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## Rock Art in the Hail Region (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) No 1472

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### Official name as proposed by the State Party

Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia

### Location

Northern Province, Hail Region  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

### Brief description

The serial nomination of the 'Rock Art in the Hail Region' comprises two components, namely, the Jabal Umm Sinman at Jubbah and the Jabal al-Manjor/Raat at Shuwaymis. In Jabal Umm Sinman, Jubbah, the ancestors of present-day Arabs left the marks of their presence in numerous petroglyph panels and inscriptions. In Jabal al-Manjor and Jabal Raat, Shuwaymis, the large number of petroglyphs and inscriptions has been attributed to almost 10,000 years of human history. Together, these components contain the biggest and richest rock art complexes not only in Saudi Arabia, but in the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East generally.

### Category of property

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

## 1 Basic data

### Included in the Tentative List

17 September 2012

### International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination

None

### Date received by the World Heritage Centre

24 January 2014

### Background

An ICOMOS Advisory mission within the framework of the first phase of a Pilot project for the Upstream Process (WHC-11/35.COM/12C) was undertaken on 10-17 April 2013.

### Consultations

ICOMOS consulted its International Scientific Committee on Rock Art and several independent experts.

### Technical Evaluation Mission

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 9 to 15 September 2014.

### Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 8 September 2014, requesting additional information, and a State Party response to the letter was obtained on 23 October 2014.

A second letter was sent to the State Party on 23 December 2014 to request additional information on boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone, developments, visitor management and the name of the property. On 8 February 2015 the State Party provided additional information, which has been considered for the elaboration of this report.

### Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

12 March 2015

## 2 The property

### Description

The 'Rock Art in the Hail Region' serial nomination is composed of two properties, namely, the Jabal Umm Sinman at Jubbah and the Jabal al-Manjor/Raat at Shuwaymis. Jabal Umm Sinman is located about 90 km northwest of the city of Hail and is bounded in the west, north and south by desert sands and in the east by a security fence that borders the town of Jubbah.

The second component of the serial nominated property is parallelogram-shaped and comprises two hill ranges, namely, Jabal al-Manjor and Jabal Raat, that are in the Wadi al-Mukhayet, about 40 km west of Shuwaymis, situated about 250 km south of Hail. Both sites are bounded by security fences along the foot of the escarpments enclosing the rock art sites, and by the edges of the plateaus above, but including ruins of ancient structures.

Together, the components of the serial nominated property cover an area of about 2,043.8ha and are surrounded by a buffer zone measuring a total of 3,609.5ha.

Jabal Umm Sinman, Jubbah

Overlooking the freshwater lake that once existed here and which provided water to people and animals in the southern part of the Great Nafud Desert, is the hill range of Umm Sinman. Here, on these hills, the ancestors of present-day Arabs left the marks of their presence: their religious, social, cultural, intellectual and philosophical perspectives on their beliefs about life and death, their metaphysical and cosmological ideologies.

During the region's desertification, beginning in mid-Holocene times, the oasis of Jubbah provided the only substantial source of water within the desert, facilitating its continuing human occupation up to the present and the gradual adaptation of the population to the significant environmental changes. These changes are distinctly expressed in the numerous petroglyph panels and rich inscriptions, the greatest concentrations of which occur in

the lower rock exposures of the eastern flanks of Jabal Umm Sinman.

Jabal al-Manjor and Jabal Raat, Shuwaymis

Jabals al-Manjor and Raat are rock escarpments of a now sand-covered wadi that is thought to have been a broad valley with flowing water during the early Holocene. Both Jabal al-Manjor and Raat contain a large number of human and animal figures, and other hills and outcrops within the buffer zone feature smaller concentrations.

The large number of petroglyphs and inscriptions at these site complexes has been attributed to almost 10,000 years of human history. Although the bulk of this vast corpus of petroglyphs is of a single cultural period of human history, preceding and subsequent rock art traditions have been identified and dated. As the aquifer subsided, probably around mid-Holocene times, the formerly-permanent human population became increasingly transient, but the sites were still visited in recent millennia as indicated in the rock art. The intensive and comprehensive survey of the Jabal al-Manjor and Raat complexes since their recent re-discovery resulted in the locating of hundreds of rock art panels, several stone structures, and typical stone objects of the Neolithic era.

### History and development

Observation of Middle Palaeolithic stone tools both on Umm Sinman and in its immediate vicinity, suggests that, already in the Pleistocene, climatic variations attracted human occupation of the Jubbah oasis during dry periods, perhaps acting as a refuge area to both humans and fauna. Near the Shuwaymis sites, streams and lakes occurred during Pleistocene periods and some of this surface water also persisted well into the Holocene. Here too, Middle Palaeolithic occupation evidence has been reported.

Present data indicates that the record of surviving rock art commences shortly after 10,000 years ago, providing an insight into the Neolithic culture through thousands of petroglyphs. Through the depicted fauna, the pictorial content of the rock art indicates clearly that living conditions were favourable during this period, at both components of the serial nominated property.

However, this record provided by the rock art continues through the remainder of the Holocene, firstly as pictures and eventually these are supplemented by inscriptions. This veritable library provides a continuous record illustrating how human populations coped with environmental fluctuations marking an overall deterioration and gradual desertification. After the lake of Jubbah disappeared, wells had to be dug, which, by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, were up to 23 m deep. But as the Jubbah lake bed became the only secure water source in the Nafud Desert, the occupants remained and adapted to the arid conditions they faced. This is well reflected in the late Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Bronze Age rock art. The introduction of Thamudic writing, probably about 3000 years ago, is documented in thousands of inscriptions at

Jubbah, compared with significantly lower numbers at Shuwaymis. From the locations and contents of these early inscriptions, it is evident that Jubbah had become an important staging place for camel caravans, whereas there was rather less human activity at Shuwaymis. Jubbah lies on an ancient caravan route to Jordan and Syria.

Between 3000 and 2000 years ago, the desertification process became complete across Arabia. Camels now became the dominant animal motif in the surviving rock art. The next major change in the rock art record comes with the introduction of Islam around 1400 years BP, when earlier scripts were replaced by early Arabic writing (Kufic), and the depiction of living things, especially humans, declined markedly. Nevertheless, there are still a small number of depictions found from the subsequent period.

The Jubbah oasis was visited by several European travellers and historians in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, who wrote brief accounts of the site and nothing on rock art or inscriptions from the area. Scientific archaeological investigations at Jubbah began after the Department of Antiquities and Museums initiated a Comprehensive Archaeological Survey of the entire Kingdom in 1976. The rock art of Jubbah was first thoroughly investigated and recorded by the Rock Art Survey team of the Department of Antiquities and Museums in 1986, which published its initial report on Jubbah in *Atlat* in 1987.

Later on, the Ministry of Education erected extensive fencing on the eastern side of Jabal Umm Sinman, facing the town of Jubbah, to prevent uncontrolled access to the rock art. Site guards and facilities were installed. In recent years a visitor centre has been built at Jubbah, and a new museum in Hail is under construction, all as part of the development of the cultural heritage of the region.

The Shuwaymis sites, although always known to the local Bedouin, were officially rediscovered only in 2001, which led to the undertaking of the first scientific investigation of Shuwaymis' rock art. In the subsequent years a sealed road was constructed up to Shuwaymis village, and this is now being extended to the visitor centre at the boundary of the buffer zone of the rock art sites.

## 3 Justification for inscription, integrity and authenticity

### Comparative analysis

An analysis undertaken by the State Party illustrated a comparison of the serial nominated property with other sites in Saudi Arabia, the Middle East and around the world. In the nomination dossier, a comparison with Saudi Arabian sites indicates them to be generally of significantly smaller assemblages, with the exception of the Al Qara complex. Unlike other sites, this complex houses several tens of thousands of petroglyphs, and it is reported that its substantial library of Arabian rock

inscriptions may exceed those at Jubbah in numbers. However, their Thamudic content is very low, Kufic and recent Islamic texts clearly dominating.

As far as the Middle East is concerned, the analysis concludes that there is no rock art site in the region that would match the values of the two components of the serial nominated property, or qualitatively match their petroglyphs, preservation or management. The State Party pointed out that, on the basis of current information, three of the four largest rock art collections of the Middle East are in Saudi Arabia. Of these, Jubbah and Shuwaymis have the densest concentrations, show the most impressive artwork by far, and they also include the oldest tradition represented.

In a global context, the State Party states that, if compared to rock art panels located in the Sahara, China, India, South Africa, the Americas or Australia, the nominated property eclipses them in terms of age, and matches these properties in terms of visual qualities and technical perfection.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property has some similarities with other properties located in the wider region, among them stylistic similarities with rock art in the Libyan Messak and in North Yemen, and the most ancient images exhibit influences from Egypt. Despite these similarities, ICOMOS considers that, when considering the age, span of time, amount and quality, the nominated property bears specific features that justify its consideration for the World Heritage List.

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

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#### **Justification of Outstanding Universal Value**

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

- It is a visually stunning expression of the human creative genius.
- It archives more than 6,000 years of continuous human occupation in both rock art and inscriptions.
- The petroglyphs reveal the use of the sites in different cultural periods during which populations adapted successfully to severe environmental changes by acquiring domesticated animals such as cattle and horses, and later the camel.
- The Jubbah and Shuwaymis rock art catalogue and archaeological features are among the world's largest and most magnificent surviving corpus of Neolithic petroglyphs.
- Collectively, the Jubbah and Shuwaymis rock art represent a continuous record of human endeavour covering the past 10,000 years. The record commences with a massive component of Neolithic artwork, followed by comprehensive Chalcolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Historic traditions, all of

which used the same localities to create their respective art corpora.

- In contrast to most other rock art sequences in the world, the approximate antiquity of the components of the Hail rock art is reliably known, because their ages are anchored to a series of direct dates derived from key elements.

ICOMOS considers that there are several reasons to support the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, among them the recognition of a "Jubbah style" indicates the importance and uniqueness of the site. The components of the serial nominated property bear an exceptional importance from the point of view of the amount of petroglyphs and of their high quality. As for the evolution of the environment, it is well documented by the studies on lacustrine deposits, by archaeology and by palaeo-environmental studies, which have been multiplied over the last few years. These studies support that the rock art images in the property can contribute to documenting civilisations that have left practically no other kind of vestiges. It is therefore possible to follow their evolution by adaptation to aridification of the environment.

#### **Integrity and authenticity**

##### **Integrity**

In the case of Jabal Umm Sinman, the boundary encompasses 14 clusters of petroglyphs on all sides of the mountain. The buffer zone extends northwards to enclose several smaller rocky outcrops with fewer petroglyphs. ICOMOS noted that the area of cluster 8, in the south-western part of the property, is badly vandalized with recent graffiti (mostly names painted in various colours often obliterating the ancient rock art), and littered with garbage. Furthermore, the Municipality of Jubbah has constructed a rain water diversion dam or water barrier of several kilometres length inside the buffer zone's eastern border. This dam is clearly visible from the westernmost north-south road of Jubbah, which bounds the buffer zone on the east, and somehow spoils the views from there towards Jabal Umm Sinman. On the eastern side of Jabal Umm Sinman, immediately north of the nominated property and located within the buffer zone next to the existing freshwater reservoir (in existence for the past 16 to 17 years), is the construction of a huge water tower that is visible from within the nominated property.

The property at Shuwaymis includes both rocky outcrops, Jabal Raat to the west and Jabal al-Manjor to the east, as well as the sandy valley between them. Neighbouring rocky outcrops to the north are incorporated into the buffer zone as they have not yet been thoroughly investigated. Apart from a Bedouin camp with fewer than 25 people living in the buffer zone, there is no town or large settlement nearby.

Covering more than 8 km at Jabal Umm Sinman and about 6 km at Manjor and Raat, steel fences, bars and locked access gates protect these examples of rock art.

According to the State Party, all elements necessary to express the Outstanding Universal Value of the serial nominated property, namely numerous well-preserved petroglyphs, identifiably different rock art traditions over the period from hunting and gathering to animal domestication and writing, independent evidence for climatic change at nearby palaeolake deposits, and evidence for human interaction in a vulnerable environment, are amply represented in the property, and both components are of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features that convey the Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that the components that make up the serial nomination contain the attributes to convey its Outstanding Universal Value and that the size of the nominated zones is adequate. Nevertheless, ICOMOS notes that measures to ensure adequate protection should be implemented, something that will be dealt with in the following sections of this report.

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ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the whole series has been justified; and that the integrity of the individual sites that comprise the series has been demonstrated, although measures regarding protection should be reinforced.

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#### Authenticity

The petroglyphs at the two components of the serial nominated property, Jabal Umm Sinman at Jubbah and Jabal al-Manjor/Jabal Raat at Shuwaymis, have retained their original location, setting, materials, form and design even though they do not function within a cultural tradition. According to the State Party, their patination, which is full in the case of the Neolithic petroglyphs and of a decreasing degree for the subsequent Chalcolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Islamic periods, and different phases of weathering, attest to their authenticity.

ICOMOS considers the elements on site to be authentic.

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ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the whole nominated series has been justified; and that the authenticity of the individual sites that comprise the series has been demonstrated.

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In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated series have been met; and for individual sites, the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

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#### Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (v).

Criterion (i): *representing a masterpiece of human creative genius;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the exceptionally large number of

petroglyphs, created by using a range of techniques with simple stone hammers, against a background of gradual environmental deterioration, are, by world standards, visually stunning expressions of the human creative genius, comparable to the messages left by doomed civilizations in Mesoamerica or on Easter Island. In that sense alone they are of the highest Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that the arguments advanced by the State Party are admissible and that the images are outstanding in visual terms, together with terms of employed techniques and location. At the same time, the so-called "Jubbah style" is a testimony to the recognition of this remarkable artistic achievement, which also exhibits an outstanding use of skills to handle both tools and materials.

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified for the whole series.

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Criterion (ii): *exhibiting 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 Jubbah and Shuwaymis exhibit more than 6000 years of continuous human occupation, which is reflected in both rock art and inscriptions.

ICOMOS considers that the State Party had not satisfactorily justified the extent to which the nominated property had influenced other areas, in addition to being a recipient of external influences. ICOMOS considers that, on the basis of the information available, it is not evident that the nominated property has influenced rock art in other areas.

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified for the whole series.

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Criterion (iii): *bearing 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 at Jubbah the battles of past societies can be followed against the environmental catastrophe they experienced and adapted to in a truly exceptional example of such a situation, where the petroglyphs record the nature of the changes and the stone artefacts show where people lived in relation to the rock art and to the lake as it gradually dried up. At Shuwaymis, by contrast, the petroglyphs are all that remains of the testimony of a society that vanished, leaving behind a pristine record of its existence that is of a magnitude rarely encountered elsewhere in the world.

ICOMOS considers that the arguments presented are worthy of consideration.

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified for the whole series.

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Criterion (v): *being an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the description as a traditional human settlement or human interaction with a vulnerable environment “under the impact of irreversible change” could have been formulated specifically for the Saudi site complexes. It is hard to think of alternative, similarly comprehensive records of civilizations facing environmental oblivion anywhere in the world that have left such brilliant testimony of their genius. The two properties nominated literally exemplify this criterion.

ICOMOS considers that the property witnesses a period of the history of the region, but that this does not constitute a living tradition and does not represent a significant part of the culture of a present society. ICOMOS considers that the arguments to support this criterion have been taken into account by the justification of criterion (iii).

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified for the whole series.

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ICOMOS considers that the serial approach is justified.

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ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (i) and (iii), as well as the conditions of integrity and authenticity.

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#### **Description of the attributes**

The attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value are the environmental setting in the midst of a desert; the large numbers of petroglyphs of exceptional quality attributed to between 6000 and 9000 years of human history, and archaeological features; and the inscriptions that reflect the last 3000 years of the early development of writing (Thamudic) that represents the Bedouin culture, ending in Quranic verses.

#### **4 Factors affecting the property**

ICOMOS noted that there are no modern constructions within the boundaries of the nominated property.

However, there is a construction of a dam underway near Jubbah, of which about 3.8 km length has been completed. At the time of the technical mission, the construction was halted as part of a consultation process between the Municipality and the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, to determine how to proceed. In

response to ICOMOS’s concerns on the visual impacts of the dam, the State Party committed to framing and masking the dam with typical low desert vegetation (shrubs and scattered tamarisk trees). With regard to another construction work of a tower within the buffer zone of Jabal Umm Sinman around an existing fresh water reservoir, also noted by ICOMOS, the State Party reported that the impact of the water tower will be reduced by repainting the tower with a matching colour and texture.

The identified threats include climate change and rain water flow from the mountain slopes at Jubbah, which occurs occasionally.

ICOMOS notes that there are currently no plans for management of large-scale visitation to the nominated property, something which renders the property ill-prepared for a sudden increase in tourist numbers. For instance, there is no visitor infrastructure, such as marked routes, raised walkways and viewing platforms, that prevent visitors from making direct contact with the rock art panels and thus disturbing archaeological features and deposits.

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ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are development and tourism.

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### **5 Protection, conservation and management**

#### **Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone**

##### **Jabal Umm Sinman**

The area of the component of the nominated property in Jubbah, Jabal Umm Sinman, measures 1783.9ha and is surrounded by a buffer zone of 1951ha. According to the State Party, Jabal Umm Sinman is bordered in the west, north and south by desert sands and in the east by a security fence that borders the town of Jubbah. ICOMOS noted that the security fence referred to borders the buffer zone, not the property as recorded in the nomination dossier, and in the west, north and south, the boundary of the property follows the edge of the rocky mountain outcrop. The importance of the views from the west and especially the one from the south towards Jabal Umm Sinman is considered, in the Management Plan, to be key and also contributing to the visual integrity of the property. Despite this importance, the view is currently not protected. In the State Party’s response to the ICOMOS letter, it was reported that the buffer zone in this particular area will be extended to an extra 50 to 100 metres and that the variance will depend on the general topography. The State Party also reported that an agreement with the Municipality had been reached and the demarcation poles for the buffer zone, as well as a map showing the extended buffer zone, will be provided by 30 April 2015. Currently, the buffer zone boundary is properly materialized on the ground with large white concrete blocks placed about 50 to 100 meters apart, depending on the topography of the terrain.

ICOMOS considers that an extension of 50 to 100 metres to be inadequate for the protection of such significant views to the property. ICOMOS considers that a major extension, between 1.0 to 1.5 km west and south could be achieved with no major effort and costs. The pylons of the mountain outcrop could be used as demarcation poles of the boundary of the buffer zone.

ICOMOS is also concerned that in the western part of the nominated property, where Rock Art clusters 8-14 are situated, there is no fence, and apparently cluster 8 has been badly vandalized with graffiti. This constitutes a clear indication that here the property is inadequately protected as the area is used as a picnic spot. In response to this, the State Party stated that a protection fence will be extended to protect the Rock Art clusters 8-14 as well as 15-24. All this work, together with a map showing the extension of the protection fence, will be provided by 30 April 2015.

#### Jabal al-Manjor/Raat

Both Jabals al-Manjor and Raat are included within a parallelogram-shaped nominated component of the nominated property which measures 259.9ha and is surrounded by a buffer zone of 1658.5ha. These Jabals are bounded by security fences along the foot of the escarpments enclosing the rock art sites, and by the edges of the plateau above, but including ruins of ancient stone structures. ICOMOS noted that the parallelogram-shaped demarcation only exists on a map and will therefore need to be marked with beacons or demarcation poles on the ground. On-site demarcation currently covers only 30 to 40 percent of the total area. ICOMOS also noted that the State Party is to fence the parallelogram-shaped component of the property within 3 to 4 months after the technical mission.

It was noted during the technical mission that the buffer zone is also demarcated with large white concrete blocks spaced about 30 to 50 meters apart, some with the inscription "SCTA" on them.

ICOMOS considers that the buffer zone for this component of the nominated property is sufficient.

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In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the Jabal al-Manjor/Jabal Raat component of the nominated property and its buffer zone to be adequate, and that the buffer zone of the Jabal Umm Sinman component should be adjusted towards the western part of the nominated property to protect the view.

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#### Ownership

Jabals Umm Sinman, al-Manjor and Raat are government-owned properties and are protected zones under national law.

#### Protection

Protection of the heritage sites of the Kingdom is through a Royal Decree No. M/26 dated 23/6/1392 H (1972 AD) which was issued over 40 years ago, and also through the

Resolution by the Council of Ministers No. 78 dated 16/3/1429 H (2008 AD).

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud and Prince Saud bin Abdulmushin bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, the Governor of Hail Region, are keenly interested in preserving and highlighting the cultural heritage of the country, and the government provides substantial support for the safeguarding of the Jubbah and Shuwaymis rock art.

The site at Jabal Umm Sinman has been fenced (8 km long) by steel posts and wires. A 6 km-long fence was erected around Jabal al-Manjor and Jabal Raat. ICOMOS notes that there are plans to fence the entire area of Jabal al-Manjor and Jabal Raat, for which a proposal was being considered by the finance department.

The actual legal protection process involves submission of a report, by a site guard or any citizen about any infringement of the law, especially any interference with or defacement of a rock art panel, to the local police.

There is a museum and antiquities office in Hail where the museum staff and its director are responsible for the protection and management of rock art sites and all antiquities in the Hail region.

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In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place is generally adequate.

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#### Conservation

Jabal Umm Sinman at Jubbah and Jabal al-Manjor at Shuwaymis are being intensively investigated, and most of the petroglyph and inscription localities are registered and properly documented. A computer record of these sites is available on the websites of the National Museum and Saudi Commission. Also, hard copies of all records of registered sites and petroglyphs are safely stored in the Survey and Excavation Centre, with original digital photographs, maps and charts, etc. available for researchers and students.

There are some joint archaeological projects with foreign institutions who have also trained Saudi archaeologists working on the sites in various aspects of archaeology and rock art. The current Palaeodeserts Project with British archaeologists and palaeo-environmentalists is an example of such a collaboration, in this case between Oxford University and King Fahd University in Riyadh.

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In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that conservation of the property is adequate.

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#### Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

The serial nominated property is managed by the provincial Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA) in Hail, which operates under the supervision of the SCTA head office in Riyadh. On-the-ground protection

of the Jubba site complex is provided by staff already operating there, including controlling access to the site. ICOMOS notes that site guards will be installed at Shuwaymis once the road and the interpretation centre have been completed.

Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation

A Provincial Tourism Plan for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was completed in 2002, and was followed with the preparation of a plan specifically for Hail in 2004. There is also a management plan that was submitted together with the nomination dossier, of the site, that considers the long-term development, preservation and protection of the sites, governance arrangements with the local mayor, and administration of Jubba and Shuwaymis villages. Currently, a 40 km-long road is under construction, joining the village of Shuwaymis to the interpretation centre at the entrance to the buffer zone, which will facilitate the transport of visitors.

In a response to ICOMOS's concerns over lack of on-site visitor infrastructure, the State Party reported that work on the infrastructure will commence as soon as the specifications are outlined by the tourism management strategy and the interpretation strategy.

ICOMOS concurs that the visitor-related challenges could be properly addressed through the tourism management strategy and the interpretation strategy, that will address the increase in visitation as part of the management plan, once completed.

Involvement of the local communities

Local Bedouin tribesmen are involved in protecting the rock art and have reported misdemeanours to their sheikh or directly to the police, and people defacing rock art have been prosecuted under existing legislation. The local community plays an important role not only in preserving and protecting the sites but also takes an interest in the development of the area and welcoming visitors.

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In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the management system for the overall serial property is adequate.

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## 6 Monitoring

There has been no previous monitoring or reporting of the detailed conditions of both rock art properties. Since it would be impractical for each of the petroglyphs to be monitored individually, the State Party has committed to doing sampling. The SCTA will be responsible for monitoring, for storing the data, and for designing and implementing conservation measures.

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In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that monitoring for the rock art is adequate; however, there is a need to monitor development and tourism impacts, and implement remedial measures where necessary.

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## 7 Conclusions

ICOMOS recognises the Outstanding Universal Value of the Rock Art in the Hail Region serial nominated property, which meets criteria (i) and (iii). The required conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met, although attention should be paid to improving the protection measures that ensure preservation of the attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS thanks the State Party for taking up the challenge of the heritage conservation of a property of this kind. Nevertheless, ICOMOS notes that some measures should be assured, among them those related to preserving the visual integrity of the property and those related to visitor management. ICOMOS has identified development and tourism impacts as factors that, if not properly addressed, could threaten the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. The State Party has agreed to implement measures to mitigate the visual impact of the dam and of the water tower, which will be completed by 30 April 2015. Regarding visitor management, the State Party has announced some measures that will be completed between June and October 2015.

ICOMOS has also noted that, although the boundaries of the components that make up the serial nomination can be considered adequate, it would be necessary to redefine the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone for Jabal Umm Sinman as explained above, considering the possibility of an extension of 1.0 to 1.5 km towards the west and south.

ICOMOS has proposed to change the name of the property to "Rock Art in the Hail Region", a proposal that has been agreed to by the State Party by letter dated 8 February 2015.

## 8 Recommendations

### Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of 'Rock Art in the Hail Region (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)', be **referred back** to the State Party in order to allow it to:

- Extend the buffer zone of the Jabal Umm Sinman component of 1.0 to 1.5 km towards the west and the south, in order to preserve the long-term visual integrity of the property;
- Frame and mask the rain water diversionary dam or water barrier near Jubba with typical low desert vegetation in view of the necessity of the structure and the substantial investment already made in its construction;
- Consider ways of reducing the visual impact of the water tower that is constructed on the eastern side of

Jabal Umm Sinman, near the existing fresh water reservoir;

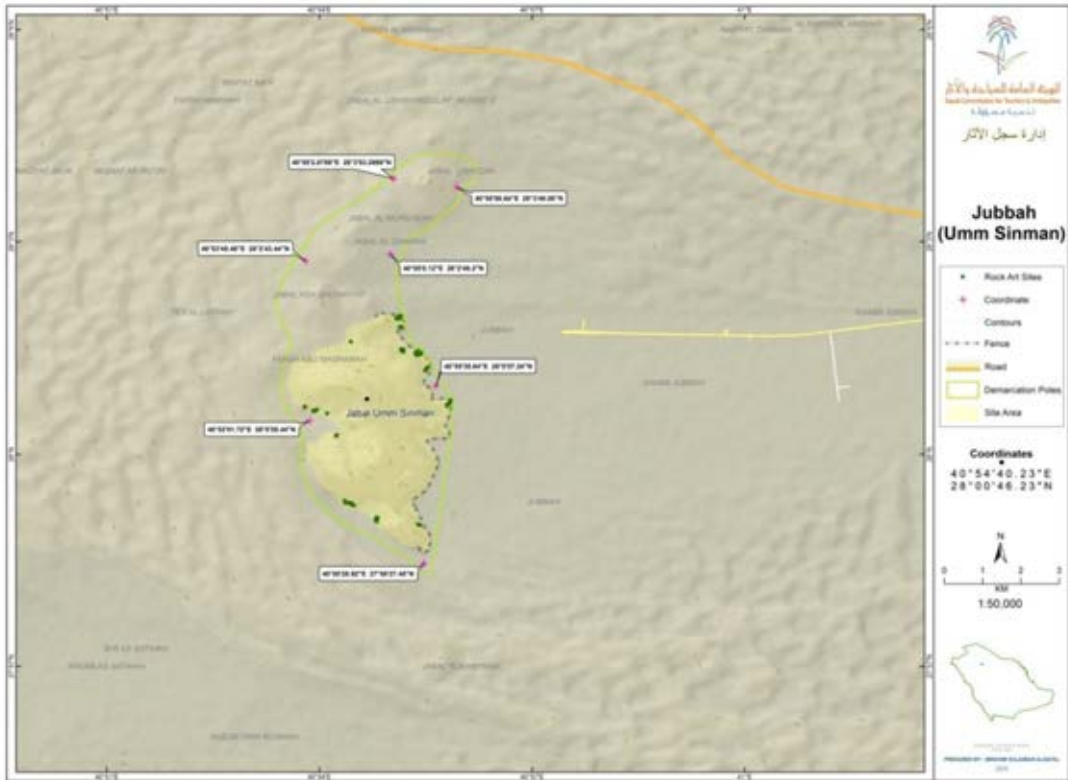
- Set up visitor infrastructures that will include marked routes, raised walkways and viewing platforms, that will prevent visitors from making contact with the rock art panels, and carry out this work in accordance with the *ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties*;
- Develop a tourism management strategy including an interpretation strategy, that will address the increase in visitation numbers as part of the management plan.

**Additional recommendations**

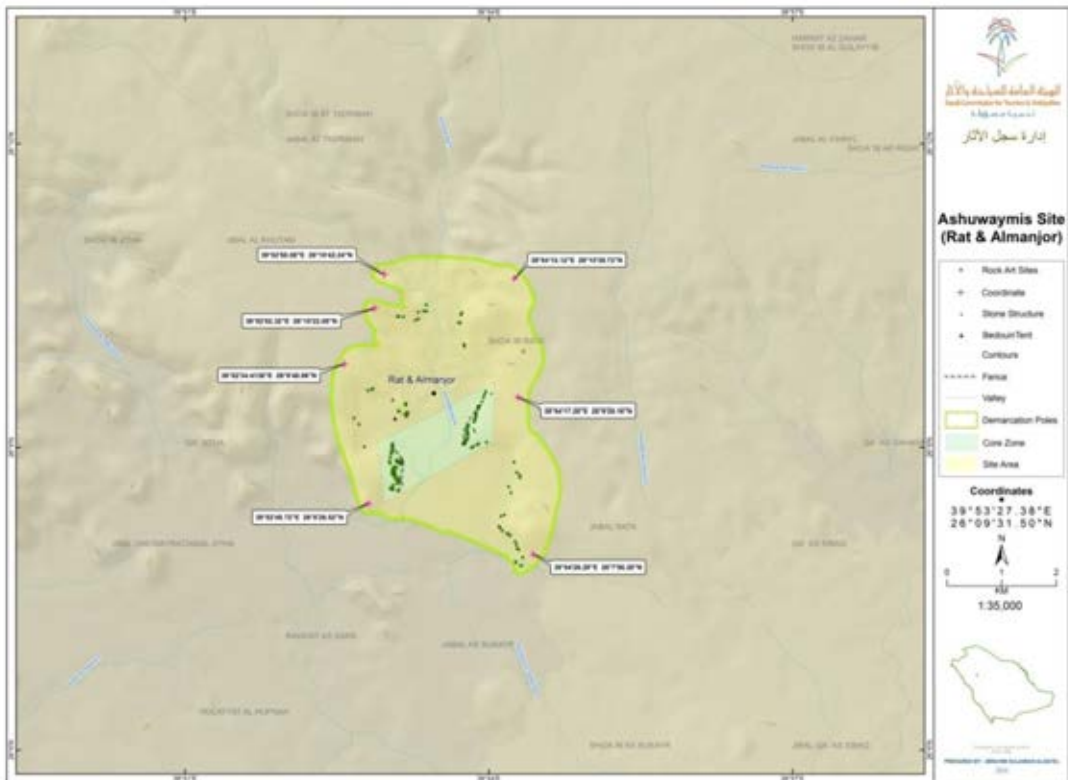
ICOMOS recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- Developing monitoring indicators for impacts of development and tourism on the attributes of the nominated serial property.





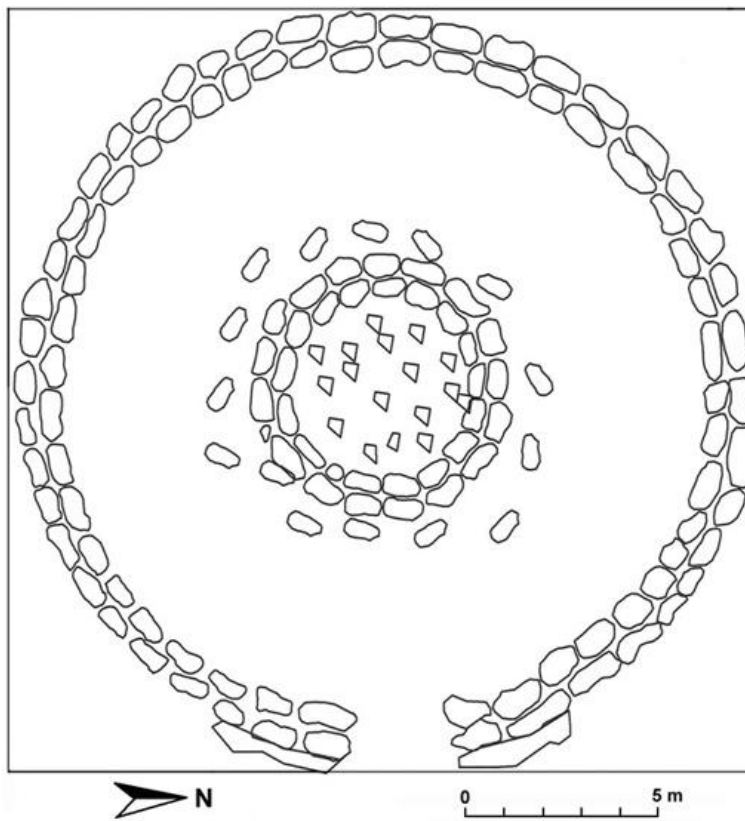
Map showing the boundaries of Jabal Umm Sinman component site



Map showing the boundaries of Jabal al-Manjor and Jabal Raath component site



Major stone structure on the edge of the Jabal al-Manjor plateau



Map showing the stone structure



Neolithic petroglyphs at Jabal Raat



"The Lion of Shuwaymis"

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## Rock Art in the Hail Region (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) No 1472

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### Official name as proposed by the State Party

Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia

### Location

Northern Province, Hail Region  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

### Brief description

The serial nomination of the 'Rock Art in the Hail Region' comprises two components, namely, the Jabal Umm Sinman at Jubbah and the Jabal al-Manjor/Raat at Shuwaymis. In Jabal Umm Sinman, Jubbah, the ancestors of present-day Arabs left the marks of their presence in numerous petroglyph panels and inscriptions. In Jabal al-Manjor and Jabal Raat, Shuwaymis, the large number of petroglyphs and inscriptions has been attributed to almost 10,000 years of human history. Together, these components contain the biggest and richest rock art complexes not only in Saudi Arabia, but in the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East generally.

### Category of property

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

## 1 Basic data

### Included in the Tentative List

17 September 2012

### International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination

None

### Date received by the World Heritage Centre

24 January 2014

### Background

An ICOMOS Advisory mission within the framework of the first phase of a Pilot project for the Upstream Process (WHC-11/35.COM/12C) was undertaken on 10-17 April 2013.

### Consultations

ICOMOS consulted its International Scientific Committee on Rock Art and several independent experts.

### Technical Evaluation Mission

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 9 to 15 September 2014.

### Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 8 September 2014, requesting additional information, and a State Party response to the letter was obtained on 23 October 2014.

A second letter was sent to the State Party on 23 December 2014 to request additional information on boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone, developments, visitor management and the name of the property. On 8 February 2015 the State Party provided additional information, which has been considered for the elaboration of this report.

### Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

12 March 2015

## 2 The property

### Description

The 'Rock Art in the Hail Region' serial nomination is composed of two properties, namely, the Jabal Umm Sinman at Jubbah and the Jabal al-Manjor/Raat at Shuwaymis. Jabal Umm Sinman is located about 90 km northwest of the city of Hail and is bounded in the west, north and south by desert sands and in the east by a security fence that borders the town of Jubbah.

The second component of the serial nominated property is parallelogram-shaped and comprises two hill ranges, namely, Jabal al-Manjor and Jabal Raat, that are in the Wadi al-Mukhayet, about 40 km west of Shuwaymis, situated about 250 km south of Hail. Both sites are bounded by security fences along the foot of the escarpments enclosing the rock art sites, and by the edges of the plateaus above, but including ruins of ancient structures.

Together, the components of the serial nominated property cover an area of about 2,043.8ha and are surrounded by a buffer zone measuring a total of 3,609.5ha.

Jabal Umm Sinman, Jubbah

Overlooking the freshwater lake that once existed here and which provided water to people and animals in the southern part of the Great Nafud Desert, is the hill range of Umm Sinman. Here, on these hills, the ancestors of present-day Arabs left the marks of their presence: their religious, social, cultural, intellectual and philosophical perspectives on their beliefs about life and death, their metaphysical and cosmological ideologies.

During the region's desertification, beginning in mid-Holocene times, the oasis of Jubbah provided the only substantial source of water within the desert, facilitating its continuing human occupation up to the present and the gradual adaptation of the population to the significant environmental changes. These changes are distinctly expressed in the numerous petroglyph panels and rich inscriptions, the greatest concentrations of which occur in

the lower rock exposures of the eastern flanks of Jabal Umm Sinman.

Jabal al-Manjor and Jabal Raat, Shuwaymis

Jabals al-Manjor and Raat are rock escarpments of a now sand-covered wadi that is thought to have been a broad valley with flowing water during the early Holocene. Both Jabal al-Manjor and Raat contain a large number of human and animal figures, and other hills and outcrops within the buffer zone feature smaller concentrations.

The large number of petroglyphs and inscriptions at these site complexes has been attributed to almost 10,000 years of human history. Although the bulk of this vast corpus of petroglyphs is of a single cultural period of human history, preceding and subsequent rock art traditions have been identified and dated. As the aquifer subsided, probably around mid-Holocene times, the formerly-permanent human population became increasingly transient, but the sites were still visited in recent millennia as indicated in the rock art. The intensive and comprehensive survey of the Jabal al-Manjor and Raat complexes since their recent re-discovery resulted in the locating of hundreds of rock art panels, several stone structures, and typical stone objects of the Neolithic era.

### History and development

Observation of Middle Palaeolithic stone tools both on Umm Sinman and in its immediate vicinity, suggests that, already in the Pleistocene, climatic variations attracted human occupation of the Jubbah oasis during dry periods, perhaps acting as a refuge area to both humans and fauna. Near the Shuwaymis sites, streams and lakes occurred during Pleistocene periods and some of this surface water also persisted well into the Holocene. Here too, Middle Palaeolithic occupation evidence has been reported.

Present data indicates that the record of surviving rock art commences shortly after 10,000 years ago, providing an insight into the Neolithic culture through thousands of petroglyphs. Through the depicted fauna, the pictorial content of the rock art indicates clearly that living conditions were favourable during this period, at both components of the serial nominated property.

However, this record provided by the rock art continues through the remainder of the Holocene, firstly as pictures and eventually these are supplemented by inscriptions. This veritable library provides a continuous record illustrating how human populations coped with environmental fluctuations marking an overall deterioration and gradual desertification. After the lake of Jubbah disappeared, wells had to be dug, which, by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, were up to 23 m deep. But as the Jubbah lake bed became the only secure water source in the Nafud Desert, the occupants remained and adapted to the arid conditions they faced. This is well reflected in the late Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Bronze Age rock art. The introduction of Thamudic writing, probably about 3000 years ago, is documented in thousands of inscriptions at

Jubbah, compared with significantly lower numbers at Shuwaymis. From the locations and contents of these early inscriptions, it is evident that Jubbah had become an important staging place for camel caravans, whereas there was rather less human activity at Shuwaymis. Jubbah lies on an ancient caravan route to Jordan and Syria.

Between 3000 and 2000 years ago, the desertification process became complete across Arabia. Camels now became the dominant animal motif in the surviving rock art. The next major change in the rock art record comes with the introduction of Islam around 1400 years BP, when earlier scripts were replaced by early Arabic writing (Kufic), and the depiction of living things, especially humans, declined markedly. Nevertheless, there are still a small number of depictions found from the subsequent period.

The Jubbah oasis was visited by several European travellers and historians in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, who wrote brief accounts of the site and nothing on rock art or inscriptions from the area. Scientific archaeological investigations at Jubbah began after the Department of Antiquities and Museums initiated a Comprehensive Archaeological Survey of the entire Kingdom in 1976. The rock art of Jubbah was first thoroughly investigated and recorded by the Rock Art Survey team of the Department of Antiquities and Museums in 1986, which published its initial report on Jubbah in *Atlat* in 1987.

Later on, the Ministry of Education erected extensive fencing on the eastern side of Jabal Umm Sinman, facing the town of Jubbah, to prevent uncontrolled access to the rock art. Site guards and facilities were installed. In recent years a visitor centre has been built at Jubbah, and a new museum in Hail is under construction, all as part of the development of the cultural heritage of the region.

The Shuwaymis sites, although always known to the local Bedouin, were officially rediscovered only in 2001, which led to the undertaking of the first scientific investigation of Shuwaymis' rock art. In the subsequent years a sealed road was constructed up to Shuwaymis village, and this is now being extended to the visitor centre at the boundary of the buffer zone of the rock art sites.

## 3 Justification for inscription, integrity and authenticity

### Comparative analysis

An analysis undertaken by the State Party illustrated a comparison of the serial nominated property with other sites in Saudi Arabia, the Middle East and around the world. In the nomination dossier, a comparison with Saudi Arabian sites indicates them to be generally of significantly smaller assemblages, with the exception of the Al Qara complex. Unlike other sites, this complex houses several tens of thousands of petroglyphs, and it is reported that its substantial library of Arabian rock

inscriptions may exceed those at Jubbah in numbers. However, their Thamudic content is very low, Kufic and recent Islamic texts clearly dominating.

As far as the Middle East is concerned, the analysis concludes that there is no rock art site in the region that would match the values of the two components of the serial nominated property, or qualitatively match their petroglyphs, preservation or management. The State Party pointed out that, on the basis of current information, three of the four largest rock art collections of the Middle East are in Saudi Arabia. Of these, Jubbah and Shuwaymis have the densest concentrations, show the most impressive artwork by far, and they also include the oldest tradition represented.

In a global context, the State Party states that, if compared to rock art panels located in the Sahara, China, India, South Africa, the Americas or Australia, the nominated property eclipses them in terms of age, and matches these properties in terms of visual qualities and technical perfection.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property has some similarities with other properties located in the wider region, among them stylistic similarities with rock art in the Libyan Messak and in North Yemen, and the most ancient images exhibit influences from Egypt. Despite these similarities, ICOMOS considers that, when considering the age, span of time, amount and quality, the nominated property bears specific features that justify its consideration for the World Heritage List.

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

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#### **Justification of Outstanding Universal Value**

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

- It is a visually stunning expression of the human creative genius.
- It archives more than 6,000 years of continuous human occupation in both rock art and inscriptions.
- The petroglyphs reveal the use of the sites in different cultural periods during which populations adapted successfully to severe environmental changes by acquiring domesticated animals such as cattle and horses, and later the camel.
- The Jubbah and Shuwaymis rock art catalogue and archaeological features are among the world's largest and most magnificent surviving corpus of Neolithic petroglyphs.
- Collectively, the Jubbah and Shuwaymis rock art represent a continuous record of human endeavour covering the past 10,000 years. The record commences with a massive component of Neolithic artwork, followed by comprehensive Chalcolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Historic traditions, all of

which used the same localities to create their respective art corpora.

- In contrast to most other rock art sequences in the world, the approximate antiquity of the components of the Hail rock art is reliably known, because their ages are anchored to a series of direct dates derived from key elements.

ICOMOS considers that there are several reasons to support the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, among them the recognition of a "Jubbah style" indicates the importance and uniqueness of the site. The components of the serial nominated property bear an exceptional importance from the point of view of the amount of petroglyphs and of their high quality. As for the evolution of the environment, it is well documented by the studies on lacustrine deposits, by archaeology and by palaeo-environmental studies, which have been multiplied over the last few years. These studies support that the rock art images in the property can contribute to documenting civilisations that have left practically no other kind of vestiges. It is therefore possible to follow their evolution by adaptation to aridification of the environment.

#### **Integrity and authenticity**

##### **Integrity**

In the case of Jabal Umm Sinman, the boundary encompasses 14 clusters of petroglyphs on all sides of the mountain. The buffer zone extends northwards to enclose several smaller rocky outcrops with fewer petroglyphs. ICOMOS noted that the area of cluster 8, in the south-western part of the property, is badly vandalized with recent graffiti (mostly names painted in various colours often obliterating the ancient rock art), and littered with garbage. Furthermore, the Municipality of Jubbah has constructed a rain water diversion dam or water barrier of several kilometres length inside the buffer zone's eastern border. This dam is clearly visible from the westernmost north-south road of Jubbah, which bounds the buffer zone on the east, and somehow spoils the views from there towards Jabal Umm Sinman. On the eastern side of Jabal Umm Sinman, immediately north of the nominated property and located within the buffer zone next to the existing freshwater reservoir (in existence for the past 16 to 17 years), is the construction of a huge water tower that is visible from within the nominated property.

The property at Shuwaymis includes both rocky outcrops, Jabal Raat to the west and Jabal al-Manjor to the east, as well as the sandy valley between them. Neighbouring rocky outcrops to the north are incorporated into the buffer zone as they have not yet been thoroughly investigated. Apart from a Bedouin camp with fewer than 25 people living in the buffer zone, there is no town or large settlement nearby.

Covering more than 8 km at Jabal Umm Sinman and about 6 km at Manjor and Raat, steel fences, bars and locked access gates protect these examples of rock art.

According to the State Party, all elements necessary to express the Outstanding Universal Value of the serial nominated property, namely numerous well-preserved petroglyphs, identifiably different rock art traditions over the period from hunting and gathering to animal domestication and writing, independent evidence for climatic change at nearby palaeolake deposits, and evidence for human interaction in a vulnerable environment, are amply represented in the property, and both components are of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features that convey the Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that the components that make up the serial nomination contain the attributes to convey its Outstanding Universal Value and that the size of the nominated zones is adequate. Nevertheless, ICOMOS notes that measures to ensure adequate protection should be implemented, something that will be dealt with in the following sections of this report.

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ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the whole series has been justified; and that the integrity of the individual sites that comprise the series has been demonstrated, although measures regarding protection should be reinforced.

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#### Authenticity

The petroglyphs at the two components of the serial nominated property, Jabal Umm Sinman at Jubbah and Jabal al-Manjor/Jabal Raat at Shuwaymis, have retained their original location, setting, materials, form and design even though they do not function within a cultural tradition. According to the State Party, their patination, which is full in the case of the Neolithic petroglyphs and of a decreasing degree for the subsequent Chalcolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Islamic periods, and different phases of weathering, attest to their authenticity.

ICOMOS considers the elements on site to be authentic.

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ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the whole nominated series has been justified; and that the authenticity of the individual sites that comprise the series has been demonstrated.

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In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated series have been met; and for individual sites, the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

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#### Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (v).

Criterion (i): *representing a masterpiece of human creative genius;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the exceptionally large number of

petroglyphs, created by using a range of techniques with simple stone hammers, against a background of gradual environmental deterioration, are, by world standards, visually stunning expressions of the human creative genius, comparable to the messages left by doomed civilizations in Mesoamerica or on Easter Island. In that sense alone they are of the highest Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that the arguments advanced by the State Party are admissible and that the images are outstanding in visual terms, together with terms of employed techniques and location. At the same time, the so-called "Jubbah style" is a testimony to the recognition of this remarkable artistic achievement, which also exhibits an outstanding use of skills to handle both tools and materials.

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified for the whole series.

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Criterion (ii): *exhibiting 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 Jubbah and Shuwaymis exhibit more than 6000 years of continuous human occupation, which is reflected in both rock art and inscriptions.

ICOMOS considers that the State Party had not satisfactorily justified the extent to which the nominated property had influenced other areas, in addition to being a recipient of external influences. ICOMOS considers that, on the basis of the information available, it is not evident that the nominated property has influenced rock art in other areas.

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified for the whole series.

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Criterion (iii): *bearing 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 at Jubbah the battles of past societies can be followed against the environmental catastrophe they experienced and adapted to in a truly exceptional example of such a situation, where the petroglyphs record the nature of the changes and the stone artefacts show where people lived in relation to the rock art and to the lake as it gradually dried up. At Shuwaymis, by contrast, the petroglyphs are all that remains of the testimony of a society that vanished, leaving behind a pristine record of its existence that is of a magnitude rarely encountered elsewhere in the world.

ICOMOS considers that the arguments presented are worthy of consideration.

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified for the whole series.

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Criterion (v): *being an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the description as a traditional human settlement or human interaction with a vulnerable environment “under the impact of irreversible change” could have been formulated specifically for the Saudi site complexes. It is hard to think of alternative, similarly comprehensive records of civilizations facing environmental oblivion anywhere in the world that have left such brilliant testimony of their genius. The two properties nominated literally exemplify this criterion.

ICOMOS considers that the property witnesses a period of the history of the region, but that this does not constitute a living tradition and does not represent a significant part of the culture of a present society. ICOMOS considers that the arguments to support this criterion have been taken into account by the justification of criterion (iii).

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified for the whole series.

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ICOMOS considers that the serial approach is justified.

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ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (i) and (iii), as well as the conditions of integrity and authenticity.

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#### **Description of the attributes**

The attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value are the environmental setting in the midst of a desert; the large numbers of petroglyphs of exceptional quality attributed to between 6000 and 9000 years of human history, and archaeological features; and the inscriptions that reflect the last 3000 years of the early development of writing (Thamudic) that represents the Bedouin culture, ending in Quranic verses.

#### **4 Factors affecting the property**

ICOMOS noted that there are no modern constructions within the boundaries of the nominated property.

However, there is a construction of a dam underway near Jubbah, of which about 3.8 km length has been completed. At the time of the technical mission, the construction was halted as part of a consultation process between the Municipality and the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, to determine how to proceed. In

response to ICOMOS’s concerns on the visual impacts of the dam, the State Party committed to framing and masking the dam with typical low desert vegetation (shrubs and scattered tamarisk trees). With regard to another construction work of a tower within the buffer zone of Jabal Umm Sinman around an existing fresh water reservoir, also noted by ICOMOS, the State Party reported that the impact of the water tower will be reduced by repainting the tower with a matching colour and texture.

The identified threats include climate change and rain water flow from the mountain slopes at Jubbah, which occurs occasionally.

ICOMOS notes that there are currently no plans for management of large-scale visitation to the nominated property, something which renders the property ill-prepared for a sudden increase in tourist numbers. For instance, there is no visitor infrastructure, such as marked routes, raised walkways and viewing platforms, that prevent visitors from making direct contact with the rock art panels and thus disturbing archaeological features and deposits.

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ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are development and tourism.

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### **5 Protection, conservation and management**

#### **Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone**

##### **Jabal Umm Sinman**

The area of the component of the nominated property in Jubbah, Jabal Umm Sinman, measures 1783.9ha and is surrounded by a buffer zone of 1951ha. According to the State Party, Jabal Umm Sinman is bordered in the west, north and south by desert sands and in the east by a security fence that borders the town of Jubbah. ICOMOS noted that the security fence referred to borders the buffer zone, not the property as recorded in the nomination dossier, and in the west, north and south, the boundary of the property follows the edge of the rocky mountain outcrop. The importance of the views from the west and especially the one from the south towards Jabal Umm Sinman is considered, in the Management Plan, to be key and also contributing to the visual integrity of the property. Despite this importance, the view is currently not protected. In the State Party’s response to the ICOMOS letter, it was reported that the buffer zone in this particular area will be extended to an extra 50 to 100 metres and that the variance will depend on the general topography. The State Party also reported that an agreement with the Municipality had been reached and the demarcation poles for the buffer zone, as well as a map showing the extended buffer zone, will be provided by 30 April 2015. Currently, the buffer zone boundary is properly materialized on the ground with large white concrete blocks placed about 50 to 100 meters apart, depending on the topography of the terrain.



ICOMOS considers that an extension of 50 to 100 metres to be inadequate for the protection of such significant views to the property. ICOMOS considers that a major extension, between 1.0 to 1.5 km west and south could be achieved with no major effort and costs. The pylons of the mountain outcrop could be used as demarcation poles of the boundary of the buffer zone.

ICOMOS is also concerned that in the western part of the nominated property, where Rock Art clusters 8-14 are situated, there is no fence, and apparently cluster 8 has been badly vandalized with graffiti. This constitutes a clear indication that here the property is inadequately protected as the area is used as a picnic spot. In response to this, the State Party stated that a protection fence will be extended to protect the Rock Art clusters 8-14 as well as 15-24. All this work, together with a map showing the extension of the protection fence, will be provided by 30 April 2015.

#### Jabal al-Manjor/Raat

Both Jabals al-Manjor and Raat are included within a parallelogram-shaped nominated component of the nominated property which measures 259.9ha and is surrounded by a buffer zone of 1658.5ha. These Jabals are bounded by security fences along the foot of the escarpments enclosing the rock art sites, and by the edges of the plateau above, but including ruins of ancient stone structures. ICOMOS noted that the parallelogram-shaped demarcation only exists on a map and will therefore need to be marked with beacons or demarcation poles on the ground. On-site demarcation currently covers only 30 to 40 percent of the total area. ICOMOS also noted that the State Party is to fence the parallelogram-shaped component of the property within 3 to 4 months after the technical mission.

It was noted during the technical mission that the buffer zone is also demarcated with large white concrete blocks spaced about 30 to 50 meters apart, some with the inscription "SCTA" on them.

ICOMOS considers that the buffer zone for this component of the nominated property is sufficient.

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In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the Jabal al-Manjor/Jabal Raat component of the nominated property and its buffer zone to be adequate, and that the buffer zone of the Jabal Umm Sinman component should be adjusted towards the western part of the nominated property to protect the view.

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#### Ownership

Jabals Umm Sinman, al-Manjor and Raat are government-owned properties and are protected zones under national law.

#### Protection

Protection of the heritage sites of the Kingdom is through a Royal Decree No. M/26 dated 23/6/1392 H (1972 AD) which was issued over 40 years ago, and also through the

Resolution by the Council of Ministers No. 78 dated 16/3/1429 H (2008 AD).

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud and Prince Saud bin Abdulmushin bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, the Governor of Hail Region, are keenly interested in preserving and highlighting the cultural heritage of the country, and the government provides substantial support for the safeguarding of the Jubbah and Shuwaymis rock art.

The site at Jabal Umm Sinman has been fenced (8 km long) by steel posts and wires. A 6 km-long fence was erected around Jabal al-Manjor and Jabal Raat. ICOMOS notes that there are plans to fence the entire area of Jabal al-Manjor and Jabal Raat, for which a proposal was being considered by the finance department.

The actual legal protection process involves submission of a report, by a site guard or any citizen about any infringement of the law, especially any interference with or defacement of a rock art panel, to the local police.

There is a museum and antiquities office in Hail where the museum staff and its director are responsible for the protection and management of rock art sites and all antiquities in the Hail region.

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In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place is generally adequate.

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#### Conservation

Jabal Umm Sinman at Jubbah and Jabal al-Manjor at Shuwaymis are being intensively investigated, and most of the petroglyph and inscription localities are registered and properly documented. A computer record of these sites is available on the websites of the National Museum and Saudi Commission. Also, hard copies of all records of registered sites and petroglyphs are safely stored in the Survey and Excavation Centre, with original digital photographs, maps and charts, etc. available for researchers and students.

There are some joint archaeological projects with foreign institutions who have also trained Saudi archaeologists working on the sites in various aspects of archaeology and rock art. The current Palaeodeserts Project with British archaeologists and palaeo-environmentalists is an example of such a collaboration, in this case between Oxford University and King Fahd University in Riyadh.

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In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that conservation of the property is adequate.

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#### Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

The serial nominated property is managed by the provincial Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA) in Hail, which operates under the supervision of the SCTA head office in Riyadh. On-the-ground protection

of the Jubbah site complex is provided by staff already operating there, including controlling access to the site. ICOMOS notes that site guards will be installed at Shuwaymis once the road and the interpretation centre have been completed.

Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation

A Provincial Tourism Plan for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was completed in 2002, and was followed with the preparation of a plan specifically for Hail in 2004. There is also a management plan that was submitted together with the nomination dossier, of the site, that considers the long-term development, preservation and protection of the sites, governance arrangements with the local mayor, and administration of Jubbah and Shuwaymis villages. Currently, a 40 km-long road is under construction, joining the village of Shuwaymis to the interpretation centre at the entrance to the buffer zone, which will facilitate the transport of visitors.

In a response to ICOMOS's concerns over lack of on-site visitor infrastructure, the State Party reported that work on the infrastructure will commence as soon as the specifications are outlined by the tourism management strategy and the interpretation strategy.

ICOMOS concurs that the visitor-related challenges could be properly addressed through the tourism management strategy and the interpretation strategy, that will address the increase in visitation as part of the management plan, once completed.

Involvement of the local communities

Local Bedouin tribesmen are involved in protecting the rock art and have reported misdemeanours to their sheikh or directly to the police, and people defacing rock art have been prosecuted under existing legislation. The local community plays an important role not only in preserving and protecting the sites but also takes an interest in the development of the area and welcoming visitors.

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In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the management system for the overall serial property is adequate.

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## 6 Monitoring

There has been no previous monitoring or reporting of the detailed conditions of both rock art properties. Since it would be impractical for each of the petroglyphs to be monitored individually, the State Party has committed to doing sampling. The SCTA will be responsible for monitoring, for storing the data, and for designing and implementing conservation measures.

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In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that monitoring for the rock art is adequate; however, there is a need to monitor development and tourism impacts, and implement remedial measures where necessary.

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## 7 Conclusions

ICOMOS recognises the Outstanding Universal Value of the Rock Art in the Hail Region serial nominated property, which meets criteria (i) and (iii). The required conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met, although attention should be paid to improving the protection measures that ensure preservation of the attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS thanks the State Party for taking up the challenge of the heritage conservation of a property of this kind. Nevertheless, ICOMOS notes that some measures should be assured, among them those related to preserving the visual integrity of the property and those related to visitor management. ICOMOS has identified development and tourism impacts as factors that, if not properly addressed, could threaten the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. The State Party has agreed to implement measures to mitigate the visual impact of the dam and of the water tower, which will be completed by 30 April 2015. Regarding visitor management, the State Party has announced some measures that will be completed between June and October 2015.

ICOMOS has also noted that, although the boundaries of the components that make up the serial nomination can be considered adequate, it would be necessary to redefine the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone for Jabal Umm Sinman as explained above, considering the possibility of an extension of 1.0 to 1.5 km towards the west and south.

ICOMOS has proposed to change the name of the property to "Rock Art in the Hail Region", a proposal that has been agreed to by the State Party by letter dated 8 February 2015.

## 8 Recommendations

### Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of 'Rock Art in the Hail Region (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)', be **referred back** to the State Party in order to allow it to:

- Extend the buffer zone of the Jabal Umm Sinman component of 1.0 to 1.5 km towards the west and the south, in order to preserve the long-term visual integrity of the property;
- Frame and mask the rain water diversionary dam or water barrier near Jubbah with typical low desert vegetation in view of the necessity of the structure and the substantial investment already made in its construction;
- Consider ways of reducing the visual impact of the water tower that is constructed on the eastern side of

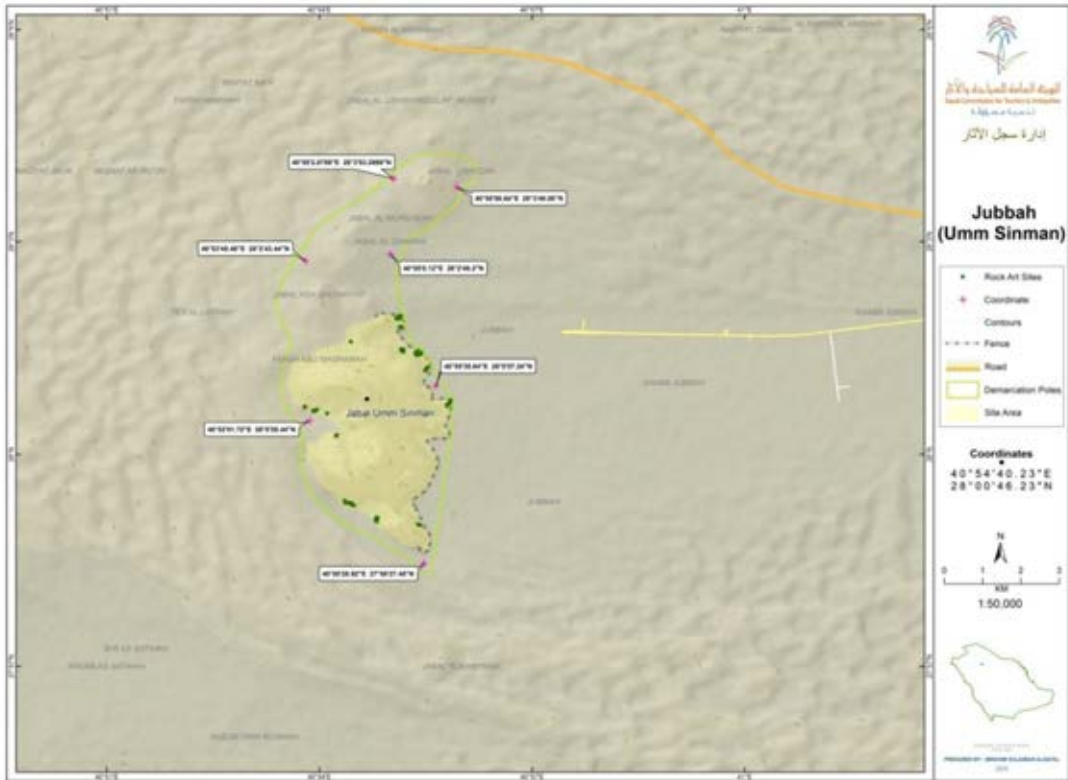
Jabal Umm Sinman, near the existing fresh water reservoir;

- Set up visitor infrastructures that will include marked routes, raised walkways and viewing platforms, that will prevent visitors from making contact with the rock art panels, and carry out this work in accordance with the *ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties*;
- Develop a tourism management strategy including an interpretation strategy, that will address the increase in visitation numbers as part of the management plan.

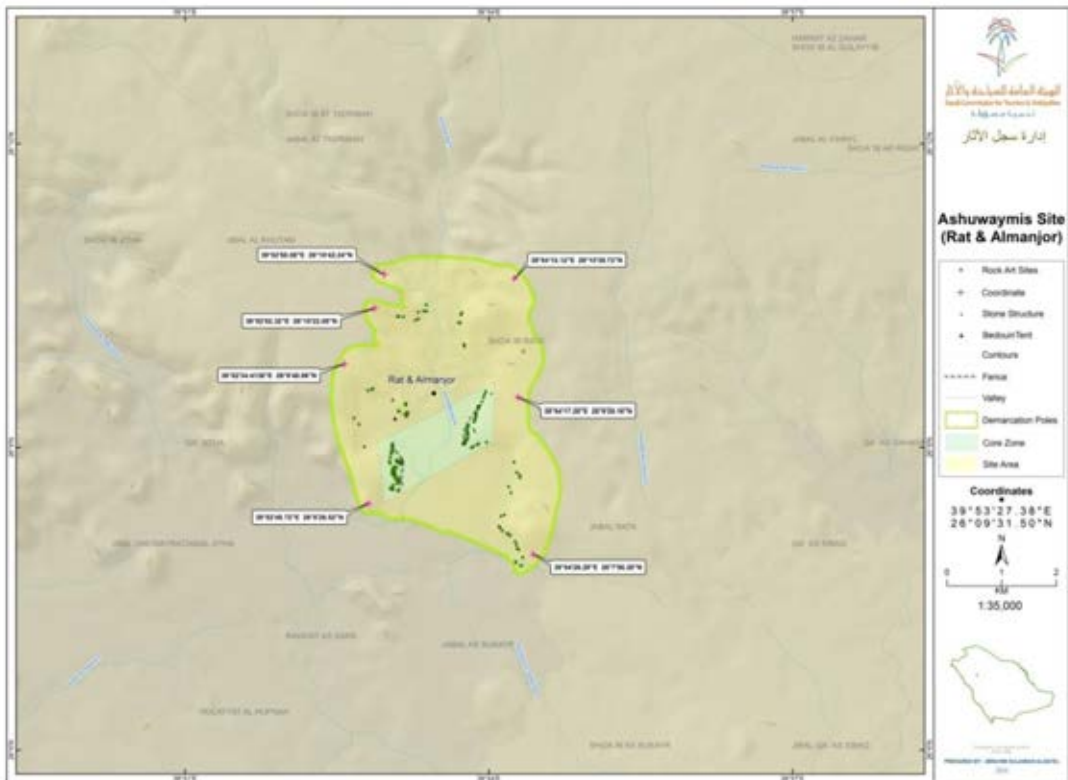
**Additional recommendations**

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

- Developing monitoring indicators for impacts of development and tourism on the attributes of the nominated serial property.



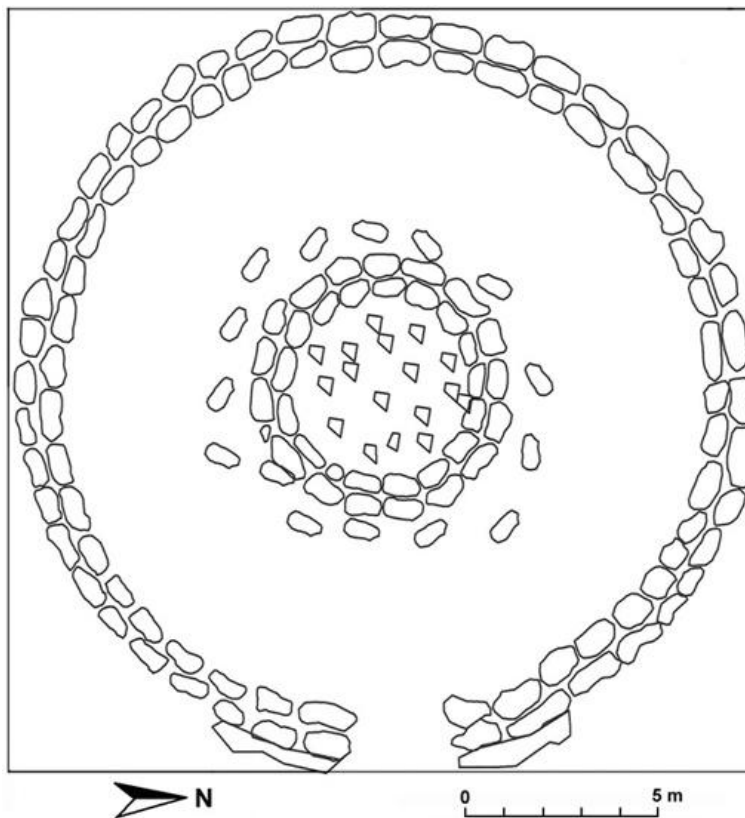
Map showing the boundaries of Jabal Umm Sinman component site



Map showing the boundaries of Jabal al-Manjor and Jabal Raath component site



Major stone structure on the edge of the Jabal al-Manjor plateau



Map showing the stone structure



Neolithic petroglyphs at Jabal Raat



"The Lion of Shuwaymis"

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## Art rupestre de la région de Hail (Royaume d'Arabie saoudite) No 1472

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**Nom officiel du bien tel que proposé par l'État partie**  
Art rupestre de la région de Hail en Arabie Saoudite

**Lieu**

Province du Nord, région de Hail  
Royaume d'Arabie saoudite

**Brève description**

La proposition d'inscription en série de l'Art rupestre de la région de Hail regroupe deux éléments, à savoir le djebel Umm Sinman à Jubbah et les djebels al-Manjor et Raat à Shuwaymis. Au djebel Umm Sinman, les ancêtres des Arabes d'aujourd'hui ont laissé des traces de leur présence dans de nombreux panneaux de pétroglyphes et de nombreuses inscriptions. Aux djebels al-Manjor et Raat, les nombreux pétroglyphes et inscriptions ont été datés d'une période qui couvre près de 10 000 ans d'histoire humaine. À eux deux, ces éléments contiennent l'ensemble d'art rupestre le plus vaste et le plus riche non seulement d'Arabie Saoudite mais de la péninsule arabique et du Moyen-Orient en général.

**Catégorie de bien**

En termes de catégories de biens culturels telles qu'elles sont définies à l'article premier de la Convention du patrimoine mondial de 1972, il s'agit d'une proposition d'inscription en série de deux *sites*.

### 1 Identification

**Inclus dans la liste indicative**

17 septembre 2012

**Assistance internationale au titre du  
Fonds du patrimoine mondial pour la préparation  
de la proposition d'inscription**

Aucune

**Date de réception par le Centre du patrimoine mondial**

24 janvier 2014

**Antécédents**

Une mission consultative de l'ICOMOS, dans le cadre de la première phase d'un projet pilote de processus en amont (WHC-11/35.COM/12C), a été effectuée du 10 au 17 avril 2013.

**Consultations**

L'ICOMOS a consulté son Comité scientifique international d'Art rupestre et plusieurs experts indépendants.

**Mission d'évaluation technique**

Une mission d'évaluation technique de l'ICOMOS s'est rendue sur le bien du 9 au 15 septembre 2014.

**Information complémentaire reçue par l'ICOMOS**

Une lettre a été envoyée à l'État partie le 8 septembre 2014 demandant des informations complémentaires ; l'État partie a répondu par une lettre datée du 23 octobre 2014.

Une deuxième lettre a été envoyée à l'État partie le 23 décembre 2014 demandant des informations complémentaires sur les délimitations du bien proposé pour inscription et de la zone tampon, les développements, la gestion des visiteurs et le nom du bien. Le 8 février 2015, l'État partie a fourni des informations complémentaires dont il a été tenu compte dans l'élaboration du présent rapport.

**Date d'approbation de l'évaluation par l'ICOMOS**

12 mars 2015

## 2 Le bien

**Description**

La proposition d'inscription en série de l'Art rupestre de la région de Hail est composée de deux éléments, à savoir le djebel Umm Sinman à Jubbah et les djebels al-Manjor et Raat à Shuwaymis. Situé à environ 90 km au nord-ouest de la ville de Hail, le djebel Umm Sinman est bordé au nord, au sud et à l'ouest par les sables du désert, et à l'est par une clôture de sécurité qui longe la ville de Jubbah.

Le deuxième élément du bien en série proposé pour inscription épouse la forme d'un parallélogramme et comprend deux chaînes de collines, à savoir le djebel al-Manjor et le djebel Raat, qui se trouvent dans l'oued al-Mukhayet, à environ 40 km à l'ouest de Shuwaymis, elle-même située à environ 250 km au sud de Hail. Les deux sites sont bordés de clôtures de sécurité passant au pied des escarpements qui entourent les sites d'art rupestre, et en bordure des plateaux qui surplombent les sites mais comportent des ruines d'anciennes structures.

L'ensemble des deux éléments du bien en série proposé pour inscription couvre une superficie de 2 043,80 ha et est entouré d'une zone tampon d'une superficie totale de 3 609,50 ha.

Djebel Umm Sinman, Jubbah

Surplombant le lac d'eau douce qui y existait autrefois et fournissait de l'eau aux hommes et aux animaux dans la partie sud du grand désert de Nefoud, se trouve la chaîne de collines d'Umm Sinman. Là, sur ces collines, les ancêtres des Arabes d'aujourd'hui ont laissé des traces de leur présence ; leurs croyances religieuses, sociales, culturelles, intellectuelles et philosophiques sur la vie et la mort, leurs idéologies métaphysique et cosmologique.

Pendant le processus de désertification de la région, qui commença au milieu de la période de l'Holocène, l'oasis de Jubbah offrait la seule source d'eau importante dans le désert, facilitant une occupation humaine continue jusqu'à nos jours et l'adaptation progressive de la population aux changements environnementaux importants. Ces changements sont clairement exprimés dans les nombreux panneaux de pétroglyphes et les riches inscriptions, dont la plus grande concentration se trouve sur les parois rocheuses les plus basses du flanc est du djebel Umm Sinman.

Djebel al-Manjor et djebel Raat, Shuwaymis

Les djebels al-Manjor et Raat sont des escarpements rocheux d'un oued aujourd'hui ensablé que l'on pense avoir été une large vallée où coulait une rivière au début de l'Holocène. Les djebels al-Manjor et Raat présentent tous deux un grand nombre de représentations humaines et animales, d'autres collines et affleurements rocheux de la zone tampon en comportent de petites concentrations.

Les pétroglyphes et inscriptions en grand nombre de ces sites ont été datés d'une période couvrant plus de 10 000 ans d'histoire humaine. Bien que la masse de cet important corpus de pétroglyphes date d'une seule période culturelle de l'histoire humaine, des traditions d'art rupestre précédentes et ultérieures ont été identifiées et datées. Avec la baisse des aquifères, probablement vers le milieu de l'Holocène, la population autrefois sédentaire devint de plus en plus nomade, mais les sites furent régulièrement visités ces derniers millénaires comme l'indique l'art rupestre. L'étude intensive et complète des djebels al-Manjor et Raat depuis leur récente redécouverte a permis de localiser des centaines de panneaux d'art rupestre, plusieurs structures en pierre et des objets en pierre typiques du Néolithique.

### **Histoire et développement**

L'observation des outils en pierre du milieu du Paléolithique, à la fois à Umm Sinman et dans les environs immédiats, suggère que, déjà au Pléistocène, des variations climatiques favorisèrent l'occupation humaine de l'oasis de Jubbah pendant les périodes sèches, servant de refuge aux hommes et à la faune. Près des sites de Shuwaymis, il existait des rivières et des lacs pendant les différentes périodes du Pléistocène et une partie de ces eaux de surface perdura pendant une bonne partie de l'Holocène. Là aussi, des preuves d'une occupation datant du milieu du Paléolithique ont été rapportées.

Des données actuelles indiquent que les traces d'art rupestre qui nous sont parvenues remontent à environ 10 000 ans, offrant une vision de la culture néolithique au travers de milliers de pétroglyphes. Grâce à la faune dépeinte, le contenu pictural des deux sites d'art rupestre composant le bien en série proposé pour inscription indique clairement que les conditions de vie, à cette époque, y étaient favorables.

Ce corpus d'art rupestre se poursuit toutefois dans le temps jusqu'à la fin de l'Holocène, tout d'abord par des images puis finalement par des inscriptions qui les complètent. Cette véritable bibliothèque offre un corpus continu illustrant la manière dont les populations ont fait face aux variations climatiques, avec une dégradation générale et une désertification progressive. Après l'assèchement du lac de Jubbah, des puits durent être creusés, jusqu'à une profondeur de 23 m à la fin du XIXe siècle. Mais, alors que le lit du lac de Jubbah était devenu l'unique source d'eau assurée dans le désert de Nefoud, les occupants restèrent sur place et s'adaptèrent aux conditions arides. Ceci est bien reflété dans l'art rupestre de la fin du Néolithique, du Chalcolithique et de l'âge du bronze. L'introduction des écrits talmudiques, probablement il y a environ 3 000 ans, est documentée par des milliers d'inscriptions à Jubbah et des inscriptions en nombre bien inférieur à Shuwaymis. D'après la localisation et le contenu de ces inscriptions anciennes, il est évident que Jubbah devint un relais important pour les caravanes de chameaux, tandis que l'activité humaine fut moindre à Shuwaymis. Jubbah se trouve sur le parcours d'une ancienne route de caravanes vers la Jordanie et la Syrie.

Il y a entre 3 000 et 2 000 ans, le processus de désertification s'était étendu à toute l'Arabie. Le chameau devint le motif animalier dominant dans l'art rupestre. Le changement majeur suivant dans l'art rupestre vint avec l'introduction de l'islam il y a environ 1 400 ans, les écrits antérieurs faisant place à l'écriture arabe (caractères coufiques), et la représentation du vivant, en particulier des hommes, diminua de manière marquée ; il en existe néanmoins un petit nombre d'exemples dans les périodes suivantes.

L'oasis de Jubbah fut visitée par plusieurs voyageurs et historiens européens à la fin du XIXe siècle et au début du XXe siècle, qui en firent de brèves descriptions, sans mention toutefois d'art rupestre ou d'inscriptions dans cette zone. Des recherches archéologiques scientifiques commencèrent à Jubbah après que le département des Antiquités et des Musées eut initié en 1976 une étude archéologique complète de tout le royaume. L'art rupestre à Jubbah fit d'abord l'objet d'une étude et d'un recensement effectué par l'équipe dédiée à l'étude de l'art rupestre du département des Antiquités et des Musées en 1986, qui publia son premier rapport sur Jubbah dans *Atfal* en 1987.

Par la suite, le ministère de l'Éducation a fait ériger des clôtures à l'est du djebel Umm Sinman, en face de la ville de Jubbah, afin d'empêcher tout accès incontrôlé au site d'art rupestre. On y a installé des gardes et des équipements. Ces dernières années, dans le cadre du développement du patrimoine culturel de la région, un centre de visiteurs a été construit à Jubbah, et un nouveau musée est en cours de construction à Hail.

Bien qu'ils aient toujours été connus des Bédouins, les sites de Shuwaymis n'ont été officiellement redécouverts qu'en 2001, déclenchant la première enquête scientifique



sur l'art rupestre à Shuwaymis. Dans les années qui ont suivi, une route bitumée a été construite jusqu'au village de Shuwaymis, aujourd'hui prolongée jusqu'au centre de visiteurs à la limite de la zone tampon des sites d'art rupestre.

### 3 Justification de l'inscription, intégrité et authenticité

#### Analyse comparative

L'analyse entreprise par l'État partie établit une comparaison du bien en série proposé pour inscription avec d'autres sites en Arabie Saoudite, au Moyen-Orient et dans le monde. Dans le dossier de proposition d'inscription, la comparaison avec les sites d'Arabie Saoudite indique qu'ils sont généralement de taille plus petite, à l'exception du site d'Al Qara. À la différence d'autres sites, cet ensemble abrite plusieurs dizaines de milliers de pétroglyphes et il est indiqué que son stock important d'inscriptions rupestres en arabe pourrait dépasser en nombre celui de Jubbah. Toutefois, leur contenu talmudique est très faible, les textes en caractères coufiques et islamiques dominant clairement.

Concernant la comparaison avec le Moyen-Orient, l'analyse conclut qu'il n'existe pas de site d'art rupestre dans la région dont les valeurs seraient comparables à celles des deux éléments du bien en série proposé pour inscription ou dont les pétroglyphes, la préservation ou la gestion pourraient en concurrencer la qualité. L'État partie a souligné le fait que, sur la base des informations actuelles, trois des quatre plus grandes collections d'art rupestre du Moyen-Orient se trouvent en Arabie Saoudite. Parmi celles-ci, Jubbah et Shuwaymis possèdent les concentrations les plus denses, présentent la collection d'art rupestre de loin la plus impressionnante et comportent aussi les plus anciennes traditions représentées.

Dans un contexte mondial, l'État partie déclare que, par rapport aux panneaux d'art rupestre situés au Sahara, en Chine, en Inde, en Afrique du Sud, sur le continent américain ou en Australie, le bien proposé pour inscription les éclipse en termes d'ancienneté et les égale en termes de qualité visuelle et de perfection technique.

L'ICOMOS considère que le bien proposé pour inscription présente quelques similitudes avec d'autres biens situés dans cette région du monde, parmi lesquelles des ressemblances stylistiques avec l'art rupestre du désert libyen du Messak et du nord du Yémen, et des influences égyptiennes pour les représentations les plus anciennes. Malgré ces similitudes, l'ICOMOS considère que, compte tenu de l'ancienneté, de la période de temps, de la quantité et de la qualité, le bien proposé pour inscription comporte des caractéristiques spécifiques qui justifient d'envisager son inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

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L'ICOMOS considère que l'analyse comparative justifie d'envisager l'inscription de ce bien en série sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

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#### Justification de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle

Le bien proposé pour inscription est considéré par l'État partie comme ayant une valeur universelle exceptionnelle en tant que bien culturel pour les raisons suivantes :

- Il est une expression visuelle exceptionnelle du génie créateur humain.
- Il constitue les archives de plus de 6 000 ans d'occupation humaine continue sous forme à la fois d'art rupestre et d'inscriptions.
- Les pétroglyphes révèlent la fréquentation des sites à différentes périodes culturelles au cours desquelles les populations s'adaptèrent avec succès aux changements environnementaux majeurs domestiquant des animaux tels que vaches et chevaux, puis le chameau.
- Le catalogue d'art rupestre représenté par Jubbah et Shuwaymis et leurs caractéristiques archéologiques comptent parmi les corpus de pétroglyphes néolithiques les plus vastes et les plus beaux du monde.
- De façon générale, l'art rupestre de Jubbah et de Shuwaymis représente un relevé continu des activités humaines couvrant les 10 000 dernières années, qui commence par une composante importante datant du Néolithique, suivie des traditions complètes du Chalcolithique, de l'âge du bronze, de l'âge du fer puis des temps historiques, qui tous ont utilisé les mêmes lieux pour créer leurs corpus d'art respectif.
- Contrairement à la plupart des autres séries d'art rupestre dans le monde, l'ancienneté des éléments d'art rupestre de Hail est connue de façon fiable, car elle est liée à une série de datations directes déduites d'éléments clés.

L'ICOMOS considère qu'il existe plusieurs raisons pour soutenir la valeur universelle exceptionnelle du bien, parmi lesquelles la reconnaissance d'un « style de Jubbah » qui indique l'importance et le caractère unique du site. Les éléments du bien en série proposé pour inscription ont une importance exceptionnelle du point de vue de la quantité des pétroglyphes et de leur haute qualité. Quant à l'évolution de l'environnement, elle est bien documentée par les études sur les dépôts lacustres, par l'archéologie et les études paléo-environnementales qui ont été multipliées depuis quelques années. Ces études soutiennent le fait que les images d'art rupestre dans le bien contribuent à documenter des civilisations qui n'ont par ailleurs laissé que très peu de vestiges. Il est par conséquent possible de suivre leur évolution à travers leur adaptation à un environnement devenu de plus en plus aride.

## Intégrité et authenticité

### Intégrité

Dans le cas du djebel Umm Sinman, la délimitation englobe quatorze groupes de pétroglyphes de tous les côtés de la chaîne de collines. La zone tampon s'étend vers le nord pour inclure plusieurs petits affleurements rocheux comportant une moindre quantité de pétroglyphes. L'ICOMOS a noté que la zone du groupe 8 dans le sud-ouest du bien a été gravement vandalisée avec des graffitis récents (principalement des noms peints dans différentes couleurs, oblitérant souvent l'art rupestre), et est jonchée d'ordures. De plus, la municipalité de Jubbah a construit un barrage de récupération d'eau de pluie long de plusieurs kilomètres dans la partie est de la zone tampon. Ce barrage est clairement visible depuis la route nord-sud de Jubbah la plus à l'ouest qui borde la zone tampon à l'est, et gêne la vue depuis cet endroit vers le djebel Umm Sinman. Sur le flanc est du djebel Umm Sinman, immédiatement au nord du bien proposé pour inscription et situé dans la zone tampon à proximité du réservoir d'eau douce (construit depuis 16 ou 17 ans), se trouve un énorme château d'eau, visible depuis l'intérieur du bien proposé pour inscription.

À Shuwaymis, le bien comporte des chaînes de collines, le djebel Raat à l'ouest et le djebel al-Manjor à l'est, et une vallée de sable entre les deux. Des affleurements rocheux situés non loin vers le nord sont incorporés à la zone tampon car ils n'ont pas encore fait l'objet d'une étude approfondie. Hormis un camp de Bédouins de moins de vingt-cinq personnes vivant dans la zone tampon, il n'existe pas de ville ou de grand établissement à proximité.

Des clôtures métalliques assorties de barrières fermées à clé, longues de plus de 8 km au djebel Umm Sinman et d'environ 6 km aux djebels Manjor et Raat, protègent ces exemples d'art rupestre.

Selon l'État partie, tous les éléments nécessaires à l'expression de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle du bien en série proposé pour inscription, à savoir les nombreux pétroglyphes bien conservés, différentes traditions d'art rupestre identifiables selon les périodes, de la chasse et la cueillette à la domestication des animaux et à l'écriture, des preuves indépendantes de changement climatique dans les dépôts des paléo-lacs et des preuves de l'interaction humaine dans un environnement vulnérable, sont amplement représentés dans le bien, et les deux éléments qui constituent celui-ci sont d'une taille appropriée pour assurer la représentation complète des caractéristiques qui expriment sa valeur universelle exceptionnelle.

L'ICOMOS considère que les éléments constitutifs de la proposition d'inscription en série possèdent les attributs qui traduisent la valeur universelle exceptionnelle du bien et que la taille des zones proposées pour inscription est appropriée. Néanmoins, l'ICOMOS note que des mesures

pour assurer une protection suffisante devraient être mises en œuvre, ce qui sera traité dans les chapitres suivants du présent rapport.

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L'ICOMOS considère que l'intégrité de l'ensemble de la série a été justifiée et que l'intégrité des sites individuels qui composent la série a été démontrée, bien que des mesures de protection doivent être renforcées.

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### Authenticité

Les pétroglyphes des deux éléments constitutifs de la proposition d'inscription en série, le djebel Umm Sinman à Jubbah et les djebels al-Manjor et Raat à Shuwaymis, ont conservé leur situation d'origine, leur cadre, leurs matériaux, leur forme et conception, même s'ils ne sont pas intégrés à une tradition culturelle. Selon l'État partie, leur patine, qui est entière pour les pétroglyphes du Néolithique et qui diminue pour les périodes suivantes du Chalcolithique, de l'âge du bronze, de l'âge du fer et de la période islamique, ainsi que différentes phases de vieillissement, attestent leur authenticité.

L'ICOMOS considère que les éléments des sites sont authentiques.

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L'ICOMOS considère que l'authenticité de la série proposée pour inscription dans son ensemble a été justifiée et que l'authenticité des éléments individuels qui composent celle-ci a été démontrée.

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En conclusion, l'ICOMOS considère que les conditions d'intégrité et d'authenticité de l'ensemble de la série proposée pour inscription sont remplies et que les conditions d'intégrité et d'authenticité des sites individuels le sont également.

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### Critères selon lesquels l'inscription est proposée

Le bien est proposé pour inscription sur la base des critères culturels (i), (ii), (iii) et (v).

Critère (i) : *représenter un chef-d'œuvre du génie créateur humain ;*

Ce critère est justifié par l'État partie au motif que les pétroglyphes en nombre exceptionnellement important, créés *via* l'usage d'une diversité de techniques avec de simples marteaux de pierre, dans un contexte de dégradation environnementale progressive, sont, par rapport aux exemples qu'on peut voir dans le monde, des expressions visuellement exceptionnelles du génie créateur humain, comparables aux messages laissés par les civilisations disparues de Mésoamérique ou de l'île de Pâques. En ce sens, ils sont de la plus haute valeur universelle exceptionnelle.

L'ICOMOS considère que les arguments avancés par l'État partie sont recevables et que les images sont exceptionnelles sur le plan visuel mais aussi du point de vue des techniques employées et de la situation. Qui plus est, le style dit de Jubbah, en tant que témoignage,

permet de reconnaître cette réalisation artistique remarquable, qui montre un usage exceptionnel de compétences dans l'utilisation d'outils et de matériaux.

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L'ICOMOS considère que ce critère a été justifié pour l'ensemble de la série.

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*Critère (ii) : témoigner d'un échange d'influences considérable pendant une période donnée ou dans une aire culturelle déterminée, sur le développement de l'architecture ou de la technologie, des arts monumentaux, de la planification des villes ou de la création de paysages ;*

Ce critère est justifié par l'État partie au motif que Jubbah et Shuwaymis présentent plus de 6 000 ans d'occupation humaine continue, reflétés à la fois dans l'art rupestre et dans les inscriptions.

L'ICOMOS considère que l'État partie n'a pas justifié de manière satisfaisante dans quelle mesure le bien proposé pour inscription a influencé d'autres zones, en plus d'avoir reçu lui-même des influences externes. L'ICOMOS estime que, sur la base des informations disponibles, il n'est pas évident que le bien proposé pour inscription ait eu une influence sur l'art rupestre d'autres régions.

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L'ICOMOS considère que ce critère n'a pas été justifié pour l'ensemble de la série.

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*Critère (iii) : apporter un témoignage unique ou du moins exceptionnel sur une tradition culturelle ou une civilisation vivante ou disparue ;*

Ce critère est justifié par l'État partie au motif que, à Jubbah, il est possible de suivre les batailles livrées par les sociétés anciennes contre la catastrophe environnementale qu'elles ont connue et à laquelle elles se sont adaptées à travers un exemple vraiment exceptionnel d'une telle situation, les pétroglyphes rapportant la nature des changements et les objets en pierre montrant l'implantation des hommes par rapport aux sites d'art rupestre et au lac à mesure que ce dernier s'asséchait. À Shuwaymis, en revanche, les pétroglyphes sont les seuls témoignages d'une société disparue, laissant derrière elle une trace intacte de son existence d'une amplitude rarement rencontrée dans le monde.

L'ICOMOS considère que les arguments avancés sont appropriés.

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L'ICOMOS considère que ce critère a été justifié pour l'ensemble de la série.

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*Critère (v) : être un exemple éminent d'établissement humain traditionnel, de l'utilisation traditionnelle du territoire ou de la mer, qui soit représentatif d'une culture (ou de cultures), ou de l'interaction humaine avec*

*l'environnement, spécialement quand celui-ci est devenu vulnérable sous l'impact d'une mutation irréversible ;*

Ce critère est justifié par l'État partie au motif que la description du bien en tant qu'établissement humain traditionnel ou lieu d'interaction humaine avec un environnement vulnérable « sous l'effet de mutations irréversibles » correspond exactement aux éléments du site saoudien. Il est difficile de penser à d'autres traces aussi complètes de civilisations dans le monde faisant face à l'oubli environnemental, qui aient laissé un témoignage aussi brillant de leur génie. Les deux éléments constitutifs du bien proposé pour inscription illustrent parfaitement ce critère.

L'ICOMOS considère que le bien témoigne d'une période de l'histoire de la région, mais que cela ne constitue pas une tradition vivante ni ne représente une part importante de la culture d'une société actuelle. L'ICOMOS considère que les arguments qui soutiennent ce critère ont été pris en considération dans la justification du critère (iii).

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L'ICOMOS considère que ce critère n'a pas été justifié pour l'ensemble de la série.

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L'ICOMOS considère que l'approche en série est justifiée.

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L'ICOMOS considère que le bien proposé pour inscription remplit les critères (i) et (iii) ainsi que les conditions d'intégrité et d'authenticité.

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#### **Description des attributs de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle**

Les attributs qui traduisent la valeur universelle exceptionnelle sont : le cadre environnemental au milieu d'un désert ; les pétroglyphes en grand nombre, d'une qualité exceptionnelle, liés à l'histoire humaine remontant à entre 6 000 et 9 000 ans, ainsi que les vestiges archéologiques ; et les inscriptions qui reflètent les trois derniers millénaires qui ont vu les premiers développements de l'écriture (talmudique) représentant la culture bédouine et aboutissant aux versets coraniques.

#### **4 Facteurs affectant le bien**

L'ICOMOS a noté qu'il n'existe aucune construction moderne dans les limites du bien proposé pour inscription.

Toutefois, un barrage est en cours de construction près de Jubbah, dont une portion de 3,8 km a déjà été réalisée. Au moment de la mission technique, la construction était arrêtée, dans le cadre du processus de consultation entre la municipalité et la Commission saoudienne pour le tourisme et les antiquités, afin de déterminer la manière de procéder. En réponse aux inquiétudes formulées par l'ICOMOS concernant les impacts visuels du barrage, l'État partie s'est engagé à encadrer et masquer le

barrage avec de la végétation basse typique du désert (buissons et tamaris épars). Concernant l'autre chantier de construction, celui d'un château d'eau dans la zone tampon du djebel Umm Sinman autour d'un réservoir d'eau douce existant, également noté par l'ICOMOS, l'État partie a déclaré que l'impact du château d'eau serait réduit en repeignant la tour d'une couleur et d'un matériau adaptés.

Les menaces identifiées comprennent le changement climatique et le ruissellement des eaux de pluie depuis la montagne à Jubbah, ce qui arrive de temps en temps.

L'ICOMOS note qu'il n'existe pas de plan de gestion des visites à grande échelle du bien proposé pour inscription, ce qui rend celui-ci mal préparé à un accroissement soudain du nombre de touristes. Par exemple, il n'existe pas d'infrastructures à destination des visiteurs, telles que des itinéraires fléchés, des chemins piétons surélevés et des plateformes panoramiques, qui empêchent tout contact direct des visiteurs avec les panneaux d'art rupestre et leur évitent de perturber les vestiges et les gisements archéologiques.

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L'ICOMOS considère que les principales menaces pesant sur le bien sont le développement et le tourisme.

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## **5 Protection, conservation et gestion**

### **Délimitations du bien proposé pour inscription et de la zone tampon**

#### **Djebel Umm Sinman**

La superficie de l'élément du bien proposé pour inscription à Jubbah, le djebel Umm Sinman, est de 1 783,90 ha ; celle de sa zone tampon est de 1 951 ha. D'après l'État partie, le djebel Umm Sinman est bordé à l'ouest, au nord et au sud par les sables du désert et à l'est par une clôture de sécurité qui longe la ville de Jubbah. L'ICOMOS a noté que la clôture de sécurité en question entoure la zone tampon et non pas le bien comme le mentionne le dossier de proposition d'inscription, et à l'ouest, au nord et au sud, les limites du bien suivent le bord de l'affleurement rocheux. Les vues depuis l'ouest et surtout celle depuis le sud en direction du djebel Umm Sinman sont considérées dans le plan de gestion comme essentielles et contribuant à l'intégrité visuelle du bien. Malgré leur importance, ces vues ne sont pas protégées à l'heure actuelle. Dans la réponse de l'État partie à la lettre de l'ICOMOS, il a été signalé que la zone tampon dans cette zone particulière sera étendue de 50 à 100 m selon la topographie générale. L'État partie a également déclaré qu'un accord a été passé avec la municipalité et que les poteaux de démarcation de la zone tampon, ainsi qu'une carte indiquant la zone tampon étendue, seront fournis d'ici le 30 avril 2015. Actuellement, la délimitation de la zone tampon est correctement matérialisée au sol par de grands blocs de ciment blanc disposés tous les 50 à 100 m, selon la topographie du terrain.

L'ICOMOS considère qu'une extension de 50 à 100 m ne suffit pas à la protection des vues d'une telle importance sur le bien. L'ICOMOS estime qu'une extension plus grande, comprise entre 1 km et 1,5 km vers l'ouest et le sud, pourrait être réalisée à moindre effort et à moindre coût. Les pylônes de l'affleurement rocheux pourraient être utilisés en guise de piquets de démarcation délimitant la zone tampon.

L'ICOMOS s'inquiète aussi du fait que, dans la partie ouest du bien proposé pour inscription, où sont situés les groupes d'art rupestre 8 à 14, il n'existe pas de clôture ; or le groupe 8 a été gravement vandalisé avec des graffitis. Ceci indique clairement que le bien est insuffisamment protégé à cet endroit, car il est de surcroît utilisé comme aire de pique-nique. En réponse à cela, l'État partie a déclaré qu'une clôture de protection sera posée afin de protéger les groupes d'art rupestre 8 à 14 et 15 à 24. Ces travaux, ainsi que la carte indiquant l'extension de la clôture de protection, seront réalisés d'ici le 30 avril 2015.

#### **Djebels al-Manjor et Raat**

Les djebels al-Manjor et Raat sont tous deux inclus dans l'élément du bien proposé pour inscription qui est en forme de parallélogramme, d'une superficie de 259,90 ha, et est entouré d'une zone tampon de 1 658,50 ha. Ces djebels sont entourés de clôtures de sécurité passant au pied des escarpements où se trouvent les sites d'art rupestre et bordant le plateau qui les surplombe mais qui recèlent les ruines de structures anciennes en pierre. L'ICOMOS a noté que la délimitation en forme de parallélogramme n'existe que sur un plan et devra donc être matérialisée au sol par des bornes ou des piquets de démarcation. Le marquage des délimitations sur le site ne concerne que 30 à 40 % de la totalité de la zone. L'ICOMOS a aussi noté que l'État partie devrait clôturer l'élément du bien en forme de parallélogramme dans les trois à quatre mois suivant la mission technique.

Lors de la mission technique, il a été noté que la délimitation de la zone tampon est indiquée par de grands blocs de béton blanc espacés les uns des autres de 30 à 50 mètres, certains portant l'inscription « SCTA ».

L'ICOMOS considère que la zone tampon de cet élément du bien proposé pour inscription est suffisante.

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En conclusion, l'ICOMOS considère que les délimitations de l'élément du bien proposé pour inscription constitué par les djebels al-Manjor et Raat et de sa zone tampon sont appropriées, et que la zone tampon de l'élément constitué par le djebel Umm Sinman devrait être ajustée à l'ouest du bien proposé pour inscription afin de protéger les vues.

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#### **Droit de propriété**

Les djebels Umm Sinman, al-Manjor et Raat appartiennent à l'État et sont protégés par la législation nationale.

## Protection

Il existe le décret royal n° M/26 du 23/06/1392 H (1972), pris il y a plus de quarante ans, ainsi que la résolution du Conseil des ministres n° 78 du 16/03/1429 H (2008) qui protègent les sites patrimoniaux du Royaume.

Le gouvernement offre un large soutien à la sauvegarde de l'art rupestre de Jubbah et Shuwaymis.

Le site du djebel Umm Sinman a été clôturé (8 km de long) avec des poteaux et des fils d'acier. Une clôture de 6 km de long a été érigée autour du djebel al-Manjor et autour du djebel Raat. L'ICOMOS note qu'il existe des projets de clôture autour de la totalité de la zone des djebels al-Manjor et Raat, une proposition étant à l'étude au ministère des Finances.

La protection juridique actuelle prévoit que les gardiens du site, ou tout citoyen constatant une infraction, en particulier l'interférence avec ou la dégradation d'un panneau d'art rupestre, fassent une déclaration à la police.

Il existe un musée et un bureau des antiquités à Hail, où le personnel du musée et son directeur sont responsables de la protection et de la gestion des sites d'art rupestre et de tous les monuments anciens de la région de Hail.

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En conclusion, l'ICOMOS considère que la protection juridique en place est globalement appropriée.

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## Conservation

Le djebel Umm Sinman à Jubbah et le djebel al-Manjor à Shuwaymis font l'objet de recherches importantes et la plupart des zones comportant des pétroglyphes et des inscriptions sont dûment inventoriées et documentées. Un relevé informatique de ces sites est disponible sur les sites Internet du Musée national et de la Commission saoudienne. Des copies papier de toutes les données sur les sites inventoriés et les pétroglyphes sont entreposées en sécurité au Centre d'étude et de fouille, ainsi que des photographies numériques originales, des plans et graphiques, etc., mis à la disposition des chercheurs et des étudiants.

Il existe des projets archéologiques communs à des institutions étrangères qui ont également formé des archéologues saoudiens travaillant sur les sites aux différents aspects de l'archéologie et de l'art rupestre. Le projet *Palaeodeserts*, mené actuellement avec des archéologues et des paléo-environmentalistes britanniques, est un exemple de collaboration, ici entre l'université d'Oxford et l'université du roi Fahd à Riyad.

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En conclusion, l'ICOMOS considère que la conservation du bien est appropriée.

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## Gestion

Structures et processus de gestion, y compris les processus de gestion traditionnels

Le bien en série proposé pour inscription est géré par la Commission saoudienne du tourisme et des antiquités (SCTA) à l'échelon provincial basée à Hail, qui travaille sous la supervision du siège de la SCTA à Riyad. La protection sur le terrain de l'ensemble du site de Jubbah est assurée par le personnel opérant sur place, notamment par le contrôle de l'accès au site. L'ICOMOS note que des gardiens de site seront installés à Shuwaymis une fois que la route et le centre d'interprétation auront été achevés.

Cadre de référence : plans et mesures de gestion, y compris la gestion des visiteurs et la présentation

Un Plan de tourisme provincial pour le Royaume d'Arabie Saoudite a été mis en place en 2002, suivi de la préparation d'un plan spécifique à Hail en 2004. Un plan de gestion du site a été également soumis avec le dossier de proposition d'inscription, lequel envisage le développement à long terme, la préservation et la protection des sites, des accords de gestion avec les maires locaux et l'administration des villages de Jubbah et Shuwaymis. Actuellement, une route de 40 km de long est en construction, devant relier le village de Shuwaymis au centre d'interprétation situé à l'entrée de la zone tampon, ce qui facilitera le transport des visiteurs.

En réponse à l'inquiétude de l'ICOMOS au sujet du manque d'infrastructures à destination des visiteurs sur le site, l'État partie a indiqué que ces travaux commenceront dès que les stratégies de gestion du tourisme et d'interprétation en auront défini le cahier des charges.

L'ICOMOS confirme que les questions relatives aux visiteurs seront traitées de façon appropriée grâce aux stratégies de gestion du tourisme et d'interprétation, qui aborderont l'augmentation du flux des visiteurs dans le plan de gestion.

### Implication des communautés locales

Les membres de tribus bédouines locales sont impliqués dans la protection de l'art rupestre et ont rapporté des infractions à leur sheikh ou directement à la police ; les personnes ayant dégradé l'art rupestre ont été poursuivies en vertu des lois existantes. Non seulement la communauté locale joue un rôle important dans la préservation et la protection des sites mais elle s'intéresse aussi au développement de la zone et à l'accueil des visiteurs.

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En conclusion, l'ICOMOS considère que le système de gestion de l'ensemble du bien en série est approprié.

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## 6 Suivi

Il n'existe pas d'historique de suivi ou de rapport d'état détaillé des deux biens. Étant donné qu'il est impossible d'avoir un suivi individuel pour chaque pétroglyphe, l'État partie s'est engagé à procéder par échantillonnage. La SCTA sera responsable du suivi, du stockage des données ainsi que de la conception et de la mise en œuvre des mesures de conservation.

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En conclusion, l'ICOMOS considère que le suivi de l'art rupestre est approprié ; toutefois, il est nécessaire de surveiller les impacts du tourisme et du développement, et d'appliquer des mesures correctives si nécessaire.

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## 7 Conclusions

L'ICOMOS reconnaît la valeur universelle exceptionnelle du bien en série proposé pour inscription de l'Art rupestre de la région de Hail en Arabie Saoudite, lequel remplit les critères (i) et (iii). Les conditions requises d'intégrité et d'authenticité sont remplies, bien qu'il faille porter une attention particulière à l'amélioration des mesures de protection afin d'assurer la préservation des attributs qui traduisent cette valeur universelle exceptionnelle.

L'ICOMOS remercie l'État partie d'avoir relevé le défi de la conservation d'un patrimoine de ce type. Néanmoins, l'ICOMOS note que certaines mesures devraient être prises, en particulier celles liées à la préservation de l'intégrité visuelle du bien et à la gestion des visiteurs. L'ICOMOS a identifié des impacts dus au développement et au tourisme comme étant des facteurs qui, s'ils ne sont pas abordés correctement, pourraient menacer la valeur universelle exceptionnelle du bien. L'État partie a accepté de mettre en œuvre des mesures atténuant l'impact visuel du barrage et du château d'eau, qui le seront d'ici le 30 avril 2015. Concernant la gestion des visiteurs, l'État partie a annoncé la mise en place de quelques mesures entre juin et octobre 2015.

L'ICOMOS a également noté que, bien que les délimitations des éléments du bien en série proposé pour inscription puissent être considérées comme satisfaisantes, il serait nécessaire de redéfinir les délimitations de la zone tampon proposée pour le djebel Umm Sinman comme indiqué ci-dessus, en envisageant la possibilité d'une extension de 1 km à 1,5 km vers l'ouest et le sud.

L'ICOMOS a proposé de changer le nom du bien en « Art rupestre de la région de Hail », proposition qui a été acceptée par l'État partie par lettre datée du 8 février 2015.

## 8 Recommandations

### Recommandations concernant l'inscription

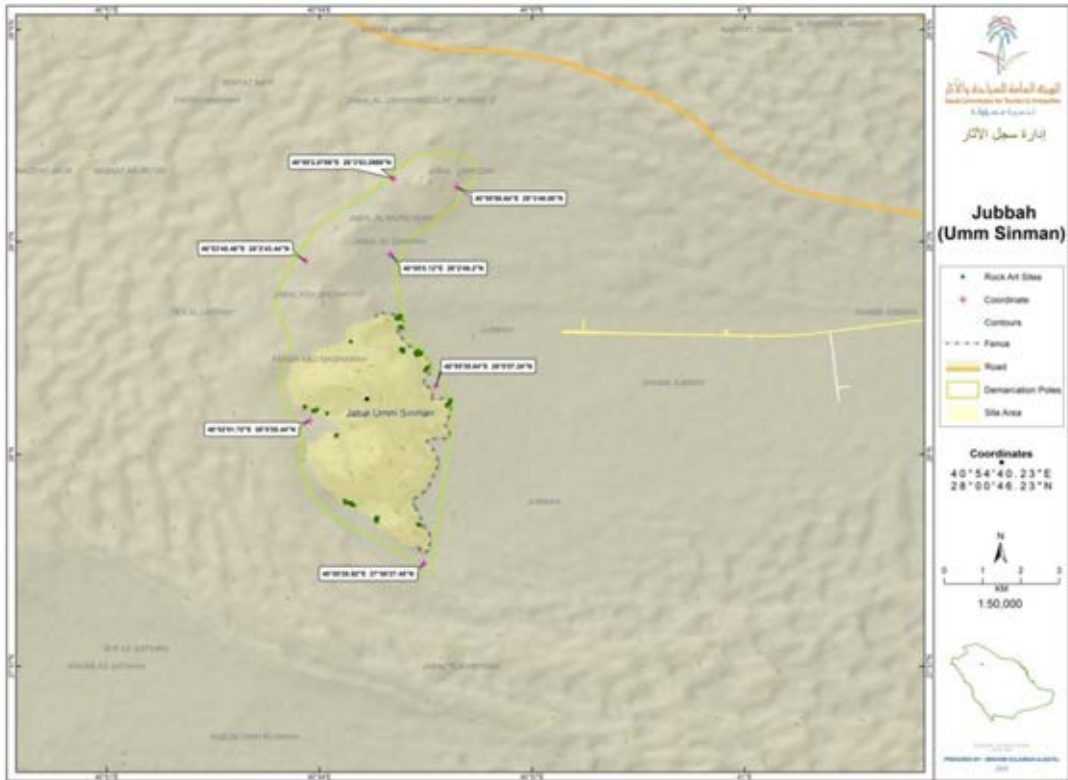
L'ICOMOS recommande que la proposition d'inscription de l'Art rupestre de la région de Hail, Royaume d'Arabie Saoudite, soit **renvoyée** à l'État partie afin de lui permettre de :

- étendre la zone tampon de l'élément constitué par le djebel Umm Sinman de 1 km à 1,5 km vers l'ouest et le sud, afin de préserver l'intégrité visuelle à long terme du site ;
- encadrer et masquer le barrage de récupération d'eau de pluie près de Jubbah avec de la végétation basse typique du désert en raison du caractère indispensable de cette structure et de l'important investissement déjà réalisé dans sa construction ;
- envisager des manières de réduire l'impact visuel du château d'eau en construction à l'est du djebel Umm Sinman, à proximité du réservoir d'eau douce existant ;
- mettre sur pied des infrastructures à destination des visiteurs, qui comprendront des itinéraires fléchés, des chemins piétons surélevés et des plateformes panoramiques empêchant les visiteurs d'avoir un contact direct avec les panneaux d'art rupestre, et mener ces travaux conformément aux *Orientations de l'ICOMOS sur les études d'impact pour les biens culturels du patrimoine mondial* ;
- développer une stratégie de gestion du tourisme incluant une stratégie d'interprétation, qui abordera l'augmentation du nombre de visiteurs dans le cadre du plan de gestion.

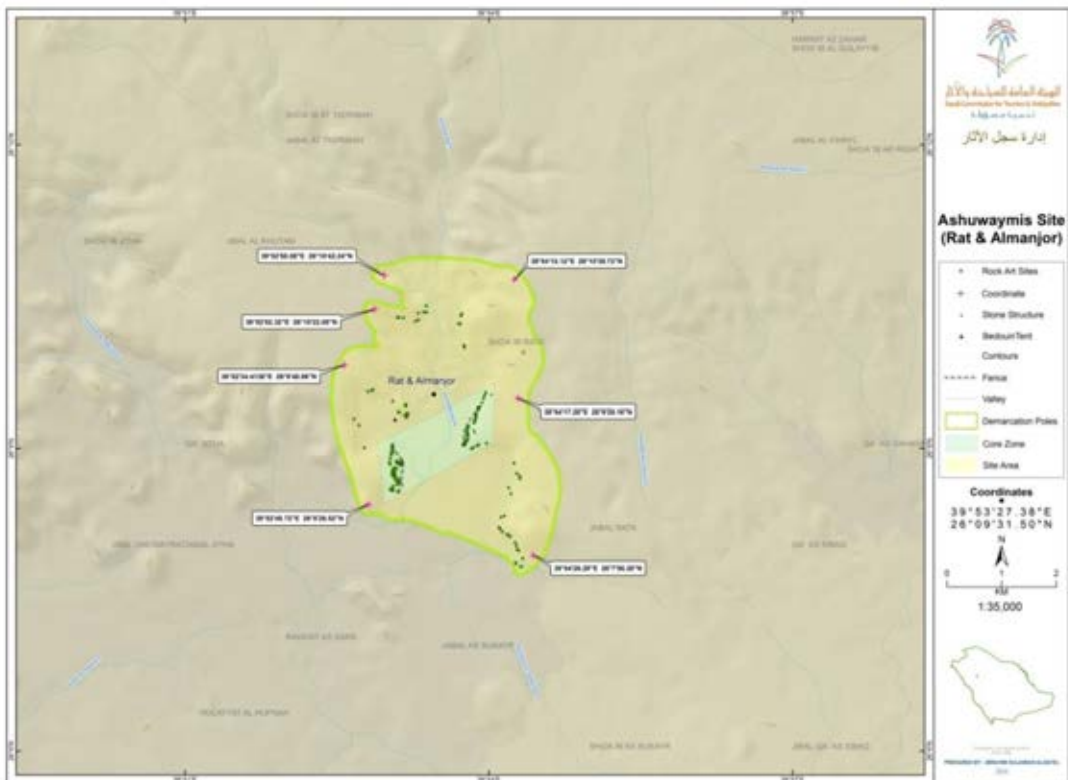
### Recommandations complémentaires

L'ICOMOS recommande que l'État partie prenne en considération le point suivant :

- développer des indicateurs mesurant l'impact du développement et du tourisme sur les attributs du bien en série proposé pour inscription.



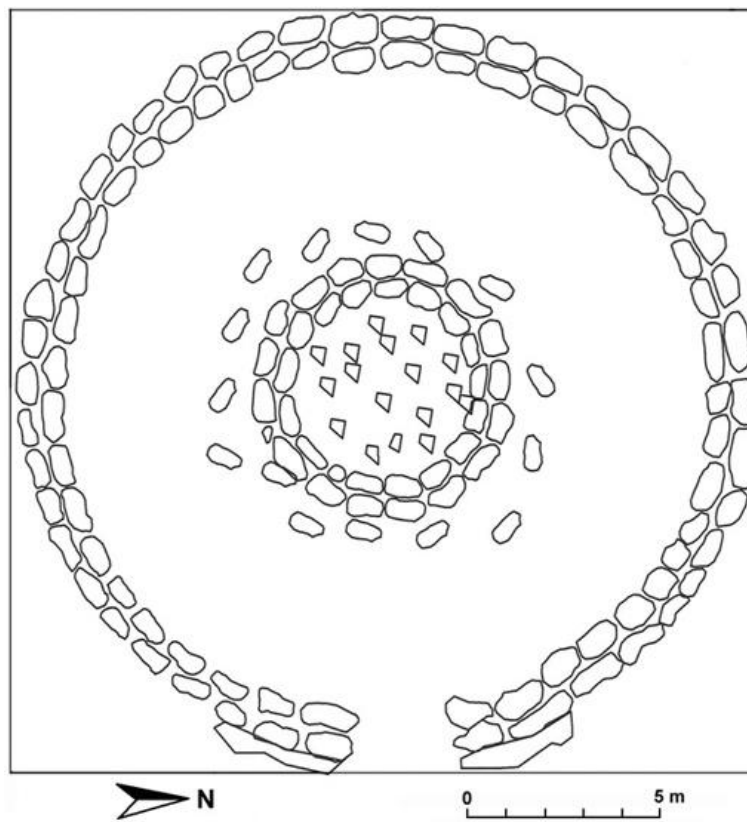
Plan indiquant les délimitations de l'élément Jabal Umm Sinman



Plan indiquant les délimitations de l'élément Jabal al-Manjor et Jabal Raat



Structure en pierre aux bords du plateau de Jabal al-Manjor



Plan de la structure en pierre





Pétroglyphes néolithiques à Jabal Raat



Le « Lion des Shuwaymis »