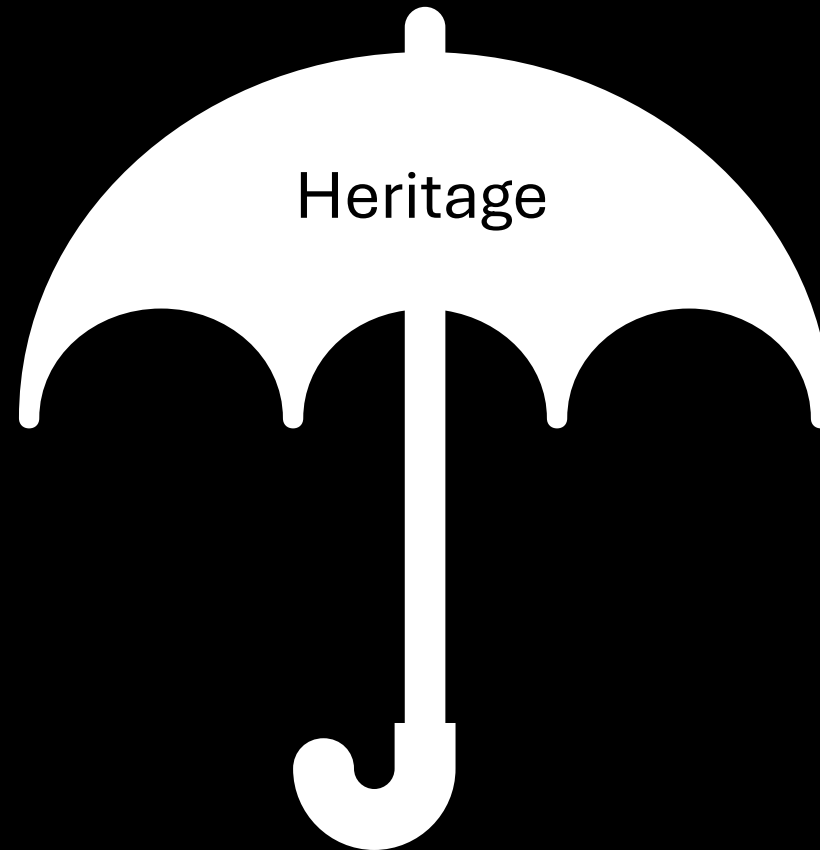


Exploring Heritage

Heritage

“The legacy of material culture (physical objects) and intangible attributes of a group or society that are **inherited** from past generations, **maintained** in the present and **bestowed** for the benefit of future generations” UNESCO



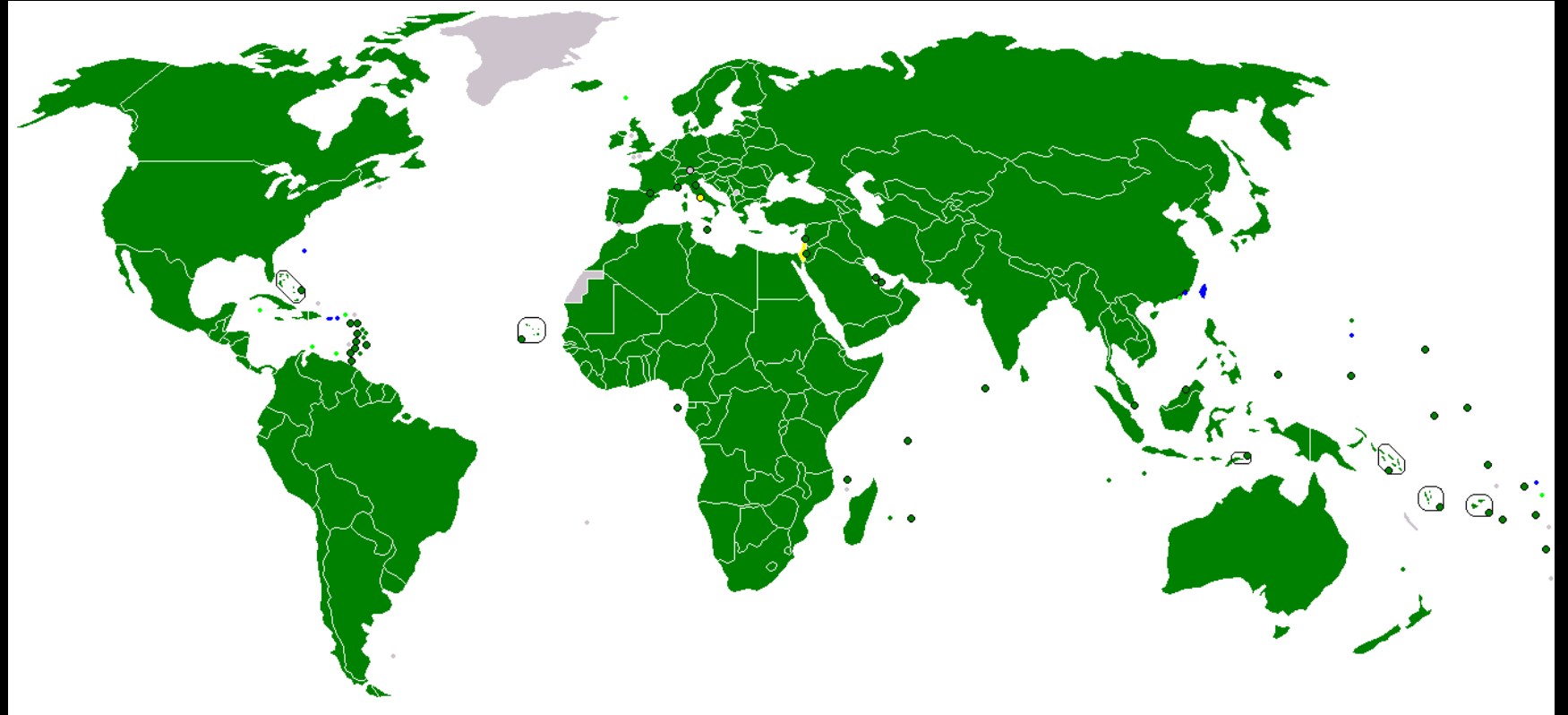
United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization UNESCO

- Founded 1945
- Created “to contribute to peace and security by promotion collaboration among the nations through education, science, and culture” [link](#)
- 194 member states

“peace and security”



Cultural Heritage



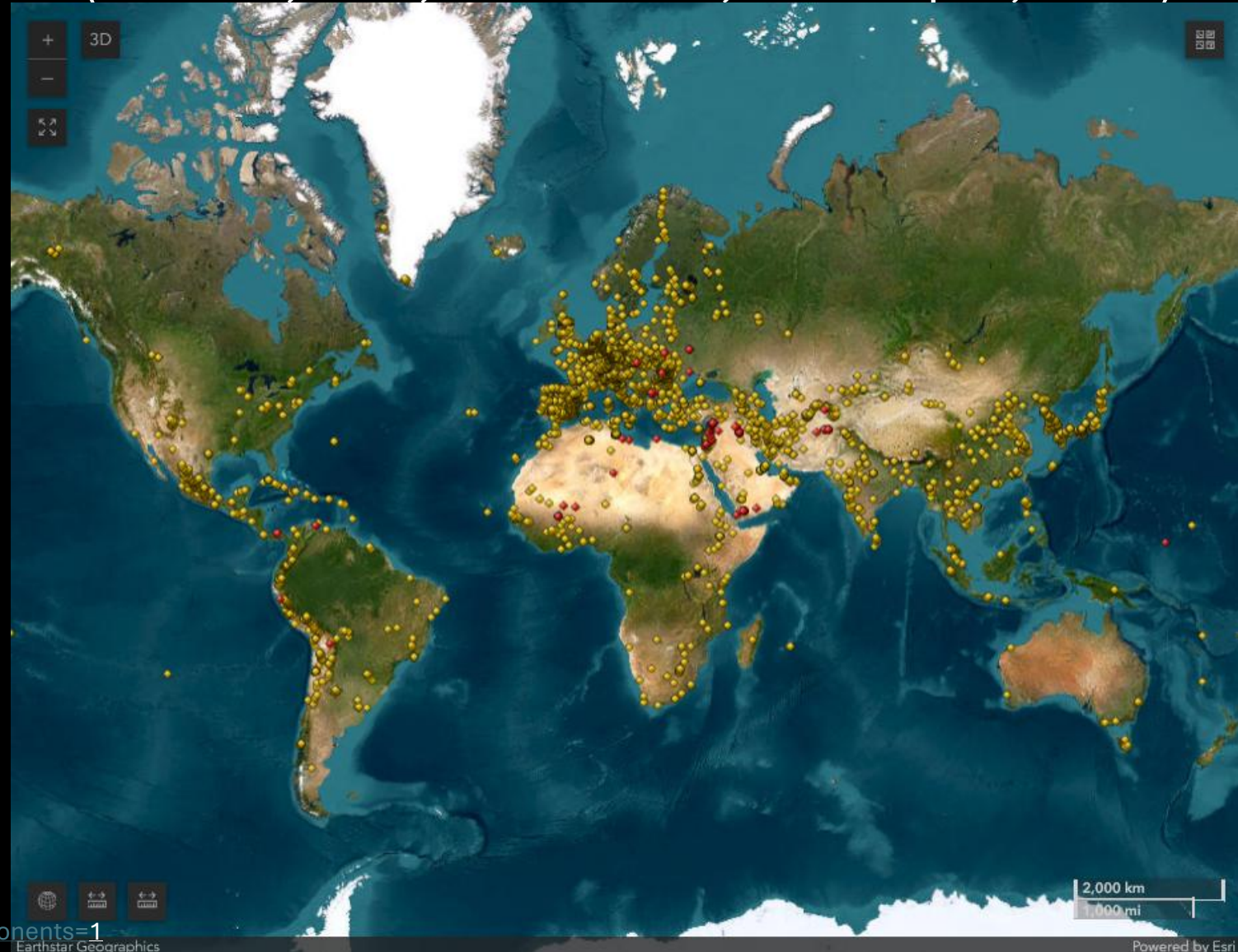
UNESCO Member States ([link](#))

Tangible Heritage

Physical things produced, maintained, and transmitted intergenerationally in society

- Moveable (artifacts) and immovable (features, sites, monuments, landscapes, cities)
- Material culture

What is an example of tangible heritage?



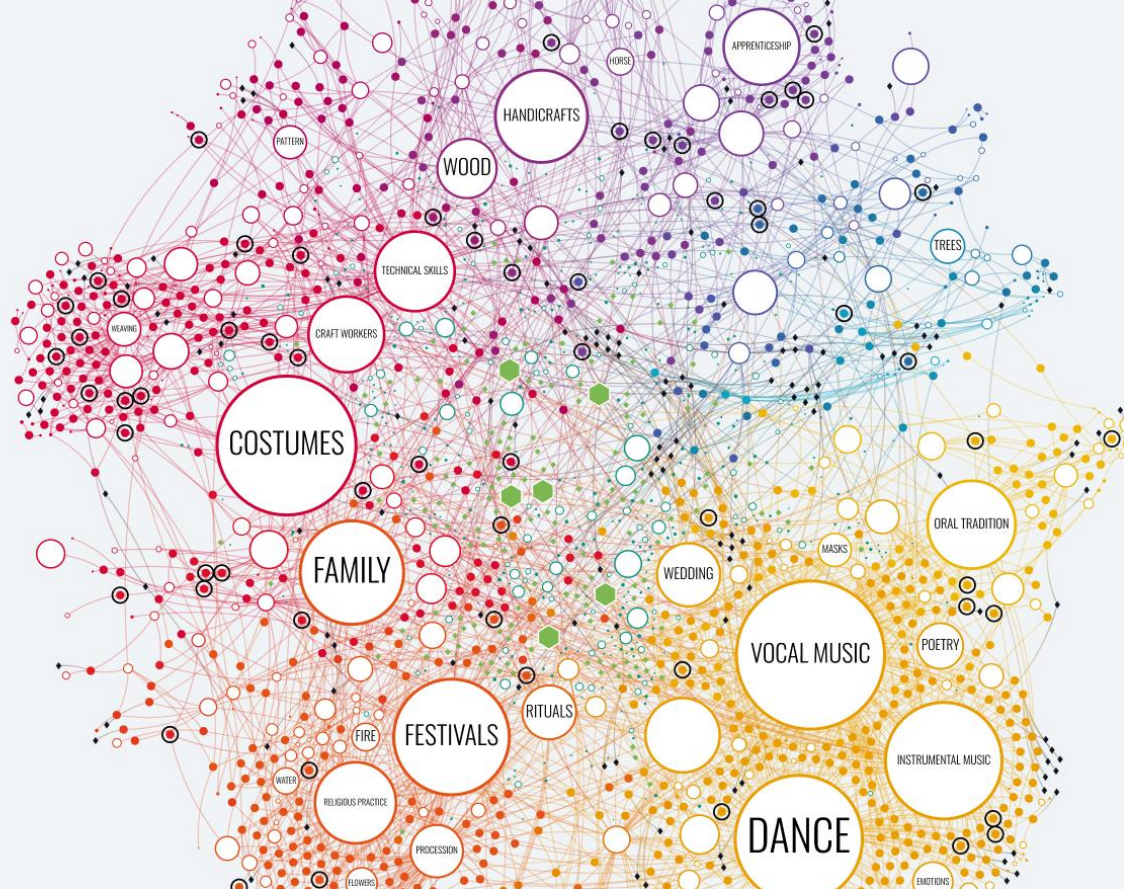
Intangible Heritage

“includes tradition or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants”

Examples:

- Oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festivals, knowledge and practices about nature and the universe, or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts
- Can be connected to or facilitated by tangible heritage

What is an example of intangible heritage?



Intangible Heritage

Intangible Heritage is:

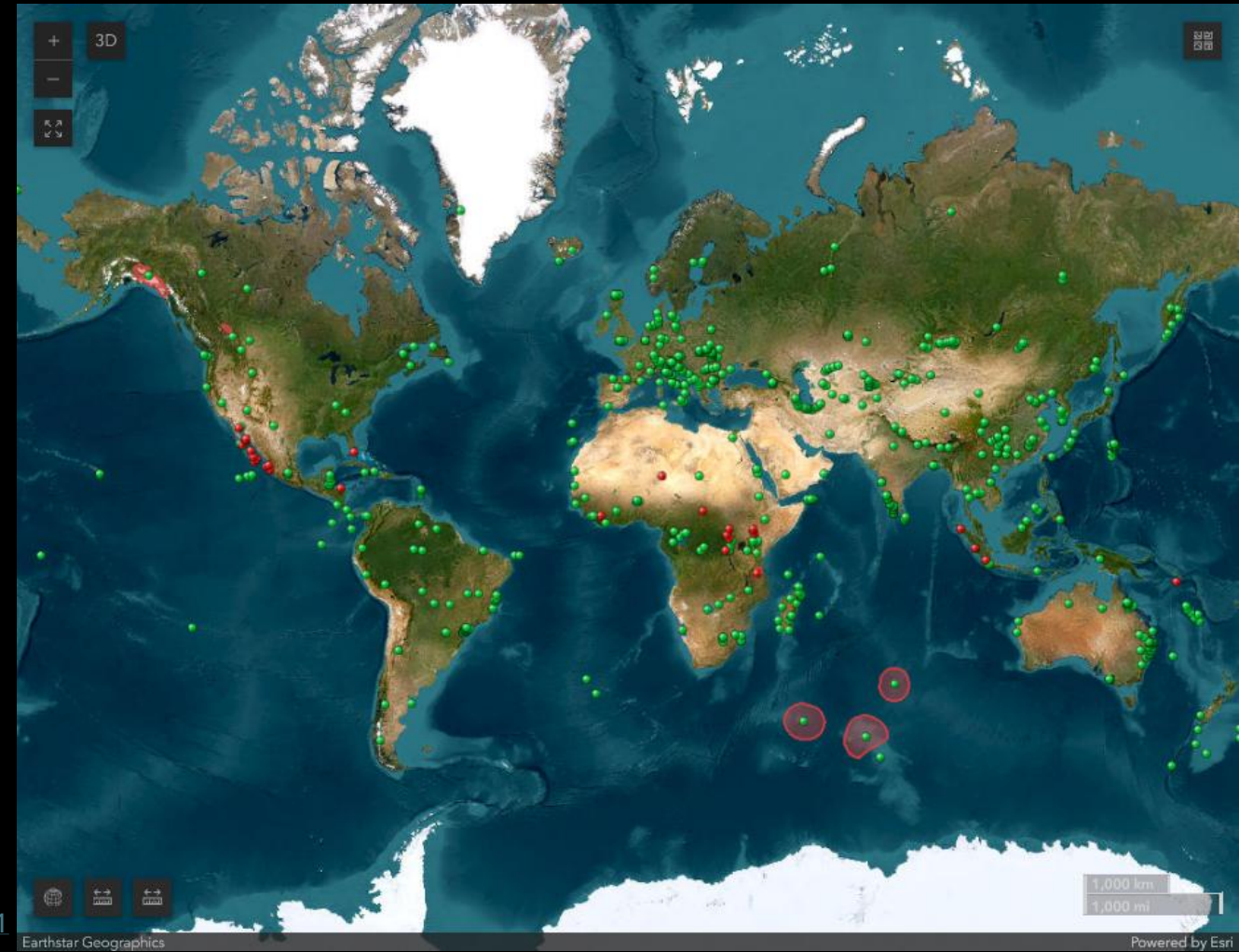
- Traditional, contemporary and living at the same time
- Inclusive
- Representative
- Community-based



Natural Heritage

Natural features, geological, and physiographical formations and delineated areas that constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants and natural sites of value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty

- Created by UNESCO
- Here we see the addition of the idea of 'value'
 - Science, conservation, or natural beauty
- >250 sites in 95+ countries
 - Can be co-listed with cultural heritage



World Heritage

“Designation for places on Earth that are of outstanding universal value to humanity and as such, have been inscribed on the World Heritage List to be protected for future generations to appreciate and enjoy”

1248

Properties

51

Transboundary

170

States Parties with
properties out of 196

+

The World Heritage List includes **1248** properties forming part of the cultural and natural heritage which the [World Heritage Committee](#) considers as having outstanding universal value.

These include **972** cultural, **235** natural and **41** mixed properties in **170** [States Parties](#). As of October 2024, **196** [States Parties](#) have ratified [the World Heritage Convention](#).

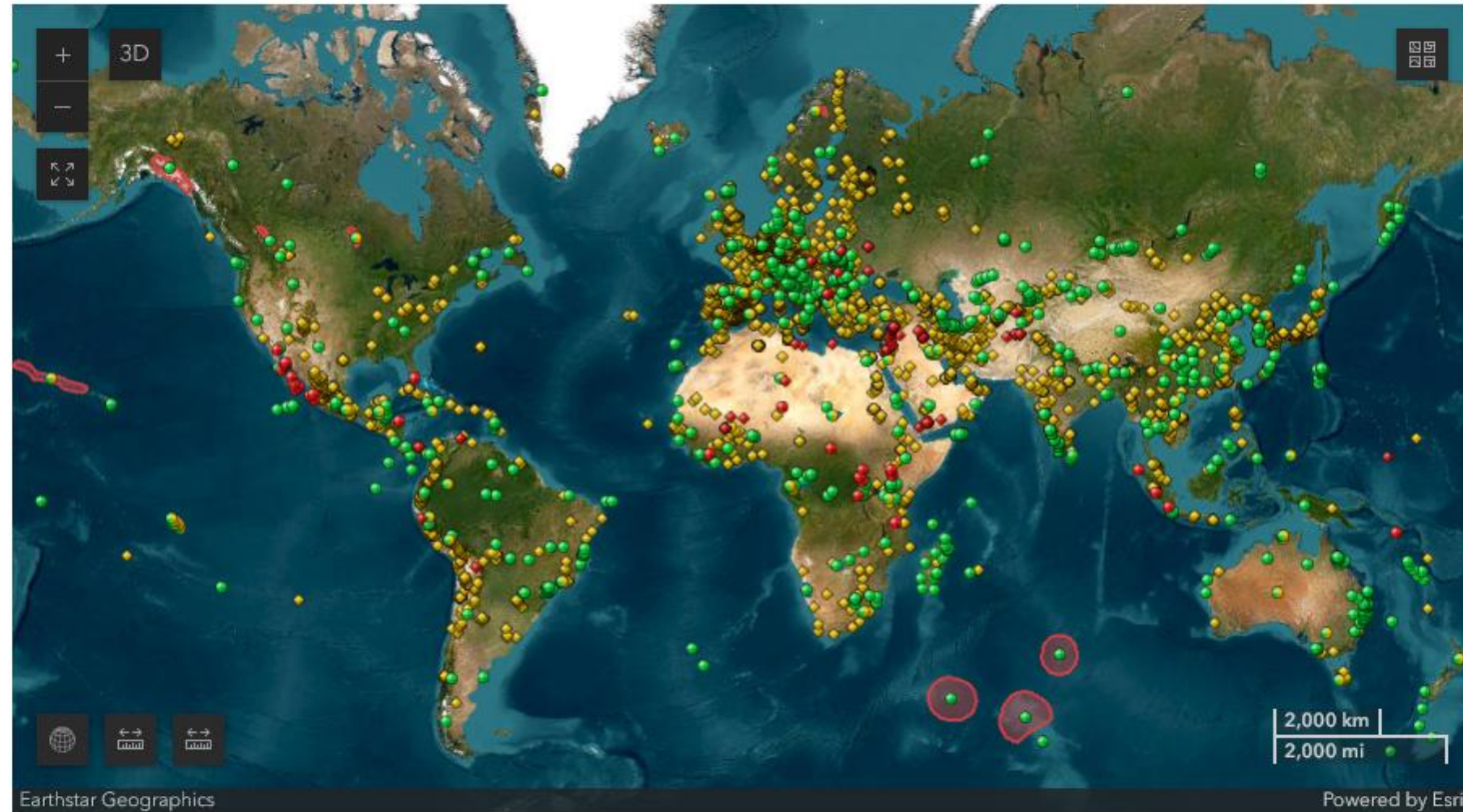
Legend

Category of property

◆ Cultural ◆ Natural ◆ Mixed

Property inscribed on the List of World Heritage in
Danger

◆ Cultural ◆ Natural ◆ Mixed



UNESCO

- 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural & Natural Heritage
 - Outlines needs for protect of cultural and natural heritage
 - Mechanisms for protections (mostly tangible)
 - Creation of List and requirements for nominating/staying on it

Cultural:

(i)

to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;

(ii)

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

(iii)

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

(iv)

to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

(v)

to 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;

(vi)

to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);

Natural:

(vii)

to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;

(viii)

to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;

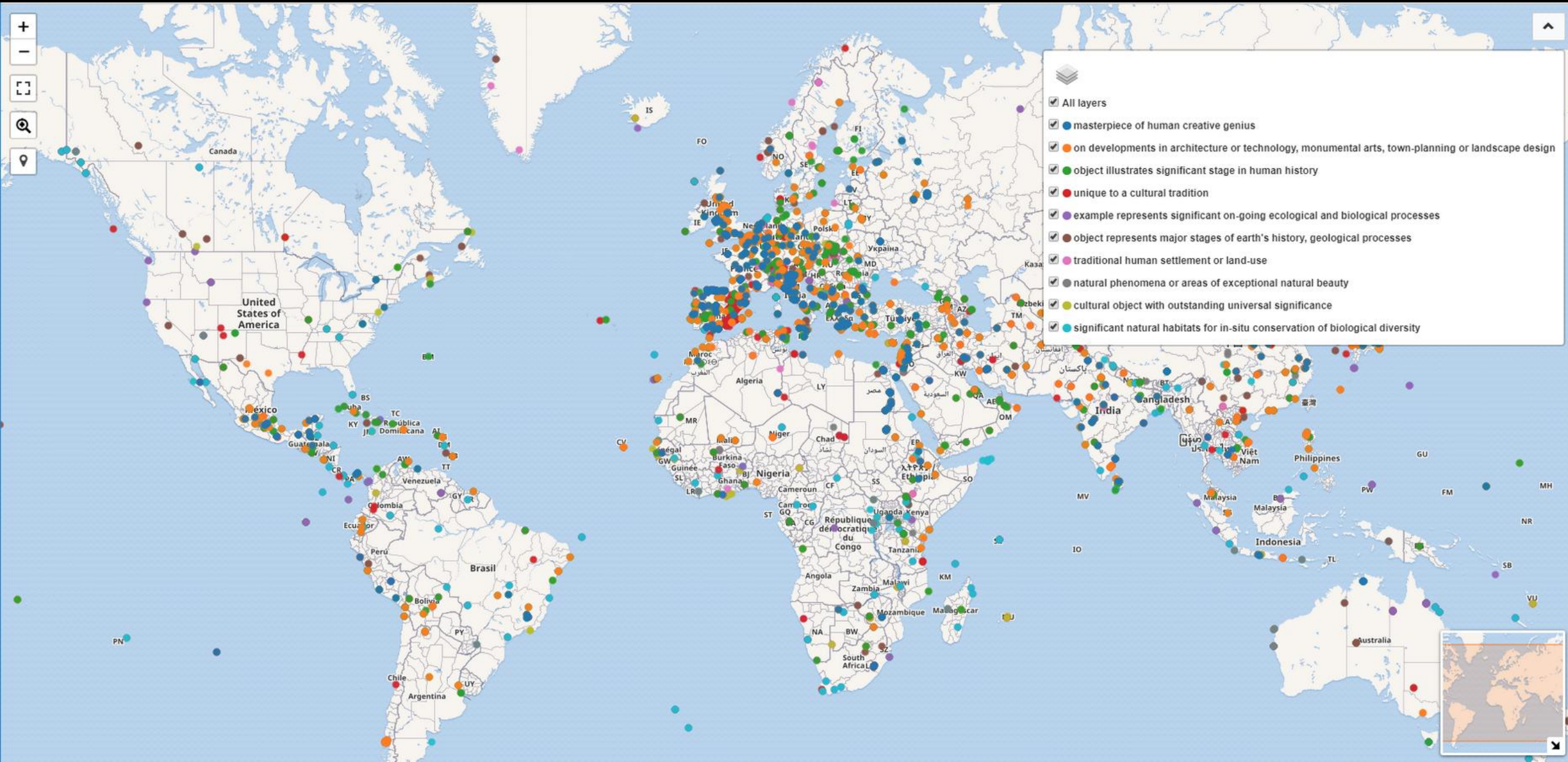
(ix)

to be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;

(x)

to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

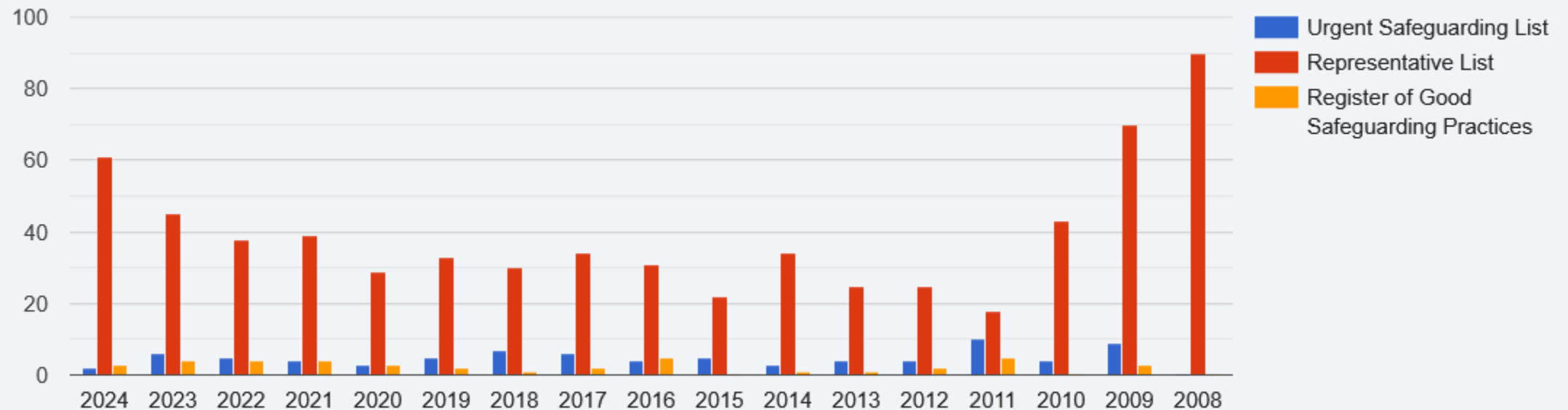
UNESCO Criteria



UNESCO

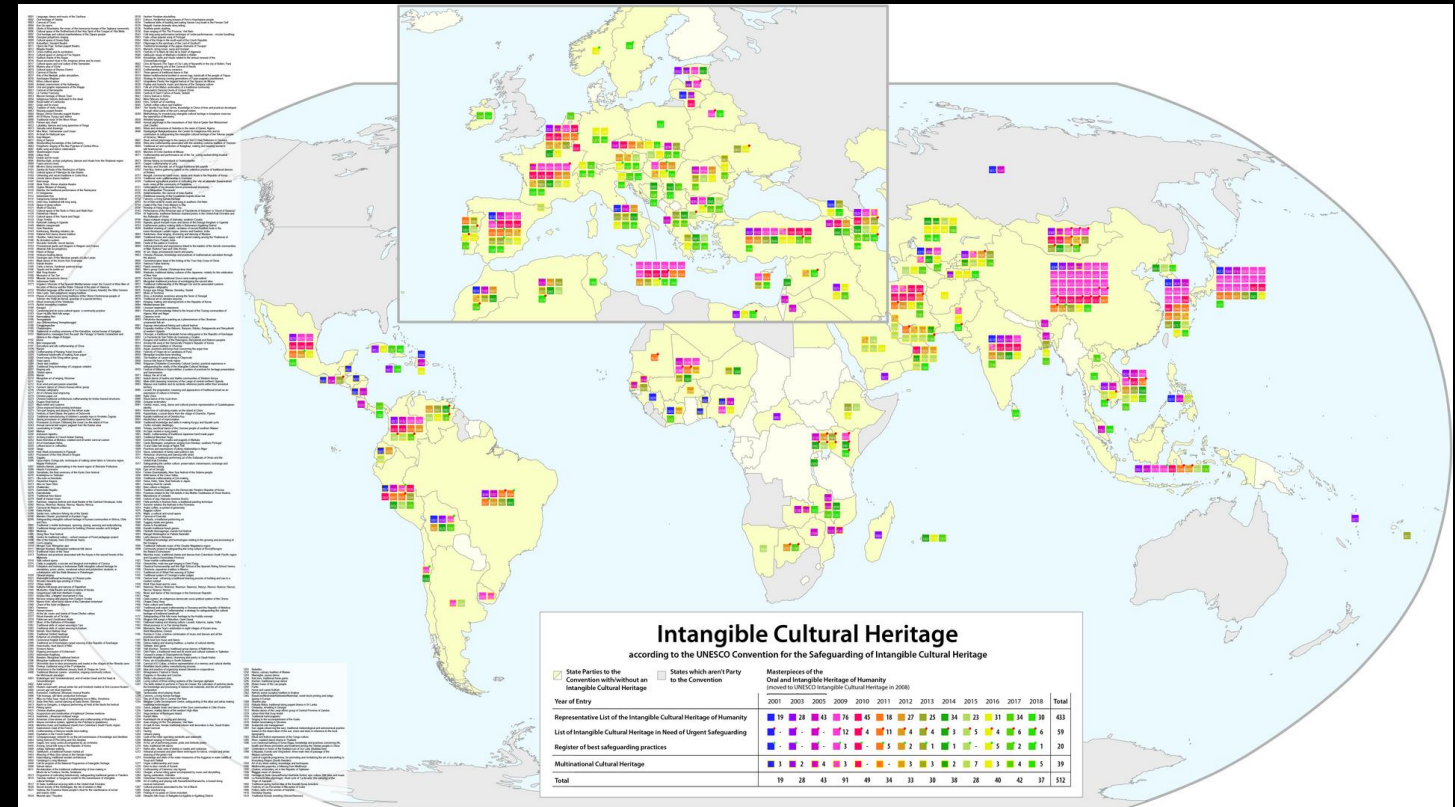
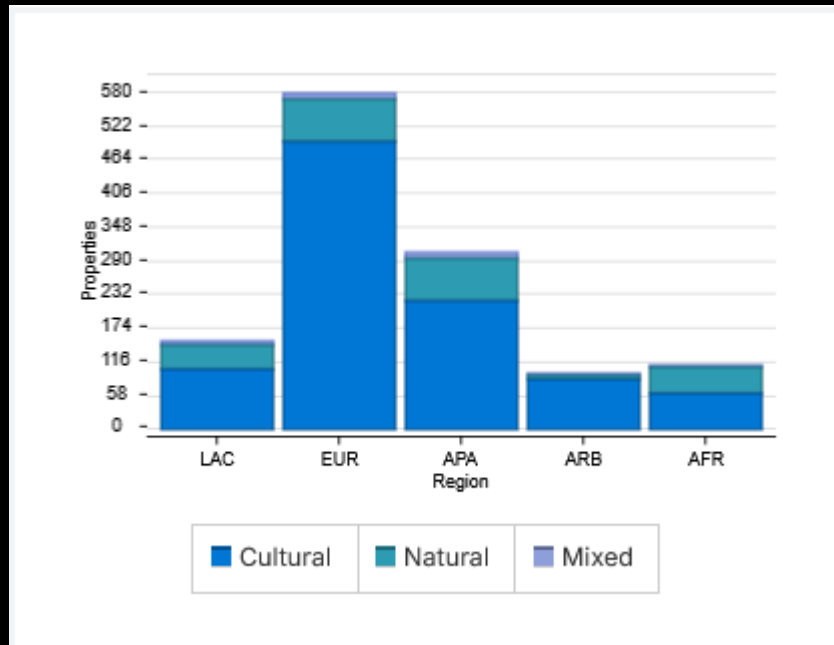
What about intangible heritage?

- List of Intangible Cultural Heritage
 - Established 2008
 - Most states have joined



UNESCO

- Remember this is a political process
 - Starts at national level and then goes up the chain
 - Must be of universal value
 - Needs to maintain standards to stay on list
 - No monetary benefits, but international recognition of value (which does have benefits)



World Heritage

“Designation for places on Earth that are of outstanding universal value to humanity and as such, have been inscribed on the World Heritage List to be protected for future generations to appreciate and enjoy”

Heritage is not in a vacuum:
Political, ideological, and
contentious

1248

Properties

51

Transboundary

170

States Parties with
properties out of 196

+

The World Heritage List includes **1248** properties forming part of the cultural and natural heritage which the [World Heritage Committee](#) considers as having outstanding universal value.

These include **972** cultural, **235** natural and **41** mixed properties in **170** [States Parties](#). As of October 2024, **196** [States Parties](#) have ratified [the World Heritage Convention](#).

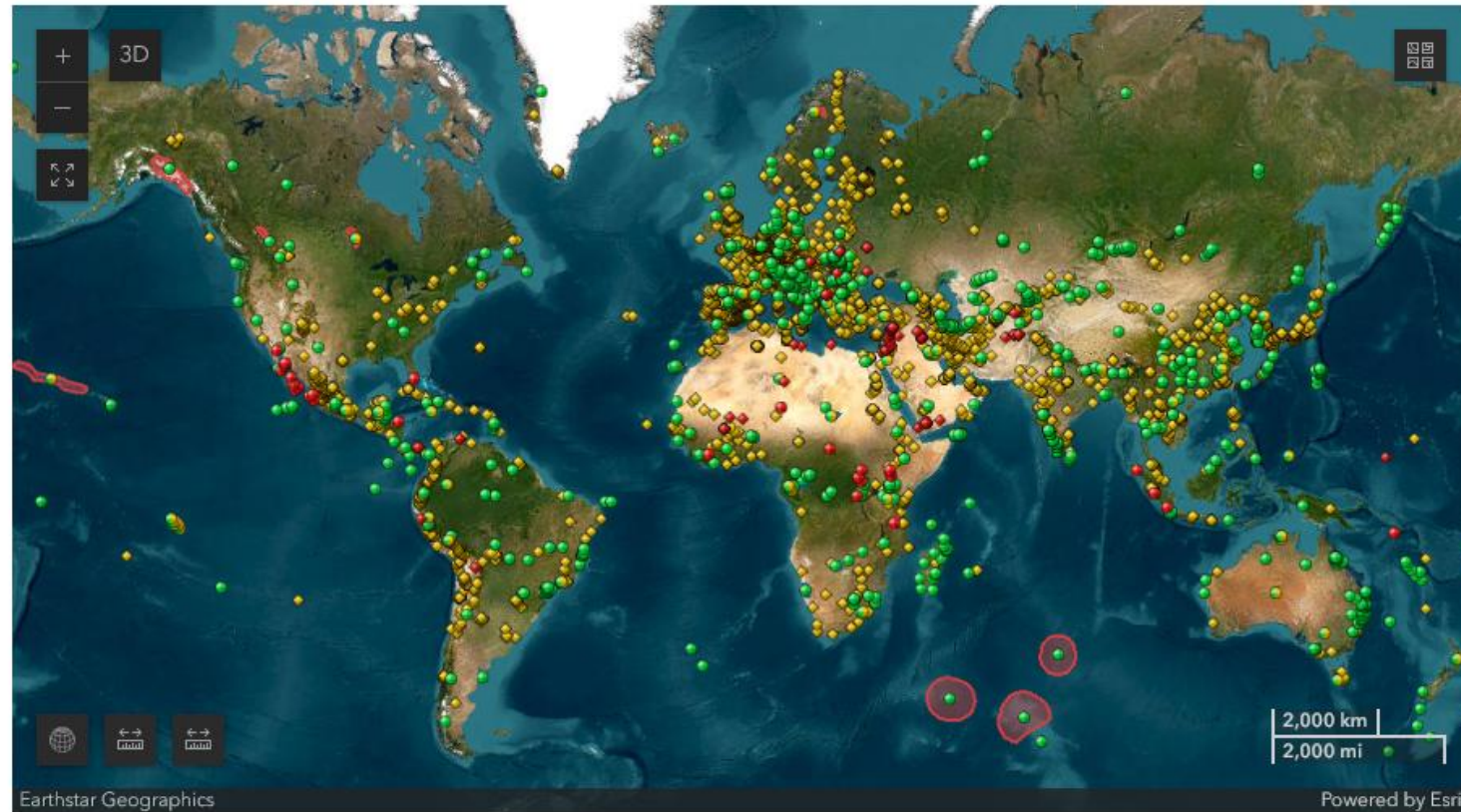
Legend

Category of property

◆ Cultural ◆ Natural ◆ Mixed

Property inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

◆ Cultural ◆ Natural ◆ Mixed



Who owns the past

If you left \$20 in the library, who owns it?

- A) You
- B) The person who found it
- C) The library



- Laws help to tell us who owns what (sometimes)
- What if there are disagreements about how owns/manages cultural heritage?
- What if the previous owners are no longer alive or they have no descendants?
- Can you share it? Can you sell it?



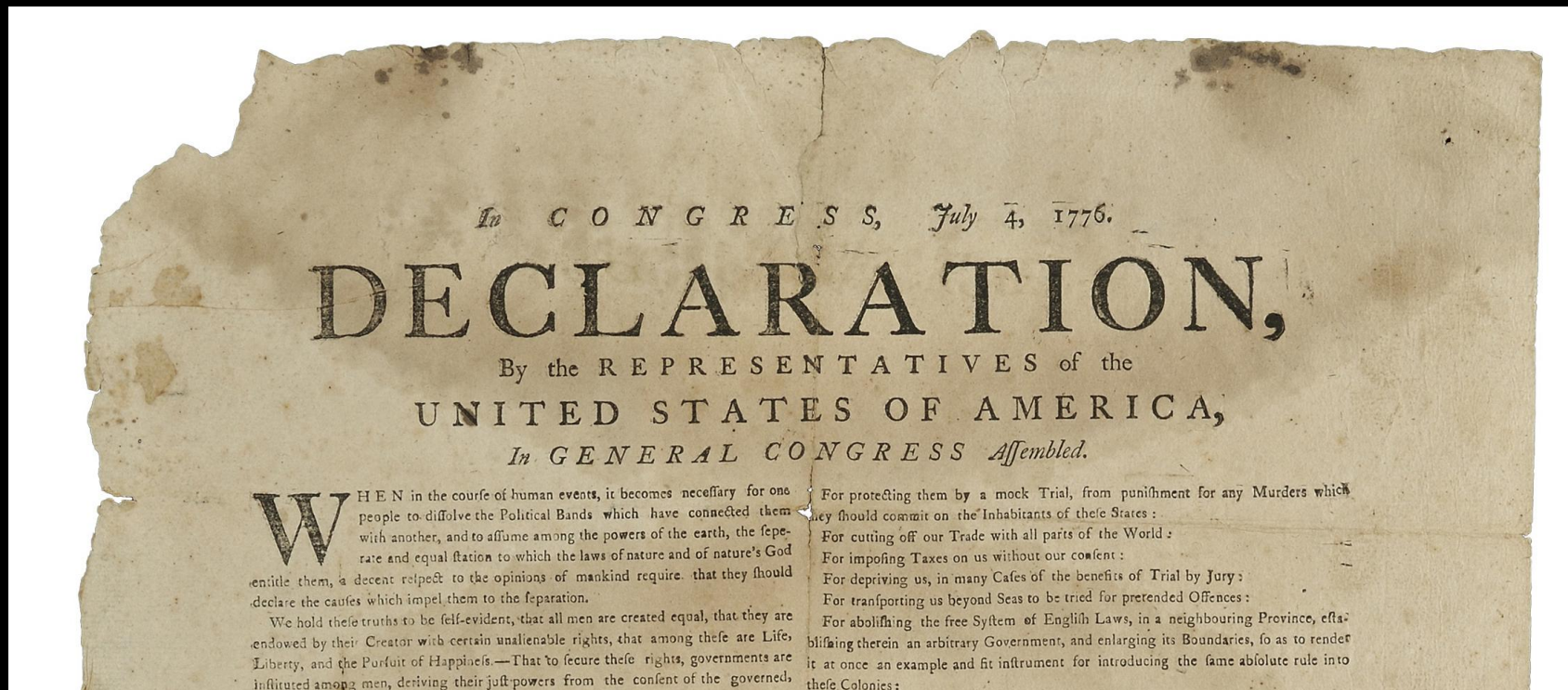
Who owns the past

Question: Whose heritage is it?

Universal? But someone needs to decide who, what, where, and for whom?

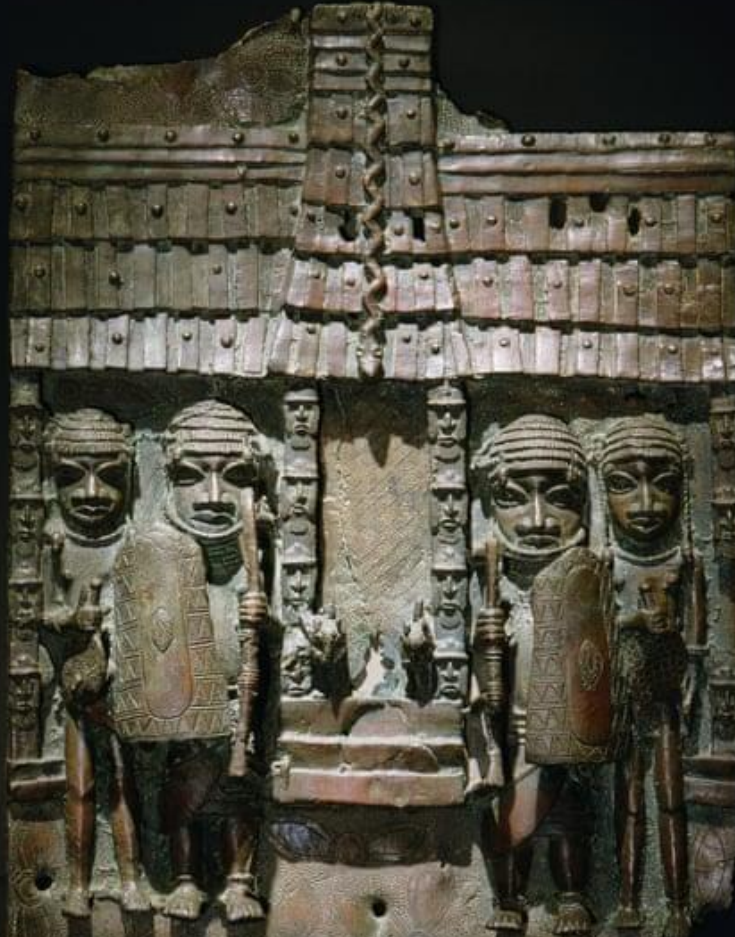
Cultural Patrimony

- Continuing cultural, traditional, or historical importance to the heritage of a group
- Particularly material culture considered inalienable by the group as the time of objects has been separated from the group or from the historical settings of the objects
 - Aka Owned by the people, not a person



Benin Bronzes

Ca. 16th to 19th century



Benin Bronzes

Benin City sacked and looted in 1897

<https://digitalbenin.org/map>



Arts

Smithsonian Museum of African Art removes Benin bronzes from display and plans to repatriate them

Published 5th November 2021

October 27, 2021
11:49 AM MDT
Last Updated 13 days ago

United Kingdom

Cambridge college, Paris museum return looted African artefacts

3 minute read

By Estelle Shirbon



The Netherlands will return more than 100 bronze artifacts to Nigeria

FEBRUARY 21, 2025 · 4:35 PM ET

By Alana Wise

2-Minute Listen

+ PLAYLIST



A glass case contains some of the Benin Bronzes that are being returned to Nigeria after British troops looted them in the late 19th century, seen during a handover ceremony at the Wereldmuseum (World Museum) in Leiden on Feb. 19, 2025.

Freek van den Bergh/AFP

A London museum agrees to return more than 70 pieces of looted Nigerian art

AUGUST 7, 2022 · 8:33 PM ET

Emma Bowman



The Horniman Museum's collection of artifacts from the ancient kingdom of Benin includes 12 brass plaques, ceremonial objects and a 'key' to the king's palace.

Horniman Museums and Gardens

Who Owns the Benin Bronzes? The Answer Just Got More Complicated.

Restitution efforts were underway, fueled by news that a museum was being planned in Nigeria to house the treasures. Then a surprising announcement sowed uncertainty.

Share full article



Nigeria Works to Reclaim Benin Bronzes, With a Change of Custodian

BY DANIEL CASSADY February 26, 2025 12:56pm



The King, known as Oba of Benin, Omo NOba Uku Akpolokpolo, Ewuare II, react while receiving repatriated artifacts that was looted from Nigeria over 125 years ago by the British military force in Benin City, mid-western, Nigeria, on February 19, 2022.

AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Most-Read Stories

- 1 Donald L. Bryant Jr., Vineyard Owner Who Amassed a Treasure...
- 2 Trump Moves to Axe 7 Federal Agencies, Including Key...
- 3 As the Centre Pompidou Closed on Monday, Parisians Said...
- 4 Sotheby's and Pace Gallery in Talks For Significant...



Art in America

Nigeria's long-running effort to repatriate the **Benin Bronzes**—some of the most prized artifacts in African history—has taken a turn.

The country's National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM) will now be responsible for retrieving and housing the looted works, according to *Reuters*. This is a shift away from the 2023 presidential decree that named the Oba of Benin, the traditional ruler of the Edo people, as their rightful owner and custodian. The reason? The Benin Royal Court, though historically central to these artifacts, lacks the infrastructure to properly house them—at least for now.

Nefertiti Problem

AD&D 4D
Future is today



Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
Preußischer Kulturbesitz

Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Bust of Queen Nefertiti, Ident. Nr. ÄM 21300.

49 x 24,5 x 33 cm | Amarna | 1851 BC / 1354 BC.

Shortened Right 2D scan, 2008 | 3D-Model by Tigran Art, Berlin, 2008.

© Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2018.



licensed under a Creative Commons
Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0
International License

Digital Heritage is Heritage

“It embraces cultural, educational, scientific and administrative resources as well as technical, legal, medical and other kinds of information created digitally or converted into digital form existing analogue resources (UNESCO)



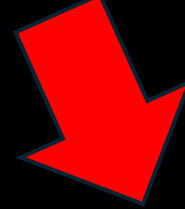
- Includes, but is not limited to, the use of digital media in the service of understanding and preserving cultural or natural heritage
- All of the complexities we talked about with heritage today are relevant for digital heritage

Cultural Heritage and CHI

Cultural Heritage Informatics Fellowship



See the last 60+ minutes of your
life



The creative application of information,
communication, and computing
technologies to_____

Digital heritage is heritage!