



المنظمة العربية للتربية والثقافة والعلوم

ALECSO

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**World Cultural Heritage
in the Arab Countries**

1 - Introduction:

The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has recognized the importance of protecting the world's cultural and natural heritage. Goal 11 is designed to “*make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*”, and Target 11.4 aims to “*strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.*”

Earlier on, the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, commonly known as the World Heritage Convention, provides that “*parts of the cultural or natural heritage are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole.*” Ratified by 190 countries, this Convention is designed to unite global efforts to identify and preserve natural and cultural heritage sites across the world.

Heritage can be defined as a set of non-renewable resources inherited from past generations, maintained in the present, and bestowed to future generations. There are two types of heritage : cultural and natural. As defined by UNESCO, **Cultural Heritage** includes artefacts, monuments, a group of buildings and sites, museums that have a diversity of values including symbolic, historic, artistic, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological, scientific and social significance. It includes tangible heritage (movable, immobile and underwater), intangible cultural heritage (ICH) embedded into cultural, and natural heritage artefacts, sites or monuments. As for **Natural Heritage**, it refers to natural features, geological and physiographical formations and delineated areas that constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants and natural sites of value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty. It includes private and publically protected natural areas, zoos, aquaria and botanical gardens, natural habitat, marine ecosystems, sanctuaries, reservoirs etc.

The World Heritage Convention is unique in that it integrates the concepts of nature protection and cultural site preservation into a single document. It stresses the role of local communities, and is an effective tool for addressing issues of climate change, rapid urbanization, sustainable socioeconomic development, natural disasters, and other contemporary challenges.

The World Heritage List currently includes 1154 sites (897 cultural, 218 natural and 39 mixed) in 167 States Parties.

Cultural heritage is not limited to historical monuments and collections of art and archaeological objects, but also encompasses traditions and forms of cultural expression inherited from past generations and passed on to future generations, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, celebrations, and handicraft skills and practices. Cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, is a key factor in preserving cultural diversity in the face of rampant globalization.

The list of intangible cultural heritage currently includes 584 inscribed cultural elements, including 53 elements in the Arab countries.



2 – The World’s natural and cultural heritage:

World Heritage Sites : Definition and selection criteria

World Heritage Sites are monuments or areas recognized as being of outstanding international importance and therefore as deserving special protection. They are nominated by countries to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List. These properties may be natural, such as forests and mountain chains, or man-made, such as buildings and cities, or they may be mixed.

Until the end of 2004, World Heritage sites were selected on the basis of six cultural and four natural criteria. In 2005, these criteria were combined into one set of ten criteria.

Data and indicators on world heritage:

Table 1 below shows the distribution of World Heritage Sites by type of site (cultural, natural or mixed) and by region.

As can be noted from Table 1, heritage sites in the Arab countries represent 7.63% of the total number of sites in the world, and are distributed over 18 countries. They are mostly cultural (80), compared to only 5 natural sites and only 3 mixed sites.

Table 1

Distribution of World Heritage Sites by type of site and by region - 2021

Regions	Cultural	Natural	Mixed	Total	%	States Parties with inscribed properties
Latin America and the Caribbean	100	38	8	146 *	12.65%	28
Europe and North America	468	66	11	545 *	47.23%	50
Asia and the Pacific	195	70	12	277 *	24.00%	36
Arab States	80	5	3	88	7.63%	18
Africa	54	39	5	98	8.49%	35
Total	897	218	39	1154	100%	167

* The properties "[Uvs Nuur Basin](#)" and "[Landscapes of Dauria](#)" (Mongolia, Russian Federation) are trans-regional properties located in Europe and Asia and the Pacific region. They are counted here in the Asia and the Pacific region.

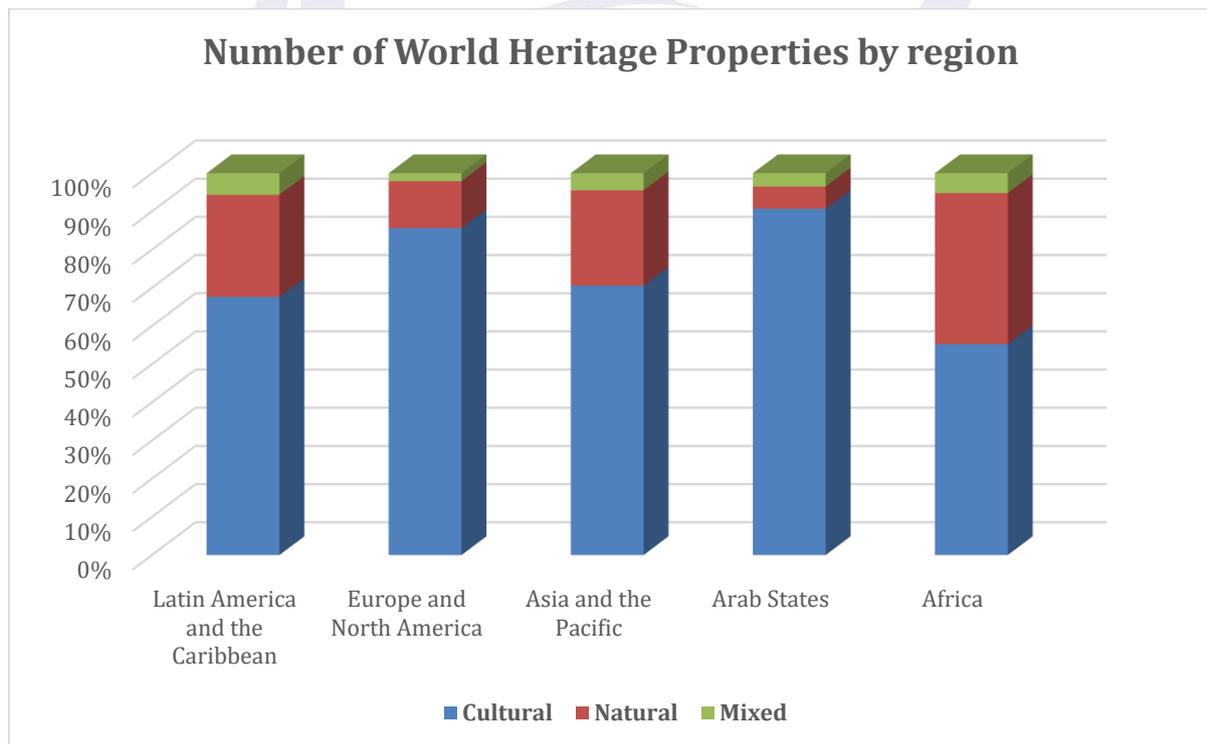
* The property "[The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement](#)" (Argentina, Belgium, France, Germany, India, Japan, Switzerland) is a trans-regional property located in Europe, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean region. It is counted here in the Europe and North America.

Source : World Heritage Center - UNESCO

Figure 1 shows differences between regions, especially in terms of diversity of heritage sites (cultural, natural or mixed). The Arab countries, unlike other regions, include a small percentage of natural or mixed sites inscribed on the World Heritage List, and most sites are archaeological. By comparison, nearly half of the sites in the African Continent are natural or mixed.



Figure 1



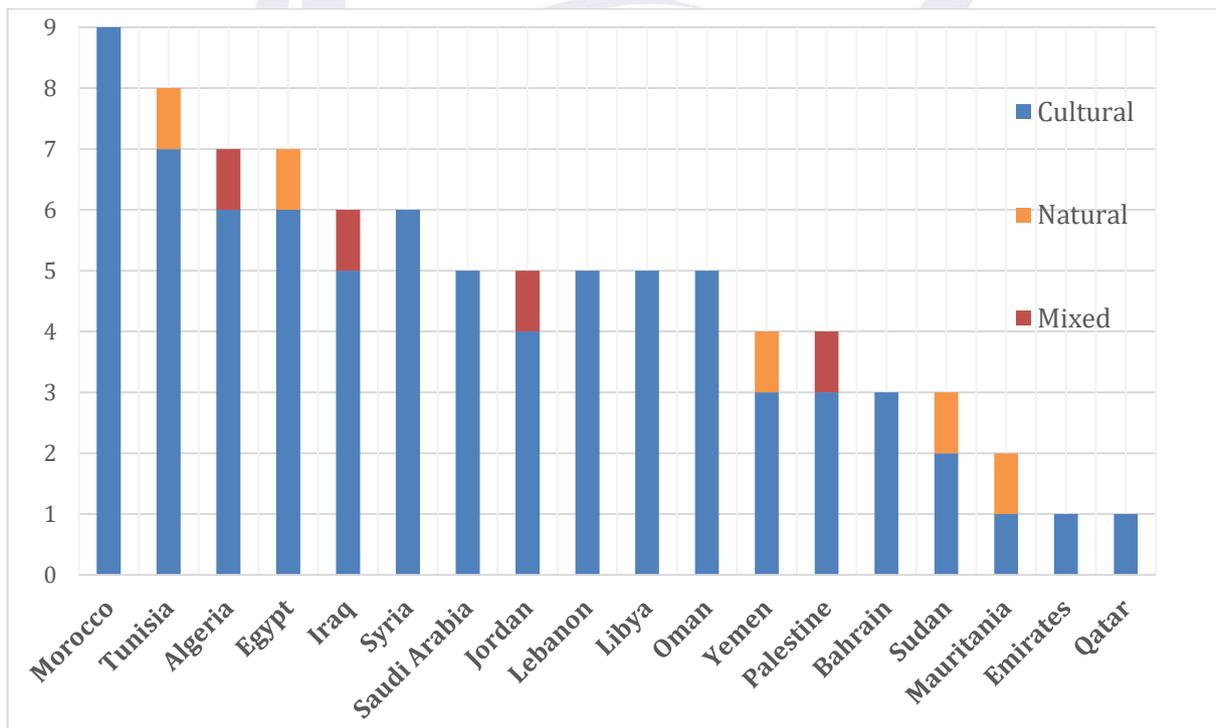
Source : World Heritage Center - UNESCO

Figure 2 shows the distribution of cultural heritage in the Arab countries by type of site. As can be noted, Morocco ranks first in terms of number of sites (9), followed by Tunisia (8), Algeria and Egypt (7), Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Jordan (6), Lebanon, Libya and Oman (5), Yemen (4), Bahrain, Palestine and Sudan (3), Mauritania (2), and UAE and Qatar (1).

The five natural sites, located in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Sudan and Mauritania, represent 2.3% of the world's natural heritage sites. As for mixed (cultural-natural) sites, they are located in Algeria, Iraq and Jordan, and represent 7.7% of the total number of mixed heritage sites in the world. There are also 80 archaeological sites in the Arab countries, representing 9% of the total archaeological sites in the world.

Figure 2

Distribution of cultural heritage in the Arab countries by type of site



Source : World Heritage Center – UNESCO

3 - World cultural heritage in danger:

Article 11 of the World Heritage Convention states, in Paragraph 4, that “*the World Heritage Committee shall establish, keep up to date and publish, whenever circumstances shall so require, under the title of ‘List of World Heritage in Danger’, a list of the property appearing in the World Heritage List for the conservation of which major operations are necessary, and for which assistance has been requested under this Convention.*”

The List of World Heritage in Danger is designed to inform the international community of conditions which threaten the very characteristics for which a property was inscribed on the World Heritage List, and to encourage corrective action. Dangers can be ‘ascertained’, referring to specific and proven imminent threats, or ‘potential’, when a property is faced with threats which could have negative effects on its world heritage value.

“Ascertained dangers” include :

- serious deterioration of materials;
- serious deterioration of structure and/or ornamental features;
- serious deterioration of architectural or town-planning coherence;
- serious deterioration of urban or rural space, or the natural environment;
- significant loss of historical authenticity;
- important loss of cultural significance.

“Potential dangers” include :

- modification of juridical status of the property diminishing the degree of its protection;
- lack of conservation policy;
- threatening effects of regional planning projects;
- threatening effects of town planning;
- outbreak or threat of armed conflict;
- threatening impacts of climatic, geological or other environmental factors.

The World Heritage Committee undertakes an annual review of the state of conservation of the properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Based on the results of the review, the Committee may demand additional action to safeguard the property. It may decide to remove the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger when the property is no longer under threat (that is, the desired state of conservation has been restored), or it may decide to remove the property from both the List of World Heritage in Danger and the World Heritage List if the deterioration of the property has reached such an extent that the property has lost the very characteristics for which it was inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Two properties have so far been removed from the World Heritage List:

- The Arabian Oryx Sanctuary (Oman), delisted in 2007 without being inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, after the government reduced the protected area by 90%;
- The Dresden Elbe Valley (Germany), delisted in 2009 due to the building of a four-lane bridge in the heart of the cultural landscape, which meant that the property failed to keep its outstanding universal value as inscribed.

There are currently 52 endangered World Heritage sites, including 21 sites (about 40%) in the Arab countries, a high percentage considering that the Arab countries contain only 7.63 % of the total number of heritage sites in the world.

Endangered sites are distributed over 6 Arab countries, namely Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Palestine, Syria and Yemen. They are all cultural heritage properties.

Figure 2

Distribution of World Heritage Sites in Danger by Region – 2021

Regions	Cultural	Natural	Mixed	Total	%
Latin America and the Caribbean	4	2	0	6	12%
Europe and North America	3	1	0	4	8%
Asia and the Pacific	4	2	0	6	12%
Arab States	21	0	0	21	40%
Africa	4	11	0	15	29%
Total	36	16	0	52	100%

Source : World Heritage Center - UNESCO



4 – World Intangible Cultural Heritage:

As defined by UNESCO, Intangible Cultural Heritage is “the practices, expressions, knowledge and skills that communities, groups and sometimes individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.”

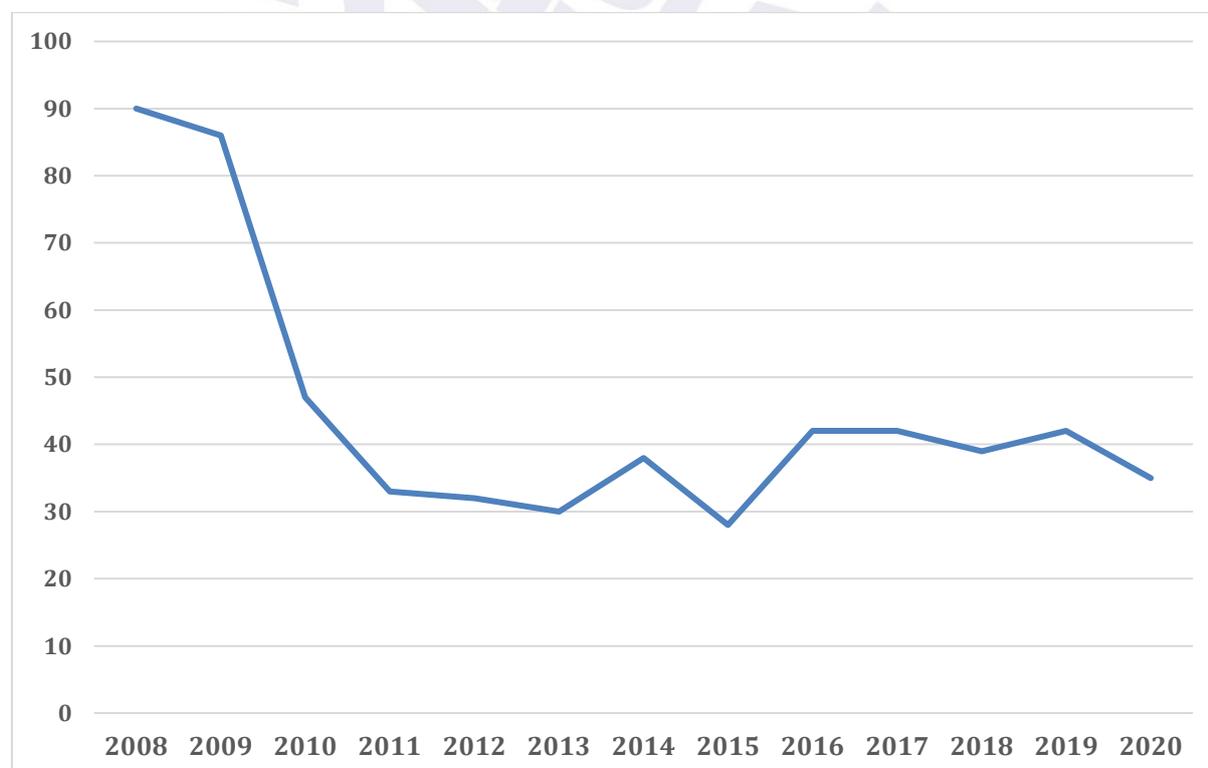
This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

However, inscribing elements of intangible heritage on the World Cultural Heritage List involves complex procedures and requires financial means. This might hinder the inscription process especially that this type of heritage usually belongs to small groups of people in a given town, city or region. Although UNESCO has allocated funds to help the concerned countries and regions prepare their inscription files, the number of files remains modest. It is, therefore, necessary to ease the process of heritage inscription.

Till 2020, 584 Intangible Cultural Heritage elements were registered. Figure 3 below shows that the number of elements inscribed amounted to 90 in 2008 and 2009, and then dropped to 30-40 during the period 2011-2020.

Figure 3

**The evolution of intangible cultural heritage registration
during the period 2008-2020**



Source : World Heritage Center - UNESCO



Intangible Cultural Heritage is divided into three categories:

- List of Intangible Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding: 67 elements;
- Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity: 492 elements
- Register of Good Safeguarding Practices: 25 elements.

In the Arab World, two or more Arab countries may share common elements of intangible heritage, such as :

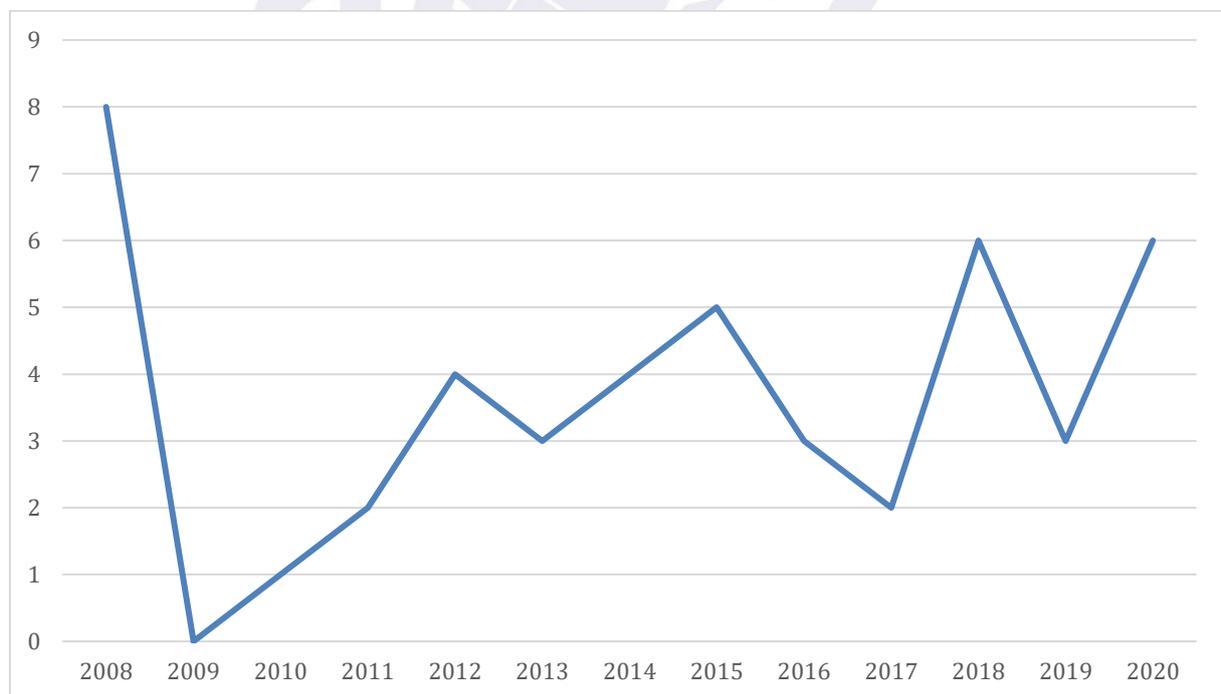
- “Couscous” in Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia;
- “Camel Racing” in the UAE and Oman;
- “Traditional Weaving of Al Sadu” in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

In this regard, ALECSO plays a significant coordination role in the process of preparing joint files before submitting them to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Currently, 51 Arab intangible cultural heritage elements are registered (8.7% of the world total).

Figure 4 shows the evolution of the inscription of Arab intangible cultural heritage during the period 2008-2020. As can be noted, the number of annual inscriptions is somewhat low, compared to the great heritage treasures existing across the Arab World.

Figure 4

The evolution of intangible cultural heritage registration in the Arab countries during the period 2008-2020



Source : World Heritage Center - UNESCO

Conclusion

Cultural heritage is the tangible and intangible legacies inherited from past generations, maintained in the present, and passed on to future generations.

Arab countries are rich in cultural and natural heritage elements, including 88 inscribed properties (out of a total of 1154 World Heritage properties).

This Bulletin has focused on Arab heritage properties inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, including endangered sites that need to be protected. In this context, ALECSO can play a leading role in protecting these properties and providing technical and other assistance to restore these sites to their original state.

The Bulletin has also addressed Intangible Cultural Heritage, defined as “the practices, expressions, knowledge and skills that communities, groups and sometimes individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage”. This heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thereby promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

The Bulletin has showed that the Arab Intangible Heritage Properties inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List do not actually reflect the rich and diverse heritage treasures existing in the Arab countries. Many elements have not so far been registered given the complexity of the relevant procedures. Some Arab States have sought to inventory their intangible cultural heritage. In this regard, ALECSO can provide technical support to facilitate the inscription of this heritage.

Bibliographic resources

A set of booklets for the year 2009: "What is the intangible cultural heritage?" UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, UNESCO, approved by the General Conference at its seventeenth session. Paris, November 16, 1972.

UNESCO website: World Heritage List - 2021.

Intangible Heritage - UNESCO. Access to the Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices in 2021.

UNESCO - Online Meeting: World Heritage at Risk in the Arab States Region Operations and Actions - 23 November 2020.

Achieving Authenticity in Reconstruction Projects for World Cultural Heritage Sites Affected by Wars and Conflicts - Vol. 5, No.1 – 2021 Journal of Engineering Research (ERJ)

The National Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Project - National Heritage Institute - Tunisia 2019.

The World Heritage Book in the Arab Countries (first edition in 2011) and its second edition will soon be published jointly by the Organization and the Arab Regional Center for World Heritage in Bahrain.

The ALECSO Pentecostal Book, which includes the complete lists of all properties and heritage elements in the Arab countries registered as world heritage until the age of 2020.

Arab Regional Center for World Heritage website: <https://www.arcwh.org/ar>

Report of the Arab Regional Center for World Heritage for the year 2020 (78 pages).

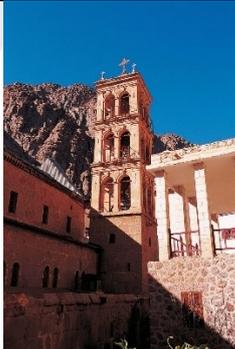
Annexes

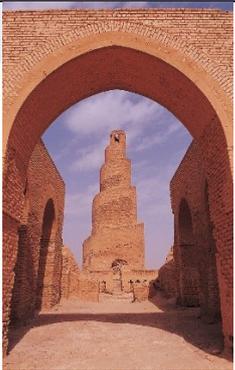
Arab Cultural and Heritage Sites inscribed on the World Heritage List

Algeria			
Al Qal'a of Beni Hammad	In a mountainous site of extraordinary beauty, the ruins of the first capital of the Hammadid emirs, founded in 1007 and demolished in 1152, provide an authentic picture of a fortified Muslim city. The mosque, whose prayer room has 13 aisles with eight bays, is one of the largest in Algeria.		Cultural
Djémila	Situated 900 m above sea-level, Djémila, or Cuicul, with its forum, temples, basilicas, triumphal arches and houses, is an interesting example of Roman town planning adapted to a mountain location.		Cultural
M'Zab Valley	A traditional human habitat, created in the 10th century by the Ibadites around their five ksour (fortified cities), has been preserved intact in the M'Zab valley. Simple, functional and perfectly adapted to the environment, the architecture of M'Zab was designed for community living, while respecting the structure of the family. It is a source of inspiration for today's urban planners.		Cultural
Tassili n'Ajjer	Located in a strange lunar landscape of great geological interest, this site has one of the most important groupings of prehistoric cave art in the world. More than 15,000 drawings and engravings record the climatic changes, the animal migrations and the evolution of human life on the edge of the Sahara from 6000 BC to the first centuries of the present era. The geological formations are of outstanding scenic interest, with eroded sandstones forming 'forests of rock'.		Mixed
Timgad	Timgad lies on the northern slopes of the Aurès mountains and was created ex nihilo as a military colony by the Emperor Trajan in AD 100. With its square enclosure and orthogonal design based on the cardo and decumanus, the two perpendicular routes running through the city, it is an excellent example of Roman town planning.		Cultural
Tipasa	On the shores of the Mediterranean, Tipasa was an ancient Punic trading-post conquered by Rome and turned into a strategic base for the conquest of the kingdoms of Mauritania. It comprises a unique group of Phoenician, Roman, palaeochristian and Byzantine ruins alongside indigenous monuments such as the Kbor er Roumia, the great royal mausoleum of Mauretania.		Cultural
Kasbah of Algiers	The Kasbah is a unique kind of medina, or Islamic city. It stands in one of the finest coastal sites on the Mediterranean, overlooking the islands where a Carthaginian trading-post was established in the 4th century BC. There are the remains of the citadel, old mosques and Ottoman-style palaces as well as the remains of a traditional urban structure associated with a deep-rooted sense of community.		Cultural

Bahrain

<p>Qal'at al-Bahrain – Ancient Harbour and Capital of Dilmun</p>	<p>Qal'at al-Bahrain is a typical tell – an artificial mound created by many successive layers of human occupation. The strata of the 300 × 600 m tell testify to continuous human presence from about 2300 BC to the 16th century AD. About 25% of the site has been excavated, revealing structures of different types: residential, public, commercial, religious and military. They testify to the importance of the site, a trading port, over the centuries. On the top of the 12 m mound there is the impressive Portuguese fort, which gave the whole site its name, qal'a (fort). The site was the capital of the Dilmun, one of the most important ancient civilizations of the region. It contains the richest remains inventoried of this civilization, which was hitherto only known from written Sumerian references.</p>		<p>Cultural</p>
<p>Pearling, Testimony of an Island Economy</p>	<p>The site consists of seventeen buildings in Muharraq City, three offshore oyster beds, part of the seashore and the Qal'at Bu Mahir fortress on the southern tip of Muharraq Island, from where boats used to set off for the oyster beds. The listed buildings include residences of wealthy merchants, shops, storehouses and a mosque. The site is the last remaining complete example of the cultural tradition of pearling and the wealth it generated at a time when the trade dominated the Gulf economy (2nd century to the 1930s, when Japan developed cultured pearls). It also constitutes an outstanding example of traditional utilization of the sea's resources and human interaction with the environment, which shaped both the economy and the cultural identity of the island's society.</p>		<p>Cultural</p>
<p>Dilmun Burial Mounds</p>	<p>The Dilmun Burial Mounds, built between 2200 and 1750 BCE, span over 21 archaeological sites in the western part of the island. Six of these sites are burial mound fields consisting of a few dozen to several thousand tumuli. In all there are about 11,774 burial mounds, originally in the form of cylindrical low towers. The other 15 sites include 17 royal mounds, constructed as two-storey sepulchral towers. The burial mounds are evidence of the Early Dilmun civilization, around the 2nd millennium BCE, during which Bahrain became a trade hub whose prosperity enabled the inhabitants to develop an elaborate burial tradition applicable to the entire population. These tombs illustrate globally unique characteristics, not only in terms of their number, density and scale, but also in terms of details such as burial chambers equipped with alcoves.</p>		<p>Cultural</p>

Egypt			
Abu Mena	The church, baptistry, basilicas, public buildings, streets, monasteries, houses and workshops in this early Christian holy city were built over the tomb of the martyr Menas of Alexandria, who died in A.D. 296.		Cultural ■
Ancient Thebes with its Necropolis	Thebes, the city of the god Amon, was the capital of Egypt during the period of the Middle and New Kingdoms. With the temples and palaces at Karnak and Luxor, and the necropolises of the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens, Thebes is a striking testimony to Egyptian civilization at its height.		Cultural
Historic Cairo	Tucked away amid the modern urban area of Cairo lies one of the world's oldest Islamic cities, with its famous mosques, madrasas, hammams and fountains. Founded in the 10th century, it became the new centre of the Islamic world, reaching its golden age in the 14th century.		Cultural
Memphis and its Necropolis – the Pyramid Fields from Giza to Dahshur	The capital of the Old Kingdom of Egypt has some extraordinary funerary monuments, including rock tombs, ornate mastabas, temples and pyramids. In ancient times, the site was considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World.		Cultural
Nubian Monuments from Abu Simbel to Philae	This outstanding archaeological area contains such magnificent monuments as the Temples of Ramses II at Abu Simbel and the Sanctuary of Isis at Philae, which were saved from the rising waters of the Nile thanks to the International Campaign launched by UNESCO, in 1960 to 1980.		Cultural
Saint Catherine Area	The Orthodox Monastery of St Catherine stands at the foot of Mount Horeb where, the Old Testament records, Moses received the Tablets of the Law. The mountain is known and revered by Muslims as Jebel Musa. The entire area is sacred to three world religions: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. The Monastery, founded in the 6th century, is the oldest Christian monastery still in use for its initial function. Its walls and buildings of great significance to studies of Byzantine architecture and the Monastery houses outstanding collections of early Christian manuscripts and icons. The rugged mountainous landscape, containing numerous archaeological and religious sites and monuments, forms a perfect backdrop to the Monastery.		Cultural

<p>Wadi Al-Hitan (Whale Valley)</p>	<p>Wadi Al-Hitan, Whale Valley, in the Western Desert of Egypt, contains invaluable fossil remains of the earliest, and now extinct, suborder of whales, Archaeoceti. These fossils represent one of the major stories of evolution: the emergence of the whale as an ocean-going mammal from a previous life as a land-based animal. This is the most important site in the world for the demonstration of this stage of evolution. It portrays vividly the form and life of these whales during their transition. The number, concentration and quality of such fossils here is unique, as is their accessibility and setting in an attractive and protected landscape. The fossils of Al-Hitan show the youngest archaeocetes, in the last stages of losing their hind limbs. Other fossil material in the site makes it possible to reconstruct the surrounding environmental and ecological conditions of the time.</p>		<p>Natural</p>
<p>Iraq</p>			
<p>Hatra</p>	<p>A large fortified city under the influence of the Parthian Empire and capital of the first Arab Kingdom, Hatra withstood invasions by the Romans in A.D. 116 and 198 thanks to its high, thick walls reinforced by towers. The remains of the city, especially the temples where Hellenistic and Roman architecture blend with Eastern decorative features, attest to the greatness of its civilization.</p>		<p>Cultural</p> <p style="text-align: center;">■</p>
<p>Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)</p>	<p>The ancient city of Ashur is located on the Tigris River in northern Mesopotamia in a specific geo-ecological zone, at the borderline between rain-fed and irrigation agriculture. The city dates back to the 3rd millennium BC. From the 14th to the 9th centuries BC it was the first capital of the Assyrian Empire, a city-state and trading platform of international importance. It also served as the religious capital of the Assyrians, associated with the god Ashur. The city was destroyed by the Babylonians, but revived during the Parthian period in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD.</p>		<p>Cultural</p> <p style="text-align: center;">■</p>
<p>Samarra Archaeological City</p>	<p>Samarra Archaeological City is the site of a powerful Islamic capital city that ruled over the provinces of the Abbasid Empire extending from Tunisia to Central Asia for a century. Located on both sides of the River Tigris 130 km north of Baghdad, the length of the site from north to south is 41.5 km; its width varying from 8 km to 4 km. It testifies to the architectural and artistic innovations that developed there and spread to the other regions of the Islamic world and beyond. The 9th-century Great Mosque and its spiral minaret are among the numerous remarkable architectural monuments of the site, 80% of which remain to be excavated.</p>		<p>Cultural</p> <p style="text-align: center;">■</p>
<p>Erbil Citadel</p>	<p>Erbil Citadel is a fortified settlement on top of an imposing ovoid-shaped tell (a hill created by many generations of people living and rebuilding on the same spot) in the Kurdistan region, Erbil Governorate. A continuous wall of tall 19th-century façades still conveys the visual impression of an impregnable fortress, dominating the city of</p>		<p>Cultural</p>

	<p>Erbil. The citadel features a peculiar fan-like pattern dating back to Erbil's late Ottoman phase. Written and iconographic historical records document the antiquity of settlement on the site – Erbil corresponds to ancient Arbela, an important Assyrian political and religious center – while archaeological finds and investigations suggest that the mound conceals the levels and remains of previous settlements.</p>		
<p>The Ahwar of Southern Iraq: Refuge of Biodiversity and the Relict Landscape of the Mesopotamian Cities</p>	<p>The Ahwar is made up of seven components: three archaeological sites and four wetland marsh areas in southern Iraq. The archaeological cities of Uruk and Ur and the Tell Eridu archaeological site form part of the remains of the Sumerian cities and settlements that developed in southern Mesopotamia between the 4th and the 3rd millennium BCE in the marshy delta of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The Ahwar of Southern Iraq – also known as the Iraqi Marshlands – are unique, as one of the world's largest inland delta systems, in an extremely hot and arid environment.</p>		<p>Mixed</p>
<p>Babylon</p>	<p>Situated 85 km south of Baghdad, the property includes the ruins of the city which, between 626 and 539 BCE, was the capital of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. It includes villages and agricultural areas surrounding the ancient city. Its remains, outer and inner city walls, gates, palaces and temples, are a unique testimony to one of the most influential empires of the ancient world. Seat of successive empires, under rulers such as Hammurabi and Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon represents the expression of the creativity of the Neo-Babylonian Empire at its height. The city's association with one of the seven wonders of the ancient world—the Hanging Gardens—has also inspired artistic, popular and religious culture on a global scale.</p>		<p>Cultural</p>
<p>Palestine</p>			
<p>Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls (site proposed by Jordan)</p>	<p>As a holy city for Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Jerusalem has always been of great symbolic importance. Among its 220 historic monuments, the Dome of the Rock stands out: built in the 7th century, it is decorated with beautiful geometric and floral motifs. It is recognized by all three religions as the site of Abraham's sacrifice. The Wailing Wall delimits the quarters of the different religious communities, while the Resurrection rotunda in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre houses Christ's tomb.</p>		<p>Cultural</p> <p style="text-align: center;">■</p>
<p>Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem</p>	<p>The inscribed property is situated 10 km south of Jerusalem on the site identified by Christian tradition as the birthplace of Jesus since the 2nd century. A church was first completed there in ad 339 and the edifice that replaced it after a fire in the 6th century retains elaborate floor mosaics from the original building. The site also includes Latin, Greek Orthodox, Franciscan and Armenian</p>		<p>Cultural</p>

	convents and churches, as well as bell towers, terraced gardens and a pilgrimage route.		
Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir	This site is located a few kilometres south-west of Jerusalem, in the Central Highlands between Nablus and Hebron. The Battir hill landscape comprises a series of farmed valleys, known as widian, with characteristic stone terraces, some of which are irrigated for market garden production, while others are dry and planted with grapevines and olive trees. The development of terrace farming in such a mountainous region is supported by a network of irrigation channels fed by underground sources. A traditional system of distribution is then used to share the water collected through this network between families from the nearby village of Battir.		Natural ■
Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town	The use of a local limestone shaped the construction of the old town of Hebron/Al-Khalil during the Mamluk period between 1250 and 1517. The center of interest of the town was the site of Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The tomb of the Patriarchs whose buildings are in a compound built in the 1st century AD to protect the tombs of the patriarch Abraham/Ibrahim and his family. This place became a site of pilgrimage for the three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The town was sited at the crossroads of trade routes for caravans travelling between southern Palestine, Sinai, Eastern Jordan and the north of the Arabian Peninsula. Although the subsequent Ottoman Period (1517-1917) heralded an extension of the town to the surrounding areas and brought numerous architectural additions, particularly the raising of the roof level of houses to provide more upper stories, the overall Mamluk morphology of the town is seen to have persisted with its hierarchy of areas, quarters based on ethnic, religious or professional groupings, and houses with groups of rooms organized according to a tree-shaped system.		Cultural ■
Jordan			
Petra	Inhabited since prehistoric times, this Nabataean caravan-city, situated between the Red Sea and the Dead Sea, was an important crossroads between Arabia, Egypt and Syria-Phoenicia. Petra is half-built, half-carved into the rock, and is surrounded by mountains riddled with passages and gorges. It is one of the world's most famous archaeological sites, where ancient Eastern traditions blend with Hellenistic architecture.		Cultural
Quseir Amra	Built in the early 8th century, this exceptionally well-preserved desert castle was both a fortress with a garrison and a residence of the Umayyad caliphs. The most outstanding features of this small pleasure palace are the reception hall and the hammam, both richly decorated with figurative murals that reflect the secular art of the time.		Cultural

<p>Um er-Rasas (Kastrom Mefa'a)</p>	<p>Most of this archaeological site, which started as a Roman military camp and grew to become a town from the 5th century, has not been excavated. It contains remains from the Roman, Byzantine and Early Muslim periods (end of 3rd to 9th centuries AD) and a fortified Roman military camp. The site also has 16 churches, some with well-preserved mosaic floors. Particularly noteworthy is the mosaic floor of the Church of Saint Stephen with its representation of towns in the region. Two square towers are probably the only remains of the practice, well known in this part of the world, of the stylites (ascetic monks who spent time in isolation atop a column or tower). Um er-Rasas is surrounded by, and dotted with, remains of ancient agricultural cultivation in an arid area.</p>		<p>Cultural</p>
<p>Wadi Rum Protected Area</p>	<p>The 74,000-hectare property, inscribed as a mixed natural and cultural site, is situated in southern Jordan, near the border with Saudi Arabia. It features a varied desert landscape consisting of a range of narrow gorges, natural arches, towering cliffs, ramps, massive landslides and caverns. Petroglyphs, inscriptions and archaeological remains in the site testify to 12,000 years of human occupation and interaction with the natural environment. The combination of 25,000 rock carvings with 20,000 inscriptions trace the evolution of human thought and the early development of the alphabet. The site illustrates the evolution of pastoral, agricultural and urban activity in the region.</p>		<p>Mixed</p>
<p>Baptism Site “Bethany Beyond the Jordan” (Al- Maghtas)</p>	<p>Situated on the eastern bank of the River Jordan, nine kilometres north of the Dead Sea, the archaeological site consists of two distinct areas: Tell Al-Kharrar, also known as Jabal Mar-Elias (Elijah’s Hill) and the area of the churches of Saint John the Baptist near the river. Situated in a pristine natural environment the site is believed to be the location where Jesus of Nazareth was baptized by John the Baptist. It features Roman and Byzantine remains including churches and chapels, a monastery, caves that have been used by hermits and pools in which baptisms were celebrated, testifying to the religious character of the place. The site is a Christian place of pilgrimage.</p>		<p>Cultural</p>
<p>As-Salt - The Place of Tolerance and Urban Hospitality</p>	<p>Built on three closely-spaced hills in the Balqa highland of west-central Jordan, the city of As-Salt, was an important trading link between the eastern desert and the west. During the last 60 years of the Ottoman period, the region prospered from the arrival and settlement of merchants from Nablus, Syria, and Lebanon who made their fortunes in trade, banking, and farming. This prosperity attracted skilled craftsmen from different parts of the region who worked on transforming the modest rural settlement into a thriving town with a distinctive layout and an architecture characterized by large public buildings and family residences constructed of local yellow limestone. The site’s</p>		<p>Cultural</p>

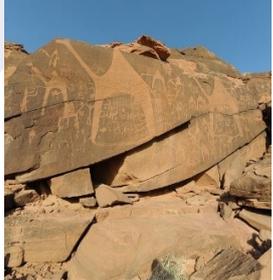
	urban core includes approximately 650 significant historic buildings exhibiting a blend of European Art Nouveau and Neo-Colonial styles combined with local traditions. The city's non-segregated development expresses tolerance between Muslims and Christians who developed traditions of hospitality evidenced in Madafas (guest houses, known as Dawaween) and the social welfare system known as Takaful Ijtimai'. These tangible and intangible aspects emerged through a melding of rural traditions and bourgeois merchants' and tradespeople's practices during the Golden Age of As-Salt's development between 1860s to 1920s.		
Lebanon			
Anjar	The city of Anjar was founded by Caliph Walid I at the beginning of the 8th century. The ruins reveal a very regular layout, reminiscent of the palace-cities of ancient times, and are a unique testimony to city planning under the Umayyads.		Cultural
Baalbek	This Phoenician city, where a triad of deities was worshipped, was known as Heliopolis during the Hellenistic period. It retained its religious function during Roman times, when the sanctuary of the Heliopolitan Jupiter attracted thousands of pilgrims. Baalbek, with its colossal structures, is one of the finest examples of Imperial Roman architecture at its apogee.		Cultural
Byblos	The ruins of many successive civilizations are found at Byblos, one of the oldest Phoenician cities. Inhabited since Neolithic times, it has been closely linked to the legends and history of the Mediterranean region for thousands of years. Byblos is also directly associated with the history and diffusion of the Phoenician alphabet.		Cultural
Tyre	According to legend, purple dye was invented in Tyre. This great Phoenician city ruled the seas and founded prosperous colonies such as Cadiz and Carthage, but its historical role declined at the end of the Crusades. There are important archaeological remains, mainly from Roman times.		Cultural
Ouadi Qadisha (the Holy Valley) and the Forest of the Cedars of God (Horsh Arz el-Rab)	The Qadisha valley is one of the most important early Christian monastic settlements in the world. Its monasteries, many of which are of a great age, stand in dramatic positions in a rugged landscape. Nearby are the remains of the great forest of cedars of Lebanon, highly prized in antiquity for the construction of great religious buildings.		Cultural
Libya			
Archaeological Site of Cyrene	A colony of the Greeks of Thera, Cyrene was one of the principal cities in the Hellenic world. It was Romanized and remained a great capital until the earthquake of 365. A thousand years of history is written into its ruins, which have been famous since the 18th century.		Cultural

Archaeological Site of Leptis Magna	Leptis Magna was enlarged and embellished by Septimius Severus, who was born there and later became emperor. It was one of the most beautiful cities of the Roman Empire, with its imposing public monuments, harbour, market-place, storehouses, shops and residential districts.		Cultural ■
Archaeological Site of Sabratha	A Phoenician trading-post that served as an outlet for the products of the African hinterland, Sabratha was part of the short-lived Numidian Kingdom of Massinissa before being Romanized and rebuilt in the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D.		Cultural ■
Rock-Art Sites of Tadrart Acacus	On the borders of Tassili N'Ajjer in Algeria, also a World Heritage site, this rocky massif has thousands of cave paintings in very different styles, dating from 12,000 B.C. to A.D. 100. They reflect marked changes in the fauna and flora, and also the different ways of life of the populations that succeeded one another in this region of the Sahara.		Cultural ■
Old Town of Ghadamès	Ghadamès, known as 'the pearl of the desert', stands in an oasis. It is one of the oldest pre-Saharan cities and an outstanding example of a traditional settlement. Its domestic architecture is characterized by a vertical division of functions: the ground floor used to store supplies; then another floor for the family, overhanging covered alleys that create what is almost an underground network of passageways; and, at the top, open-air terraces reserved for the women.		Cultural ■
Mauritania			
Banc d'Arguin National Park	Fringing the Atlantic coast, the park comprises sand-dunes, coastal swamps, small islands and shallow coastal waters. The contrast between the harsh desert environment and the biodiversity of the marine zone has resulted in a land- and seascape of outstanding natural significance. A wide variety of migrating birds spend the winter there. Several species of sea turtle and dolphin, used by the fishermen to attract shoals of fish, can also be found.		Natural
Ancient Ksour of Ouadane, Chinguetti, Tichitt and Oualata	Founded in the 11th and 12th centuries to serve the caravans crossing the Sahara, these trading and religious centres became focal points of Islamic culture. They have managed to preserve an urban fabric that evolved between the 12th and 16th centuries. Typically, houses with patios crowd along narrow streets around a mosque with a square minaret. They illustrate a traditional way of life centred on the nomadic culture of the people of the western Sahara.		Cultural

Morocco			
Medina of Fez	Founded in the 9th century and home to the oldest university in the world, Fez reached its height in the 13th–14th centuries under the Marinids, when it replaced Marrakesh as the capital of the kingdom. The urban fabric and the principal monuments in the medina – madrasas, fondouks, palaces, residences, mosques and fountains - date from this period. Although the political capital of Morocco was transferred to Rabat in 1912, Fez has retained its status as the country's cultural and spiritual centre.		Cultural
Medina of Marrakesh	Founded in 1070–72 by the Almoravids, Marrakesh remained a political, economic and cultural centre for a long period. Its influence was felt throughout the western Muslim world, from North Africa to Andalusia. It has several impressive monuments dating from that period: the Koutoubiya Mosque, the Kasbah, the battlements, monumental doors, gardens, etc. Later architectural jewels include the Bandiâ Palace, the Ben Youssef Madrasa, the Saadian Tombs, several great residences and Place Jamaâ El Fna, a veritable open-air theatre.		Cultural
Ksar of Ait-Ben-Haddou	The ksar, a group of earthen buildings surrounded by high walls, is a traditional pre-Saharan habitat. The houses crowd together within the defensive walls, which are reinforced by corner towers. Ait-Ben-Haddou, in Ouarzazate province, is a striking example of the architecture of southern Morocco.		Cultural
Historic City of Meknes	Founded in the 11th century by the Almoravids as a military settlement, Meknes became a capital under Sultan Moulay Ismaïl (1672–1727), the founder of the Alawite dynasty. The sultan turned it into a impressive city in Spanish-Moorish style, surrounded by high walls with great doors, where the harmonious blending of the Islamic and European styles of the 17th century Maghreb are still evident today.		Cultural
Archaeological Site of Volubilis	The Mauritanian capital, founded in the 3rd century B.C., became an important outpost of the Roman Empire and was graced with many fine buildings. Extensive remains of these survive in the archaeological site, located in a fertile agricultural area. Volubilis was later briefly to become the capital of Idris I, founder of the Idrisid dynasty, who is buried at nearby Moulay Idris.		Cultural
Medina of Tétouan (formerly known as Titawin)	Tétouan was of particular importance in the Islamic period, from the 8th century onwards, since it served as the main point of contact between Morocco and Andalusia. After the Reconquest, the town was rebuilt by Andalusian refugees who had been expelled by the Spanish. This is well illustrated by its art and architecture, which reveal clear Andalusian influence. Although one of the smallest of the Moroccan medinas, Tétouan is unquestionably the most complete and it has been		Cultural

	largely untouched by subsequent outside influences.		
Medina of Essaouira (formerly Mogador)	Essaouira is an exceptional example of a late-18th-century fortified town, built according to the principles of contemporary European military architecture in a North African context. Since its foundation, it has been a major international trading seaport, linking Morocco and its Saharan hinterland with Europe and the rest of the world.		Cultural
Portuguese City of Mazagan (El Jadida)	The Portuguese fortification of Mazagan, now part of the city of El Jadida, 90-km southwest of Casablanca, was built as a fortified colony on the Atlantic coast in the early 16th century. It was taken over by the Moroccans in 1769. The fortification with its bastions and ramparts is an early example of Renaissance military design. The surviving Portuguese buildings include the cistern and the Church of the Assumption, built in the Manueline style of late Gothic architecture. The Portuguese City of Mazagan - one of the early settlements of the Portuguese explorers in West Africa on the route to India - is an outstanding example of the interchange of influences between European and Moroccan cultures, well reflected in architecture, technology, and town planning.		Cultural
Rabat, Modern Capital and Historic City: a Shared Heritage	Located on the Atlantic coast in the north-west of Morocco, the site is the product of a fertile exchange between the Arabo-Muslim past and Western modernism. The inscribed city encompasses the new town conceived and built under the French Protectorate from 1912 to the 1930s, including royal and administrative areas, residential and commercial developments and the Jardins d'Essais botanical and pleasure gardens. It also encompasses older parts of the city dating back to the 12th century. The new town is one of the largest and most ambitious modern urban projects built in Africa in the 20th century and probably the most complete. The older parts include Hassan Mosque (begun in 1184) and the Almohad ramparts and gates, the only surviving parts of the project for a great capital city of the Almohad caliphate as well as remains from the Moorish, or Andalusian, principality of the 17th century.		Cultural
Oman			
Bahla Fort	The oasis of Bahla owes its prosperity to the Banu Nebhan, the dominant tribe in the area from the 12th to the end of the 15th century. The ruins of the immense fort, with its walls and towers of unbaked brick and its stone foundations, is a remarkable example of this type of fortification and attests to the power of the Banu Nebhan.		Cultural
Archaeological Sites of Bat, Al-Khutm and Al-Ayn	The protohistoric site of Bat lies near a palm grove in the interior of the Sultanate of Oman. Together with the neighbouring sites, it forms the most complete collection of settlements and necropolises from the 3rd millennium B.C. in the world.		Cultural

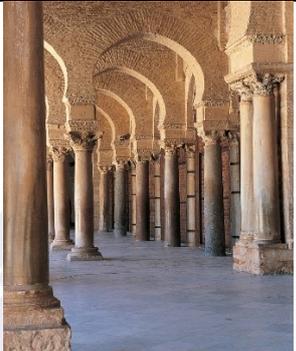
<p>Land of Frankincense</p>	<p>The frankincense trees of Wadi Dawkah and the remains of the caravan oasis of Shisr/Wubar and the affiliated ports of Khor Rori and Al-Baleed vividly illustrate the trade in frankincense that flourished in this region for many centuries, as one of the most important trading activities of the ancient and medieval world.</p>		<p>Cultural</p>
<p>Aflaj Irrigation Systems of Oman</p>	<p>The property includes five aflaj irrigation systems and is representative of some 3,000 such systems still in use in Oman. The origins of this system of irrigation may date back to AD 500, but archaeological evidence suggests that irrigation systems existed in this extremely arid area as early as 2500 BC. Using gravity, water is channelled from underground sources or springs to support agriculture and domestic use. The fair and effective management and sharing of water in villages and towns is still underpinned by mutual dependence and communal values and guided by astronomical observations. Numerous watchtowers built to defend the water systems form part of the site reflecting the historic dependence of communities on the aflaj system. Threatened by falling level of the underground water table, the aflaj represent an exceptionally well-preserved form of land use.</p>		<p>Cultural</p>
<p>Ancient City of Qalhat</p>	<p>The property, which is located on the east coast of the Sultanate of Oman, includes the ancient city of Qalhat, surrounded by inner and outer walls, as well as areas beyond the ramparts where necropolises are located. The city developed as a major port on the east coast of Arabia between the 11th and 15th centuries CE, during the reign of the Hormuz princes. The Ancient City bears unique archaeological testimony to the trade links between the east coast of Arabia, East Africa, India, China and South-East Asia.</p>		<p>Cultural</p>
<p>Qatar</p>			
<p>Al Zubarah Archaeological Site</p>	<p>The walled coastal town of Al Zubarah in the Persian Gulf flourished as a pearling and trading centre in the late 18th century and early 19th centuries, before it was destroyed in 1811 and abandoned in the early 1900s. Founded by merchants from Kuwait, Al Zubarah had trading links across the Indian Ocean, Arabia and Western Asia. A layer of sand blown from the desert has protected the remains of the site's palaces, mosques, streets, courtyard houses, and fishermen's huts; its harbour and double defensive walls, a canal, walls, and cemeteries. Excavation has only taken place over a small part of the site, which offers an outstanding testimony to an urban trading and pearl-diving tradition which sustained the region's major coastal towns and led to the development of small independent states that flourished outside the control of the Ottoman, European, and Persian empires and eventually led to the emergence of modern day Gulf States.</p>		<p>Cultural</p>
<p>Saudi Arabia</p>			

<p>Hegra Archaeological Site (al-Hijr / Madā' in Šālih)</p>	<p>The Hegra Archaeological Site (al-Hijr / Madā' in Šālih) is the first World Heritage property to be inscribed in Saudi Arabia. Formerly known as Hegra it is the largest conserved site of the civilization of the Nabataeans south of Petra in Jordan. It features well-preserved monumental tombs with decorated facades dating from the 1st century BC to the 1st century AD. The site also features some 50 inscriptions of the pre-Nabataean period and some cave drawings. Al-Hijr bears a unique testimony to Nabataean civilization. With its 111 monumental tombs, 94 of which are decorated, and water wells, the site is an outstanding example of the Nabataeans' architectural accomplishment and hydraulic expertise.</p>		<p>Cultural</p>
<p>At-Turaif District in ad-Dir'iyah</p>	<p>This property was the first capital of the Saudi Dynasty, in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula, north-west of Riyadh. Founded in the 15th century, it bears witness to the Najdi architectural style, which is specific to the centre of the Arabian peninsula. In the 18th and early 19th century, its political and religious role increased, and the citadel at at-Turaif became the centre of the temporal power of the House of Saud and the spread of the Salafiyya reform inside the Muslim religion. The property includes the remains of many palaces and an urban ensemble built on the edge of the ad-Dir'iyah oasis.</p>		<p>Cultural</p>
<p>Historic Jeddah, the Gate to Makkah</p>	<p>Historic Jeddah is situated on the eastern shore of the Red Sea. From the 7th century AD it was established as a major port for Indian Ocean trade routes, channelling goods to Mecca. It was also the gateway for Muslim pilgrims to Mecca who arrived by sea. These twin roles saw the city develop into a thriving multicultural centre, characterized by a distinctive architectural tradition, including tower houses built in the late 19th century by the city's mercantile elites, and combining Red Sea coastal coral building traditions with influences and crafts from along the trade routes.</p>		<p>Cultural</p>
<p>Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia</p>	<p>This property includes two components situated in a desert landscape: Jabal Umm Sinman at Jubba and the Jabal al-Manjor and Raat at Shuwaymis. A lake once situated at the foot of the Umm Sinman hill range that has now disappeared used to be a source of fresh water for people and animals in the southern part of the Great Nafoud Desert. The ancestors of today's Arab populations have left traces of their passages in numerous petroglyphs and inscriptions on the rock face. Jabal al-Manjor and Raat form the rocky escarpment of a wadi now covered in sand. They show numerous representations of human and animal figures covering 10,000 years of history.</p>		<p>Cultural</p>
<p>Al-Ahsa Oasis, an Evolving Cultural Landscape</p>	<p>In the eastern Arabian Peninsula, the Al-Ahsa Oasis is a serial property comprising gardens, canals, springs, wells and a drainage lake, as well as historical buildings, urban fabric and archaeological sites. They represent traces of continued human settlement in the Gulf region from the Neolithic to the present, as can be seen</p>		<p>Cultural</p>

	from remaining historic fortresses, mosques, wells, canals and other water management systems. With its 2.5 million date palms, it is the largest oasis in the world. Al-Ahsa is also a unique geocultural landscape and an exceptional example of human interaction with the environment.		
Himā Cultural Area	Located in an arid, mountainous area of southwest Saudi Arabia, on one of the Arabian Peninsula's ancient caravan routes, Himā Cultural Area contains a substantial collection of rock art images depicting hunting, fauna, flora and lifestyles in a cultural continuity of 7,000 years. Travellers and armies camping on the site left a wealth of rock inscriptions and petroglyphs through the ages and until the late 20th century, most of which are preserved in pristine condition. Inscriptions are in different scripts, including Musnad, South-Arabian, Thamudic, Greek and Arabic. The property and its buffer zone are also rich in unexcavated archaeological resources in the form of cairns, stone structures, interments, stone tool scatters and ancient wells. This location is at the oldest known toll station on an important ancient desert caravan route, where the wells of Bi'r Himā date back at least 3,000 years and still produce fresh water.		Cultural
Sudan			
Gebel Barkal and the Sites of the Napatan Region	These five archaeological sites, stretching over more than 60 km in the Nile valley, are testimony to the Napatan (900 to 270 BC) and Meroitic (270 BC to 350 AD) cultures, of the second kingdom of Kush. Tombs, with and without pyramids, temples, living complexes and palaces, are to be found on the site. Since Antiquity, the hill of Gebel Barkal has been strongly associated with religious traditions and folklore. The largest temples are still considered by the local people as sacred places.		Cultural
Archaeological Sites of the Island of Meroe	The Archaeological Sites of the Island of Meroe, a semi-desert landscape between the Nile and Atbara rivers, was the heartland of the Kingdom of Kush, a major power from the 8th century B.C. to the 4th century A.D. The property consists of the royal city of the Kushite kings at Meroe, near the River Nile, the nearby religious site of Naqa and Musawwarat es Sufra. It was the seat of the rulers who occupied Egypt for close to a century and features, among other vestiges, pyramids, temples and domestic buildings as well as major installations connected to water management. Their vast empire extended from the Mediterranean to the heart of Africa, and the property testifies to the exchange between the art, architectures, religions and languages of both regions.		Cultural

<p>Sanganeb Marine National Park and Dungonab Bay – Mukkawar Island Marine National Park</p>	<p>The property consists of two separate areas: Sanganeb is an isolated, coral reef structure in the central Red Sea and the only atoll, 25 km off the shoreline of Sudan. The second component of the property is made up of Dungonab Bay and Mukkawar Island, situated 125 km north of Port Sudan. It includes a highly diverse system of coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass beds, beaches and islets. The site provides a habitat for populations of seabirds, marine mammals, fish, sharks, turtles and manta rays. Dungonab Bay also has a globally significant population of dugongs.</p>		<p>Natural</p>
<p>Syria</p>			
<p>Ancient City of Damascus</p>	<p>Founded in the 3rd millennium B.C., Damascus is one of the oldest cities in the Middle East. In the Middle Ages, it was the centre of a flourishing craft industry, specializing in swords and lace. The city has some 125 monuments from different periods of its history – one of the most spectacular is the 8th-century Great Mosque of the Umayyads, built on the site of an Assyrian sanctuary.</p>		<p>Cultural</p> <p style="text-align: center;">■</p>
<p>Ancient City of Bosra</p>	<p>Bosra, once the capital of the Roman province of Arabia, was an important stopover on the ancient caravan route to Mecca. A magnificent 2nd-century Roman theatre, early Christian ruins and several mosques are found within its great walls.</p>		<p>Cultural</p> <p style="text-align: center;">■</p>
<p>Site of Palmyra</p>	<p>An oasis in the Syrian desert, north-east of Damascus, Palmyra contains the monumental ruins of a great city that was one of the most important cultural centres of the ancient world. From the 1st to the 2nd century, the art and architecture of Palmyra, standing at the crossroads of several civilizations, married Graeco-Roman techniques with local traditions and Persian influences.</p>		<p>Cultural</p> <p style="text-align: center;">■</p>
<p>Ancient City of Aleppo</p>	<p>Located at the crossroads of several trade routes from the 2nd millennium B.C., Aleppo was ruled successively by the Hittites, Assyrians, Arabs, Mongols, Mamelukes and Ottomans. The 13th-century citadel, 12th-century Great Mosque and various 17th-century madrasas, palaces, caravanserais and hammams all form part of the city's cohesive, unique urban fabric, now threatened by overpopulation.</p>		<p>Cultural</p> <p style="text-align: center;">■</p>
<p>Crac des Chevaliers and Qal'at Salah El-Din</p>	<p>These two castles represent the most significant examples illustrating the exchange of influences and documenting the evolution of fortified architecture in the Near East during the time of the Crusades (11th - 13th centuries). The Crac des Chevaliers was built by the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem from 1142 to 1271. With further construction by the Mamluks in the late 13th century, it ranks among the best-preserved examples of the Crusader castles. The Qal'at Salah El-Din (Fortress of Saladin), even though partly in ruins, represents an outstanding example of this type of fortification, both in terms of the quality of construction and the survival of historical stratigraphy. It retains features from its Byzantine</p>		<p>Cultural</p> <p style="text-align: center;">■</p>

	beginnings in the 10th century, the Frankish transformations in the late 12th century and fortifications added by the Ayyubid dynasty (late 12th to mid-13th century).		
Ancient Villages of Northern Syria	Some 40 villages grouped in eight parks situated in north-western Syria provide remarkable testimony to rural life in late Antiquity and during the Byzantine period. Abandoned in the 8th to 10th centuries, the villages, which date from the 1st to 7th centuries, feature a remarkably well preserved landscape and the architectural remains of dwellings, pagan temples, churches, cisterns, bathhouses etc. The relict cultural landscape of the villages also constitutes an important illustration of the transition from the ancient pagan world of the Roman Empire to Byzantine Christianity. Vestiges illustrating hydraulic techniques, protective walls and Roman agricultural plot plans furthermore offer testimony to the inhabitants' mastery of agricultural production.		Cultural ■
Tunisia			
Amphitheatre of El Jem	The impressive ruins of the largest colosseum in North Africa, a huge amphitheatre which could hold up to 35,000 spectators, are found in the small village of El Jem. This 3rd-century monument illustrates the grandeur and extent of Imperial Rome.		Cultural
Archaeological Site of Carthage	Carthage was founded in the 9th century B.C. on the Gulf of Tunis. From the 6th century onwards, it developed into a great trading empire covering much of the Mediterranean and was home to a brilliant civilization. In the course of the long Punic wars, Carthage occupied territories belonging to Rome, which finally destroyed its rival in 146 B.C. A second – Roman – Carthage was then established on the ruins of the first.		Cultural
Medina of Tunis	Under the Almohads and the Hafsids, from the 12th to the 16th century, Tunis was considered one of the greatest and wealthiest cities in the Islamic world. Some 700 monuments, including palaces, mosques, mausoleums, madrasas and fountains, testify to this remarkable past.		Cultural
Ichkeul National Park	The Ichkeul lake and wetland are a major stopover point for hundreds of thousands of migrating birds, such as ducks, geese, storks and pink flamingoes, who come to feed and nest there. Ichkeul is the last remaining lake in a chain that once extended across North Africa.		Natural
Punic Town of Kerkuane and its Necropolis	This Phoenician city was probably abandoned during the First Punic War (c. 250 B.C.) and as a result was not rebuilt by the Romans. The remains constitute the only example of a Phoenicio-Punic city to have survived. The houses were built to a standard plan in accordance with a sophisticated notion of town planning.		Cultural

<p>Kairouan</p>	<p>Founded in 670, Kairouan flourished under the Aghlabid dynasty in the 9th century. Despite the transfer of the political capital to Tunis in the 12th century, Kairouan remained the Maghreb's principal holy city. Its rich architectural heritage includes the Great Mosque, with its marble and porphyry columns, and the 9th-century Mosque of the Three Gates.</p>		<p>Cultural</p>
<p>Medina of Sousse</p>	<p>Sousse was an important commercial and military port during the Aghlabid period (800–909) and is a typical example of a town dating from the first centuries of Islam. With its kasbah, ramparts, medina (with the Great Mosque), Bu Ftata Mosque and typical ribat (both a fort and a religious building), Sousse was part of a coastal defence system.</p>		<p>Cultural</p>
<p>Dougga / Thugga</p>	<p>Before the Roman annexation of Numidia, the town of Thugga, built on an elevated site overlooking a fertile plain, was the capital of an important Libyco-Punic state. It flourished under Roman and Byzantine rule, but declined in the Islamic period. The impressive ruins that are visible today give some idea of the resources of a small Roman town on the fringes of the empire.</p>		<p>Cultural</p>
<p>United Arab Emirates</p>			
<p>Cultural Sites of Al Ain (Hafit, Hili, Bidaa Bint Saud and Oases Areas)</p>	<p>The Cultural Sites of Al Ain (Hafit, Hili, Bidaa Bint Saud and Oases Areas) constitute a serial property that testifies to sedentary human occupation of a desert region since the Neolithic period with vestiges of many prehistoric cultures. Remarkable vestiges in the property include circular stone tombs (ca 2500 B.C.), wells and a wide range of adobe constructions: residential buildings, towers, palaces and administrative buildings. Hili moreover features one of the oldest examples of the sophisticated aflaj irrigation system which dates back to the Iron Age. The property provides important testimony to the transition of cultures in the region from hunting and gathering to sedentarization.</p>		<p>Cultural</p>
<p>Yemen</p>			
<p>Old Walled City of Shibam</p>	<p>Surrounded by a fortified wall, the 16th-century city of Shibam is one of the oldest and best examples of urban planning based on the principle of vertical construction. Its impressive tower-like structures rise out of the cliff and have given the city the nickname of 'the Manhattan of the desert'.</p>		<p>Cultural</p> <p style="text-align: center;">■</p>
<p>Old City of Sana'a</p>	<p>Situated in a mountain valley at an altitude of 2,200 m, Sana'a has been inhabited for more than 2,500 years. In the 7th and 8th centuries the city became a major centre for the propagation of Islam. This religious and political heritage can be seen in the 103 mosques, 14 hammams and over 6,000 houses, all built before the 11th century. Sana'a's many-storeyed tower-houses built of rammed earth (pisé) add to the beauty of the site.</p>		<p>Cultural</p> <p style="text-align: center;">■</p>

<p>Historic Town of Zabid</p>	<p>Zabid's domestic and military architecture and its urban plan make it an outstanding archaeological and historical site. Besides being the capital of Yemen from the 13th to the 15th century, the city played an important role in the Arab and Muslim world for many centuries because of its Islamic university.</p>		<p>Cultural</p> <p>■</p>
<p>Socotra Archipelago</p>	<p>Socotra Archipelago, in the northwest Indian Ocean near the Gulf of Aden, is 250 km long and comprises four islands and two rocky islets which appear as a prolongation of the Horn of Africa. The site is of universal importance because of its biodiversity with rich and distinct flora and fauna: 37% of Socotra's 825 plant species, 90% of its reptile species and 95% of its land snail species do not occur anywhere else in the world. The site also supports globally significant populations of land and sea birds (192 bird species, 44 of which breed on the islands while 85 are regular migrants), including a number of threatened species. The marine life of Socotra is also very diverse, with 253 species of reef-building corals, 730 species of coastal fish and 300 species of crab, lobster and shrimp.</p>		<p>Natural</p>

Source : World Heritage Center - UNESCO

■ Site inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

