
Ancient Kingdom of Saba (Yemen) No 1700

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party

Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate

Location

Governorate of Ma'rib
Yemen

Brief description

The Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate is a testimony to the ancient Sabaeen culture, which developed amidst the hostile environment of the Arabian Peninsula, and to its creative production in the period from the 1st millennium BCE until the arrival of Islam to the region. This serial property is composed of seven archaeological sites that demonstrate the architectural, aesthetic and technological achievements of the Sabaeans, bearing witness to a highly complex society with a strong, well-organised and centralised administration, as evidenced by numerous historical inscriptions in the old South Arabian language. With its two key cities – Sirwah and Ma'rib – the Kingdom of Saba dominated the region of South Arabia politically and culturally from about the 8th century BCE to the 3rd century CE. Its prosperity was a product of the incense trade, and the technological knowledge in hydrology helped the Sabaeen cities to flourish at the edge of the desert thanks to the development of irrigation agriculture. The construction of the Ma'rib dam irrigation system enabled cultivation of a vast territory spreading north and south of the capital city of Ma'rib, sustaining life in the Ma'rib Oasis where the administrative, cultural and economic centre of the kingdom was located.

Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of seven *sites*.

Included in the Tentative List

8 July 2002 as "Archaeological site of Marib"

Background

The nomination was submitted to the World Heritage Centre by the State Party on 11 February 2022 to be evaluated under the emergency procedure as set out in paragraphs 161 and 162 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. A letter from the State Party regarding security conditions and related threats to the nominated property was also submitted on that date.

The nomination was submitted by the State Party as an emergency nomination due to persisting threats of damage related to the ongoing war in Yemen, developmental pressures and environmental factors threatening the integrity and authenticity of the nominated property.

This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission

Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

ICOMOS, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre, considered the feasibility of a technical evaluation mission to the nominated property. However, given the safety and security conditions, the mission could not take place.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 28 February 2022 requesting further information about the nature of emergency and the management of the nominated property.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 28 March 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

13 April 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description

The nominated property, located in the Marib Governorate in central Yemen, east of the present-day capital of Sana'a, testifies to the creative production of the ancient Kingdom of Saba, which played a dominant role in the incense trade as well as having political and cultural influence on the Arabian Peninsula from about the 8th century BCE to the 3rd century CE, before it succumbed to the Himyar people. It represents a period of the South Arabian history from the 1st millennium BCE until the arrival of Islam to the region in 630 CE, when the ancient Yemeni kingdoms developed and thrived amidst the harsh semi-arid environment, on the back of the Incense Route passing along the edge of the Şayhad Desert that traded frankincense and myrrh (as well as other high value commodities) to the Greek and later the Romans in the Mediterranean.

The Sabaeans appear to have dominated the southern part of the incense trade while the Nabateans controlled the northern part. From around 950 BCE until at last the 3rd century BCE, the Sabaeans taxed goods heading north from their southern neighbours.

The Sabaeans' culture and wealth is evident in the extent of the remains of the city, in the monumental sanctuaries, and in the hydraulic structures, in which the profits gained from the incense trade were invested. The high-end irrigation technology turned the area around the Dhana Valley into farmland, locally known as the Northern Oasis (Abyn) and Southern Oasis (Ysrn), which combined were the largest in ancient Arabia.

The nominated property consists of seven component sites.

Ancient city of Ma'rib (component part 1)

Occupying a tell in the middle of the Ma'rib Oasis, the ancient city of Ma'rib was one of the most important control points on the Incense Trade Route. As the cultural and economic centre of the ancient South Arabia, the city served as the capital of the Sabaean kingdom in the years 950-115 BCE, reaching its peak of prosperity in the 7th century BCE. Surrounded by a city wall dating back to the 2nd millennium BCE, Ma'rib included a city centre with the Salhin Palace, and the lower city which housed several temples, including the Ḥarūnum temple, which served as the first stop for pilgrims heading from the city to the Awām temple through a sacred processional road connecting the two edifices. The Ḥarūnum temple was converted into a mosque in the 4th century CE. The city was only abandoned in the 20th century at which time the 4.3-kilometre city walls were still intact.

Ma'rib now survives as a tell overlooking what was the Northern Oasis and separated from what was the Southern Oasis by the Wadi Dhana. Together the oases once covered some 10,000 hectares. Today urban areas have spread over parts of both oases.

Fragments of city's finely dressed stone walls, pierced with arched windows decorated with basalt, are still standing, including a circular tower, and also the pillars of the Ḥarūnum temple. On top of the tell are the remains of a cluster of traditional Yemeni tower houses. Elsewhere there are scattered ruins of stone buildings and towers, whose function remains unknown due to the absence of archaeological excavations.

Awām temple (component part 2)

The Awām temple lies four kilometres south from the ancient city of Ma'rib in what was the Southern Oasis. Said to be the largest temple in all of South Arabia, it was the centre of religious authority in the Sabaean kingdom. Dedicated to the official deity of the state Almaqah, the moon god, the Awām temple served as the final destination of a sacred pilgrimage route that started at the Ḥarūnum temple. The temple dates back to probably the

2nd millennium BCE and functioned until the 4th century CE.

Parts of the site have been excavated. What survives is the lower parts of a characteristic oval-shaped enclosure wall. Originally some thirteen metres high, the wall was constructed using a construction technique called *al-mi'sam*, i.e. "by wrist", characteristic for the architecture of South Arabia (consisting in building two walls in ashlar masonry with a thick filling of rubble core). Within the walls are the remains of a colonnade hall with (originally) thirty-two columns, preceded by a peristyle hall with eight square stone pillars (all still standing), a mausoleum and a necropolis (southern and western cemeteries – parts of which have been excavated), as well as residential buildings and workshops.

The Awām temple is notable for its fine stone friezes with ibex head motifs, false windows in the hall of the column lobby, unmatched in other temples in Yemen, and inscriptions of carved stones, metal, or black and pink ink.

An asphalt road cuts across the oasis someone hundred kilometres to the north of the temple and urban sprawl is said to be heading towards it.

Bar'ān temple (component part 3)

Also, in the Southern Oasis and northwest of the Awām temple is the Bar'ān temple dedicated to the Moon God. Erected in the 1st millennium BCE, with large limestone and alabaster blocks with some walls still standing up to three metres in height, it functioned as an important pilgrimage destination until about the 6th century CE. The temple consisted of a courtyard with porticoes on all sides and an elevated platform of polished limestone fronted by six monumental stone pillars (five of which are still fully preserved), leading further to the most holy part of the temple. Inscriptions record the gift by a Sabaean leader of silver and bronze statues of the moon, the bases of which survive.

Ancient dam of Ma'rib (component parts 4a, 4b, 4c)

One of the oldest irrigation systems in the Arabian Peninsula, the ancient dam of Ma'rib controlled the torrential waters flowing through Wadi Dhana and channelled them to the Ma'rib Oasis through a system of canals. The dam was constructed around the 7th and 6th century BCE, but some earlier hydraulic system existed here probably already at the end of the 3rd millennium BCE. The dam was in operation for some 2,500 years until the 6th century CE.

The Ma'rib dam irrigation system is said to be one of the oldest models for the emergence of advanced dam engineering. Three elements of the irrigation system are nominated as separate component parts – remains of the northern bank of the Ma'rib dam (component site 4a), remains of the southern bank of the Ma'rib dam (component site 4b), and remains of the dam of Al-Jufaynah (component site 4c) with the associated diversion canals.

The northern and southern banks consisted, each, of a sluice linked to a barrier wall and connected to diversion canals that distributed water to the Ma'rib Oasis. The main drains and diversion canals are only the part of the overall irrigation network still visible.

Further north, twenty-seven kilometres away from the northern bank, remains of the Al-Jufaynah dam are preserved. Composed of two walls constructed using the *al-mi'sam* technique, this dam regulated the waters flowing through Wadi Jufaynah as part of the irrigation system.

Ancient city of Sirwah (component site 5)

Sirwah, the second city of the Kingdom of Saba, was situated forty kilometres away from the Ancient city of Ma'rib, on a rocky hill above the Sirwah Valley, surrounded by mountain ranges. The beginnings of sedimentation and irrigation in the area around Sirwah city date back to the 7th-5th millennium BCE. A settlement is proven within the city walls from the mid-2nd millennium BCE. An important Sabaeen centre serving administrative purposes under the early *Mukarribs* (priest-kings), it was established as a city under a tribal union.

Within its walls, it contained the Awal temple, with a characteristic horseshoe-shaped enclosure wall which survives almost to its full height in the east, and six pillars still survive in the courtyard front of the main gate. There are also remains of the eastern gate of a palace functioning as an administrative building, and some defensive structures. An irrigation system with a dam-regulated watering of the fertile lands of the Sirwah Valley. The city was possibly a military base for the Sabaeen armies, as indicated by the historical inscriptions preserved on Sirwah's walls.

The inscriptions recorded (carved on stone, poured in metal or written in ink) testify to historical events, and give details of the administration and the economy of the Kingdom of Saba, demonstrating its leading position among other kingdoms of the Arabian Peninsula.

In the nomination dossier, the State Party originally proposed very limited boundaries of the component sites, totalling 75.30 ha, and the buffer zones totalling 67.18 ha. The boundaries in general follow the plots of the cultivated land or elements of transport infrastructure where these exist. Otherwise, they are not discernible in the landscape.

In the additional information sent in March 2022, the State Party revised the boundaries. The revised area of the seven component parts now totals 375.29 ha, with their buffer zones totalling 19,291.71 ha. An additional larger buffer zone (buffer zone B) totalling 8,933 ha is proposed to encompass the entire Ma'rib Oasis.

The buffer zones around the component parts include the important immediate and wider setting of each site, as well as some key views. The larger buffer zone B

encompasses the historical Northern (Abyn) and Southern (Ysrn) Oases together with Wadi Dhana that runs between them, and includes component parts 1, 2, 3, 4a-c and their buffer zones. Its northern perimeter is simultaneously the current projected boundary of the modern city of Ma'rib.

History

Historical evidence shows migrations from the area of southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula to the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East in the 3rd millennium BCE. Around 1400-1200 BCE, descendants of these people immigrated back to South Arabia, bringing with them already highly complex culture and religion. Fuelled by the trade of incense, the South Arabian societies of Saba, Ma'in, Qataban and Hadramaut developed in the territory delimited by the Sarat mountain range and the Şayhad Desert. Saba is the earliest reported kingdom. In its early days, it was ruled by the Mukarribs, federal tribal leaders, who held strong political and probably religious power. In the 7th century BCE, the political system in the kingdom changed with the transfer of the administrative control to the dynastic kings. Together with this transfer, religious practice changed, and the Moon God Almaqah became the state deity of the Sabaeans. By the 5th century BCE Saba was ruling a federation of neighbouring States – Ma'in, Qataban, Ausan and Hadramaut – maintaining its hegemony over 600 years and extending its influence to Najran in the north and crossing the Red Sea to Ethiopia.

Ma'rib and Sirwah represented the main political centres of the realm. In the 8th-7th century BCE, Ma'rib became the biggest city of southwest Arabia, by which time the Sabaeans largely controlled the southern incense trade taxing merchandise from their neighbours. Ma'rib was also a centre for sacred pilgrimage, which played an important role in the religious and political system of the kingdom. The prosperity of Saba was sustained as a result of high level of hydraulic know-how that enabled the people to turn the semi-arid territory of the southwest corner of the Arabian Peninsula into agricultural lands and to develop pastoral economy. The importance of the hydrological technology has been at the centre of South Arabian history to such a degree that the destruction of the ancient Ma'rib dam in the 6th century CE has been associated with the demise of the ancient civilisations of South Arabia.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The nominated property represents an outstanding example of a complex culture that developed in South Arabia from the 1st millennium BCE as a result of the Incense Trade Route passing through the Ṣayhad desert. The Kingdom of Saba dominated the region politically and culturally from about the 8th century BCE to the 3rd century CE, spreading its influence to the neighbouring realms and playing a key role in the wider network of cultural exchanges.
- The Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate demonstrates the exceptional creative and technological achievements of the Sabaeans, before the arrival of Islam in the 7th century CE, which bear witness to a strong well-organised and centralised administration. An innovative irrigation system created to sustain agriculture and pastoral economy in the semi-arid environment of the Arabian Peninsula demonstrates the high level of hydrological engineering, which enabled the Kingdom of Saba to flourish among other contemporary kingdoms of South Arabia.
- The historical importance and the outstanding character of the achievements of the Sabaeans survived in legends and literary works, as well as religious and symbolic associations.

Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes of the nominated property are urban areas with buildings and associated structures, such as temples, palaces, fortifications, city walls, settlements, cemeteries, workshops, administrative and defensive buildings, together with their decorative ornamentation and historical wall inscriptions; irrigation systems, with dams, sluices, canals and a network of channels that irrigated the Northern and Southern Oases, adjoining Ma'rib, and the Sirwah valley near Sirwah; and control over parts of the incense trade.

ICOMOS considers that since the governorate of Marib is a present-day administrative unit, which does not reflect the boundaries of the ancient Kingdom of Saba, there is no need to reference it in the name of the nominated property. The integrity of the nominated serial property relies on the full range of the Sabaeen architectural, technological and artistic production as evidence for the society's life, independent of their location within the present-day structures.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed around two key parameters: the monumental expressions of different aspects of society's life in architecture of different type and purpose, and the technologically advanced level of construction. These parameters have been considered within typological, chronological-regional and thematic

frameworks. The component parts have been considered as archaeological heritage, and compared using geo-cultural context of the Arabian Peninsula, Near and Middle East, as well as North Africa within a timeframe from about the 1st millennium BCE until the arrival of Islam to the Arabian Peninsula. Within the thematic framework, the nominated property has been compared to properties representing ancient capitals, structures revealing symbolic associations, and sites related to the Incense Trade Route. The comparative analysis has examined properties within the Arabian Peninsula (the location of ancient Arabia), and in the adjacent region of the Mediterranean, as well as in North Africa, inscribed on the World Heritage List, inserted in the Tentative Lists of States Parties as well as other properties.

Comparators on the World Heritage List include the Land of Frankincense (Oman, 2000, criteria (ii) and (iv)), Hegra Archaeological Site (Saudi Arabia, 2008, criteria (ii) and (iii)), Petra (Jordan, 1985, criteria (i), (iii), and (iv)), Babylon (Iraq, 2019, criteria (iii) and (vi)), Persepolis (Iran, 1979, criteria (i), (iii) and (vi)), Archaeological Site of Carthage (Tunisia, 1979, criteria (ii), (iii) and (vi)), Archaeological Sites of the Island of Meroe (Sudan, 2011, criteria (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v)), and Gebel Barkal and the Sites of the Napatan Region (Sudan, 2003, criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi)). None of these properties is considered a better representative of the cultures of South Arabia, through their creative productions and symbolic associations, than the nominated property.

Among the sites on the Tentative Lists, the closest comparators include The Cultural Landscape of Al-Faw Archaeological Area (Saudi Arabia, Tentative List), The Cultural Heritage of Yeha (Ethiopia, Tentative List), and The Ancient City of Nineveh (Iraq, Tentative List). None of these sites is said to demonstrate the level of technological mastery as the nominated property.

The most important part of the comparative analysis is the section on comparisons with sites in the Arabian Peninsula.

What characterises the nominated property are its monumental urban structures and its highly sophisticated irrigation systems, but also its control of large parts of the incense trade. It needs to be positioned within the complex of cities that made up the Incense Route and those that benefited from it. This is the geo-cultural area within which comparisons are most relevant.

It is acknowledged that cities of the early complex societies along the Incense Route shared many common characteristics such as monumental stone masonry constructions, sophisticated irrigation techniques, and a written language with a common alphabet. Details are provided of the extensive remains of Shabwa, capital of Hadramaut, Timna, capital of Qataban, Baraqish, capital of the Minaean kingdom, and Zafar, capital of the Himyarite kingdom. Although some of these are compared in terms of surviving monuments rather than for their contribution to the incense trade, or for how these

kingdoms relate to each other, all these sites demonstrate exceptional features such as extensive surviving town walls, large temples, urban areas, etc. In ICOMOS's view the comparisons between these cities cannot be carried out just in terms of size but should also consider what they reflect as particular kingdoms during particular eras and how they contributed to and benefited from the incense trade.

It is noted that the Incense Route - Desert Cities in the Negev, (Israel 2005, criteria (iii) and (v)) was not referenced in the analysis, however this property with its four cities reflects the way Nabateans organised the incense trade to the north, and how large communities prospered as a result of the sophisticated water management in the desert environment. The Sabaeen cities can be seen as counterparts to the Nabatean cities of Haluza, Mamshit, Avdat and Shivta as both groups are linked to the chain of cities that made up the overall land routes across the Arabian Peninsula to the Mediterranean.

The weakness of the comparative analysis is the lack of justification for the nominated component sites. No details have been provided on the range of Sabaeen sites in the Ma'rib area or around Sirwah.

What the comparative analysis does demonstrate is that there is no other property on the World Heritage List or on Tentative Lists that reflects the kingdoms and cities that developed in South Arabia around the incense trade.

In terms of how the nominated sites stand out in relation to the many sites that testify to other kingdoms and cities of South Arabia that were also part of the incense trade and prospered from it, comparisons are handicapped to a degree by the paucity of research. Thus, while ICOMOS considers that some of these other sites might well be able to demonstrate exceptionality, the Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate may be seen to stand out in particular for the dominant role that the kingdom played in the Incense Route, for the highly sophisticated and large-scale water management techniques, and for the affluence that is demonstrated by the surviving temples and urban areas.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii) and (iv).

Criterion (iii): *bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the monumental architecture and the preserved hydraulic structures of the Sabaeans are an exceptional testimony to the affluence of the Kingdom of Saba, which dominated South Arabia in the period between the 8th century BCE to the 3rd century CE as a political and

cultural power. They express the high socio-political and economic status of the kingdom, which owed its prosperity to the incense trade and flourished in the harsh environment of the Arabian Peninsula thanks to the high level of hydrological know-how and engineering skills. The preserved wall inscriptions document historical events, religious and other occasions, as well as administrative decisions, thus offering a glimpse into the main domains of life of the kingdom. Religious and symbolic references made to the mythical land of the legendary Queen of Sheba, known locally as Bilqis, testify to the global significance of the archaeological remains of the Sabaeen kingdom, associated with the Queen.

ICOMOS supports this justification apart from references to the Queen of Sheba.

The person of Queen Sheba or Bilqis is not historically attested. She remains a mythical figure. The myth itself does not seem to have originated in the South Arabian context. The tangible associations to Bilqis in the temples of Awām and Bar'ān may therefore be more of a mythical projection, referring to an idealised kingdom as a place of origin of Queen Sheba/Bilqis rather than the Kingdom of Saba in particular.

Criterion (iv): *be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate demonstrates outstanding examples of the architectural, aesthetic and technological achievements of the Sabaeen people that bear witness to their sophisticated cultural tradition present in South Arabia from the 1st millennium BCE until the arrival of Islam in the year 630 CE. The administrative and religious constructions of monumental size created by the Sabaeans influenced architecture in the region, serving as typological models. The dam of Ma'rib irrigation system which enabled farming in the Ma'rib Oasis represents the pinnacle of hydrological engineering in the region.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is an outstanding example of an ensemble representing the cultural tradition of the Sabaeen kingdom, which controlled much of the Incense Route through the Arabian Peninsula, and played a key role in the wider network of cultural exchanges due to its prominent socio-political and economic status. Located within a semi-arid landscape of valleys, mountains and deserts, and composed of remnants of large urban settlements with their monumental architecture and diverse technological advances, the ensemble bears witness to the ancient South Arabian kingdom that flourished at the edge of the desert thanks to the commodities that they possessed and technological prowess. The irrigation system of ancient Ma'rib reflects technological invention in the field of hydrological engineering on a scale not existing anywhere else in the ancient South Arabia. Backed by

advanced knowledge of irrigation and agricultural sciences, it required a complex regulatory framework to create what is said to be the largest artificial oasis in ancient Arabia. The system sustained the expansion of a society in a semi-arid territory of the Arabian Peninsula at a significant stage in human history, when trade routes linking South Arabia with the Mediterranean and North Africa were established.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (iv). The serial approach is justified.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property is based on the wholeness of archaeological vestiges that reflect different aspects of life of the Sabaeen population, and their intactness.

The nominated component parts represent the range of the creative and technological production of the Sabaeen culture between the 1st millennium BCE until the arrival of Islam to express the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The boundaries of the component sites were drawn to include remains of archaeological vestiges and some neighbouring areas of high archaeological potential, although the full extent of these archaeologically rich areas around Ma'rib and Sirwah has, however, not been presented. But, as no inventory nor map showing the distribution and categories of Sabaeen sites in the Ma'rib area or around Sirwah apart from those in the nominated property has been provided, it is not possible to evaluate whether the boundaries encompass all the sites or areas that include attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.

It is further not known where the findings from excavations and archaeological surveys performed on the sites are stored and in what condition they are.

The ancient city of Ma'rib has not yet been archaeologically investigated and clearly has suffered greatly from damage since its abandonment in the 20th century.

The processional road of the sacred pilgrimage that linked the ancient city of Ma'rib and the Awām temple is not included within either the boundaries of the component parts 1 and 2, or their buffer zones, but lies within the buffer zone B. The symbolic and ritual connection between component part 1 and component part 2 is essential for the understanding of the nominated property along the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

The proposed individual buffer zones do not protect fully the visual integrity of the landscape of the Ma'rib Oasis. The larger buffer zone B is in this case a better solution, as it protects visual associations between the component parts and includes the wadis and farmland areas that were part of the irrigation and sustainable land-use system. However, the rationale for creating two buffer zones is not clear.

The visual integrity of the individual sites has been partly compromised in the case of the ancient city of Ma'rib (component part 1) and the Awām temple (component part 2), due to the major asphalt roads passing close to the perimeter of these archaeological sites. The integrity of the Ma'rib dam irrigation system (component parts 4a-c) is currently in danger, as a result of the proposed road building in the Master Plan 2018. The proximity of the southern perimeter of the large development projected in the Master Plan to the component parts located within the Ma'rib Oasis would also affect the visual integrity of the nominated property as a whole.

In the absence of a technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS has been unable to evaluate fully the integrity of the property or its potential vulnerabilities.

It is however clear that the physical fabric of the property is generally very poor, with some attributes being gravely damaged as a result of the ongoing military attacks. Combined with the identified threats, integrity of the individual component parts and of the nominated property as a whole can be considered as highly vulnerable.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on the evidence from the archaeological sites – the form and design, as well as the materials and substance of the vestiges that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

Most of the sites have been excavated only to a small degree or not excavated at all (an estimated ten percent). Of all the component parts, the Bar'ān temple (component part 3) is the best known archaeologically.

The conditions of authenticity of some component parts are fragile due to historical developments and contemporary threats. The forms have been affected by the military activities related to the ongoing war, with cases of severe damage observed, while some past conservation and restoration works have negatively affected materials and substance of the attributes. Considering additionally the developmental pressures linked to the population growth and urbanisation of the area, authenticity of the individual component parts and of the whole series can be considered as highly vulnerable. The ongoing damage, destruction and removal of elements of the nominated property has a negative impact on the ability of the component parts to convey their meaning. It is of note that the entire component part 4c (dam of Al-Jufaynah) lies currently in the area designated for development in the 2018 Master Plan for Ma'rib. The newly planned transport infrastructure in this area will further affect the authenticity of component parts 4a and 4b (ancient dam of Ma'rib, northern and southern banks).

Despite changes in the landscape of the nominated property associated with the development of the modern city of Ma'rib, and the urban sprawl that led to the destruction of some areas with archaeological potential,

the historical setting of the component parts can be still easily understood. Also of concern is the demolishing of post-Sabaeen vernacular architecture in the ancient cities of Ma'rib and Sirwah, which reflects the traditions that link the pre-Islamic Sabaeen culture with the cultures that developed in the area after the arrival of Islam.

In the absence of a technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS has been unable to evaluate fully the authenticity of the property or its potential vulnerabilities, but considers that authenticity appears to be highly vulnerable.

Boundaries

The revised boundaries of the component sites have been defined based on the extent of archaeological remains and consider in some instances the unexcavated areas where archaeological material is to be expected. The full extent of these archaeologically rich areas has not been provided; neither was an inventory or map showing the distribution of Sabaeen sites in the Ma'rib area or around Sirwah. The buffer zones have been delimited taking into consideration the historical context together with the key vistas to and from the component parts, and the wider archaeological and natural landscape setting, which played an important role in the development of the Sabaeen kingdom. Vulnerability to pressure from development was also taken into account as a factor that influenced the perimeter of the buffer zones. A joint buffer zone has been proposed for component parts 4a, 4b and 4c.

An additional much larger buffer zone B, encompassing the entire Ma'rib Oasis as an archaeological and agricultural park has been suggested for the nominated property. It protects the wider landscape setting of the property, which contributes to the understanding of the nominated serial property.

ICOMOS notes that the number of inhabitants within the revised boundaries of the component parts and their buffer zones has not been provided. It is also unclear whether the land included within the nominated property is state- or privately-owned. ICOMOS considers that the legal authority within the boundaries of the nominated property is unclear, given that the perimeter has been changed during the evaluation process. It is further not known what restrictions apply in the buffer zones of each component part and in the buffer zone B; the rationale for establishing two types of buffer zones is unclear.

ICOMOS notes that the processional road of the sacred pilgrimage that linked the ancient city of Ma'rib and the Awām temple is not included within the boundaries of the nominated property, nor is it fully enclosed within the buffer zones of component parts 1 and 2. It lies within the boundary of the buffer zone B. ICOMOS considers that the sacred pilgrimage was a fundamental practice that constituted complex societies in ancient South Arabian states, and the fact that Ma'rib and its temples were the centre of this practice testifies to the dominant role that the Kingdom of Saba exercised among other local realms. This symbolic and ritual connection between component part 1

and component part 2 is thus essential for the understanding of the nominated property along the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS also notes that the visual connections between the component parts located in the Ma'rib Oasis, which were all part of one administrative system of the capital city of Ma'rib, are not fully protected within the individual buffer zones. Only the buffer zone B protects these visual associations; the latter also includes the wadis and farmland areas that were part of the irrigation and sustainable land-use system.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the nominated serial property for the World Heritage List. ICOMOS also considers that the proposed justification for inscription under criteria (iii) and (iv) is appropriate. The serial approach is justified. ICOMOS further considers that in the absence of a technical evaluation mission, the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts could not be fully evaluated.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation

There is substantial documentation of work done at the different component sites of the nominated property, which can be used as a baseline documentation of the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. It includes aerial photos and photogrammetric documentation of some of the component parts. A digital archive for the study of pre-Islamic Arabian inscriptions, which includes inscriptions recorded at the nominated property, is in place as well.

Since 2021, Yemeni cultural heritage authorities are working on a national inventory of cultural heritage, which is to include archaeological remains in the Marib Governorate. An inventory of the collections of the Sana'a National Museum and some provincial museums is being prepared within a three-year project (2020-2023) on safeguarding and archiving museum objects. Complementing it is a photogrammetric record of museum collections at risk, with a long-term goal of presenting collections in the form of a virtual museum. Since 2017, the Ancient Yemen Digital Atlas, a WebGIS-based monument information system of Yemeni sites is in place.

ICOMOS notes that it is not known whether there exists an inventory of all the artefacts uncovered at the component sites, and where these are being currently stored; no information has been provided on their conditions either. It is also not well understood at what level of completion are the multiple projects documenting

Yemeni archaeological sites and collections in relation to the nominated property.

State of conservation and conservation measures

The nomination dossier does not provide detailed information on the conservation history of the nominated property.

The Bar'an temple (component part 3) has been subject to archaeological excavations in the years 1997-2000; the work included some restoration and consolidation of the temple. The Awām temple (component part 2), including its cemetery, has been under investigation since the late 1990s. Archaeological surveys have been performed in the ancient city of Ma'rib (component part 1) and the ancient city of Sirwah (component part 5), and their surroundings. The latter also saw some restoration and consolidation works (in the Awal temple). The northern bank of the Ma'rib dam (component part 4a) has been subject to consolidation works in the years 2002-2006.

Since the mid-1980s, recultivation and development in the Ma'rib Oasis have caused extensive damage to the unexcavated areas rich in archaeological records. Contemporary urban infrastructure is slowly approaching the ancient city of Ma'rib (component part 1) and the temple of Awām (component part 2). A major asphalt road runs along the northern and western boundary of the component part 1, and another one at a distance of approximately one hundred metres north of the component part 2.

Since the beginning of the war in 2014, all archaeological works have been stopped at the component parts, and the sites have gradually fell into disrepair. The heritage authorities struggle to maintain and protect the sites effectively due to lack of financial resources and logistical challenges related to the ongoing conflict. All the component parts of the nominated property suffer from neglect. They are exposed to collateral and targeted damage as a result of the war, looting, ongoing destruction related to illegal construction, developmental threats and environmental factors.

Based on the information provided by the State Party, ICOMOS considers that the component parts are in the general state of neglect, with no conservation measures or conservation plan in place. Regular maintenance is not taking place. Funds for protection and conservation of the component parts have not been available since 2015.

ICOMOS notes that no state of conservation reports have been prepared since 2009. And some of the past conservation and restoration works have been executed in a rather insensitive way, which would need to be addressed in the long term.

In the absence of a technical evaluation mission, it has not been possible to assess fully the state of conservation of the nominated property.

Monitoring

The monitoring of the nominated property has been typically done on a quarterly basis by the Marib branch of the General Organization of Antiquities and Museums. However, due to war, the onsite inspections have become a challenge. Remote monitoring has been implemented instead with the use of satellite imagery to evaluate the changes in the state of conservation of the component parts, and detect undesirable activities near the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the use of satellite imagery is not adequate as a tool to monitor the state of conservation of the property, in line with the identified threats, and direct actions to prevent negative impact thereof.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated serial property is in a state of neglect. There is a lack of regular maintenance, and no relevant conservation measures are in place. No funds are available for protection and conservation of the component parts.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

The archaeological vestiges being part of the nominated property are owned by the State and protected by Law on Antiquities N. 21/1994 and its amendments set forth by Law N. 8/1997. Law N. 16/2013 additionally applies to the ancient city of Ma'rib as a historic town. Artistic production is protected by Law N. 6/1994.

A number of other intersectoral laws apply, such as the Law on Tourism N. 22/1994, Law N. 26/1995 on Environment Protection, Law N. 20/1995 on Urban Planning.

With regard to urban planning tools, the Decree on urban plan regulations N. 260/1997 and the 2018 Master Plan of Ma'rib are binding.

ICOMOS considers that it is unclear what protection mechanisms exist within the legislation that applies to the nominated property. No details have been provided on the legal basis of the buffer zones, or how the protection mechanisms within the individual buffer zones differ from restrictions within the buffer zone B, set to protect the wider setting of the nominated property.

Management system

At the national level, the General Organization of Antiquities and Museums is in charge of the protection, conservation, restoration and management of the nominated property. The Organisation also manages issues related to research and presentation of cultural heritage. Its Ma'rib branch is responsible for monitoring and maintenance of the component parts. Additionally, the General Organization for the Preservation of Historic Cities in Yemen is responsible for protection and management of the ancient city of Ma'rib as a historic town. Both of these organisations fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of

Information, Culture and Tourism. Budgetary and other financial resources allocated for the protection and management of the nominated property are under regional level administration, overseen by the Governorate of Marib. At the local level, the municipality of Ma'rib carries the responsibility for the development of the area and the implementation of the Master Plan, prepared by the General Administration for Land, Survey and Urban Planning, to address the predicted urban growth in the area and ratified in 2018.

A management plan for the nominated property has not been developed. It is not clear whether there exist management plans for the individual component parts. The management measures for the buffer zones (including buffer zone B) have not been provided either. A document "*Conservation and Management Guidelines*", which include key policies and priority actions requiring attention, has been prepared to guide the future management and protection of the component parts. There are, however, no timeframe for the implementation of the proposed plan of action and no indication on how it would be carried out in practice given the precarious political situation.

Besides the legal-institutional protection, the component parts benefit from traditional protection provided by the local tribes on whose traditional lands the nominated property sites are located. The tribes play an informal role as traditional custodians of the component parts but are also involved formally in their protection, being employed as guards or taking part in the maintenance of the nominated property.

In the additional information sent in March 2022, the State Party ensured that formal agreements exist with local tribesmen based on which the cooperation with the State is taking place currently. The tribal leaders are part of the local authorities.

ICOMOS notes that while traditional tribal system supports the legal-institutional framework to manage the sites, this system is fragile and potential tribal conflicts may occur in the future. ICOMOS considers that since the local tribes are traditional custodians of the component parts, it will be important to include them in the future management and protection of the nominated property as key stakeholders to ensure buy-in from local communities and prevent potential conflicts. ICOMOS further considers that inclusion of local populations in the protection and management of the nominated property needs to be tied with the preservation of post-Sabaeen vernacular architecture in the ancient cities of Ma'rib and Sirwah, as part of the safeguarding of the historic and traditional context of the nominated property.

ICOMOS also considers that the situation of the ancient city of Sirwah component part and its management is unclear, since it is currently occupied by militia.

ICOMOS notes that there are plans to resume excavations in the nominated property once the political

situation becomes more stable. In the meantime, documentation work continues. ICOMOS considers that given the multitude of institutions involved in research and development of the nominated property, it would be important to enhance and coordinate the input of international agencies, to ensure that there is no duplication of work or resources, and to maximise and sustain the initiatives aimed at capacity-strengthening, knowledge production, protection and management of the property.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property

In summary, ICOMOS considers that in the current political situation, the protective measures and management system for the property are inadequate. The clear disconnection between the goals of urban development of the area and the need to safeguard the archaeological vestiges shows that the protection of the nominated property is ineffective.

6 Emergency threats affecting the nominated property

The State Party has set out the following emergency threats as a reason for requesting an emergency inscription:

- Collateral and deliberate damage of the nominated property related to the ongoing war in Yemen;
- Vandalism and looting observed at the nominated component parts;
- Occupation of the ancient city of Sirwah component part by militia;
- Development pressures related to the population growth in the area of Ma'rib city;
- Environmental factors having negative impact on the archaeological sites.

The World Heritage status is sought by the State Party to strengthen the international protection of the nominated property and seek financial assistance to fund maintenance and protection of the component parts.

The State Party indicated that since the start of the current war the nominated property has been subject to significant threats and risk of damage. Some component parts have been deliberately damaged in targeted attacks, as is the case of the ancient city of Ma'rib and the northern bank of the Ma'rib dam (airstrike in 2015), as well as in the ancient city of Sirwah (bombing in 2018). These attacks have intensified recently, and the State Party believes that there exists a high risk of imminent new ones that may result in further loss of the cultural heritage in the area.

Vandalism and looting add to the seriousness of the situation. The Ma'rib walls have been quarried for building stone while in the Awām temple, inscriptions have been pillaged, smuggled outside the country and illegally sold.

Developmental pressures that threaten the sites are largely related to the enormous population growth in the area since 2014, partly as a result of the displacement of people due to war, but also in relation to the movement of migrants in search of employment in the ever-expanding oil and gas industry. The new residential areas, 'informal' settlements, refugee camps, and the spread of agricultural activities to the areas surrounding the component parts of the nominated property where potential for new archaeological finds is considered high remain a threat. Some attempts at building on unexcavated archaeological areas surrounding the ancient Ma'rib city (component part 1) have been halted back in 2017. Moreover, the archaeological sites are being damaged by being used as quarries for building materials by the local communities, and cracks are left in the walls of the temples by people searching for minerals.

With regard to the environmental factors affecting the property, desertification and flooding are having negative impact on the archaeological sites. Damage to the wall of the Bar'ân temple (component part 3) due to flash floods has been indicated by the State Party. Sand encroaching on the sites of the Awâm temple (component part 2) or the northern bank of the Ma'rib dam (component part 4a) is re-burying archaeological vestiges.

In the additional information sent in March 2022, the State Party elaborated further on the development pressures threatening the component sites located within the Ma'rib Oasis, based on the analysis of recent expansion trends and the planned future development of the area according to the existing Master Plan of Ma'rib (2018).

The Master Plan addresses the predicted urban growth in the area by projecting an expansion of the present-day urban area of the modern city of Ma'rib, mostly to the west and north, and the related construction of a network of roads. The expansion of the modern Ma'rib city urban area will add pressure on the Ma'rib Oasis due to increased traffic on the two national roads that cut across the Oasis in the north-south and east-west directions and the related population sprawl alongside them. It may also result in the increase in pollution and noise, higher vulnerability of sites to vandalism and looting, as well as loss of visual integrity and authenticity of the nominated serial property. This future development also signals potential conflicts between the development of the area and heritage protection. For instance, a sinuous road running along the proposed northern perimeter of the buffer zone B is planned as the southern boundary of the planned expansion. Component part 4c (dam Al-Jufaynah) is situated entirely within the area designated for development, according to the Master Plan. Moreover, the new road constituting the western perimeter of the planned Ma'rib development would in the future continue towards southeast, thus cutting across component part 4a (northern bank), leading to the loss of integrity of the Ma'rib dam irrigation system and the nominated property as a whole.

The State Party also explained that component part 5 (the ancient city of Sirwah) is not subject to the same developmental pressures as the rest of the nominated property. However, the occupation of Sirwah by militia is a reason for the urgent need to protect the site.

ICOMOS considers that the threats indicated by the State Party are of serious nature, and the damage to the nominated property and the dangers it faces constitute an emergency situation.

ICOMOS also notes that the potential decision to inscribe the nominated property on the World Heritage List may increase the risk of damage to the heritage resources, which have been the target of attacks, deliberate destruction and looting since the start of the war, or even before it.

ICOMOS also considers that the ongoing war has numerous secondary impacts, such as major decrease in the financial and human resources that can be dedicated to heritage protection and management, rise in illegal export and sale of heritage resources, and uncontrolled urban expansion in the vicinity of the nominated property, which add to the emergency context of the nomination.

The implementation of the 2018 Master Plan related to the expansion of the transport infrastructure in the immediate proximity to the Ma'rib Oasis component parts signals not only a lack of connectivity between the management and protection of the property and the plans for urban development of the area, but also demonstrates that the current protection measures are not effective. The Master Plan poses an urgent risk of compromising the integrity and authenticity of the nominated property, especially with regard to the impact of the new transport infrastructure on the component parts 4a-c. The proximity of the southern perimeter of the Master Plan development project to the component parts located within the Ma'rib Oasis also risks affecting the visual integrity of the latter.

ICOMOS also considers that environmental pressures need to be managed as continuing factors with long-term effects on the integrity and authenticity of the nominated serial property rather than imminent threats that would require emergency procedure. These pressures require long-term solutions to mitigate the negative impact, also related to climate change. However, ICOMOS recognises that the precarious situation in the country and the lack of financial resources for protection and maintenance of sites have led to the neglect whereby even short-term preventive measures are not in place at the moment.

7 Conclusion

In response to the requirements of an emergency nomination as set out in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, paragraph 161, ICOMOS has considered whether:

- The property is in danger, as a result of having suffered damage or facing serious and specific dangers from natural events or human activities, which would constitute an emergency situation;
- An immediate decision by the World Heritage Committee is necessary to ensure its safeguarding;
- The property may unquestionably justify Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that the threats of collateral damage and targeted destruction of the component parts related to the ongoing war in Yemen are a serious danger to the integrity and authenticity of the nominated property, and represent an imminent threat necessitating an immediate decision by the World Heritage Committee. Considering that the nominated component parts had been targeted in the past in military attacks, ICOMOS recognises that the risk of damage to the nominated property may increase following its inscription on the World Heritage List.

ICOMOS further considers that the developmental threats, and in particular risks related to the implementation of the 2018 Master Plan for Ma'rib, represent a danger to the nominated property, and can be said to constitute an emergency situation in terms of risk of damage to the property's integrity and authenticity. They demonstrate the ineffectiveness of the protection and management measures in place, testifying to a disconnection between the goals of urban development of the area and the need to safeguard the archaeological vestiges constituting the nominated property.

ICOMOS also considers that the environmental pressures indicated by the State Party do not currently represent an imminent danger to the property, even if addressing them at the moment has become challenging due to the war and the related shortage of funds.

In view of the lack of a technical evaluation mission, combined with limited details on certain aspects being provided in the nomination dossier, ICOMOS has not been able to fully evaluate integrity, authenticity and management of the nominated property in line with the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, or to appraise the appropriateness and effectiveness of the boundaries. It considers that there are potential vulnerabilities and weaknesses in the case as presented. There is also a gap relating to the selection of component parts in the absence of documentation being provided on the full extent and disposition of Sabaeen sites. All of this means that the evaluation cannot be fine-tuned to the extent that a full evaluation would be. However, on the basis of all the sources of information reviewed during the evaluation process, ICOMOS is in a position to conclude that the

property unquestionably justifies Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS recommends that the Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate, Yemen, should be inscribed on the World Heritage List but at the same time be inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

This recommendation should be seen as a way to ensure that the attributes are not impacted by the threats related to the ongoing war in Yemen, or by developmental pressures posing a threat to the nominated property, and that appropriate planning regulations are modified or developed, resources are mobilised to address the conservation challenges, and the protection, conservation, management and monitoring regimes for the property are developed and implemented to address what are seen as potential vulnerabilities and weaknesses of the property in terms of integrity and authenticity, as well as protection and management.

ICOMOS considers that the dangers facing the property can be considered to constitute an emergency situation for which a decision by the World Heritage Committee is necessary for its safeguarding, and that the Outstanding Universal Value of the property has been demonstrated.

8 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate, Yemen, be inscribed on an emergency basis on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (iii) and (iv)** and at the same time on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

ICOMOS notes that the authenticity, integrity, protection and management of the property or its potential vulnerabilities could not have been fully evaluated at this stage due to the lack of a technical evaluation mission to the site.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba represents a period of the South Arabian history from the 1st millennium BCE until the arrival of Islam to the region in 630 CE, when the ancient Yemeni kingdoms developed amidst the harsh and arid environment of the Arabian Peninsula and flourished through their involvement with the Incense Trade Route linking South Arabia to the Mediterranean, from about the 8th century BCE to the 3rd century CE, before it was overpowered by the Himyar people.

Located in the Marib Governorate in central Yemen, seven archaeological sites reflect the affluent Kingdom of Saba, arising from its control of the incense trade in South

Arabia and its architectural, aesthetic and technological achievements that bear witness to a highly complex society with a strong, well-organised and centralised administration, as evidenced by numerous historical wall inscriptions.

The Sabaeans' culture and wealth is clearly evident in the ensemble of two cities, temples and extensive irrigation systems. The walled capital city Ma'rib, was the administrative, cultural and economic centre of the Kingdom of Saba, while the fortified city of Sirwah, some forty kilometres to the west, may have acted as its military capital. The monumental colonnaded sanctuaries in the temples of Ḥarūnum, Awām and Bar'ān were linked by a processional pilgrimage route, which attracted adherents from across the Arabian Peninsula. Technological knowledge in the field of hydrological engineering enabled the Sabaeans to create the Ma'rib dam, which fed an innovative irrigation system of canals that allowed cultivation of a vast territory spreading north and south of Ma'rib, that was considered to be the largest artificial oasis in ancient Arabia.

Criterion (iii): The Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba, with the monumental architecture and the preserved hydraulic structures erected by the Sabaeans, demonstrate high level of technological know-how and engineering skills. They are an exceptional testimony to the affluence of the Kingdom of Saba, which dominated South Arabia in the period between the 8th century BCE to the 3rd century CE as a political and cultural power. They reflect the high socio-political and economic status of the kingdom, which owed its prosperity to control of the incense trade, and its survival in the harsh arid environment of the Arabian Peninsula through the creation of large oases based on a sophisticated irrigation system linked to the Ma'rib dam. The preserved wall inscriptions that document historical events, religious occasions, and administrative decisions offer a glimpse into the main domains of life of the kingdom.

Criterion (iv): The Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba with their monumental architecture and diverse technological advances represent an outstanding example of an ensemble that testifies to the cultural tradition of the Kingdom of Saba that served as a central node in the frankincense trade route through the Arabian Peninsula. Flourishing within the semi-arid landscape of valleys, mountains and deserts of South Arabia thanks to a highly advanced irrigation system, the kingdom played a key influential role among neighbouring realms and in the wider network of cultural exchanges at a time when trade routes linked South Arabia with the Mediterranean and North Africa. The dam of the Ma'rib irrigation system, which enabled farming in what is said to be the largest artificial oasis in ancient Arabia, represents the pinnacle of hydrological engineering in the region.

Integrity

The component parts of the property include the attributes necessary to ensure the representation of the features and

processes, which convey the property's Outstanding Universal Value. The physical fabric of the property can be considered as very poor with some attributes having been gravely damaged. Considering the existing threats related to the war and the developmental pressures, integrity of the individual component parts and of the property as a whole can be considered as highly vulnerable.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the individual component parts and of the whole series can be considered as highly vulnerable due to historical developments and contemporary threats. Despite changes in the landscape of the property associated with the development of the modern city of Ma'rib, and the urban sprawl that led to the destruction of some areas with archaeological potential, the historical oasis setting of the component parts can be still understood. Demolishing of post-Sabaeen vernacular architecture, which reflects the traditions that link the pre-Islamic Sabaeen culture with the cultures that developed in the area after the arrival of Islam, and which constitutes part of the historical context of the property, is of concern.

Management and protection requirements

The archaeological material at all component parts is legally protected at the national level through the Law on Antiquities N. 21/1994 and its amendments set forth by Law N. 8/1997. The ancient city of Ma'rib is protected as a historic town by Law N. 16/2013. The legal authority within the boundaries of the component parts is unclear, as are protection mechanisms that apply to the property. The legal basis for the buffer zones, including buffer zone B, is also not known at this stage.

Protection and management of the property reside at the highest level with the General Organization of Antiquities and Museums; the Ma'rib branch being responsible for the monitoring and maintenance of the component parts. The General Organization for the Preservation of Historic Cities in Yemen is in charge of the protection and management of the ancient city of Ma'rib as a historic town. Besides the legal-institutional protection, the component parts benefit from traditional protection provided by the local tribes.

At present, there is no management plan for the property in place. *Conservation and Management Guidelines* have been developed to guide future management and protection of the component parts. But it is unclear how the proposed plan of action will be implemented given the precarious political situation. The management measures for the buffer zones, including buffer zone B, have not been provided.

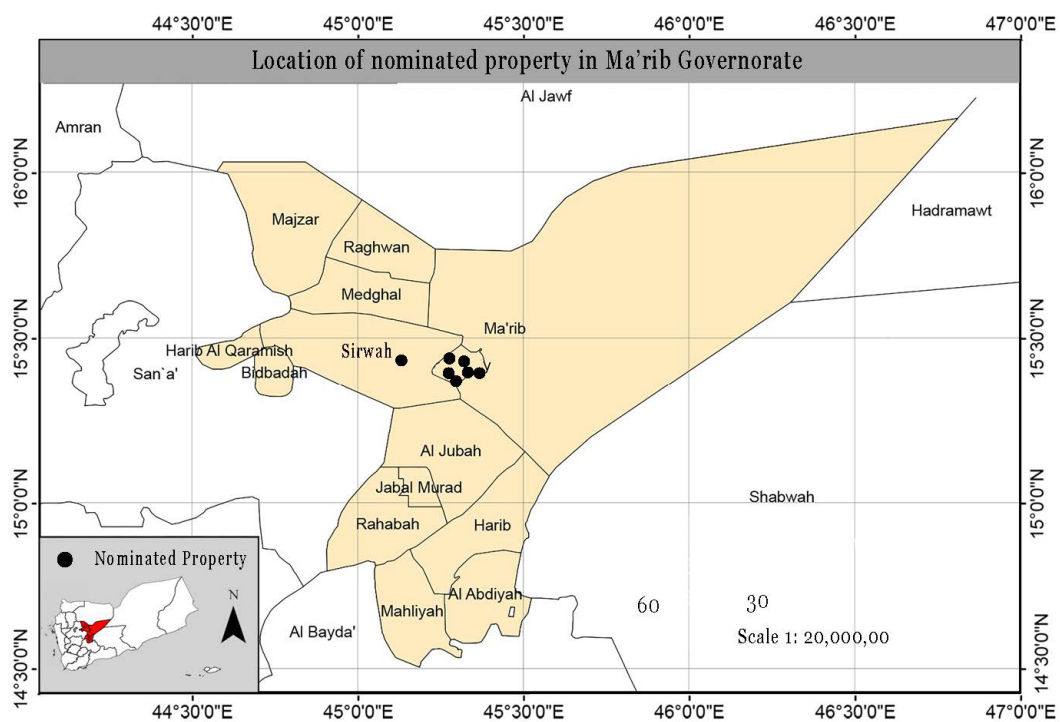
Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give urgent consideration to the following:

- a) Inviting, as soon as is feasible, a reactive monitoring mission to the property, to:
 - i) Prepare a detailed report on the state of conservation,
 - ii) Assess protection of the property and its buffer zones,
 - iii) Consider the effectiveness of its boundaries;
 - iv) Establish a Desired state of conservation and a programme of corrective measures to remove the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger,
- b) Halting the implementation of the 2018 Master Plan until a full assessment has been undertaken, through a Heritage Impact Assessment, of its potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and its setting, and, based on the results of the Heritage Impact Assessment, undertaking necessary revisions of the Plan,
- c) Reinstating funding for management and conservation,
- d) Developing as a matter of urgency risk preparedness plans for each component part to address vandalism and looting as well as overall protection,
- e) Including local tribes as traditional custodians of the component parts in the management and protection of the property to ensure buy-in from local communities and prevent potential conflicts,
- f) Extending protection measures onto the post-Sabaeen vernacular architecture in the ancient cities of Ma'rib and Sirwah as part of the safeguarding of the historic and traditional context of the property, and involving local populations in the protection and management of these heritage resources,
- g) Completing an inventory of Sabaeen monuments and sites,
- h) Enhancing the coordination of inputs from varied research institutions and international agencies to ensure that there is no duplication of work or resources and to maximise and sustain the initiatives aimed at capacity-strengthening, knowledge production, protection and management of the property,
- i) Informing the World Heritage Centre of the intention to undertake or authorise all major projects which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, in line with paragraph 172 of *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*,

- j) Submitting to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2024, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session;

Since the governorate of Marib is a present-day administrative unit, which does not reflect the boundaries of the ancient Kingdom of Saba, there is no need to reference it in the name of the nominated property. ICOMOS recommends that the name be changed by excluding the mention of the Marib Governorate.



Map showing the location of the nominated component parts