
Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan (Palestine) No 1687

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party

Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan

Location

Jericho Municipality
Governorate of Jericho and Al Aghwar
Palestine

Brief description

Located in the Jordan Valley, the nominated property is an oval-shaped tell, or mound, that contains the archaeological deposits of millennia of human activity, and includes the adjacent perennial spring of 'Ain es-Sultan. A sizeable permanent settlement had emerged here by the 9th to 8th millennium BCE, enabled by the fertile soil of the Jericho oasis and easy access to water. With its monumental features and community structures, Neolithic Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan reflects developments that took place across the Fertile Crescent. Increasingly large and sedentary settlements began to form then, acting as drivers in the development of new subsistence economies, leading eventually to agriculture and pastoralism. Skulls with post-mortem treatment found in abundance on the site and purposefully buried anthropomorphic statues testify to the presence of cultic practices amongst the Neolithic populations living there. The Early Bronze Age archaeological material shows signs of urban planning, while vestiges from the Middle Bronze Age reveal the presence of a large Canaanite city-state occupied by a socially complex population.

Category of property

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

Included in the Tentative List

20 October 2020

Background

This is a new nomination.

Preparatory Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for the elaboration of the nomination dossier was received by the State Party in 2019. The World Heritage Centre supported an International Assistance request submitted in 2020 to prepare a Management and Conservation Plan.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission

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

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 13 to 16 December 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 3 October 2022 requesting further information about the proposed justification for inscription, boundaries, and the Jericho Spatial Urban Plan.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 3 November 2022.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 27 January 2023 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: the comparative analysis, the Conservation and Management Plan, new developments, community engagement, and future research.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 27 February 2023.

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

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

10 March 2023

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 and history

Located northwest of present-day Jericho in the Jordan Valley in Palestine, the nominated property consists of an oval-shaped tell, or mound, that contains the archaeological deposits of human activity going back to about 10,500 BCE, and the adjacent spring of 'Ain es-Sultan, located immediately to the east, which has been and continues to be an important source of water for the surrounding area.

The stratigraphy of this archaeological site shows twenty-nine phases of occupation. From the earliest period is a large rectangular platform of natural clay with retaining walls. In the Neolithic period, a sizeable settlement developed in the 9th to 8th millennium BCE, with a wall, a tower with internal staircase, and a ditch dug into the bedrock. In the 8th to 7th millennium BCE, archaeological vestiges prove the existence of an enclosure wall and terraced walls constructed on the western side of the tell.

Remnants of different types of houses found on the site testify to the evolution of housing in the Neolithic period – from circular semi-subterranean houses made of timber to more sophisticated mud-brick houses with courtyards and rectangular rooms, to pit dwellings.

Graves found under the floors of houses, and skulls and skeletons with post-mortem treatment discovered under what was probably a shrine, testify to the presence of cultic practices in Ancient Jericho from at least the 8th millennium BCE. Numerous plastered skulls buried in groups in different places around the site are evidence of a practice widely known in this period across the Levant and in Anatolia, which tends to be associated with ancestor worship. Buried anthropomorphic plaster statues may hint at the presence of an organised religion.

The archaeological material from the Bronze Age includes three massive fortified walls constructed in the Early Bronze Age (3000-2350 BCE) and four walls dating to the Middle Bronze Age (1550-1200 BCE) visible in the excavated sections. Ancient Jericho in the Early Bronze Age had an oval shape and included within its enclosure walls the spring of 'Ain es-Sultan. Semi-circular towers strengthened the walls. The archaeological deposits contain the remains of residential and public buildings, including rectangular houses with rounded corners, a large apsidal construction for communal functions, and a multi-storey mud-brick structure known as Palace G, which is thought to have played an important economic and political function. The layout of Ancient Jericho at that time shows early signs of urban planning, with a central street created in a residential quarter along which houses were constructed.

From the Middle Bronze Age, a large defensive system with ramparts, buttresses, and retaining and revetment walls (a so-called Cyclopean wall) has been preserved. Amongst the excavated houses and public buildings is a structure that probably served as a temple, as well as an edifice considered to be the Hyksos palace. The uncovered material shows that during the Middle Bronze Age the city was occupied by a socially complex population.

Most of the excavated artefacts are in museums and collections outside Palestine.

The nominated property has an area of 5.93 ha and a buffer zone of 22.53 ha.

Historic evidence shows the presence of hunter-gatherer groups in the area of the nominated property from the Late Epipaleolithic period: Natufian culture is attested at this site around 10,500 BCE. Towards the end of the 9th millennium BCE, Ancient Jericho developed into a sizeable settlement due to the favourable conditions and fertile soil of the Jericho oasis, with easy access to water from the perennial springs of 'Ain es-Sultan, 'Ain ed-Duyuk, and 'Ain en-Nueima. An irrigation system was established as early as the Neolithic period, and was developed substantially later under the Romans. Destroyed, abandoned, and rebuilt several times during the 8th to 6th

millennium BCE, the settlement regressed and was finally deserted during the Chalcolithic period.

In the Early Bronze Age, Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan witnessed impressive growth and saw early urban development. In the Middle Bronze Age, it became a large, flourishing Canaanite city-state with a highly developed urban centre inclusive of palaces, cemeteries, and architecture that served both private and public purposes. The city was destroyed around the year 1550 BCE, and in its place a number of villages developed in the Jordan Valley.

The settlement relocated to Tulul Abu al-'Alayiq in the Hellenistic period, and in the Byzantine and Early Islamic periods the urban core of the Jericho oasis was at Tell Hassam. During the Ottoman period, Jericho was barely a village until the beginning of the 20th century CE, when it became an agricultural centre under the British Mandate. At that time, the 'Ain es-Sultan Refugee Camp grew north of Tell es-Sultan. The city, together with the remainder of the West Bank, was controlled by the Kingdom of Jordan from 1948-49 until 1967. During Israeli occupation from 1967 to 1994, Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan became an Israeli National Park and was opened to the public in 1984. It has been under the administrative control of the Palestinian Authority since 1994.

In the additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party clarified that the chronological timeframe for the nominated property with respect to its proposed Outstanding Universal Value is limited to the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods. Earlier and later historical developments, which span several millennia and are demonstrated by material remains beyond the boundaries of the nominated property into the wider setting of the Jericho oasis, constitute the cultural context and are not the focus of the nomination.

State of conservation

Scholarly interest in the nominated property goes back to the 18th century CE. The first archaeological soundings and investigations took place in the 19th century CE. The tell was conceptually associated with Ancient Jericho in 1841. A series of trenches were excavated in 1907-09, followed by an archaeological campaign in 1930-36 that confirmed that the tell had a multi-stratified history. Additional archaeological excavations were carried out from 1952 to 1958, led by Kathleen Kenyon, who determined the chrono-stratigraphy of the site. Except for a sounding done in 1992, no works were undertaken on the site between 1958 and 1997.

Between 1997 and 2019, a Joint Palestinian-Italian Expedition reassessed previous excavations and rehabilitated the uncovered vestiges. Mud-brick walls were strengthened and consolidated; some were plastered using traditional mortar. Some of the collapsed structures were restored and trenches were backfilled. The new mud-bricks installed to protect the original walls were intentionally made larger to be easily distinguishable from the originals. In 2021, the Neolithic tower, which

previously had metal beams installed to stabilise it, underwent maintenance work. Cracks in its lintels and flaking of staircase steps were documented.

The 'Ain es-Sultan spring was rehabilitated in 2009 in order to improve the water supply for the nearby present-day city of Jericho, and to develop the spring as a tourist destination. Works included landscaping and installation of a retractable roof.

Today, about thirty percent of the tell is excavated. In the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party explained that excavations have temporarily been suspended in order to focus on conserving the uncovered vestiges. Future archaeological work will be based on a research strategy that will form part of a Management and Conservation Plan.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is satisfactory, but the site in general, and certain sections in particular, require urgent attention. Past excavations damaged portions of the archaeological strata, and soil erosion keeps degrading the exposed structural remains and causes open trenches to widen. Due to the fragility of the material, urgent conservation measures and continued maintenance are needed.

Factors affecting the nominated property

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are environmental and anthropogenic pressures.

Rainfall and its runoff, paired with high temperatures and wind, are the main causes of erosion on the nominated property. Rising groundwater leads to the destruction of archaeological deposits, and nesting birds, burrowing animals, and uncontrolled vegetation further exacerbate the fragility of the archaeological material. Earthquakes are a major risk, as the nominated property is located in a high seismic hazard zone.

In the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party explained that drainage channels have been made around the excavated areas to control rain runoffs. ICOMOS considers that the planned Management and Conservation Plan should include a hydrological strategy for the evacuation of rainwater from the nominated property.

Amongst the anthropogenic factors, pressure from tourism and the effects of urbanisation, including urban encroachment on the land immediately surrounding the nominated property, are key threats. Currently, two tourist centres are located close to the southern boundary of the nominated property, within the buffer zone: the Sultan Tourist Centre, and the Temptation Tourist Centre. The latter encroaches on the nominated property. Negotiations

with the developer to relocate the facility are currently underway.

In 2018, the Japan International Cooperation Agency together with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of Palestine conducted a survey to better understand the existing dynamics amongst tourists, and to plan for the future. Accordingly, the State Party is planning new tourist infrastructure adjacent to the nominated property. It is to include a new visitor facility with an interpretation centre, site museum, and new parking lot. A cable car that connects the nominated property with the Mountain of Temptation to the northwest provides visitors with a panoramic view of the area, but affects the views to and from the nominated property. The State Party will seek to remove the cable car system in the future, though no date has been specified.

The land surrounding the nominated property is subject to increasing development pressures. The 'Ain es-Sultan Refugee Camp spreads immediately north of the nominated property, with no buffer between it and the tell. The State Party has no control over the camp, as it is under the authority of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The spring of 'Ain es-Sultan is currently separated from Ancient Jericho by a public road. Re-routing this road to a location at the eastern edge of the buffer zone has been approved and financed by the Jericho Municipality. Completion is planned for July 2023. The former public road will then become a pedestrian path on the site.

Some issues in relation to re-routing the road were raised by the residents of the 'Ain es-Sultan Refugee Camp. In the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party clarified that residents of the 'Ain es-Sultan Refugee Camp were engaged, through the committee of camp, in the re-routing of the road, which has been included in planning documents since the 1950s. Part of the new road was built in the 2000s, and a short section was added in 2022. The State Party also explained that an archaeological survey was conducted before the construction of this alternative road began. It indicated that the area did not contain any archaeological remains. As such, the State Party did not consider an Environmental and Heritage Impact Assessment to be necessary.

ICOMOS considers that independent Heritage Impact Assessments need to be carried out as a pre-requisite for any development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around the nominated property.

ICOMOS also considers that the plans of the State Party regarding the expansion of tourism facilities are not clear, including the location of the land to be acquired for this development.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is satisfactory, and that factors affecting the nominated property need attention. A hydrological strategy for the evacuation of rainwater from the nominated property should be included in the Management and Conservation Plan.

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:

- Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan exhibits an interchange of ideologies with civic living, creating developments in architecture, technology, and the arts, and the domestication of plants and animals during the Neolithic, Early Bronze Age, and Middle Bronze Age.
- As an outstanding testament to cultural traditions and ancient civilisations, it is the oldest fortified city of the world, a fundamental milestone in the history of humanity for more than 10,000 years, one of the first settled agricultural societies, a main centre of the Neolithic Revolution, and one of the earliest instances of ancestor worship.
- As an outstanding example of Neolithic development of a permanent sedentary settlement, the unique architectural and technological innovations of Ancient Jericho best illustrate the development of permanent urban centres. It is also amongst the best examples in the Levant of rampart construction techniques during the Bronze Age.

Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes of the nominated property are the archaeological deposits and the above-ground archaeological vestiges of Ancient Jericho dating to the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods, as well as the adjacent spring of 'Ain es-Sultan.

ICOMOS considers that some conclusions drawn by the State Party on the significance of Ancient Jericho, especially in the Neolithic period, appear to be based on 20th-century theories about the development of agriculture, urbanisation, and the spread of cultic practices in the Levant and the wider Near East cultural context. These theories have been challenged by more recent archaeological investigations and interdisciplinary studies of Neolithic sites in the Near East, which indicate that a more nuanced understanding of the values of the nominated property is needed.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed around the following parameters (which are implicit rather than explicit): sites from the Neolithic and the Bronze Age, particularly the Middle Bronze Age; sites located in the Fertile Crescent; sites with long histories as urban centres on major trade routes; and sites with virtually continuous occupation over millennia. It has examined properties

within the Near East geo-cultural region and beyond, that have been inscribed on the World Heritage List or inserted in the Tentative Lists of States Parties, as well as other properties.

The State Party considers that the main attributes relevant to the comparative analysis are the Neolithic fortifications, the development of housing, ritual practices related to the treatment of skulls, Neolithic material culture, and Bronze Age fortifications. It also discusses the nominated property as a place where pioneering archaeological methods were developed and scientific terminology was devised.

Given the large number of relevant archaeological sites in this geo-cultural region, the State Party provides a general overview, with selected sites being mentioned as examples rather than being analysed in a systematic or comprehensive manner. Amongst the important properties from the Neolithic period inscribed on the World Heritage List, the overview mentions Göbekli Tepe (Türkiye, 2018, criteria (i), (ii) and (iv)) and the Neolithic Site of Çatalhöyük (Türkiye, 2012, criteria (iii) and (iv)), which differ from the nominated property either in their dating or their purposes.

Bronze Age fortifications on the World Heritage List such as Byblos (Lebanon, 1984, criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi)) and the Biblical Tels - Megiddo, Hazor, Beer Sheba (Israel, 2005, criteria (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi)) are compared to Ancient Jericho, which is said by the State Party to stand out due to its impressive and technologically complex ramparts.

The comparative analysis also includes a list of sites that testify to the Neolithic traditions of house construction, and that have evidence of ritual practices related to post-mortem skull treatment. Ancient Jericho is said by the State Party to stand out amongst them because it attests to the development of housing styles and skull treatment practice over a long period of time.

The comparative analysis uses a largely quantitative approach that offers few details in support of a robust examination. In addition, it relies on interpretations of the nominated property that have been challenged in recent studies.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested the State Party to provide a more focused and complete comparative analysis developed around a set of values that are based on more recent archaeological investigations and interdisciplinary studies. In its response provided in February 2023, the State Party presented an expanded and better focused qualitative analysis that includes a large number of comparators. Properties such as Choirkoitia (Cyprus, 1998, criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv)) and the Archaeological Site of Troy (Türkiye, 1998, criteria (ii), (iii) and (vi)) have similarities to the nominated property, but are shown to represent different cultural contexts and to have stratigraphies that are significantly different from the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the revised comparative analysis demonstrates in a convincing way that the combination of values and the attributes that the site convey are not yet represented on the World Heritage List, and that the nominated property stands out within its geo-cultural region.

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 (ii), (iii) and (iv).

Criterion (ii): *exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan bears witness to an exceptional interchange of cultural values and religious practices as well as technological innovations in the Near East during the Neolithic and the Bronze Age. According to the State Party, its location along major trade routes helped Ancient Jericho to act as a cultural centre from which ideas and experiences in the fields of plant and animal domestication, architecture, and mortuary practices related to ancestor worship spread throughout the region. The nominated property is also known as the place where the so-called Wheeler-Kenyon method of archaeological excavation used widely by archaeologists in the Near East and Anatolia was popularised.

ICOMOS considers that Ancient Jericho was an important permanent settlement in the Levant during the Neolithic period and later. Its inhabitants shared cultural and religious practices with the populations in the wider region, with whom they communicated and exchanged goods. However, ICOMOS considers that the claims that specific ideas and values around agricultural production, technological and architectural developments, and cultic practices were developed specifically in Ancient Jericho and were exported from there to influence the region over time have not been fully substantiated. The early dating of the material remains discovered in the nominated property does not necessarily indicate this influence.

ICOMOS further considers that, while the Wheeler-Kenyon method of archaeological excavation is of importance in the history of archaeological research and methodology, its significance as regards the proposed Outstanding Universal Value is limited. ICOMOS considers that criterion (ii) has not been demonstrated.

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 nominated property represents one of the earliest examples of a permanent settlement, with virtually

continuous occupation over ten millennia. The inhabitants domesticated plants and animals and developed agriculture to sustain their lifestyle, which, according to the State Party, makes it one of the progenitors of the Neolithic agricultural revolution in the Near East. It is also claimed to be the oldest fortified city, where innovative technology was used in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A period to create fortifications that included a ditch and a tower, which must have required the existence of socio-political structures and an economic system at that early period.

While there is evidence of a long settlement history on this site, ICOMOS considers that Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan cannot be considered to have been occupied virtually continuously. The archaeological record from the tell shows gaps in occupation in the Chalcolithic, Late Bronze Age, and Iron Age I periods. ICOMOS further considers that it is difficult to confirm whether Ancient Jericho is the oldest fortified city, as there is a body of scholarship that proposes the Neolithic settlements were rather large villages or mega-sites, the concept of urbanism having developed much later. The defensive character of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A walls in Ancient Jericho remains a matter of debate.

ICOMOS does, however, consider that the nominated property testifies in an exceptional way to developments that took place across the Near East in the Early Neolithic, when increasingly large and sedentary settlements began to emerge and to act as major drivers in the development of new subsistence economies, eventually leading to agriculture and pastoralism. Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan demonstrates how people learned to live together in larger and more permanent settlements. Monumental features, the presence of shared structures, and the treatment of skulls all belong to the wider Neolithic framework where people developed new social and ritual methods of communal living. The nominated property provides important insights into changes in social organisation, and into the degree of skill, planning, and labour that this social organisation required. The deep stratigraphy preserved on the tell has the potential to answer many questions related to development and change in the Neolithic period. ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified on these grounds.

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 nominated property is an exceptional example of the development of permanent urban centres in the Near East, which marked the significant stage of human transition from hunter-gatherers to a sedentary lifestyle. As a fortified town with elaborate defensive architecture in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A period, the nominated property, according to the State Party, demonstrates the architectural and technological innovations in the realm of urban housing until the Bronze Age, based on a long record of consecutive habitation phases and a range of

housing styles preserved on the site. It is also said to bear exceptional evidence, on the scale of the Levant, of Middle Bronze Age rampart construction techniques.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is an outstanding example of a permanent sedentary settlement with a long history that illustrates the transition of the people of the Levant from hunter-gatherers to a sedentary lifestyle in the Neolithic. With monumental architectural features such as a wall with a ditch and a tower dating to the Neolithic, the nominated property exemplifies in an exceptional way the process of Neolithisation of the Fertile Crescent, a significant stage in human history. It also testifies to the rise of early Levantine urban culture in the Early Bronze Age, and the Middle Bronze Age ramparts show evidence of innovative construction techniques. Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan further testifies to the development of building traditions in both private and public spheres in the Neolithic and later in the Bronze Age. ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (iv), but that criterion (ii) has not been demonstrated.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property is based on the wholeness and intactness of the archaeological deposits and uncovered vestiges of Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan dating to the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods. The boundary has been drawn to encompass the archaeological elements and the 'Ain es-Sultan spring that together support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

The nominated property contains all the attributes necessary to convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The archaeological deposits and deep stratigraphy are generally well preserved, though some of the structures have been destroyed as a result of past archaeological investigations. The excavated artefacts have been alienated from the site. The integrity of uncovered structures is fragile in some instances, due to a lack of systematic maintenance and conservation measures. Environmental factors pose great risks to the intactness of the vestiges and are not adequately addressed at the moment. Erosion has affected the uncovered structures and widened the trenches post-excavation.

A public road that separates the tell from the 'Ain es-Sultan spring is being re-routed to restore the connection between the tell and the spring. The views from the nominated property are compromised to some extent by existing developments within the proposed buffer zone. Tourism facilities have encroached on the southern end of the nominated property and the infrastructure for a neighbouring cable car is visually intrusive. The State

Party has indicated that it will seek to have both removed. The refugee camp immediately to the north affects the views from the nominated property, but the State Party has no control over it.

ICOMOS considers that the impacts of existing developments, although negative, are relatively limited and may be mitigated by appropriate management solutions in the future.

ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the nominated property has been demonstrated.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on the ability of the archaeological deposits and uncovered remains to credibly express the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The nominated property can be said to be authentic in its forms and designs, materials and substance, as well as its location.

Past excavations damaged portions of archaeological material, resulting in the loss of some structures from the Neolithic period. Given the fragility of the mud-brick, the exposed parts of archaeological deposits remain vulnerable. Conservation measures undertaken to consolidate the mud-brick have not always been successful. New interventions are urgently needed in several cases, such as for the Middle Bronze Age ramparts. No large-scale reconstructions have been made at the site. Where minimal interventions have occurred, mud-bricks made from local materials have deliberately been made distinguishable from the originals.

The few intrusive elements on the site include metal supports that have been installed in the Neolithic tower and a footbridge that has been constructed to enable visitors to appreciate the results of the excavations without damaging them.

The 'Ain es-Sultan spring has retained its original function as a water source. It has been rehabilitated and covered with a retractable roof.

The immediate context of the nominated property has been altered and compromised by urban and peri-urban encroachment. The nominated property now exists as an isolated island within a mixed and dynamic urban, peri-urban, and agrarian landscape that also includes the 'Ain es-Sultan Refugee Camp (which at seventy-five years old has become part of the cultural landscape of Jericho).

ICOMOS considers that, despite some concerns, the attributes truthfully convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and therefore the authenticity of the nominated property has been demonstrated.

ICOMOS also considers that the setting of the nominated property may be less of an authenticity issue in this particular case and more of a management issue, which

should be addressed as an integral part of future management planning.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property have been met.

Boundaries

The nominated property is a National Archaeological Park with no permanent inhabitants. About 300 people reside in the buffer zone.

The boundaries of the nominated property follow the base of the mound except for the eastern side where they extend to encompass the spring. They are based on the limits of the National Archaeological Park, which incorporates the tell and the spring of 'Ain es-Sultan along with a small area of rehabilitated historic drainage channels. The boundaries have been defined by the existing and known attributes of Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan in the Neolithic through Bronze Age periods. ICOMOS notes that the wider context of the Jericho oasis is directly relevant and integral to the development of the tell. Areas immediately adjacent to the nominated property that have been included in the buffer zone may contain features or deposits with the potential to contribute to and enhance understanding of the nominated property in the future, but at present remain unknown.

The buffer zone includes a very narrow strip of land on the north containing 'Ain es-Sultan Refugee Camp dwellings, an open landscape to the west as far as the break in slope at the foot of the Rift Valley escarpment, beyond which the whole area is protected as a Provisional Protected Cultural Landscape, and a section of land to the east and south with commercial centres and tourism facilities. The boundaries of the buffer zone largely follow the road infrastructure or limits of land plots, except for the northern side where it is arbitrary and cuts through the terrain. Parts of the immediate setting have been included within the buffer zone, which is said to include areas that are visually important to the nominated property.

The State Party proposed an additional outer protection zone that includes areas beyond the buffer zone to the west, northeast, east, and south (but still excluding the refugee camp). This zone is intended to provide additional protection of views and to restrict urban expansion and development, although with slightly fewer restrictions than in the buffer zone itself. Work is underway by the Jericho Municipality to modify the Jericho City Spatial Urban Plan by preparing a Detailed Urban Master Plan for the Tell es-Sultan Area, scheduled for completion in 2023, which will accommodate this additional outer protection zone in addition to the buffer zone.

In the additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party explained that, while the tell has been an integral part of the wider Jericho oasis, the historic cultural landscape has been heavily changed due to subsequent developments. While some elements of the landscape are

crucial to understanding the history of human settlement in and around Ancient Jericho over millennia, the State Party indicates that they do not contribute directly to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and thus have been included in the buffer zone. The sites that testify to the relocation of the Jericho settlement after the Hellenistic period have been left outside the buffer zone, as they are a considerable distance from the nominated property.

ICOMOS recommends that the State Party consider simplifying the proposals for protecting the wider settings of the nominated property by extending the buffer zone (and the associated regulatory mechanisms that are being developed) to include the proposed additional outer protection zone, when this becomes possible, through a minor boundary modification request.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the nominated property for the World Heritage List. The nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (iv) on the basis of a more nuanced understanding of its values, but criterion (ii) has not been demonstrated. The conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation

The post-1997 inventory of the nominated property is part of the National Register. The records are kept in the archives of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and are available in a digital format. The documentation includes information on the restoration works. Monitoring records are stored at the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and Jericho Municipality.

Pre-1997 excavation documentation and the unearthed artefacts are held by a number of institutions across the world, including the Musée du Louvre in Paris, the Amman Citadel Museum and Jordan National Museum in Amman, the Institute of Archaeology at University College London, the State Collection for Anthropology in Munich, the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology at Oxford University, and many more. Some are held at the Palestine Archaeological Museum/Rockefeller Museum in East Jerusalem.

ICOMOS considers that copies of inventories, reports, and other records of works that predate 1997, and which are spread across many countries, should be assembled and deposited at the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities as baseline documentation for any future management, conservation, and monitoring activities.

Conservation measures

A dedicated site manager with a small team at the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities' Jericho Office is in charge of on-site administration and maintenance. The nominated

property is checked daily in terms of cleanliness and safety for visitors. Specialised personnel are engaged as needed.

There is no programmed conservation or maintenance regime in place. However, a three-year conservation and management project recently begun. It includes development of a Management and Conservation Plan for the nominated property, which aims at addressing this gap. In the additional information sent in February 2023, the State Party indicated that the Management and Conservation Plan should be finalised and adopted by December 2023. Emergency conservation and consolidation activities will be continued during 2023, but large-scale interventions, including restoration, will not be implemented until the Plan is approved by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

The archaeological remains exposed during excavations require regular maintenance and consolidation *in situ*. The human resources and expertise available at the site to attend to these needs on a regular basis are currently very limited. ICOMOS considers that the State Party needs to ensure adequate resources are in place to sustain appropriate levels of conservation and maintenance over the long term.

Monitoring

The monitoring system is operated and technically implemented by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities' Jericho Office. It is rudimentary, and largely quantitative in nature.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring system needs to be further developed to address more directly all the attributes of the nominated property, and the identified threats to them. ICOMOS further considers that it is unclear how the monitoring indicators inform specific interventions, and what constitutes a baseline for reference.

ICOMOS considers that adequate resources are needed to sustain appropriate levels of conservation and maintenance. Complete baseline documentation should be assembled and deposited at the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable that the monitoring system is further developed to encompass all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, and is conceived for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

The nominated property is protected by the Tangible Cultural Heritage Law (No. 11, 2018). The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities has the primary legal responsibility for its management and conservation. According to this Law, any major intervention, including conservation activities and excavations, must first be approved by the

Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, and any new structures or major changes in the areas surrounding the nominated property require an Environmental and Heritage Impact Assessment.

Additionally, the Law of Environment (No. 7, 1999) prohibits acts that would have a negative impact on archaeological sites, including their visual aesthetics.

The Building and Planning Law (No. 79, 1966; Jordanian Law) is in force in the buffer zone. Its implementation is overseen by the Ministry of Local Government, which has a mandate to investigate any building site and stop any construction where an archaeological discovery has been made. The buffer zone is owned primarily by private individuals and the Islamic and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate Endowments.

Additional regulatory measures apply through the Jericho City Spatial Urban Plan, which regulates land use and urbanisation of the area. The Jericho City Spatial Urban Plan identifies the nominated property and the majority of its buffer zone as a protected archaeological area (antiquities zone) under the provisions of the Tangible Cultural Heritage Law (No. 11, 2018), which prohibits any change to its current land-use classification without the endorsement of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. Building activity is also not allowed in these areas, while activities such as farming, gardening or construction of reversible structures require a special permit from the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. The western area of the buffer zone, outside the archaeological protection zone, is classified for rural land use, which imposes restrictions on the heights of buildings. On the south, a tourist zone with special regulations has been created.

In the additional information submitted in November 2022, the State Party clarified that, regardless of ownership of land within the buffer zone, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities has full legal authority over the protected archaeological area (antiquities zone) to determine the appropriate use of this land, in line with the provisions of the Tangible Cultural Heritage Law (No. 11, 2018). It is also mandated through the Jericho City Spatial Urban Plan to review all interventions and developments in other zones having special regulations. The existing regulations will be supplemented in 2023 by additional special protection regulations in the Detailed Urban Master Plan for the Tell es-Sultan Area, which are intended to control land-use patterns and construction in the wider area around the nominated property, except for the area of the refugee camp to the north.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property has a satisfactory level of statutory protection at the national and local levels.

Management system

The nominated property is owned by the State Party and managed as a National Archaeological Park by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the highest heritage authority in Palestine. The Ministry of Tourism and

Antiquities' Jericho Office is responsible for managing the site. The 'Ain es-Sultan spring, as well as main roads inside the nominated property and buffer zone, are managed and maintained by the Jericho Municipality. In the future, the spring will be managed jointly by the Ministry and the Municipality.

At the level of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, an Advisory Council for Heritage composed of representatives of different ministries, academic institutions, and civil society is responsible for guidelines on conservation, protection, management, and development of heritage in the country. On an operational level, several directorates within the Ministry are responsible for implementation, including approvals of major interventions, conservation activities, and excavations within the nominated property. The General Directorate of World Heritage oversees the management of World Heritage properties and ensures their long-term conservation. At the local level, a small team in the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities' Jericho Office is responsible for on-site administration and maintenance of the nominated property. The Jericho Office is also responsible for issuing construction permits.

The annual budget of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities covers the costs of maintenance, repairs, presentation, and promotion of the nominated property, while conservation and management depend largely on external funding. Income generated by the nominated property is accumulated centrally and redistributed by the Ministry according to needs of heritage sites across the country.

Currently, the management objectives for the nominated property are based on the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities' Sector Strategic Plan (updated every four years). A Management and Conservation Plan is under preparation and will integrate a research programme and a community involvement strategy, as well as an interpretation and presentation strategy that will be aligned with international standards.

In the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party clarified that, to inform interventions, an assessment of the state of conservation, the factors affecting the nominated property, a dynamic tourism study, and, if needed, a hydrological survey will be prepared as part of the Management and Conservation Plan. A risk management strategy will also be included in the Plan.

ICOMOS observes that it is not clear whether all heritage-related oversight and decision-making takes place at the national government level, or if some functions have been delegated to local authorities.

ICOMOS considers that the existing budget for the nominated property is modest. The current centralised Ministry budget arrangement may limit the flexibility needed to be able to respond to urgent needs at the nominated property.

Visitor management

A tourism management and promotion strategy will be developed by 2023 to organise the flow of tourists and reduce any undue pressures on the individual attributes of the nominated property.

New tourism facilities are planned by the State Party, including a rehabilitated interpretation centre and a site museum. It is unclear where these are planned to be constructed.

There is currently no provision for access or facilities suitable for the disabled. ICOMOS considers that the current presentation and interpretation of the nominated property require upgrading in order to make the archaeological site more accessible, both physically and intellectually. The complexity of the archaeological stratigraphy and the absence of a meaningful and linear visitor route make understanding the nominated property challenging.

ICOMOS also considers that the interpretation and presentation strategy should guide the development of all on-site and off-site interpretation of the nominated property as a whole, as well as the interpretation of the specific features of the site. It should also establish common design principles. These improvements should not have any negative impacts on the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity or integrity of the nominated property.

Community involvement

The State Party has engaged in a dialogue with relevant stakeholders during the nomination process, including property owners, residents of the 'Ain es-Sultan Refugee Camp, and the business community, and the same will be done for the elaboration of the Management and Conservation Plan. A community involvement strategy will be drafted as part of the said Plan to ensure participation of the local communities in the conservation and sustainable development of the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the local communities should continue to be actively involved when decisions are being made about the nominated property.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the current protection and management systems are adequate, but there is a need to enhance the resource base, in terms of both human capacities and financial means. A Management and Conservation Plan that is currently being prepared will address the most important aspects of research, management, conservation, and interpretation. It should include a risk management strategy, a research strategy, a community involvement strategy, and an interpretation and presentation strategy, and be integrated with a tourism management and promotion strategy. A hydrological strategy for evacuation of rainwater from the site needs to be included as well.

6 Conclusion

Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan contains a multi-layered history of occupation that testifies to two historical-cultural contexts, namely the Neolithisation of the Fertile Crescent and the phenomenon of urbanism in southern Levant during the Bronze Age. The nominated property exemplifies changes and dynamics that the Near East region experienced in the Neolithic period, related to the shifting of humanity to a sedentary lifestyle and the related transition to new subsistence economies.

ICOMOS acknowledges the effort made by the State Party in elaborating the nomination dossier and appreciates the work it carried out to provide clarifying additional information.

ICOMOS considers that criteria (iii) and (iv) have been met, although with a more nuanced understanding of the values of the nominated property. Criterion (ii) has not been demonstrated. The claims that specific ideas and values were developed in Ancient Jericho and were exported from there to influence the region have not been fully substantiated. The conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

ICOMOS further considers that the protection and management of the nominated property are satisfactory, but the long-term provision of adequate financial and human resources needs to be ensured. The Management and Conservation Plan currently in preparation should provide an appropriate basis for relevant conservation and maintenance regimes. Complete baseline documentation of the nominated property needs to be assembled, and the monitoring system should be further developed.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan, Palestine, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (iii) and (iv)**.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

Located northwest of present-day Jericho in the Jordan Valley in Palestine, Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan consists of an oval-shaped tell, or mound, that contains archaeological deposits of human activity dating back to about 10,500 BCE, and the adjacent perennial spring of 'Ain es-Sultan, which for millennia has been an important source of water for the inhabitants of this area.

The stratigraphy of this archaeological site shows twenty-nine phases of occupation and testifies to two historical-cultural contexts, namely the Neolithisation of the Fertile

Crescent and the phenomenon of urbanism in southern Levant during the Bronze Age.

By the 9th to 8th millennium BCE, Neolithic Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan was already a sizeable permanent settlement, as expressed by surviving monumental architectural features such as a wall with a ditch and a tower. It reflects the developments of the period, which include the shifting of humanity to a sedentary communal lifestyle and the related transition to new subsistence economies, as well as changes in social organisation and the development of religious practices.

The Early Bronze Age archaeological material on the site provides insights into urban planning, while vestiges from the Middle Bronze Age reveal the presence of a large Canaanite city-state, equipped with an urban centre and technologically innovative rampart fortifications, occupied by a socially complex population.

Criterion (iii): Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan testifies in an exceptional way to developments that took place across the Near East in the Neolithic, characterised by the shifting of humanity to a new sedentary lifestyle and the related transition to new subsistence strategies. It demonstrates how people learned to live in larger, more permanent settlements and develop new social and ritual methods of communal living. Monumental features of the property, the presence of shared structures, and the evidence of post-mortem treatment of skulls provide important insights into changes in social organisation, and into the degree of skill, planning, and labour that this social organisation required. The deep stratigraphy preserved on the tell has the potential to answer many questions related to development and change of societies in the Neolithic period.

Criterion (iv): Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan is an outstanding example of a permanent settlement with a long history that testifies to the transition of the people of the Levant from hunter-gatherers to a sedentary lifestyle in the Neolithic, and provides evidence of the rise of early Levantine urban culture in the Early Bronze Age. With its monumental architectural features and shared structures dating from the 9th to 8th millennium BCE, the property exemplifies in an exceptional way the process of Neolithisation of the Fertile Crescent, a significant stage in human history. It further allows developments in building traditions to be observed in both the private and public spheres in the Neolithic and the Bronze Age, its Middle Bronze Age ramparts in particular showing evidence of innovative construction techniques.

Integrity

All the attributes necessary to convey the Outstanding Universal Value are located within the boundaries of the property. These attributes include the archaeological deposits and the above-ground archaeological vestiges of Ancient Jericho dating to the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods, as well as the adjacent spring of 'Ain es-Sultan. The excavated artefacts have been alienated from the

site. The property is of sufficient size to ensure the complete representation of the features and values that convey its significance. Its archaeological deposits and deep stratigraphy are well preserved, despite destruction of some structures as a result of past archaeological investigations. The uncovered structures are fragile in some instances. The property does not suffer from adverse effects of development and/or neglect.

Authenticity

Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan is authentic in terms of its forms and designs, materials and substance, and location. The Neolithic and Bronze Age archaeological vestiges of Ancient Jericho, while in some cases damaged during early excavations, truthfully convey the Outstanding Universal Value. The designs, materials and substance of the archaeological vestiges *in situ* are authentically preserved and have maintained their intact forms. Conservation measures are needed in several cases, such as for the Middle Bronze Age ramparts. No reconstructions have been made at the site, which remains in its historical location. Minimal interventions that have occurred have been made distinguishable from the original fabric. The rehabilitated 'Ain es-Sultan spring has retained its original function as a water source.

Protection and management requirements

The property is protected by the Tangible Cultural Heritage Law (No. 11, 2018) of Palestine, according to which any major intervention, including conservation activities and excavations, must first be approved by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, and any new structures or major changes in the areas surrounding the property require an Environmental and Heritage Impact Assessment. The Building and Planning Law (No. 79, 1966; Jordanian Law) is in force in the buffer zone. Additional regulatory measures apply through the Jericho City Spatial Urban Plan, soon to be supplemented with regulations pertaining to the Detailed Urban Master Plan for the Tell es-Sultan Area. The Jericho City Spatial Urban Plan identifies the property and the majority of its buffer zone as a protected archaeological area (antiquities zone).

The property is owned by the State Party and managed as a National Archaeological Park by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the highest heritage authority in Palestine, whose Jericho Office is responsible for on-site management. The 'Ain es-Sultan spring will be managed jointly with the Ministry. A Management and Conservation Plan is intended to address the most important aspects of research, management, conservation, and interpretation of the property.

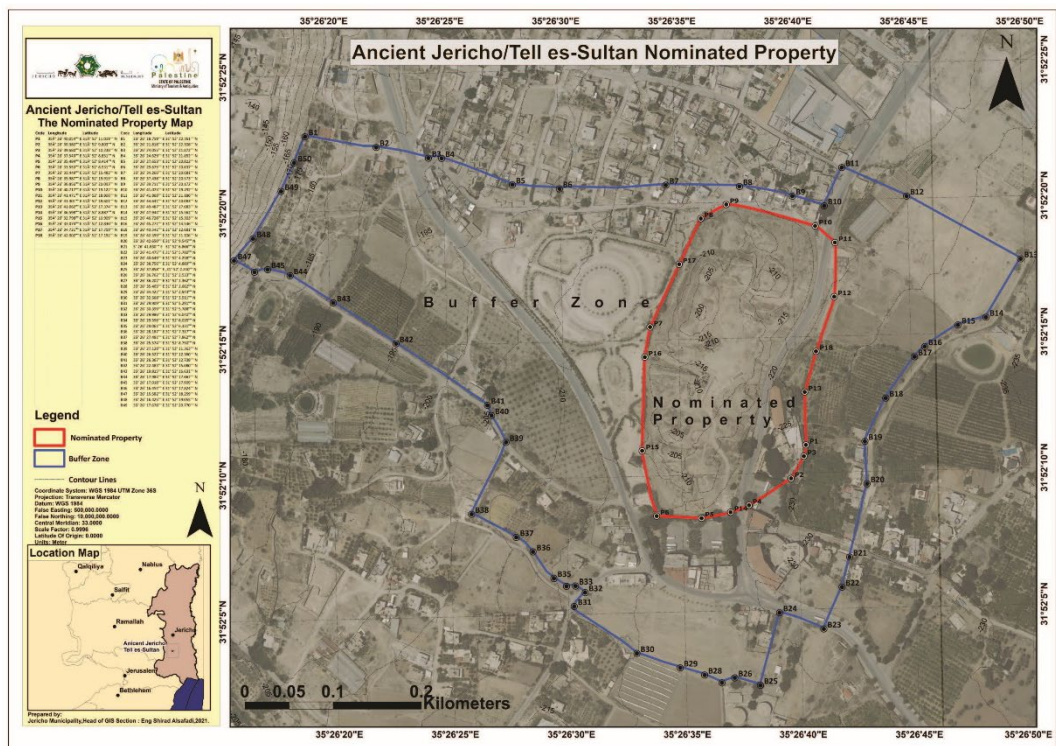
Additional recommendations

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

- a) Completing and adopting the Management and Conservation Plan for the property, integrated with a tourism management and promotion strategy, research strategy, risk management

strategy, community involvement strategy, and an interpretation and presentation strategy that includes careful elucidation of the wider setting of the property, and submitting the Plan to the World Heritage Centre as soon as it is finalised,

- b) Undertaking a hydrological study and including in the Management and Conservation Plan a hydrological strategy for the evacuation of rainwater from the property,
- c) Assembling complete baseline documentation of the property, and further developing the monitoring system,
- d) Negotiating with relevant stakeholders for the removal of the existing tourism facilities encroaching on the property, and developing a process to remove the cable car as soon as is practicable,
- e) Considering extending the buffer zone (and the associated regulatory mechanisms that are being developed) to include the proposed additional outer protection zone, when this becomes possible, through a minor boundary modification request,
- f) Carrying out Heritage Impact Assessments as a pre-requisite for any development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around the property, such as tourism facilities and road realignments,
- g) 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*;



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property