

8 sites :



UNITED PRINTERS
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



Ethiopian
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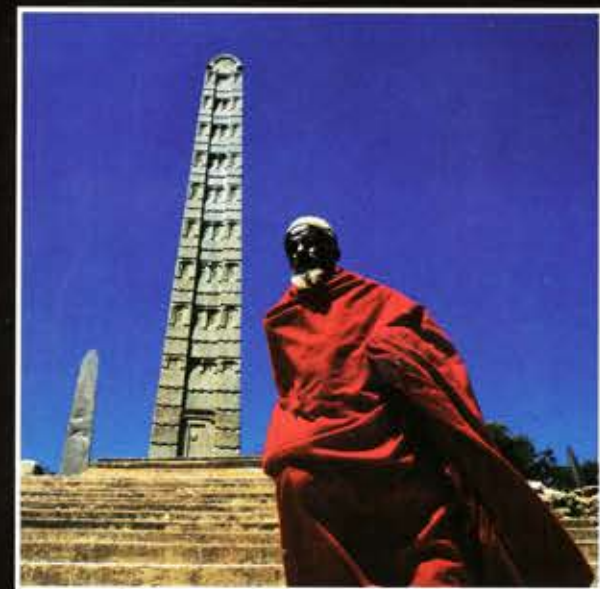
Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织



Homecoming & re-Erection of the Axum Obelisk



Celebrating Ethiopian Cultural Heritage & Cultural Diversity

Introduction

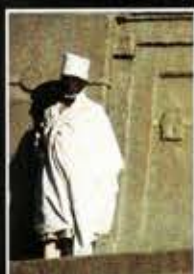
After almost seventy years, the Axum Obelisk is coming home to Ethiopia from Rome! The giant monolith (24 meters high, 160 tons and about 1700 years old) has a significant historic, spiritual and cultural value to all Ethiopians.

Since Axum is one of the UNESCO's World Heritage Sites (together with the Rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, the Simien National Park, Fasil Ghebbi in Gondar region, the Lower Valley of the Awash, Tiya and the Lower Valley of the Omo and Harar currently a candidate), the return and re-erection has a particular importance not only to Ethiopia and Italy, but also to UNESCO and humanity at large.

To celebrate the return and re-erection of the Axum Obelisk specifically, and Ethiopian cultural heritage and cultural diversity in general, UNESCO, together with the "National Coordinating Committee for the Return and Re-erection of the Axum Obelisk", and other partners (see back) are launching a promotional campaign to raise awareness locally and internationally and celebrate the rich Ethiopian cultural heritage and to present a positive image of the country.

The centerpiece of the promotional campaign titled "The Homecoming and Re-erection of the Axum Obelisk: Celebrating Cultural Heritage and Cultural Diversity" is a display of giant photographs of Axum, and other heritage sites, together with portraits of Ethiopians, placed in Addis Ababa and Axum airports and others regional airports and capitals. It is hoped the display will go to Paris, Rome and others centers.

Awad Elhassan
Director and Representative
UNESCO Office Addis Ababa



Axum (inscribed in 1980)

Ancient city of Aksum, was heart of ancient Ethiopia, capital of a Kingdom was the most powerful state between the Eastern Roman Empire and Persia. The massive ruins, dating from between the 1st to 13th century A.D., include monolithic obelisks, giant stelae, royal tombs and the ruins of ancient castles.

Lalibela (inscribed in 1978)

The 11 medieval monolithic cave churches of this 13th century "New Jerusalem" are situated in a mountainous region in the heart of Ethiopia. Lalibela is a high place of Ethiopian Christianity, still today a place of pilgrimage and devotion. The churches are still "alive", holding regular religious services and festivities especially on Timkat (Epiphany).



Gondar (inscribed in 1979)

In the 16th and 17th centuries, the fortress-city of Fasil Ghebbi was the residence of the Ethiopian emperor Fasilides and his successors. Surrounded by a 900-m-long wall, the city contains palaces, churches, monasteries and unique public and private buildings marked by Hindu and Arab influences, and Baroque style brought by Jesuit missionaries.

Harar (candidate in 2005)

The walled city of Harar, in Eastern Ethiopia, was the capital of a vast Muslim Kingdom that dates back to the 8th century. The city was a prosperous trade centre acting as a cross road between India, Egypt, Arabia and the interior of Africa. The famous wall was constructed in the 16th century to protect the city. The walled city has 90 mosques, the oldest was built in the eleventh century. Influences from all those places are still visible in the faces, dress and jewelry of the region.



Tiya (inscribed in 1980)

Tiya is among the most important of the roughly 160 archaeological sites discovered so far in the Soddo region, south of Addis Ababa. The site contains 36 monuments, including 32 carved stelae covered with symbols, most of which are difficult to decipher. They are the remains of an ancient Ethiopian culture whose age has not yet been precisely determined.

Semien (inscribed in 1978)

One of the most spectacular landscapes in the world, with jagged peaks, deep valleys and sharp precipices dropping some 1,500 m, is home to Ras Dashen, one of the highest mountains in Africa and to some extremely rare animals (Gelada baboon, the Simien fox and the Walia ibex, a goat found nowhere else in the world.)



Lower valley of Awash

(inscribed in 1980)

The Awash valley contains one of the most important groupings of palaeontological sites on the African continent. The remains found at the site, the oldest of which date back at least 4 million years, provide evidence of human evolution. The most spectacular discovery came in 1974, when 52 fragments of a skeleton enabled the famous Lucy to be reconstructed.



Lower valley of Omo

(inscribed in 1980)

A prehistoric site near Lake Turkana, (close to the Kenyan border), the lower valley of the Omo is renowned the world over. The discovery of many fossils there, especially *Homo gracilis*, has been of fundamental importance in the study of human evolution.

