

Palmeral of Elche

The Palmeral of Elche, a landscape of groves of date palms, was formally laid out, with elaborate irrigation systems, at the time the Muslim city of Elche was erected, towards the end of the tenth century A.C., when much of the Iberian peninsula was Arab. The Palmeral is an oasis, a system for agrarian production in arid areas. It is also a unique example of Arab agricultural practices on the European continent. Cultivation of date palms in Elche is known at least since the Iberian times, dating around the fifth century B.C.

Justification for Inscription

Criterion (ii): The Palmeral (palm groves) of Elche represent a remarkable example of the transference of a characteristic landscape from one culture and continent to another, in this case from North Africa to Europe.

Criterion (v): The palm grove or garden is a typical feature of the North African landscape which was brought to Europe during the Islamic occupation of much of the Iberian peninsula and has survived to the present day. The ancient irrigation system, which is still functioning, is of special interest.

