is given on UNESCO's website at www.unesco.org. The world heritage of Greenland is presented on the website of Greenland Home Rule at www.nanoq.gl.

The Danish sites included on the World Heritage List can be found on the website of the Heritage Agency of Denmark at www.kulturarv.dk



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Roskilde Cathedral World Heritage in Denmark and Greenland





Kronborg Castle



Ilulissat Icefjord



Roskilde Cathedral



The Jelling Monuments



Sepulchral Monument of Christian III



The Raphaëlis organ in the south side of the nave

UNESCO

UNESCO stands for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The objective of UNESCO is to contribute to international peace and universal respect by promoting collaboration among nations. The organisation was founded in 1945, and Denmark and Greenland have been members since 1946.

Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage

UNESCO adopted the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1972 in light of the increasing threat of destruction to archaeological monuments and natural areas by war, natural disasters, pollution, tourism or simply decay.

The Convention calls on all nations to promote the protection of the cultural and natural heritage of local or national importance. The objective is to identify and seek to assure the conservation of the cultural and natural heritage that is important to all the peoples of the world. The cultural and natural heritage of mankind.

Cultural and natural heritage may include monuments, groups of separate or connected buildings, cultural landscapes or natural areas. It may be works of nature, works of man or the combined works of nature and man. It may be a structure that represents an important stage of development from the point of view of history or a natural phenomenon of outstanding value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view.

The international cultural heritage and natural heritage make up UNESCO's World Heritage List. The purpose of the list is to arouse global awareness of our common heritage, thus facilitating its protection and conservation. Furthermore, its purpose is also to strengthen international solidarity in this area with a view to increasing cross-frontier scientific and economic cooperation.

Denmark and Greenland ratified the 'World Heritage Convention' in 1979, and in 1994 the Jelling Mounds, Runic Stones and Church were added to the World Heritage List. The year after, Roskilde Cathedral was included. In 2000, Kronborg Castle was added to the list, and most recently, Ilulissat Icefjord was included in 2004.

Roskilde Cathedral

Roskilde Cathedral is included on the World Heritage List because of the outstanding importance of the building, not only for Denmark, but also for the other Scandinavian countries and the entire Baltic region.

It contains the sepulchral monument for Queen Margrete I, Sovereign Lady and Ruler of Denmark, Norway and Sweden, at the centre of the choir under the spire that bears her name. The cathedral is the last resting-place of the Danish kings whose sepulchres are found in the chapels - that had to be added over time - and other royals buried in the crypts of the church.

The cathedral has a precious interior. The altarpiece was made in Antwerp around 1560. Its golden reliefs depict the life of Jesus. The Raphaëlis organ on the south side of the nave bears the name of the famous 16th century Dutch organ builder. The pulpit is from the 17th century and built of sandstone with alabaster figures. In the Middle Ages the cathedral was richly decorated with frescos, the remains of which are found in several places.

Roskilde Cathedral is a Danish architectural apex in terms of the actual medieval church building as well as the royal chapels and the other extensions added at its north and south sides through several periods, all the way up to our time.

The main body of the structure that can be seen today was commissioned by bishop Absalon around 1170. It replaced a number of older churches that had succeeded each other at the same site. To begin with, the design of the new cathedral was strongly influenced by Romanesque cathedrals in Flanders and the North of France, but in the course of the protracted building process it was adapted to the ideals of the Gothic style.

To the east of the cathedral, connected by a covered bridge called 'Absalon's Arch', stood the bishop's palace. It included the bishop's residence, administration buildings, storehouses and stables. Today, Palæet (the Palace) (1733-36) occupies this site.