



editorial

After a very full and successful 27th session of the World Heritage Committee, we can begin looking forward to events in which the World Heritage Centre will be playing an important role in the near future.

From 8 – 17 September Durban, South Africa will be host to the IUCN Fifth World Parks Congress. This ten-yearly event will bring together 2,500 senior park personnel from all over the world. It will set the agenda for protected areas and help direct more resources towards biodiversity conservation. World Heritage will be a central subject at the Congress and throughout its thematic workshops. The Durban Accord, a global outreach statement from the Congress' participants, will be issued at the close of the meeting.

The World Heritage Centre is also looking forward to the 7th International Symposium of the Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC) to be held in Rhodes, Greece from 23 – 26 September. Organized by OWHC in co-operation with UNESCO and ICCROM, the Symposium will give the participants – mayors and representatives of World Heritage Cities, scientists and experts, as well as young people taking part in the Heritage and Youth Forum – the opportunity to exchange ideas and to search out and develop issues under the general theme of 'Keeping Heritage Alive: Education and Training for the Preservation and Management of Cultural Heritage.'

We are planning for the 14th General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention on 14-15 October at which eight new Committee members will be elected. This meeting, which takes place at UNESCO Headquarters every two years, will be held during the General Conference of UNESCO (29 September-17 October 2003).

Finally, in October, the World Heritage Centre is planning to organize a scientific meeting in order to further advance the initiative of the States Parties of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru in the nomination process of the Qhapac Nan – Camino Inca for inscription on the World Heritage List. Joint guidelines, criteria, concepts and a timetable for the preparation of the nomination will be established at this important meeting of experts.

We shall keep you informed of these and other important World Heritage events throughout the coming months.

*Francesco Bandarin, Director, World Heritage Centre*

contents

‘We need to help restore the capacity of countries in crisis to protect their heritage, respond to emergency situations and maintain our day-to-day efforts for heritage conservation all around the world. Neither States Parties to the Convention, UNESCO nor the World Heritage Committee can do this alone and as you know partnerships will be essential.’

*Koichiro Matsuura, UNESCO Director-General, at the 27th session of the World Heritage Committee.*

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## The 27th session of the World Heritage Committee

The 27th session of the World Heritage Committee met at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, from June 30 to July 5, 2003. Over 400 delegates from 106 States Parties, Advisory Bodies and non-governmental organizations participated. During the session, chaired by Véra Lacoëuilhe of Saint Lucia, nineteen cultural and five natural properties were added to the World Heritage List, bringing the total number of properties inscribed to 754 (149 natural, 582 cultural and 23 mixed). One hundred and thirty-seven reports on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties were also examined.

It was unanimously agreed to hold the 28th session of the Committee in Suzhou, China in June/July 2004.

This Committee session was rich with significant changes. The cultural landscape and archaeological remains of the Bamiyan Valley in Afghanistan, home of the fabled giant Buddha statues destroyed by the Taliban, and the Iraqi city of Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat) were inscribed on the World Heritage List. Both properties, threatened by lack of maintenance and guardianship, were simultaneously placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. In all, five properties were inscribed on the Danger list, including Comoé National Park (Côte d'Ivoire), the Kathmandu Valley (Nepal) and The Walled City of Baku (Azerbaijan).

After noting improvements in state of conservation, the Committee removed the Srebarna Natural Reserve (Bulgaria), the Natural and Culturo-Historical Region of Kotor (Serbia and Montenegro) and Yellowstone (United States of America) from the List of World Heritage in Danger. The decision on Yellowstone was taken after considerable debate, and the Committee invited the United States to continue its commitment to address the issues that have caused concern in the past (including reports on the snowmobile phase out and efforts to insure that adjacent mining does not contaminate the property).

The List of World Heritage in Danger now numbers thirty-five properties.

Twenty-four new properties were inscribed on the World Heritage List (see insert).



The Secretariat and members of the World Heritage Committee



The Delegation of the People's Republic of China

Louise Graham, Delegate of South Africa, Rapporteur of the 27th session

### Periodic Reporting and Global Strategy

Following presentations by a number of distinguished representatives from the region, the Committee took note of the 'Synthesis Regional Periodic Report for the Asia-Pacific Region 2003', a result of six years of work. It also recommended that the Director-General review operations and staffing in the regional offices in Asia and the Pacific by 2005, and expressed support for the proposed programmes 'ActionAsia 2003-2009' and 'World Heritage-Pacific 2009'.

With regard to the Cairns Decision to limit the number of new nominations to be examined each year, the Committee decided to retain the limit of one new and complete nomination per State Party with properties already on the World Heritage List, as the best means of managing the workload of the Committee, the Advisory Bodies, and the World Heritage Centre, and of improving the geographic distribution of properties on the World Heritage List. States Parties that are not yet represented on the World Heritage List will be able to nominate up to three properties.

The Committee set the limit on the number of new nominations it will review in 2005 at forty, exclusive of nominations deferred and referred by previous sessions of the Committee, changes to the boundaries of properties already inscribed, transboundary nominations and nominations submitted on an emergency basis.

**China's Vice Minister of Education and Chairman of the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, Zhang Xincheng, was elected Chairman of the Committee for the period between the end of the 27th and the end of the 28th session. He said his country is fully aware of its responsibilities and obligations in the protection and preservation of the World's Heritage. 'We are pleased to note that all our friends [who are] familiar with China have acknowledged the huge progress that China has made in recent years in promoting the cause of World Heritage as well as ... the positive and important role World Heritage has played in China,' Mr Xincheng told the Committee.**

### The Budget

The Committee approved a total expenditure of US\$7,248,070 for the biennium 2004-2005 from the World Heritage Fund, subject to the approval by the UNESCO General Conference of a budget totaling US\$610 million for the same period. This represents a decrease of US\$3.6 million as compared to the budget of the previous biennium.

While a real increase in UNESCO's budget has been proposed to the next General Conference by the 166th Executive Board, there will be a significant cut in the budget of the World Heritage Fund, for technical reasons. The Committee therefore invited the Director-General to recommend to the General Conference an increased provision to compensate fully for the impact of this year's budget reduction and provide for an overall real increase in the resources for the Convention.

The Committee also approved a preparatory assistance request for Hungary; technical cooperation requests for India and Yemen; training assistance requests for Kazakhstan, Oman, Uzbekistan and Bangladesh; and emergency assistance for Iraq.

According to the timeline set for the approval of the revised *Operational Guidelines*, States Parties are to provide their final written comments to the World Heritage Centre by 15 October 2003. As of 1st March 2004, once the revised text is approved by the Chairperson of the 27th session, the new *Operational Guidelines* will come into effect.

The report on the activities of the Committee over the past two years was noted and will be transmitted to the 14th General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention and the 32nd session of the General Conference (29 September – 17 October 2003).

## Interview with the Chairperson



The Chairperson of the 27th session of the World Heritage Committee, Ms Vera Lacoëuilhe (Saint-Lucia)

The Newsletter talked to Véra Lacoëuilhe, Saint Lucia, the chairperson of the 27th session of the Committee. We asked her whether she was satisfied with this Committee's work.

I think we accomplished a lot, and I am very proud of that. It was a difficult agenda of some 25 items, 45 nominations and more than 130 conservation reports. The extraordinary session in March was very helpful because it undertook an in-depth examination of the

*Operational Guidelines*, in addition to major amendments to the *Rules of Procedure*. That may sound trivial, but these improvements in the methods of working allowed us to move forward. We must be careful not to overload the agenda and be sure to have enough time to discuss substance.

### Do you think the Committee is moving in this direction?

Yes. We will have more time at the meeting in China. In Paris the time available did not fit the agenda – even with Committee members and observers exercising self-discipline. The World Heritage Centre staff was exceptionally dedicated. Many of them didn't go home on the last night. They worked 50 hours straight to prepare the report. They were great, but that cannot continue. The length of the sessions of the Committee should fit the agenda, and not the other way around.

### What do you think of the change in the format for the Report?

I think it is a major change that will considerably improve the work of the Committee. In previous reports it was difficult to distinguish between the debate and the decisions taken by

the Committee. Now that the decisions are separate everything is clear and straightforward for the Committee, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies. The Summary Records give us a day-by-day account of the discussion which guarantees the memory of the institution. This is a significant achievement.

### The Committee is to set up an open-ended group to review comments on the Cairns Decision. What is your view?

The issue is highly important, but it should not turn into a fight between over- and under-represented countries. The Committee has to take a holistic view of the situation and address the following issues: how much do we want the World Heritage List to grow and how fast; how much can the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies cope with in a year, not only in terms of inscriptions, but mostly in terms of conservation and monitoring; how much can the Committee cope with in one session and still produce quality work.

States Parties from the developing world who wish to be allowed to inscribe more than one site per year should remember that things don't end with the inscription on the World Heritage List. What matters most is conservation after inscription. For example, the Periodic Reporting for the Asia/Pacific region, examined during the 27th session speaks for itself.

Having said all that, I do believe that next year in China we have to attempt to reach a decision that deals with the concerns of all States Parties. We should adopt a pragmatic approach and I intend to put a lot of effort to this end.

## USA, UNESCO and World Heritage

The United Nations Foundation (UNF) and the National Geographic Society (NGS) co-sponsored a meeting in Washington D.C. on 3 June to discuss the United States' re-entry into UNESCO. Some 250 participants from academic institutions, government, non-governmental organizations, Congress and the media attended

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Terry Miller confirmed U.S. re-entry into UNESCO on 1 October and praised UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura for the reforms he had undertaken. Mr Miller also outlined U.S. plans to name an ambassador to head an enlarged mission to Paris and a national commission with up to 100 members. On the U.S. contribution to World Heritage, Mr Miller said that Washington expected to match its current voluntary contribution to World Heritage in the coming year and that a bid to increase the account has been entered for 2005.

United States Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Paul Hoffman, called the World Heritage Convention 'spectacularly successful.' He underlined the U.S. position on national sovereignty, saying that 'the World Heritage Convention is based on cooperation between sovereign nations.' He emphasized the need for State Party consent for the inscription of a site on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

A large number of United States-based organizations attending the meeting expressed their support for World Heritage preservation. There was concern for the lack of sufficient funds to carry out projects, and discussion on how resources could be generated.

# New World Heritage Properties

At the 27th session of the World Heritage Committee, held at UNESCO Headquarters in June/July 2003, 24 properties were inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List, including, for the first time, properties in Gambia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan and Sudan.

The Committee also extended one natural and two cultural properties already inscribed on the World Heritage List: the **Central Amazon Conservation Complex** in Brazil; the **Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties** in China, and the **Archaeological Site of Panamá Viejo and the Historic District of Panamá** in Panama.

The World Heritage List now numbers 754 properties, including 149 natural, 582 cultural and 23 mixed properties of outstanding universal value.

## Natural Properties

### AUSTRALIA Purnululu National Park



(N i, iii)  
The 239,723-hectare Purnululu National Park is located in the State of Western Australia. It contains the deeply dissected Bungle Bungle Range composed of Devonian-age quartz sandstone eroded over a period of 20 million years into a series of beehive-shaped towers or cones, whose steeply sloping surfaces are distinctly marked by regular horizontal bands of dark-grey cyanobacterial crust (single-celled photosynthetic organisms). These outstanding examples of cone karst owe their existence and uniqueness to several interacting geological, biological, erosional and climatic phenomena.

### CHINA Three Parallel Rivers of Yunnan Protected Areas

(N i, ii, iii, iv)  
Consisting of eight geographical clusters of protected areas within the boundaries of the Three Parallel Rivers National Park, in the mountainous northwest of Yunnan province, the 1.7-million-hectare site features sections of the upper reaches of three of the great rivers of Asia: the Yangtze (Jinsha), Mekong and Salween run roughly parallel, north to south, through steep gorges which, in places, are 3,000 m deep and are bordered by glaciated peaks more than 6,000 m high. The site is an epicentre of Chinese biodiversity. It is also one of the richest temperate regions of the world, in terms of biodiversity.

### MONGOLIA / RUSSIAN FEDERATION Uvs Nuur Basin

(N ii, iv)  
The Uvs Nuur Basin (1,068,853 hectares), is the northernmost of the enclosed basins of Central Asia. It takes its name from Uvs Nuur Lake, a large, shallow and very saline lake, important for migrating birds, waterfowl, and seabirds. The site is made up of 12 protected areas representing the major biomes of eastern Eurasia. The steppe ecosystem supports a rich diversity of birds and the desert is home to a number of rare gerbil,

jerboas and the marbled polecat. The mountains are important refuges for the globally endangered snow leopard, mountain sheep (argali) and the Asiatic ibex.

### SWITZERLAND Monte San Giorgio

(N i)  
The pyramid-shaped, wooded mountain (1,096 m above sea level), to the south of Lake Lugano in Canton Ticino is regarded as the best fossil record of marine life from the Triassic Period (245-230 million years ago). The sequence records life in a tropical lagoon environment, sheltered and partially separated from the open sea by an offshore reef. Diverse marine life flourished within this lagoon, including reptiles, fish, bivalves, ammonites, echinoderms and crustaceans. Because the lagoon was near to land, the fossil remains also include some land-based fossils including reptiles, insects and plants. The result is a fossil resource of great richness.

### VIET NAM Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park

(N i)  
The karst formation of Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park has evolved since the Palaeozoic (some 400 million years ago) and so is the oldest major karst area in Asia. Subject to massive tectonic changes, the park's karst landscape is extremely complex with many geomorphic features of considerable significance. The vast area, extending to the border of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, contains spectacular formations including 65 kilometres of caves and underground rivers.

## Cultural Properties

### AFGHANISTAN Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley

(C i, ii, iii, iv, vi)  
The cultural landscape and archaeological remains of the Bamiyan Valley represent the artistic and religious developments which from the 1st to the 13th centuries characterized ancient Bakhtria, integrating various cultural influences into the Gandhara school of Buddhist art. The area contains numerous Buddhist monastic ensembles and sanctuaries, as well as fortified edifices from the Islamic period. The site is also testimony to the tragic destruction by the Taleban of the two standing Buddha statues, which shook the world in March 2001.

### ARGENTINA Quebrada de Humahuaca

(C ii, iv, v)  
Quebrada de Humahuaca follows the line of a major cultural route, the Camino Inca, along the spectacular valley of the Rio Grande, from its source in the cold high



Quebrada de Humahuaca

desert plateau of the High Andean lands to its confluence with the Rio Leone some 150 kilometres to the south. The valley shows substantial evidence of its use as a major trade route over the past 10,000 years. It features visible traces of prehistoric hunter-gatherer communities, of the Inca Empire (15th to 16th century) and of the fight for independence in the 19th and 20th centuries.

### CHILE Historic Quarter of the Seaport City of Valparaíso

(C iii)  
The colonial city of Valparaíso presents an excellent example of late 19th-century



Historic Quarter of the Seaport City of Valparaíso

urban and architectural development in Latin America. In its natural amphitheatre-like setting, the city is characterized by a vernacular urban fabric adapted to the hillsides where a great variety of church spires are to be seen. It contrasts with the geometrical layout utilized in the plain. The city has well preserved its interesting early-industrial infrastructures, such as the numerous 'elevators' on the steep hillsides.

### CZECH REPUBLIC Jewish Quarter and St Procopius' Basilica in Třebíč

(C ii, iii)  
The ensemble of the Jewish Quarter, the old Jewish cemetery and the Basilica of St Procopius in Třebíč are reminders of the co-existence of Jewish and Christian cultures from the Middle Ages to the 20th century. The Jewish Quarter bears an outstanding testimony to the different aspects of the life of this community. St Procopius Basilica, built as part of the Benedictine monastery in the early 13th century, is an exceptional witness to the influence of Western-European architectural heritage in this region.

### GAMBIA James Island and Related Sites

(C iii, vi)  
James Island and Related Sites present a testimony to the main periods and facets of the encounter between Africa and Europe along the River Gambia, a continuum that stretched from pre-colonial and pre-slavery times to independence. The site is particularly significant for its relation to the beginning and the abolition of the slave trade. It also documents early access to the interior of Africa.



James Island and Related Sites

### INDIA Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka

(C iii, v)  
The Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka are in the foothills of the Vindhyan Mountains on the southern edge of the central Indian plateau. Within massive sandstone outcrops, above comparatively dense forest, are five clusters of natural rock shelters, displaying paintings that appear to date from the Mesolithic period right through to the Historical period. The cultural traditions of the inhabitants of the 21 villages adjacent to the site bear a strong resemblance to those represented in the rock paintings.



Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka

### IRAN (Islamic Republic of) Takht-e Soleyman

(C i, ii, iii, iv, vi)  
The archaeological site of Takht-e Soleyman, in north-western Iran, is situated in a valley set in a volcanic mountain region. The site includes the principal Zoroastrian sanctuary partly rebuilt in the Ilkhanid (Mongol) period (13th century) as well as a temple of the Sasanian period (6th and 7th centuries) dedicated to Anahita. The site has important symbolic significance. The designs of the fire temple, the palace and the general layout have had significant influence on the development of Islamic architecture.

**IRAQ**  
**Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)**

(C iii, iv)

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



Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat)

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.

**ISRAEL**  
**White City of Tel-Aviv – the Modern Movement**

(C ii, iv)

Tel Aviv was founded in 1909 and developed as a metropolitan city under the British Mandate in Palestine. The White City was constructed from the early 1930s until the 1950s, based on the urban plan by Sir Patrick Geddes, reflecting modern organic planning principles. The buildings were designed by architects who were trained in Europe where they practiced their profession before immigrating. They created an outstanding architectural ensemble of the modern movement in a new cultural context.

**ITALY**  
**Sacri Monti of Piedmont and Lombardy**

(C ii, iv)

The nine *Sacri Monti* of northern Italy are groups of chapels and other architectural features created in the late 16th and 17th centuries and dedicated to different aspects of the Christian faith. In addition to their symbolic spiritual meaning, they are of great beauty by virtue of the skill with which they have been integrated into the surrounding natural landscape of hills, forests, and lakes. They also house much important artistic material in the form of wall paintings and statuary.

**KAZAKHSTAN**  
**Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi**

(C i, iii, iv)

The Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi, in the town of Yasi, now Turkestan, was built at the time of Timur (Tamerlane), from 1389 to 1405. In this partly unfinished building, Persian master builders experimented with architectural and structural solutions later used in the construction of Samarkand, the capital of the Timurid Empire. Today, it is one of the largest and best-preserved constructions of the Timurid period.



Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi



Franciscan Missions in the Sierra Gorda of Queretaro

**MEXICO**  
**Franciscan Missions in the Sierra Gorda of Querétaro**

(C ii, iii)

The five Franciscan missions of Sierra Gorda were built during the last phase of the conversion to Christianity of the interior of Mexico in the mid 18th century and became an important reference for the continuation of the evangelization of California, Arizona and Texas. The richly decorated church façades are of special interest as they represent an example of the joint creative efforts of the missionaries and the *Indios*. The rural settlements that grew around the missions have retained their vernacular character.

**POLAND**  
**Wooden Churches of Southern Little Poland**

(C iii, iv)

The wooden churches of southern Little Poland represent outstanding examples of the different aspects of medieval church-building traditions in Roman Catholic culture. Built using the horizontal log technique, common in eastern and northern Europe since the Middle Ages, these churches were sponsored by noble families and became status symbols. They offered an alternative to the stone structures erected in urban centres.

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION**  
**Citadel, Ancient City and Fortress Buildings of Derbent**

(C iii, iv)

The Citadel, the Ancient City and the Fortress buildings of Derbent were part of the northern limes of the Sasanian Persian Empire, which extended east and west of the Caspian Sea. The fortification was built in stone and consisted of two parallel walls that formed a barrier from the seaside up to the mountain. The town of Derbent was built between these two walls, and has retained part of its medieval fabric. The site continued to be of great strategic importance until the 19th century.

**SOUTH AFRICA**  
**Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape**

(C ii, iii, iv, v)

Mapungubwe is set hard against the northern border of South Africa joining Zimbabwe and Botswana. It is an open, expansive savannah landscape at the confluence of the Limpopo and Shashe. Mapungubwe developed into the largest kingdom in the sub-continent before it was abandoned in the 14th century. What survives are the almost untouched remains of the palace sites and also the entire settlement area dependent upon them, as well as two earlier capital sites, the whole presenting an unrivalled picture of the development of social and political structures over some 400 years.

**SPAIN**  
**Renaissance Monumental Ensembles of Úbeda and Baeza**

(C ii, iv)

The urban morphology of the two small cities of Úbeda and Baeza in southern Spain dates back to the Moorish 9th century and to the Reconquista in the 13th century. An

important development took place in the 16th century, when the cities were subject to renovation along the lines of the emerging Renaissance. This planning intervention was part of the introduction into Spain of new humanistic ideas from Italy, and they went on to have a great influence on the architecture of Latin America.



Renaissance Monumental Ensembles of Úbeda and Baeza

**SUDAN**  
**Gebel Barkal and the Sites of the Napatan Region**

(C i, ii, iii, iv, vi)

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.



Gebel Barkal and the Sites of the Napatan Region

**UNITED KINGDOM**  
**Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew**

(C ii, iii, iv)

This historic landscape garden features elements that illustrate significant periods of the art of gardens from the 18th to the 20th centuries. The gardens house botanic collections (conserved plants, living plants and



United Kingdom Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

documents) which have been considerably enriched through the centuries. Since their creation in 1759, the gardens have made a significant and uninterrupted contribution to the study of plant diversity and economic botany.

**ZIMBABWE**  
**Matobo Hills**

(C iii, v, vi)

The area exhibits a profusion of distinctive rock landforms rising above the granite shield that covers much of Zimbabwe. The large boulders provide abundant natural shelters and have been associated with human occupation from the early Stone Age right through to early historical times, and intermittently since. They also feature an outstanding collection of rock paintings. The Matobo hills continue to provide a strong focus for the local community which still uses shrines and sacred places, closely linked to traditional, social and economic activities.

**Extensions****BRAZIL**  
**Central Amazon Conservation Complex**

(N ii, iv)

The Central Amazon Conservation Complex makes up the largest protected area in the Amazon Basin (over six million hectares) and is one of the planet's richest regions in terms of biodiversity. It also includes an important sample of *varzea* ecosystems, *igapó* forests, lakes and channels which take the form of a constantly evolving aquatic mosaic that is home to the largest array of electric fish in the world. The site protects key threatened species, including giant arapaima fish, the Amazonian manatee, the black caiman, and two species of river dolphin.

**CHINA**  
**Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties**

(C i, ii, iii, iv, vi)

The Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties are four groups of tombs in four provinces of eastern China. The tombs, designed in keeping with the Chinese concepts of geomancy (*Fengshui*), provide outstanding evidence of Chinese beliefs and traditions from the 14th century onward and are significant examples of architecture and applied arts from that period.

**PANAMA**  
**Archaeological Site of Panamá Viejo and Historic District of Panamá**

(C ii, iv, vi)

Founded in 1519 by the conquistador Pedrarias Dávila, Panamá Viejo is the oldest European settlement on the Pacific coast of the Americas. It was laid out on a rectilinear grid and marks the transference from Europe of the idea of a planned town. Abandoned in the mid-17th century, it was replaced by a 'new town', (the Historic District), which has also preserved its original street plan, its architecture and an unusual mixture of Spanish, French and early American styles. The Salón Bolívar was the venue for the unsuccessful attempt made by 'El Libertador' in 1826 to establish a multinational continental congress.

# Looting of Iraq's National Treasures

Although the world was shocked by the looting of cultural, artistic and archaeological treasures in Iraq during the recent war, the international community has been heartened by the recent discovery that the extent of the damage and loss in the Iraqi Museum is less widespread than initially feared.

Some of the heritage of mankind found in the Iraqi Museum has resurfaced, while other items are being returned to their former homes, after having been hidden away for safekeeping before the start of the war. Nevertheless, some two to three thousand objects from this Museum are still missing.

This does not mean that UNESCO, other cultural institutions and university research groups have let down their guard. Much of Iraq's cultural heritage is irretrievable. The National Library and Archives, a priceless treasure of Ottoman historical documents, was burnt to the ground, while the Islamic Library of Qur'ans at the Ministry of Religious Endowment was also set ablaze.

United States investigators have released details of a preliminary report which concludes that 3,000 pieces in the Baghdad Museum are missing. Donny George, the Director-General of Research and Study of the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities, says that of the 8,000 or so exhibit-quality, world-class pieces of jewelry, statues and cuneiform clay tablets in the museum's collection, only a small number of pieces which were in the galleries of the museum at the time of the looting, are now unaccounted for.

As soon as reports of the looting of Iraq's treasures became known, UNESCO immediately alerted the relevant authorities in countries neighboring Iraq, as well as the United States and British authorities, in order to obtain their assistance in tightening border checks and preventing the illicit trafficking of cultural objects.

## UNESCO Action

Before the outbreak of the conflict, UNESCO took a number of steps to ensure that the different parties involved were aware of the terms of the 1954 Hague Convention and its two additional protocols relating to the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict. Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, alerted the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the United States Department of State and made available a detailed map of the positions of Iraqi archaeological sites and museums. UNESCO also invited INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization and the International Confederation of Art Dealers to ensure compliance with the 1970 Convention relating to the illicit transfer of ownership of cultural property.

'The real priority now is securing sites and cultural institutions throughout the country, and rebuilding Iraqi government departments in order to make them operational. UNESCO should be on the ground to coordinate with the Iraqis and the international community,' said Giovanni Boccardi, WHC Chief Arab States Unit.

In the United Nations' first non-humanitarian mission to Iraq in late May, a UNESCO team, led by Mounir Bouchenaki, Assistant Director-General for Culture, along with Neil MacGregor, Director of the British Museum, Ken Matsumoto, Professor at Tokyo University and chief of the Japanese archaeological mission at Kish, John Russell, Professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Arts and Roberto Parapetti, architect and Director of the Italian-Iraqi Centre for the Conservation of Historic Monuments, made a preliminary assessment of the damage to Iraqi cultural heritage. Most importantly the mission reaffirmed UNESCO's essential role in the preservation of Iraq's cultural heritage.

At the time this article went to press a second mission was in preparation which would complete the assessment of cultural institutions in Baghdad, as well as visit sites in the country.

## Experts meet

In the lead-up to the mission in May, UNESCO acted quickly with a series of high-level meetings in France and Britain with various partners involved in the preservation of Iraqi heritage in order to bring the international community together to monitor the loss and to find means to protect and preserve that heritage.

Before the end of the conflict Mr Matsuura decided to call a meeting on 17 April at Headquarters in Paris of the heads of the main archaeological missions in Iraq in order to coordinate the network of international scientific experts who work on Iraq's cultural heritage. They immediately formulated a post-conflict line of action for the rehabilitation of that heritage, as well as an emergency safeguard plan. They called for the protection of all museums, libraries, archives and sites, and for an immediate prohibition on the export of all antiques, antiquities, works of art, books and archives and a ban on international trade in objects of Iraqi cultural heritage.

A second meeting was convened in London and co-chaired by the Director of the British Museum and by the Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO. The curators of the largest collections of Mesopotamian antiquities outside Iraq, from the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, Berlin's Middle East Museum, the Louvre in Paris, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the British Museum in London concentrated on the situation in Iraq's museums and the immediate measures to be taken to prevent illicit trafficking.



Mounir Bouchenaki, UNESCO ADG for Culture, leads a discussion among experts on Iraqi cultural heritage

Efforts to get objects returned have become of paramount importance to UNESCO's emergency plan. In early May UNESCO participated in a meeting in Lyons, France, called by Interpol, the international police organization, whose aim was to bring together police and customs officials, art dealers and museum professionals in order to work out measures to fight illicit trafficking. UNESCO was called upon to coordinate the creation of a database, which is now being set up, for the identification of stolen objects.

The Director-General has also opened a special account for the generous donations which have already been proposed by Member States to finance projects for the rehabilitation of cultural institutions and historic monuments and sites. Italy has already granted 400,000 euros which can be increased to 1 million euros. Japan has contributed US\$1 million and Switzerland 250,000 Swiss francs.

A third meeting of experts jointly organized by the government of Japan and UNESCO will take place in Tokyo on 1 and 2 August 2003 and will focus in particular on the rehabilitation of the conservation laboratories in the Iraqi Museum.

In a most significant development, the United Nations Security Council on 22 May lifted trade and financial sanctions on Iraq and agreed to phase out the Oil-for-Food programme over the following six-months. It also took the unprecedented step of placing an embargo on the trafficking of Iraqi cultural heritage.

The resolution adopted has particularly strengthened the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, for which UNESCO is responsible. Although not all States Parties are signatories to the Convention, the resolution now makes it incumbent on all member States to take all possible measures to facilitate the safe return of stolen cultural property and prohibits trade in or transfer of such property. Some countries have already passed specific legislation to this effect. 'This resolution extends to all States Parties the obligations of the 1970 Convention and will undoubtedly greatly facilitate UNESCO's action,' Mr. Matsuura said.

## Cultural Heritage in Iraq

Iraq, the modern-day Mesopotamia, or land between the two rivers, is known as the cradle of civilization. It was the birthplace of the varied civilizations that brought humanity from prehistory into history, from the fifth millennium BC.

Thanks to an exceptional combination of geographical and climatic factors, a surplus of agricultural production led to the development of sophisticated societies, the invention of writing and the establishment of the first urban settlements and legal codes. The Sumerians, the Akkadians, the Assyrians all flourished here. In more recent times Baghdad became the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate and the political and cultural centre of one of the three monotheistic religions.

Numerous outstanding sites still bear witness to the great technical and artistic achievements of the ancestors of the people of present-day Iraq, and constitute a precious legacy for all humanity.

**Hatra** In 1985 Hatra was inscribed on the World Heritage List. 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 the 2nd century AD 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.

**Ashur** At the 27th session of the World Heritage Committee Ashur was inscribed the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger. The city was the first



Fortress of Al-Ukhaidar

capital of the Assyrian Kingdom and a very important religious centre, from the third to the first millennium BC.

## Tentative List

In 2000, Iraq submitted a new Tentative List to the WHC. The list now contains six sites from the Sumerian City-State of Ur to the Islamic Fortress of Al-Ukhaidar.

**The Ancient City of Nineveh** Nineveh is one of the most important of the ancient Mesopotamian cities and is often mentioned in the Bible. Today, the site consists of several mounds, the main one being the palace of Kuyunjik. It was occupied from the 6th millennium BC until it was destroyed by the Medes late in the 7th century BC.

**Ur** Ancient Ur was the capital of a small, wealthy empire during the third millennium BC, and was fabled as the city of the Sumerian moon god Nanna and the traditional home of the biblical patriarch Abraham. Ur's mounded ruins rise to a height of 20 meters above the surrounding plain. The most spectacular archaeological discovery has brought to light the Royal Cemetery, which contained numerous clay tablets, some of which tell the story of the epic hero Gilgamesh.

**Nimrud** Nimrud was one of the great cities of Assyria, built in the 13th century BC. An 8 km-long wall surrounds the 200-hectare city, which includes a citadel where a Ziggurat (a temple tower) was erected, dedicated to Nabu, the god of writing, and a series of palaces. Recent excavations have revealed three royal tombs containing incredible treasures, as well as an imposing stone wall.

**Wasit** Wasit was founded in 701 AD as an administrative centre and a garrison town. Excavations have revealed the remains of a madrasa (a religious school), residential buildings and two superimposed mosques.

**The Fortress of Al-Ukhaidar** Among the famous palaces built by Abbasid caliphs and emirs is the Al Ukhaidar Palace, a fortified complex containing halls, courtyards, apartments and a mosque. The palace, built between 774 and 775, is considered a masterpiece of technical innovation, and has had an important impact on the development of Islamic architecture.

**Samarra** Samarra was established as an important centre in 836 BC, when the Abbasid Caliph al-Mu'tassim made it his capital. Directly east of the caliph's palace is the Great Mosque of Samarra with its famous spiral minaret, which may have been influenced by earlier Mesopotamian ziggurats. Baked brick was used for the Mosque and the Bab al-Amma. Carved and molded stucco panels adorned palaces and houses, and provide the earliest examples of beveled stucco decoration.

On 2 June the **World Bank** and representatives of the WHC held a workshop in Washington for an exchange of views on respective activities. WHC Director **Francesco Bandarin** met **James Wolfensohn**, President of the World Bank Group, who expressed support for WB/WHC joint efforts to find closer means of co-operating on World Heritage issues.

On 4 June representatives of the WHC held a half-day workshop with the **Inter-American Development Bank** in Washington which demonstrated the synergy between the work of the WHC and the Bank and the great scope for collaboration.

The first planning workshop to discuss the feasibility of preparing a marine transboundary nomination of the **Pacific Line Islands (Kiribati, Cook Islands, French Polynesia and the US territories)** was held in Honolulu, Hawaii from 2-6 June, with participation from international and regional NGOs, relevant government authorities and WHC staff.

From 21-24 May the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO organized in Amsterdam a conference '**Linking Universal and Local Values: Managing a Sustainable Future for World Heritage**' which brought together some 66 representatives from 35 countries, as well as representatives from WHC and the Advisory Bodies. The central theme of the conference was to build on the holistic approach to culture and nature, in order to better understand the connection between local and universal values.

The first joint periodic reporting meeting of the **Council of Europe's Herein Co-ordinators** and WH representatives was held in Nicosia, Cyprus from 6-11 May. The meeting was opened by **Pefkios Georgiades**, Minister for Culture and Education and **Yiannis Papadopoulos**, Director of the Department of Town Planning and Housing.

On 28 April New Zealand's **Prime Minister, Helen Clark**, met with Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura at UNESCO in Paris, and signed an Arrangement concerning the protection and promotion of world cultural and natural heritage, with particular emphasis on the Pacific sub-region.

The World Heritage Centre joins ICOMOS Cuba, in mourning the loss of **Roberto Lopez**, Conservator of the World Heritage site of Trinidad y el Valle de los Ingenios, Cuba. Known affectionately as Macholo, he will always be remembered as a professional who devoted his energy and time to the preservation of the town he loved so much.

## What Are They Doing ?

From 29-31 May **Minja Yang**, WHC Deputy-Director, was in Bursa, Turkey to co-chair a conference organized by the Association of Historic Cities of Turkey. Together with Associate Expert **Fumiko Ohinata**, Ms. Yang went to the Crimea region in Ukraine from 21-23 May for a regional meeting on the harmonization of the national Tentative Lists of the Black Sea countries. On 11 May, Ms. Yang also undertook a mission to the Group of Monuments at Hampi, India, a site on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Accompanied by **Luc Tessier**, Director of the French public agency for major architectural projects, she was in Essen, Germany on 28 April to participate in a planning meeting on the re-use of the Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex. **Mechtild Rössler**, Chief, Europe and North America Unit, participated in the first meeting of site managers and agencies in the UK for Periodic Reporting (London, 8-9 April). **Hermann van Hooff**, Advisor for World Heritage in Latin America and the Caribbean, along with **Nuria Sanz**, WHC Consultant, went to Lima, Peru from 30 March-4 April to participate in the First Regional Technical Meeting Qhapac Nan - Camino Inca. **Giovanni Boccardi**, WHC Chief Arab States Unit, was in New York from 4-9 May to take part in the World Monument Fund selection panel, chaired by **Henry Cleere**, former ICOMOS WH Coordinator, to select 100 sites in danger. Along with **Pasquale Malara** and **Angela Maria Ferroni**, of the Italian Ministry of Cultural Properties and Activities, from 8-15 March Mr Boccardi went on the first mission in ten years to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to visit the country's WH sites, to renew coordination and identify possible initiatives for the protection of the sites. **Junko Taniguchi**, WHC Chief Asia Unit a.i., and **Alessandro Balsamo**, Consultant, completed the mapping and reformulation of the Bamiyan Valley nomination with the authorities during their mission to Afghanistan from 10-18 May. **Richard Engelhart**, Asia-Pacific Regional Advisor for Culture (UNESCO Bangkok), visited Borobudur in Indonesia, from 16-20 April, to examine the state of

conservation of the site. **Art Pedersen**, Consultant on Tourism and Visitor Management, was on mission to Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras from 18 March-9 April to review and analyze progress in the four Latin American project sites of Sian Ka'an and El Vizcaino in Mexico, Tikal National Park in Guatemala and Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve in Honduras. **Ron van Oers**, Latin America & Caribbean Unit, and **Marjaana Kokkonen**, Associate Expert, participated in a planning workshop in Bonaire, on a transboundary WH marine nomination between Venezuela and the Netherlands Antilles. The workshop was also attended by **Georgina Bustamante**, of the Nature Conservancy, and **Kalli de Meyer**, of the Coral Reef Alliance. **Alexandra zu Sayn-Wittgenstein**, Consultant, Central and Eastern Europe, participated in a meeting organized by ICCROM in Rome, 22-23 May 2003, with **Francis Childe**, Cultural Heritage Division, to discuss the joint future heritage conservation strategy for the Caucasus Region. **Lazare Eloundou**, Programme Specialist Africa Unit, was in Parakou, Benin from 14-19 April for a sub-regional seminar on the management of protected areas, organized jointly by the University of Benin and the French Development Institute for Research. **Julian Poole** joined the WHC as Chief Executive Officer. He is involved in coordinating and monitoring of the budget, evaluation and programme implementation, the administration of financial and human resources, and heads the administration team. **Fumiko Ohinata**, Associate Expert from Japan and **Kerstin Manz**, Consultant, joined the Europe and North America Unit on to work on cultural heritage in Eastern and Western Europe respectively.



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World Heritage mission to the Bamiyan Valley



Participants of the Pacific Line Islands workshop, Honolulu, Hawaii

**27 to 31 August**  
**EUROPARC General Assembly and Conference.** Stryn, Norway.  
Information: <http://www.europarc2003.no/>  
office@europarc2003.no

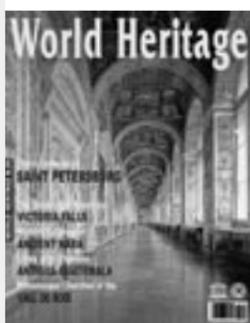
**8 to 17 September**  
**IUCN Fifth World Parks Congress.** Durban South Africa.  
Information: <http://www.iucn.org/wpc2003>

**19 to 20 September**  
**International Conference on Modern Re-uses for Historical Architecture.** Suomenlinna sea fortress, Helsinki, Finland.  
Information:  
<http://www.accr-europe.org/SL-eng/sommaire.htm>  
b.wallborn.accr@wanadoo.fr

**23 to 26 September**  
**7th International Symposium of the Organization of World Heritage Cities.** Rhodes, Greece.  
Information: <http://ovpm.org/rhodes/>

**30 September to 4 October**  
**New Perspectives to Save Cultural Heritage, XIX International Symposium of CIPA.** Antalya, Turkey.  
Information: <http://www.cipa2003-antalya.org/>  
info@cipa2003-antalya.org

**14 to 15 October**  
**14th General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention.** UNESCO Headquarters, Paris.  
Information: [n.dhumal@unesco.org](mailto:n.dhumal@unesco.org)



*The World Heritage Review No. 30, April 2003. The lead article in this issue focuses on the 300th anniversary of Saint Petersburg (Russian Federation), a city that has changed the face of literature and music and boasts a sumptuous Baroque and Neoclassical architectural heritage. Other articles feature Victoria Falls (Zambia/Zimbabwe), considered among the most spectacular waterfalls in the world; Ancient Nara (Japan) with its wooden Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines; Antigua Guatemala (Guatemala), the former capital devastated by an earthquake in 1773, now a flourishing tourist destination; and the splendid Romanesque churches of Vall de Boí (Spain) in the Catalanian Pyrenees.*

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