



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

## AMENDMENT

<b>Item of the Agenda</b>	<b>43 COM 8B</b>
<b>Amended Draft Decision</b>	<b>43 COM 8B.13 Babylon, Iraq</b>
<b>Amendment submitted by the Delegation of....</b>	<b>Tunisia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Brazil, Tanzania, Spain, Saint Kits and Nevis, China</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>03-7-2019</b>

### TEXT

***Draft Decision: 43 COM 8B.13***

*The World Heritage Committee,*

*1. Having examined Documents WHC/19/43.COM/8B and WHC/19/43.COM/INF.8B1,*

*2. Inscribes **Babylon, Iraq**, on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (iii) and (vi)**;*

*3. Adopts the following Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:*

***Brief synthesis***

*Babylon is an archaeological site which stands out as a unique testimony to one of the most influential empires of the ancient world. One of the largest, oldest settlements in Mesopotamia and the Middle East, it was the seat of successive powerful empires under such famous rulers as Hammurabi and Nebuchadnezzar. As the capital of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (626-539 BCE), it is the most exceptional testimony of this culture at its height and represents the expression of this civilization's creativity through its unusual urbanism, the architecture of its monuments (religious, palatial and defensive) and their decorative expressions of royal power. Babylon radiated not only political, technical and artistic influence over all regions of the ancient Near and Middle East, but it also left a considerable scientific legacy in the fields of mathematics and astronomy.*

*As an archaeological site, Babylon possesses exceptional cultural and symbolic associations of universal value. The property represents the tangible remains of a multifaceted myth that has functioned as a model, parable, scapegoat and*

symbol for over two thousand years. Babylon figures in the religious texts and traditions of the three Abrahamic faiths and has consistently been a source of inspiration for literary, philosophical and artistic works. The buildings and other urban features contained within the boundaries of the property (outer and inner-city walls, gates, palaces, temples including the ziggurat, the probable inspiration for the Tower of Babel, etc.), include all its attributes as a unique testimony to the neo-Babylonian civilization, in particular its contribution to architecture and urban design. Eighty-five percent of the property remains unexcavated and of primary importance to support the site's Outstanding Universal Value through further conservation and research.

**Criterion (iii):** Babylon dates back to the third millennium BCE and was the seat of successive powerful empires under such famous rulers as Hammurabi and Nebuchadnezzar. As the capital of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (626-539 BCE), it is the most exceptional testimony of this culture at its height and represents the expression of this civilization's creativity during this highly productive phase in architectural and urban creation.

Babylon's cultural legacy was enhanced by previous Akkadian and Sumerian cultural achievements, which included the cuneiform writing system, a significant tool for today's knowledge of the history and evolution of the region in general and Babylon in particular. In turn, Babylon exerted considerable political, scientific, technological, architectural and artistic influence upon other human settlements in the region, and on successive historic periods of Antiquity.

**Criterion (vi):** Babylon functioned as a model, parable and symbol of ancient power for over two thousand years and inspires artistic, popular and religious culture on a global scale. The tales of Babel find reference in the religious texts of the three Abrahamic religions. In the works of Greek historians, Babylon was distant, exotic and incredible. Classical texts attribute one of the seven wonders of the world to Babylon: the Hanging Gardens; and other texts speak of the wondrous Tower of Babel. Both are iconic but have their origins in real ancient structures of which archaeological traces are still preserved: the ziggurat Etemenanki and Nebuchadnezzar's palatial complex.

### **Integrity**

The boundaries of the property encompass the outer walls of the neo-Babylonian capital on all sides. These limits are well marked by remnants of the fortifications in the form of mounds visible on the ground and they are also confirmed by archaeological surveys. The buildings and other urban features contained within the property include all archaeological remains since the time of Hammurabi until the Hellenistic period, and specifically urbanistic and architectural products of the Neo-Babylonian period when the city was at the height of its power and glory. These represent the complete range of attributes of the property as a unique testimony to the Neo-Babylonian civilization, and the material basis for its cultural and symbolic associations.

The property suffers from a variety of threats including illegal constructions, trash dumping and burning, small-scale industrial pollution, urban encroachments and other environmental factors. At the time of inscription, the general physical fabric of the site is in a critical condition and lacks programmed efforts towards conservation. Both the reconstructions and structural alterations

*of the 'Revival of Babylon Project' and other constructions in the 1980s have negatively affected the integrity of the property. Whilst the constructions of the 20th century are excluded from the property and now function as above-ground buffer zones within the property area, the future management of these within the overall property will be critical to the preservation of the fragile condition of integrity.*

### ***Authenticity***

*Some physical elements of the site have been viewed as problematic in terms of authenticity, in particular the reconstructions built on archaeological foundations, which aimed at making the scanty archaeological remains better visible to visitors, and the 20th century interventions within the property. In most cases, however, these additions are discernible from the original remains.*

*Whilst it is a matter of debate whether these did affect the legibility of the spatial organization of the urban core, the inner and outer city limits remain discernible today and approximately 85 percent of the property is unexcavated. Authenticity of these remains is very vulnerable based on the critical state of conservation of the property. For the reconstructed sections, the authenticity of the property above-ground is problematic. While all other 20th century constructions were excluded from the property and covered by the aboveground buffer zones, the unusually high number of reconstructions and the fact that some of these were almost complete reconstructions based on very scanty archaeological evidence remains an unfortunate part of the history of the property. The height and design of these reconstructions is therefore based on conjecture rather than scientific or archaeological evidence. These volumetric aspects of the reconstructed monuments and the additions in successive restorations did affect the ability of parts of the property to convey authenticity in form and design with regard to these archaeological remains. Likewise, based on the introduction of new materials, these monuments illustrate limited authenticity in material and substance.*

### ***Management and protection requirements***

*The property falls under the jurisdiction of the Iraqi Antiquities and Heritage Law No. 55 of 2002, which aims to protect, conserve and manage all archaeological sites in Iraq. The law is also concerned with surveying, excavating and documenting all archaeological sites and presenting them to the public. The law is enforced by the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, a body under the authority of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities. At the provincial level, the Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage of Babil is directly responsible to ensure the conservation, management and monitoring of the property, and works in collaboration with the Antiquity and Heritage Police who maintain a station near the site.*

*The state of conservation of the property is very concerning and constitutes an ascertained danger in the absence of a coordinated programmed conservation approach with urgent priority interventions. A management plan has been developed through an in-depth consultation process with local and national stakeholders since 2011. Both the federal and provincial governments have committed sufficient levels of funding to ensure that the property is conserved, studied and developed for visitors to international standards while protecting its Outstanding Universal Value. It is essential that the overall*

principles laid out in the plan are subsequently transferred to concrete actions on site, prioritizing conservation to prevent immediate losses which can occur at any time, in particular in case of rainfalls.

~~4. Also inscribes **Babylon, Iraq** on the List of World Heritage in Danger;~~

~~5. Recommends that the State Party invites a mission to the property as soon as possible to agree on a Desired State of Conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger, based on the cultural attributes of Outstanding Universal Value and to be reached through a detailed conservation strategy and corrective measures that can then be phased and costed. Efforts would then be made with the assistance of the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS to find partners, technical support and donors to support this conservation project;~~

4. Also Recommends that the State Party give urgent consideration to the following:

a) Developing and finalizing the comprehensive conservation plan for the property and within this address the various risk factors identified in the risk map provided, including through proposing concrete measures towards their effective reduction and mitigation as well as the establishment of a priority intervention scheme for the most urgent conservation measures needed,

b) Augmenting the management plan to include the above-described conservation plan, to allow the management team to focus on priority, emergency interventions and providing detailed implementation-oriented guidance as well as quality indicators for its successful implementation,

c) Researching further the relationships between the Neo-Babylonian capital and its wider landscape, in particular towards the Euphrates River, which is located a few kilometres west of Babylon and, based on the outcomes of this research, consider further extending the buffer zone in order to address actual and potential future challenges which can be identified in the wider setting of the archaeological city,

d) Communicating to visitors the revised boundary concept and the explicit exclusion of 20<sup>th</sup> century additions from the property;

5. Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by **1 December 2019** ~~February 2020~~ a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 44th session in 2020;

6. Encourages international cooperation to support the protection and conservation of the property.