Nomination of
MINORCA TALAYOTIC
for Inscription on the World Heritage List

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ATTRIBUTES
(Summary)

TANGIBLE

- The most representative Cyclopean architectural and built elements of the Talayotic Culture
- The outstanding expressions of the pre-Talayotic period and some manifestations that show their re-use in times after the Talayotic period
- The unique and outstanding manifestations of pre-historic Minorca (taulas, burial navetas, circular houses) and the built elements on the island
- The model of territorial occupation, the inter-visibility and the settlement pattern organised around the monumental architecture
- The extreme density and number of archaeological sites and remains belonging to this culture in a limited area
- The diversity of kinds of Cyclopean constructions to be found
- The design of ceremonial and burial sites and monuments (taulas, navetas, dolmens) relating to the skyscape
- The outstanding expressions associated with the water culture
- The monumental nature of the landscape impregnated with pre-historic remains
- The living landscape associated with the property, evidence of a unique model of a fusion between the natural landscape, the farming landscape and the archaeological and/or monumental landscape
- The harmonious integration of the archaeological remains in the mosaic of the plant landscape and its similarity to the pre-historic landscape
- The unique territorial dichotomy between the world of the living and the world of the dead
• The presence of new stone cultures that support the Talayotic monuments and which attain their maximum expression in the colossal network of dry-stone walls.

INTANGIBLE
• The unique, outstanding expressions of the material Talayotic culture (stone work, pottery, bone work, fabrics, etc.)
• The unique nature of certain building techniques
• The diversity and unique nature of the funerary customs
• The documented rites and beliefs
• The astronomic culture
• Evidence of the resistance to external influences and the continued survival of their culture, as a result of their relative isolation, which marked Talayotic culture since its origins
• The co-existence of the present population with the monumental landscape and the continued survival of these manifestations in the collective memory over time
• The stone culture as a transversal factor in the Menorcan identity from the past until the present day
Minorca Talayotic is a serial cultural property divided into five different territorial areas that harbour the most representative and best conserved constructions of the island's pre-history, especially those of the Talayotic period. The components of the property illustrate the different forms of occupation and use of the territory, the portrayal of social and religious orders and, therefore, the processes of modelling the island landscape and its symbolic spaces in Talayotic times.

Each of these areas is a significant site in the development of the Talayotic culture, associated with the beliefs, uses and the cosmovision of this island culture.

The series as a whole, harbours the most representative sample of the enormous wealth of monumental expressions of Menorcan Cyclopean architecture, including those that are unique and outstanding. This way, the archaeological remains included in each part of the property as a whole offer a complete and transversal vision of the evolution of this culture over time and the diversity of the kinds and functions of its works.

The components of the property clearly express the ways in which Talayotic communities related with the territory, in accordance with its characteristics and resources, leaving their mark on the landscape with the construction of “talayots” (burial chambers) and other monumental buildings, defining the agricultural and livestock uses of different areas and keeping certain enclaves for their funeral spaces and rituals.
Each of these areas shows unique expressions of the settlement pattern of the Talayotic period that consisted of laying out closed space, organised around the monumental architecture and concentrated and underpinned by the village, which was the nerve centre for laying out a complex network of visibility. The monumental nature of the buildings is understood to be an element that provides the community with social cohesion, and identifies the group with the landscape and as a form of laying out a political landscape through the community’s entire territory.

Each of these areas is underpinned by a well-conserved surrounding landscape that allows the remains of this culture to be appreciated in a largely unaltered context with similar features to the space inhabited by the ancient settlers. They are territories in which the rural and natural spaces as a whole, offer an excellent representation of the unique mosaic landscape that has characterised the island ever since pre-historic times.

All the parts or components of the series are related as territories that reflect the monumental landscape and the cultural and functional ties of the Talayotic culture in an exceptional fashion, substantially contributing to the different dimensions of the Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property in a recognisable manner and based on scientific evidence.

### Delimitation criteria

The assessment to establish the most representative areas that lay out the components of the series is based on extensive research aimed at locating a full representation of all the significant elements and attributes of the property in different areas that, as a whole, properly express and convey the Outstanding Universal Value.

The delimitation of the components of the property and the result of their portrayal in territorial areas is the result of a commitment to apply the following criteria:

1. **Representativity of the tangible attributes and the density of sites**

   The components would include in each case, the most representative monumental attributes of pre-historic Minorca, particularly the constructions of the Talayotic period and those that represent unique expressions of that culture (see Chap. 2.a.v), which include: the talayots, the “taula” grounds, the burial navetas, the megalithic tombs, the burial grounds and the circular houses. These areas are also representative spaces on an island-wide scale in which there is a large density and diversity of archaeological sites.

2. **Connectivity and inter-visibility**

   Constituting coherent spaces in terms of visual connectivity between Talayotic settlements, and with the visibility basins from the main monuments. The delimitation rests on the results of the visibility studies and visual connections conducted to such end for the island of Minorca.
3. **Symbolic references and landmarks of the landscape**

Include the main natural and scenic elements, topographic features and symbolic territorial landmarks that could have been used in Talayotic times as references in their culture.

The series would also harbour a representative sample of spaces that highlight the territorial duality of this culture between the world of the living and the world of the dead, along with fundamental reference landmarks and landscapes associated with the unique astronomic culture of the ancient inhabitants.

4. **Quality of the landscape**

The parts or components would include the best-conserved scenic areas and environments that provide the appropriate context for the main material attributes of the property and which reflect its cultural and functional ties and its evolution over time, including the unique Menorcan agro-ecosystem and the best preserved associated natural areas. The areas that have been modified and those subjected to more intensive uses and built-up areas are excluded as they do not provide an appropriate context for the monumental attributes of the property.

5. **Territorial techniques and uses**

Including representative elements associated with the techniques and use of resources, particularly those related to the working in stone and with the unique, outstanding water culture.

6. **Association with the remains of the material culture**

Including significant archaeological sites that have provided important elements of the material culture of Talayotic societies in all their expressions.
COMPONENTS

Attributes
Constructions
Integrity of the composition
Representativity, Values

COMPONENTS

Associated landscape
Connectivity, inter-visibility, quality

Others
Density, associations, intangible attributes
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CRITERIA MET BY THE PROPOSED PROPERTY
(discussion paper)

Criterion (iii)

Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared.

The components and attributes of the property, along with the remains of its material culture as a whole, illustrate a unique evolutionary process in the pre-history of the islands that encompasses a series of successive cultural phenomena whose roots date back to the Copper Age, continue through the Bronze Age, reach their height in the Iron Age and continue until Roman Times.

Archaeological sites offer exceptional testimony of an island civilisation of the past that established a powerful, imaginative and original tradition expressed through its monumental architecture, the material remains and regional organisation of which have maintained their presence on the island and indelibly marked its landscape over the last three thousand years.

The components of the property provide a significant sample of the extreme diversity and density of pre-historic archaeological sites in an excellent state of conservation on the island of Menorca, the greatest density recorded anywhere in the world covering an extensive area of living, inhabited territory, with over 1,558 sites catalogued in 700 km². These manifestations constitute an exceptional reserve of information concerning the physical nature and way of life of the human communities that inhabited this island and a place of excellence for studying the primitive civilisations of Europe and the Mediterranean islands.
The great concentration and originality of the social, economic, ritual and burial monuments, along with the remains of the material culture and its continued survival over time, are an outstanding reflection of a prehistoric culture that make the property one of the most extensive, rich and important archaeological complexes in the Mediterranean basin and in the island world of the entire planet.

As a whole, the property offers an exceptional testimony to the Balearic Talayotic Culture, which developed between the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, offering genuine and original expressions on this island in the Mediterranean context, as a result of its relative isolation and the ability of island cultures to generate amazing, endemic monumental works and expressions.

The archaeological sites of Menorca illustrate an exceptional cultural process in which the remains of prehistoric island cultures survive beyond their times, thanks in part to their continued use, which extended up until the Islamic period and later.

The prehistoric heritage of Menorca offers unique testimony to a process of human occupation and adaptation to a limited territory, in extreme conditions and with few resources, illustrating the odyssey of the ancient island cultures of the planet and generating an outstanding cosmovision that includes the skyscape and an original territorial division of the world of the living from the world of the dead.

The nominated property illustrates the long, outstanding Talayotic cultural process, in which the extreme insularity and the conditions of relative isolation enabled its inhabitants to model and adapt the scope of outside cultural influences for centuries by developing a unique system of expressions that is very different from its context. These circumstances created the conditions for the survival of cultural traits that date back to the Copper Age, traits that were erased from the mainland in the course of the Bronze Age and the Iron Age.

The burial customs of the Talayotic culture of Menorca, enlightened by researchers and archaeological evidence, show specific island beliefs and rituals that are different from those of neighbouring islands and of the Mediterranean surroundings.
**Criterion (iv)**

*Be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history.*

The nominated property is an excellent example of a monumental site and archaeological landscape that illustrates a significant stage of the island pre-history of the Mediterranean, characterised by the development of Cyclopean techniques and constructions, generating unique architectural forms and built components endowed with enormous power, imagination and originality.

The components of the property include a rich inventory of Cyclopean architecture, which illustrates the different stages that the pre-history of the island encompasses, comprehending a wide range of different kinds, including religious, burial, dwelling and symbolic structures, which showcase one of the most complete manifestations of this kind of buildings in terms of diversity and functionality in the pre-historic panorama of the Mediterranean basin and the island territories of the world.

The property includes excellent elements of outstanding buildings such as the burial navetas, the shrines acknowledged as “taula” grounds and the houses with their peculiar circular floorplan, which constitute unique expressions exclusive to Menorca. On top of this, there are also the amazing morphological characteristics of the towers or “talayots” and the burial sites on the cliffs, with exclusive traits for this kind of manifestation in Europe and the Mediterranean. The specific morphology of most of these structures is considered unique in the pre-historic Mediterranean world, with many variants of each kind represented. Moreover, some monuments illustrate unique reference elements of the transition from megalithic to Cyclopean techniques.

Talayotic buildings are notable, not just because of their originality, complexity and surprising proportions, but also for their imaginative and innovative use of materials, the considerable technical ability required to build them and the colossal collective effort invested over time. The complexity of the construction can be seen, for example, in the case of the “taula” grounds, evidence of the availability of a surprising knowledge of geometry, physics, geology and astronomy.

The series of components of the nominated property each show a space that exemplifies the singular ways in which this culture occupied the territory, laying out physically inter-connected areas that even today continue to clearly express the relations of inter-visibility between settlements and between the most representative monuments, offering an exceptional reading of the universe of visual and territorial relations on which the life of these communities was grounded.

Certain Cyclopean monuments and their megalithic predecessors (dolmens, burial navetas and “taula” grounds) show regular orientation patterns that remained stable over the time that highlight them and allow them to stand out from other contemporary cultures of similar Cyclopean characteristics, as outstanding attributes that could be considered as unique expressions of cultural astronomy, which manifest a vigorous relationship between the landscape and the skyscape.
The water catchment systems to be found in Talayotic settlements and their cisterns, illustrate one of the most outstanding expressions of the water culture on islands, which can be considered unique in the Mediterranean area.

The remains of the Talayotic culture blend harmoniously into the current landscape, particularly in the case of the properties of the series, where we see the superimposition of new, historical stone cultures that have generated agricultural spaces fenced in by over one hundred thousand kilometres of dry stone walls, and where the same plant species that made up the ancient Talayotic landscape continue to grow, thus showing an outstanding symbiosis between the monumental pre-historic landscape, the current living landscape and the natural environment.
**Criterion (v)**

*Be 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.*

*Compliance with this criterion is a point to be discussed. These elements, may eventually be included in the previous criteria.*

The nominated property illustrates an outstanding process of cultural syncretism between the pre-historic and the historic landscape, where the ruins of the past become subjects in their own right of today’s monumental landscape of the island, having been recognised now as a fundamental element of the island identity.

The set of components of the property as a whole illustrate a unique and unrepeatable example of how the substantial remains of a pre-historic culture now blend in with their rich natural and human surroundings to create an incomparable cultural landscape.

The scenic context of each component of the series, which shelters the best expressions of the Talayotic culture of Menorca, is grounded on the peculiar Menorcan agro-ecosystem, characterised by a mosaic of plants forming the landscape that, in general terms, is very similar to the one that the ancient settlers helped to forge from the beginning of the Bronze Age, highlighting an outstanding case of archaeological sites that can be properly placed in context and perceived in relation to their surroundings.

The traditional forms of land use and the layout of the territory in the area of the nominated property, show a unique model of territorial organisation that includes the exceptional grid of dry stone walls and the amazing form of farming settlements characterised by the exquisite manner in which they have adapted to and shown the utmost respect for the remains of the Talayotic culture.

The components of the property show a clear scenic continuity based not only on stone cultures, but also on factors like the excellent conservation of emblematic natural surroundings and the continuity of the vegetation landscape.

The cultural dimensions of the current landscapes allow many leading aspects of the spiritual and social life of their ancient inhabitants to be transmitted to the present, along with the history of its inhabitants up until the present day, in a context that has hardly changed since pre-historic times.
Nomination of MINORCA TALAYOTIC for Inscription on the World Heritage List

CRITERIA MET BY THE PROPOSED PROPERTY
(discussion paper)

Criterion (iii)

Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared.

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Archaeological sites offer exceptional testimony of an island civilisation of the past that established a powerful, imaginative and original tradition expressed through its monumental architecture, the material remains and regional organisation of which have maintained their presence on the island and indelibly marked its landscape over the last three thousand years.

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The archaeological sites of Menorca illustrate an exceptional cultural process in which the remains of pre-historic island cultures survive beyond their times, thanks in part to their continued use, which extended up until the Islamic period and later.

The pre-historic heritage of Menorca offers unique testimony to a process of human occupation and adaptation to a limited territory, in extreme conditions and with few resources, illustrating the odyssey of the ancient island cultures of the planet and generating an outstanding cosmovision that includes the skyscape and an original territorial division of the world of the living from the world of the dead.

The nominated property illustrates the long, outstanding Talayotic cultural process, in which the extreme insularity and the conditions of relative isolation enabled its inhabitants to model and adapt the scope of outside cultural influences for centuries by developing a unique system of expressions that is very different from its context. These circumstances created the conditions for the survival of cultural traits that date back to the Copper Age, traits that were erased from the mainland in the course of the Bronze Age and the Iron Age.

The burial customs of the Talayotic culture of Menorca, enlightened by researchers and archaeological evidence, show specific island beliefs and rituals that are different from those of neighbouring islands and of the Mediterranean surroundings.
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*Be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history.*

The nominated property is an excellent example of a monumental site and archaeological landscape that illustrates a significant stage of the island pre-history of the Mediterranean, characterised by the development of Cyclopean techniques and constructions, generating unique architectural forms and built components endowed with enormous power, imagination and originality.

The components of the property include a rich inventory of Cyclopean architecture, which illustrates the different stages that the pre-history of the island encompasses, comprehending a wide range of different kinds, including religious, burial, dwelling and symbolic structures, which showcase one of the most complete manifestations of this kind of buildings in terms of diversity and functionality in the pre-historic panorama of the Mediterranean basin and the island territories of the world.

The property includes excellent elements of outstanding buildings such as the burial navetas, the shrines acknowledged as “taula” grounds and the houses with their peculiar circular floorplan, which constitute unique expressions exclusive to Menorca. On top of this, there are also the amazing morphological characteristics of the towers or “talayots” and the burial sites on the cliffs, with exclusive traits for this kind of manifestation in Europe and the Mediterranean. The specific morphology of most of these structures is considered unique in the pre-historic Mediterranean world, with many variants of each kind represented. Moreover, some monuments illustrate unique reference elements of the transition from megalithic to Cyclopean techniques.

Talayotic buildings are notable, not just because of their originality, complexity and surprising proportions, but also for their imaginative and innovative use of materials, the considerable technical ability required to build them and the colossal collective effort invested over time. The complexity of the construction can be seen, for example, in the case of the “taula” grounds, evidence of the availability of a surprising knowledge of geometry, physics, geology and astronomy.

The series of components of the nominated property each show a space that exemplifies the singular ways in which this culture occupied the territory, laying out physically inter-connected areas that even today continue to clearly express the relations of inter-visibility between settlements and between the most representative monuments, offering an exceptional reading of the universe of visual and territorial relations on which the life of these communities was grounded.

Certain Cyclopean monuments and their megalithic predecessors (dolmens, burial navetas and “taula” grounds) show regular orientation patterns that remained stable over the time that highlight them and allow them to stand out from other contemporary cultures of similar Cyclopean characteristics, as outstanding attributes that could be considered as unique expressions of cultural astronomy, which manifest a vigorous relationship between the landscape and the skyscape.
The water catchment systems to be found in Talayotic settlements and their cisterns, illustrate one of the most outstanding expressions of the water culture on islands, which can be considered unique in the Mediterranean area.

The remains of the Talayotic culture blend harmoniously into the current landscape, particularly in the case of the properties of the series, where we see the superimposition of new, historical stone cultures that have generated agricultural spaces fenced in by over one hundred thousand kilometres of dry stone walls, and where the same plant species that made up the ancient Talayotic landscape continue to grow, thus showing an outstanding symbiosis between the monumental pre-historic landscape, the current living landscape and the natural environment.
**Criterion (v)**

*Be 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.*

*Compliance with this criterion is a point to be discussed. These elements, may eventually be included in the previous criteria.*

The nominated property illustrates an outstanding process of cultural syncretism between the pre-historic and the historic landscape, where the ruins of the past become subjects in their own right of today’s monumental landscape of the island, having been recognised now as a fundamental element of the island identity.

The set of components of the property as a whole illustrate a unique and unrepeatable example of how the substantial remains of a pre-historic culture now blend in with their rich natural and human surroundings to create an incomparable cultural landscape.

The scenic context of each component of the series, which shelters the best expressions of the Talayotic culture of Menorca, is grounded on the peculiar Menorcan agro-ecosystem, characterised by a mosaic of plants forming the landscape that, in general terms, is very similar to the one that the ancient settlers helped to forge from the beginning of the Bronze Age, highlighting an outstanding case of archaeological sites that can be properly placed in context and perceived in relation to their surroundings.

The traditional forms of land use and the layout of the territory in the area of the nominated property, show a unique model of territorial organisation that includes the exceptional grid of dry stone walls and the amazing form of farming settlements characterised by the exquisite manner in which they have adapted to and shown the utmost respect for the remains of the Talayotic culture.

The components of the property show a clear scenic continuity based not only on stone cultures, but also on factors like the excellent conservation of emblematic natural surroundings and the continuity of the vegetation landscape.

The cultural dimensions of the current landscapes allow many leading aspects of the spiritual and social life of their ancient inhabitants to be transmitted to the present, along with the history of its inhabitants up until the present day, in a context that has hardly changed since pre-historic times.
MINORCA TALAYOTIC Nomination
for Inscription on the World Heritage List

Outstanding Universal Value
(discussion paper - synthesis)

The nominated property includes a series of terrestrial and shoreline spaces on the island of Minorca that harbour the most significant expressions of the island's pre-history, especially those of the Talayotic period, in a scenic setting that, even today, allows the scope and evolution of this culture to be interpreted and understood in all its splendour. The extraordinary profusion of material remains from the past and their unique characteristics make Minorca one of the most significant islands for casting light on the ancient civilisation of the Mediterranean basin.

The most important manifestations of this cultural phenomenon date back to the second millennium BC through to the end of the second century BC, encompassing part of the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, although it also includes representative and outstanding expressions of its direct predecessors from the Copper Age and of its re-use and continued survival into later eras, including Roman times.

The most important characteristics and attributes that underpin the originality and uniqueness of the nominated property, and which endow the property with its Outstanding Universal Value are as follows:

a) The nominated property offers exceptional testimony of an island civilisation that has disappeared, and one that established a powerful, imaginative, original tradition expressed through its monumental architecture, whose material remains and territorial organisation can still be seen on the island, after leaving an indelible stamp on the island landscape for the last three thousand years.
b) The Cyclopean buildings and pre-historic remains to be found in the different components of the property, along with the vestiges of its material culture, offer outstanding insight into the evolution of an island culture that developed over the course of more than two thousand years, showing all the stages of its development like an open book on the pre-history of this area.

c) The nominated property provides an outstanding representation of archaeological sites divided into spaces that constitute a unique and unrivalled example of how the substantial remains of a pre-historic culture blend harmoniously into the landscape, comprised of the exceptional Menorcan agro-ecosystem of a mosaic of different vegetation that is the landscape, which still maintains the fundamental features of the natural landscape that was moulded by the ancient inhabitants of the island.

d) The unique Talayotic Culture of Minorca, represented by the components of the property through their monumental attributes, such as talayots, taula grounds, burial navetas or chambers, burial sites, settlements, circular houses and other constructions, now give shape to one of the most complete sets of constructions that, as a whole, illustrate a pre-historic Mediterranean way of life and offer an outstanding testimony of the odyssey of the island cultures of the planet that generate endemic, diverse and unique expressions because of their greater isolation.

e) The extreme density of archaeological remains, unique in the world for an inhabited territory, its diversity of types and the ample distribution of sites in the area of the property and its surroundings, and their surprising state of conservation, are testimony to a monumental landscape that clearly shows the vigour and an exceptional capacity for survival of its components over time.

f) The components of the nominated property clearly show the evolution of this culture in the territory, the models of settlement and the unique relations of inter-visibility, offering an exceptional reading of the space generated and perceived by its ancient inhabitants. It represents an exceptional case in which the relations between the archaeological sites and between the sites and their settings are clearly evident.

g) Even today, the mark of the Talayotic culture continues to play a leading role in the island landscape, particularly in the area of the components of the nominated property, defining an island with an archaeological wealth that is unique in the world and which exists in harmony with a live landscape, in which the stone culture has always been, and continues to be one of the leading players today, providing such unique recent expressions as the outstanding grid of dry-stone walls.

h) The property provides exceptional testimony to a culture that distinguished the territory of the living from that of the dead and looked to the skies. The orientation of certain monuments and their relations with the firmament and the horizon provide an exceptional dimension to understanding both the ancient and the current landscape. Its components provide a vision of the evolutionary capacity to adapt to the environment and of the funeral and
ceremonial practises of this period, offering evidence of the pre-historic technology, architecture and astronomy associated to a cultural process that was developed in a land trapped between the sea and the sky.

i) The use of materials and resources in pre-historic times suggests that they had their own way of doing things and unaffected by external influences. This can be seen in the presence of expressions such as the water catchment systems, which illustrate one of the most outstanding expressions of water culture in island societies. These could be considered unique in the Mediterranean area.

j) The territorial Network of stone manifestations of the Talayotic culture acts as a permanent testimony to wise planning and management of the entire island space that could become a benchmark for the current inhabitants and a new universal example of just how essential it is to strike a new balance between mankind and nature.

k) The nominated property, and by extension, the whole island constitutes one of the most important places for studying primitive civilisations in Europe and an open book on the processes used by ancient cultures to adapt to island environments.