

AFRICA

MELKA KUNTURE AND BALCHIT ARCHEOLOGICAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL SITE

ETHIOPIA



Melka Kunture and Balchit Archeological and Paleontological Site © IUCN / Daniel Tormey

WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION – IUCN TECHNICAL EVALUATION

MELKA KUNTURE AND BALCHIT ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL SITE (ETHIOPIA) – ID N° 13 REV

IUCN RECOMMENDATION TO WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE: To not inscribe the nominated property under criterion (viii).

Key paragraphs of Operational Guidelines:

Paragraph 77: Nominated property does not meet World Heritage criterion (viii).

Paragraph 78: Nominated property partially meets integrity requirements and protection and management requirements.

Background note: The site was first nominated by Ethiopia in 1978. This was the 13th nomination to the World Heritage List. The 1978 ICOMOS recommendation was to defer consideration of the nomination until the State Party supplied an overall inventory of intentions for presenting nominations. In 1978 and 1979 ICOMOS also found that the eight nominations from Ethiopia (including Melka Kunture) had either inadequate documentation or lacked a sufficiently persuasive case for Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). The site was further deferred in 1980 and 1981, again because Ethiopia had not provided a tentative list of properties they intended to nominate.

1. DOCUMENTATION

a) Date nomination received by IUCN: February 2023

b) Additional information officially requested from and provided by the States Parties: No additional information was requested following the session of the IUCN World Heritage Panel. The State Party provided supplementary information to ICOMOS on 22 February 2024.

c) Additional literature consulted: IUCN's evaluation consulted a wide array of relevant reference material for the geology, protection and management as well as the comparative values of the nominated property. Further references included: Altamura, F., R. Melis, M. Mussi (2017). A middle Pleistocene hippo tracksite at Gombore II-2 (Melka Kunture). *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology*. Vol. 470, pp. 122-131; Altamura, F., L. Di Bianco, M. Mussi (2023). When a rural community defines itself through an archeological site: the case of Melka Kunture (Ethiopia). *Journal of Mediterranean Earth Sciences*; Casadevall, T, D. Tormey, J. Roberts (2019). *World Heritage Volcanoes: Classification, gap analysis, and recommendations for future listings*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. viii + 68pp; Crofts, R., Gordon, J.E., Brilha, J., Gray, M., Gunn, J., Larwood, J., Santucci, V.L., Tormey, D., and Worboys, G.L. (2020). *Guidelines for geoconservation in protected and conserved areas*. Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 31. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN; Mc Keever, P.J. and Narbonne, G.M. (2021). *Geological World Heritage: a revised global framework for the application of criterion (viii) of the World Heritage Convention*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN; Maerker, M, S. Calogero, R. Melis, and M. Mussi

(2014). *Assessment of present day geomorphological dynamics to decipher landscape evolution around the Paleolithic sites of Melka Kunture, Ethiopia*. EGU 2014-14805; Mitchell, N. with contributions from Leitão, L., Migon, P. and Denyer, S. (2013). *Study on the Application of Criterion (vii): Considering superlative natural phenomena and exceptional natural beauty within the World Heritage Convention*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 113pp; Pioli, L., R. Melis, and M. Mussi (2023). *Volcaniclastic sedimentation in a closed, marginal rift basin? The case of the Melka Kunture area*. *Geol. Soc. London*, vol 520; Wells, R. (1996). *Earth's Geological History: A Conceptual Framework for Assessment of World Heritage Fossil Site Nominations*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.

d) Consultations: 15 desk reviews received. This included reviews from specialists of the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) as well as synthesis provided by IUGS. Desk reviews also included specialist reviews from people with experience in indigenous rights as well as from the IUCN WCPA Governance Thematic Group. The field mission was able to conduct individual meetings with Vice Governor of Oromia Province; Minister of Tourism; and Ethiopian Heritage Center. Approximately 30 stakeholders actively participated in an on-site meeting with representatives including local residents; local, district, and regional government; tourism; archaeological researcher leaders for the site; pastoralists.

e) Field Visit: Daniel Tormey (IUCN) and Edward Matenga (ICOMOS), 26 to 31 October 2023

f) Date of IUCN approval of this report: May 2024

2. SUMMARY OF NATURAL VALUES

The nominated property of Melka Kunture and Balchit Archeological and Paleontological Site includes a large group of archaeological sites within six component parts. It is located in the Upper Awash River valley of Ethiopia, in the highlands above the main Ethiopian Rift at about 2,000 m above sea level, and about 60 km south of Addis Ababa, near the village of Awash Melka. The complex geological and archeological record from the nominated component parts holds lithic (i.e. relating to stone tools) industry types, made from a variety of volcanic raw materials over a very long period of time. The nominated property also includes paleo-botanical evidence, and fossil fauna (primarily hippo). Hominin remains were discovered in place during archeological investigations of the lithic tool industry. This is different from most such discoveries where the remains are found during controlled surface collections. Pleistocene fossil footprints of hominins, hippo and birds between 1.2 and 0.7 million years have also been discovered. The total area of the serial nominated property across all six component parts is 55.51 ha with a single buffer zone of 9637.88 ha.

The entire nominated property is preserved in volcanoclastic deposits developed in the slowly subsiding depression where the paleo-Awash River had established its course. The volcanoclastic deposits are complex, but overall the fluvial basin within which the nominated property is located was formed by a substantial lava dam on the Awash River, at the bridge near Awash Melka. Upstream of this natural dam, the conditions favoured deposition in the basin which thus prevented the archaeological remains from being fully eroded. Through time, parts of the paleo-landscape were subject to repeated erosion and deposition, blanketed both by alluvial deposits, and by volcanic deposits produced by the nearby volcanoes. Recent erosion by the current Awash River tributaries forms gullies within the nominated property which reveal the history of lithic technology at the site. The volcanic ignimbrites – i.e. volcanic rock of hardened tuff (volcanic ash) – and airfall layers allow dating by radiometric methods, thus providing good age constraints to the rate of lithic technology development.

Archaeological excavations have allowed the investigation of the prehistoric cultural heritage and recovery and documentation of related scientific information. More than 80 archaeological layers have been identified during 50 years of archaeological research; 30 of them have been extensively excavated over surfaces ranging from 50 m² to 250 m². Tens of thousands of lithic tools, faunal and some human remains (including *Homo erectus* and archaic *Homo sapiens*) have been discovered. Much further evidence is preserved in an area of more than 10,000 ha, and is available for future research. The archaeological deposits of Melka Kunture are a unique archive of human evolution, spanning over more than 1.7 million years, from Oldowan (i.e. the oldest known stone tool industry) layers, to a very long and complex sequence of Acheulean (i.e. stone tool industry marked by hand

axes) layers, to Middle Stone Age and eventually by Late Stone Age layers. Throughout this sequence, a diversified range of lithic raw materials of volcanic origin were available for working into tools by humans: each had different properties and qualities, all were carefully tested and, when found suitable, eventually exploited. Accordingly, Melka Kunture can be seen as a laboratory for human evolution, where the requisites for trial-and-error procedures were naturally available, and parallel the interpreted growth of cognitive capabilities in humans. The nominated property does show the interplay, over time, of early humans with their environment, within the ecosystems where they lived, documented in a sequence where episodic volcanic events have preserved a series of palaeolandscapes that each include direct and indirect fossil evidence.

3. COMPARISONS WITH OTHER AREAS

Melka Kunture and Balchit Archeological and Paleontological Site has been nominated under criteria (iii), (iv) and (v), which will be assessed by ICOMOS, as well as under criterion (viii). With respect to criterion (viii), IUCN notes that the State Party did not conduct a distinct Global Comparative Analysis. The analysis in the nomination focused only on the cultural criteria, and only considered a few African sites. The geological values described in the dossier are approached in different ways across the document: they included analysis on the basis of paleontology, volcanology/sedimentology, and the interplay between the geology and the cultural criteria. IUCN bases the following analysis on the nomination dossier, IUCN Thematic Reports, the field evaluation mission and desk reviewer input, including specialist input from IUGS.

With respect to paleontology, the preponderance of fossil remains are of hippos. It is an unresolved question why there is a spike in the occurrence of hippos at this location. There are trackways with hippo, bird and hominin tracks. Neither this time period, nor the fossil evidence of the nominated property are identified as priorities in the 1996 IUCN Paleontology Thematic Report. The 2021 IUCN thematic study on Geological World Heritage speaks to sites with mixed hominin and other fossils but makes no recommendations in general or specifically that these sites are underrepresented or should clearly be considered for World Heritage listing. The study notes some overlap with criterion (iii) to “bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is living or which has disappeared” for properties containing early hominid fossils. Several hominid fossil World Heritage properties have been inscribed on the World Heritage List under criterion (iii) only, whereas others have also been recognized under criterion (viii). However, the recognition of hominid fossil properties under criterion (viii) is linked to geological features that are clearly outstanding at global level. For instance, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (United Republic of Tanzania) has

been inscribed under criterion (viii) for containing the largest unbroken caldera in the world whilst noting the paleontological record related to human evolution, which is however predominantly recognized under criterion (iv). The hominid record at Willandra Lakes Region (Australia) is inscribed under criterion (iii) but its geology is inscribed under criterion (viii) recognizing giant marsupial fossils. IUCN therefore concludes that there is not a basis for application of criterion (viii) for non-hominin fossils in this case, and that the hominin fossil remains would be considered in relation to the possible application of cultural criteria. Nevertheless, the presence of non-hominin species enhances the understanding of how the hominins were using and exploiting the living resources around them, as well as a deeper understanding of the living part of the ecosystem within which they lived.

With respect to volcanology and sedimentology, the 2019 IUCN Volcano Thematic Report does identify the Ethiopian volcano Erta Ale as potential gap on the World Heritage List, but not the older volcanoes and volcanic deposits in the Ethiopian Highlands. Although the nominated area represents the earlier stages of the development of the currently active Main Ethiopian Rift in the lowlands, it is not a regional or internationally significant representative. The interplay of volcanology and sedimentology in the nominated property includes the formation of a lava dam across the Awash River forming the basin within which the deposition and erosion occurred that led to the preservation of the archaeological and palaeontological remains, but this feature is not of itself sufficient to justify the application of criterion (viii).

With respect to the interplay between the geology and the cultural criteria, IUCN reviewers viewed this as the main value of the geological features at the nominated property: The geology formed the basin within which the fauna gathered, and provided the means to preserve the lithic and hominin remains. The interplay between volcanology and sedimentology periodically exposed and reburied areas, providing valuable time constraints and records of the paleoecology of the area. The current gully erosion exposes the remains. During the time of occupation and lithic technology development, the obsidian (i.e. volcanic glass formed by rapidly cooling lava) and other volcanic rocks were the source material that attracted early hominins, and the abundance of raw material led this to being the cultural site present today. The geology is an integral part of this cultural site, however, this interplay is common among sites of this type; by their nature human evolution archaeological sites are part “cultural” and part geology, as noted in the 2021 IUCN study on Geological World Heritage cited above. In the view of IUCN, these geological values would be able to be addressed in the nominated property’s value statement, either as a Cultural Landscape or as a cultural site, provided – of course – that potential to demonstrate OUV is confirmed under cultural criteria. The detailed study of this complex interplay between the volcanoes and the rivers makes this a well-studied example with recent peer-reviewed publications.

However, considered purely as geological features, the significance of the complex interplay of volcanic and sedimentologic aspects of the nominated property is not globally significant, but rather of national level conservation importance. IUCN also notes that some reviewers suggested potential for consideration of the nominated property as a UNESCO Global Geopark.

In summary, IUCN considers that the geological characteristics of the nominated property, whilst important in supporting the archaeological values nominated under cultural criteria, do not justify the application of criterion (viii) as they are of national importance and not globally significant. The nominated property is typical of early human archaeological sites and does not represent a stand-alone case for criterion (viii).

4. INTEGRITY, PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

4.1. Protection

IUCN’s evaluation of the protection regime is primarily based on the protection of geological values that are linked to the cultural values. The most direct legal protection for the nominated property is the Regulation to Establish Melka Kunture and Balchit prehistoric Site Administration and Preservation Office, declared in Regulation No. 159/2013. This regulation makes the Oromia Regional State, and in particular the Oromia Region Bureau of Culture and Tourism, as the legally responsible governing body. This specific regulation to the nominated property operates within a larger framework of federal projective legislation, including: The Federal constitution for protection of culture and the natural endowment; The Cultural Policy: for conservation of cultural properties and natural heritage; Proclamation for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage; Tourism Policy; Environmental Policy.

In addition, the Oromia National Regional State has constitutional protections for heritage and nature, as well as the authority provided by the Regulation to Establish Melka Kunture and Balchit Prehistoric Site, to be the administrative body with responsibility and authority for heritage protection. In practice since 2013 when the specific regulation for Melka Kunture was enacted, the level of awareness and protection seems to have become established, based on observations by the field evaluation mission. The most tangible evidence of this recognition is the action to address water contaminated with industrial pollutants from Addis Ababa within the nominated property: the identification came from the local level to Oromia level. Action was required at the federal level to require pollution controls at the industrial area, and was taken. Also, under the auspices of the Regulation to Establish Melka Kunture and Balchit prehistoric Site Administration and Preservation Office, the several items identified in the management plan were commenced. Based on conversations with the State Party in the field, the potential World Heritage listing is viewed as the required trigger for increased levels of monetary and human resource numbers to be

designated for the property. During the mission's meetings with government agencies including the Vice Governorship of Oromia, there is commitment for both adequate funding to implement the plan, and immediate hiring to at least double the current number of full-time staff for the site (currently at 4 people).

The nominated property has an established regulatory framework, focused on the Regulation to Establish Melka Kunture and Balchit Prehistoric Site, establishing the Oromia National Regional State to be the administrative body with responsibility and authority for heritage protection. This authority has been successfully applied at the property. The Management Plan would be effective if suitably staffed.

IUCN considers that the protection status of the nominated property partially meets the requirements of the *Operational Guidelines*.

4.2 Boundaries

Whilst the boundaries of the nominated component parts were developed in conjunction with the long-term archaeological field investigations, they also encompass the geological conservation values. During the field evaluation, there was discussion with the State Party regarding focus within the relatively large serial component parts to provide focus on the key areas of conservation concern within each component part. This would be consistent with the 2020 IUCN WCPA Best Practice Guide for Geoheritage of defining geo-sites within the larger boundary of the protected area. Each geo-site would have resource-specific conservation focus, while the overall protected area would address site-wide protection.

Buffer zone boundaries were in flux at the time of the evaluation mission. The nomination dossier identified four GPS-located points that were to form a buffer zone. However, owing to the size of the proposed buffer zone and the ongoing pastoral activity in the area, the State Party determined during the mission that it would not be feasible to maintain the buffer zone and that the areas of particular conservation priorities needed a more focused approach than the currently established boundaries allow for. That is, the boundaries of the buffer zone as drawn are so large as to lose the sense of the key sites within them and the need for specific conservation efforts there. As IUCN determined that criterion (viii) is not applicable, then this question of an improved buffer zone should be considered by ICOMOS.

IUCN considers that the boundaries of the nominated property would be sufficient to address geological conservation values if a more focused approach was taken, but that the buffer zones are currently inappropriate. Thus the boundaries of the nominated property do not meet the requirements of the *Operational Guidelines* at the present time, in relation to criterion (viii).

4.3 Management

The regulatory framework covering the nominated property provides the Oromia Regional Government with full authority to manage and act. It was understood during the field evaluation that this equated to full ownership, however the current pastoral users of the nominated property who live nearby also claim the area, which is also confirmed in the nomination dossier. A site manager hired by the Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau would be appointed to work with relevant stakeholders and the local communities to manage the nominated property. The site management is responsible for the day-to-day management, monitoring and reporting and coordination of all activities, guided by the Management Plan.

The Management Plan clearly details stakeholder outreach and the management framework. The final management authority is the Oromia Regional Government, specifically the Bureau of Culture and Tourism. The Management Plan includes a broad range of stakeholder input, based on a clear understanding of the threats and needs, and provides methods to address these threats and needs. However, the nomination dossier noted that the current scale and skill levels of staffing and resources for the nominated property is limited, which was also reiterated during the field evaluation mission whilst strengthened support to the implementation of the Management Plan was envisaged by the State Party. The management of the nominated property is constrained by a relative low level of conservation funding, with only four staff whilst most of the field monitoring is implemented by archaeologists that are only present seasonally. During the IUCN field mission's meetings with government agencies including the Vice Governorship of Oromia, a clear commitment for both adequate funding to implement the plan, and immediate hiring to at least double the current number of full-time staff for the site was noted. This increase would likely be sufficient to address the likely increase in use if the nominated property is inscribed, however ICOMOS should consider the capacities related to cultural heritage.

Regarding visitation, IUCN notes the currently very limited levels of visitation suggesting that the levels of management and protection are adequate to the level of tourism pressure for the time being. If tourism does develop, it is likely to be via guided arrangements because of the remoteness of the sites. As such, monitoring and tracking could be further enhanced by enlisting the guides as an extension of the ranger staff.

The most important threat currently affecting the geological values of the nominated property emerges from illegal gravel and sand mining, particularly at a key outcrop adjacent to the river at the Simbiro site. During the mission, commitments were indicated by the State Party to remedy the situation. Under the auspices of the Regulation to Establish Melka Kunture

and Balchit prehistoric Site Administration and Preservation Office and associated regulatory framework, the State Party committed during the mission to halting the illegal sand/gravel mining at Simbiro, and to take additional protective measures at the key areas of value within the larger protected area boundary to minimize the potential for conflicts or damage from the current levels of use which include low-intensity pastoral use, grain planting and harvest, and limited visitation.

IUCN considers the management of the nominated property does not meet the requirements of the *Operational Guidelines*, but takes note of the intentions to strengthen current levels of capacity to one that would meet the requirements, in relation to natural heritage.

4.4 Community

The nomination document notes the Oromo people as Indigenous Peoples living around the nominated property. Stakeholder participation and the inclusion of the communities are regarded as essential for enabling a shared responsibility for the nominated property, both in the nomination document and in the Management Plan. However, the nomination does not mention Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), whilst indicating that the process of preparing the nomination was finalized through a validation workshop. Existing legislation and the Management Plan provide for tenure rights, rights to information, consultation, and consent. The nomination was fully supported by stakeholders and local populations who participated in the stakeholder meetings during the field evaluation mission. The mission included an emphasis on determining if FPIC by the Indigenous Peoples had been provided, within the limits of the short visit. The field evaluation mission noted that there was a strong identity with the cultural heritage of the nominated property, in part because of the visible presence of the long-term archaeological work on the site, including the use of the local population for support, which is also suggested in recent research. Inscription on the World Heritage List was presented by the State Party as a means to enhancing the livelihood of the local population by increasing visitation. As IUCN determined that criterion (viii) was not applicable, the further questions on these matters would be considered by ICOMOS.

4.5 Threats

Whilst the Management Plan enumerates a wide range of threats in a SWOT analysis, the level of threats for geo-conservation values appears to be low. The most important threat currently affecting the geological values of the nominated property emerges from illegal gravel and sand mining. One active sand mine is adjacent to the river at the Simbiro site, and sediment deposits are found in the river as a result of this activity. The field evaluation mission inspected the

effect to the natural fluvial geomorphology, which indicates that, at this time, the primary concern would be enhanced deposition. However, if the activity were to continue, a condition of enhanced erosion could occur, which would threaten to undermine the key lithic technology site. During the mission, commitments were made by the State Party to remedy the situation.

The nature of the nominated property also includes the potential for change due to two major processes: The first one is the process of erosion and deposition that will affect these sites in the future. This process is part of the value of the nominated property, because it represents how the sites were preserved more or less intact, and how they were subsequently eroded to expose them today. These processes are also preserved in the site boundaries. In this respect, IUCN notes that the full watersheds are not included as either site boundary or buffer zone, but the local watersheds do form the current site boundaries. The second source of change is the process of research by excavation and other methods that has created the nominated property as it is today.

The nominated property is in part adjacent to the growing village of Awash Melka. As the village grows there is the potential for an increase of impacts on the nominated property, and a need for services to manage waste and pollution, and to avoid improperly designed surface runoff which could lead to greater amounts of erosion within the nominated property. There is ongoing pastoral activity in the area of the nominated property. This includes low-intensity grazing by goats and cows, and some planting of grain crops. These uses do not represent a threat to the geological values of the nominated property.

In conclusion, IUCN notes that the nominated property's protection and management regime predominantly addresses cultural values, but not attributes that could be considered under criterion (viii). At the level of the geological values of national importance, the nominated property partially meets the requirements to ensure their protection and management within the currently proposed boundaries, in light of the limited level of threats for geological values.

In summary, IUCN considers that the integrity requirements and protection and management requirements of the *Operational Guidelines* are not met, but takes note of the intentions to strengthen current levels of capacity to one that would meet the requirements.

5. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

5.1 Interaction of geological and cultural attributes

Although it is IUCN's opinion that the site does not demonstrate OUV for criterion (viii) because the paleontological and volcanic attributes of the site are of

national importance only, IUCN emphasizes that this does not mean that geology is unimportant to the potential OUV of this nominated property as it formed the basin within which the fauna gathered, and provided the means to preserve the lithic and hominin remains. The interplay between volcanology and sedimentology periodically exposed and reburied areas, providing valuable time constraints and records of the paleoecology of the area. The current gully erosion exposes the remains. During the time of occupation and lithic tool technology development, the obsidian and other volcanic rocks were the source material that attracted early hominids, and the abundance of raw material led this to being the outstanding cultural site we have today. The geology of the site is central to the understanding of the cultural values of the nominated property. The State Party included “cultural landscape” as an element of the nomination, and based on the information provided in the nomination most of the discussion of geology under criterion (viii) could be modified to express the importance of the geology to the potential World Heritage property.

5.2 Consideration in relation to serial properties

a) What is the justification for the serial approach?

The basis for the proposed OUV under criteria (iii), (iv), and (v) is the archaeological sites and not the geosites. Neither the basis for criterion (viii) in a stand-alone sense, nor a serial or non-serial approach to protecting geological attributes in a stand-alone sense, are considered by the nomination dossier. The different component parts of the nominated property are located within a landscape exhibiting varied land uses, with much of this larger area not providing the integrity and legal protection that would allow inclusion in a World Heritage property, and thus a contiguous property is not feasible. The serial approach provides delineation to protect the proposed OUV, while allowing the current land use to continue.

b) Are the separate component parts of the nominated property functionally linked in relation to the requirements of the Operational Guidelines?

Whilst the six nominated component parts may be functionally linked (see ICOMOS evaluation) in demonstrating criteria (iii), (iv) and (v), there is no functional linkage between the component parts evidenced by the nomination regarding criterion (viii).

c) Is there an effective overall management framework for all the component parts of the nominated property?

The nominated component parts of the serial nomination are in geographic proximity and have similar values that require management and protection. All nominated component parts are included in the overall management strategy that has been drafted. The strategy takes into account all the

relevant stakeholders, including the regional administration of Oromia and the national, district, and local representatives. The strategy elaborates on the current management structure that is based on the existing archaeological resource and Oromia-led protections. The Management Plan will take effect upon inscription.

6. APPLICATION OF CRITERIA

The **Melka Kunture and Balchit Archaeological and Paleontological Site (Ethiopia)** has been nominated under criterion (viii), together with the cultural criteria (iii), (iv) and (v) which will be evaluated by ICOMOS.

Criterion (viii): Earth’s history and geological features

The geological values outlined in the nomination encompassed palaeontology, volcanology / sedimentology, and the interconnectedness between geology and cultural heritage. Notably, the dossier lacks a comprehensive global comparative analysis under criterion (viii). Although the area represents the earlier stages of the development of the currently active Main Ethiopian Rift in the lowlands, it is not regional or internationally significant regarding purely geological heritage, and the geological conservation values are significant at the national level. The presence of non-hominin fossil species nevertheless supports the understanding of how the hominins were using and exploiting the living resources around them, as well a deeper understanding of the living part of the ecosystem within which they lived. Whilst the nominated property’s geological history is an important context for its cultural values, the interplay between the geology and the cultural values is ubiquitous among sites of this type.

IUCN considers that the nominated property does not meet this criterion.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

IUCN recommends that the World Heritage Committee adopts the following draft decision, noting that this will be harmonised as appropriate with the recommendations of ICOMOS regarding their evaluation of this mixed site nomination under cultural criteria and included in the working document WHC/24/45.COM/8B:

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/24/46.COM/8B and WHC/24/46.COM/INF.8B2,

2. Does not inscribe the **Melka Kunture and Balchit Archaeological and Paleontological Site, Ethiopia**, on the World Heritage List under criterion (viii).

Map 1: Location of the nominated property