

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

WORLD HERITAGE LIST

N° 366

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Archaeological Zone of Chan Chan

Location : Province of Trujillo

State Party : Peru

Date : July 29, 1985

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria I and III.

C) JUSTIFICATION

The Chimu kingdom, of which Chan Chan was the capital, reached its zenith in the 15th century, not long before falling under the sway of the Incas. In about 1470, after a long war, the Inca Tupac Yupanqui took king Minchancaman in captivity to Cuzco. The king's son, Chumun Caur, governed the kingdom of the north, thereafter weakened and divided, on behalf of the Inca. Some sixty years later, the Spanish conquistadores, favorably welcomed by the Chimus out of hate of the Incas, founded a new capital five kilometers from Chan Chan which in 1535 was given the name of Pizarro's home town, Trujillo. Afterward the site of Chan Chan was quickly abandoned.

To a greater extent than the myths and legends gathered by the conquistadores, such as Father Cabello de Balboa ca. 1586 or Carlos Marcelo Corne between 1604 and 1610, it is archaeology which has provided us with data on the Chimu civilisation which, ca. 1200, replaced the Mochica culture on the very location where the latter began developing in the 4th century. It was Moche Valley (or Santa Catalina Valley) which was the vital centre of a very vast empire stretching from the Gulf of Guayaquil in the north to the region of Paramonga in the south. In this dry zone the river, which flowed into a canal approximately 80 kilometers in length, was used, via an intricate system of irrigation, to supply the entire region which lay close to Chan Chan. At present, it is hard to imagine the fertility of this region during the height of the Chimu civilisation.

The ruins of Chan Chan, which were plundered by Spanish treasure hunters and which continue to be by their modern day counterparts, the "huaqueros", in spite of protective

legislation, very early on attracted the attention of travellers, historians and archaeologists. A simplified plan of the ruins was drawn up between 1755 and 1785 by the Spaniard Baltazar Martinez de Companon. Even today, in spite of the excellent surveys conducted from 1969 by the Harvard mission headed by Michael E. Moseley, mapping of the site is incomplete and archaeological exploration has only just begun. Yet the rapid and seemingly unstoppable erosion of a particularly vulnerable building material, adobe, constitutes a serious obstacle to in-depth knowledge of the site. Many of the structures excavated and surveyed in the past have entirely disappeared.

What strikes all visitors is the sheer size of Chan Chan and the intense organisation of its strictly hierarchical urban space. The city as a whole covers some twenty square kilometers and the monumental zone in the centre occupies no less than six square kilometers. This zone comprises nine large rectangular ensembles delineated by high, thick earthen walls and known as "citadels" or "palaces". Each of these "palaces" forms a sort of independent urban unit which comprises several spaces, built or not as the case may be, around one or more squares, the ceremonial character is in some cases quite obvious. Among them are : temples, dwellings, storehouses, kitchens, reservoirs, orchards, gardens, funeral platforms, cemeteries, etc. The cob walls decorated with raised friezes in which abstract motifs, anthropomorphical and zoomorphical subjects add to the exceptional splendor of these large arrays of ruins.

Outside of these nine rectangular units (royal districts? aristocratic districts?) four industrial sectors were found to the west and south. The main activities appear to have been woodworking, weaving and the working of gold and silver. An area further to the south seems to have been used for farming as witnessed by the remains of an irrigation system, but many temples have been found there as well.

ICOMOS is favorable to the inclusion of the archaeological site of Chan Chan on the World Heritage List. The inclusion of this property is justified essentially by criteria I and III.

Criterion I. The planning of the largest city of pre-Columbian America is an absolute masterpiece of town planning. Rigorous zoning, differentiated use of inhabited space, and hierarchical construction illustrate a political and social ideal which has rarely been expressed with such clarity.

Criterion III. Chan Chan bears a unique testimony to the disappeared Chimu kingdom.

Though there is no doubt about the intrinsic quality of this cultural property, ICOMOS nevertheless considers that the only appropriate measure would be to include it on the List of World

Heritage in Danger.

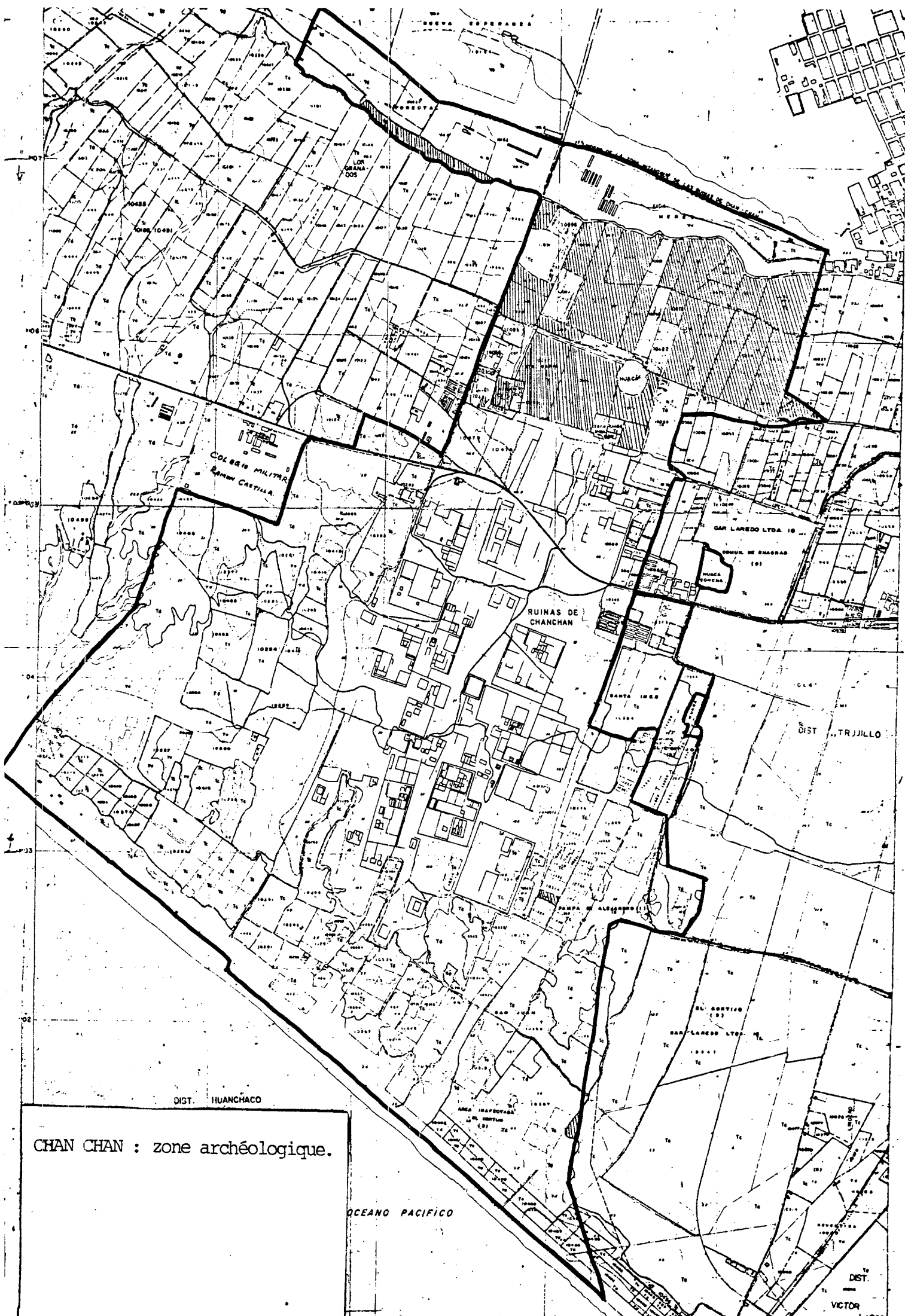
The ruins of Chan Chan, which are located in one of the world's most arid regions, are literally melting away due to the combined effects of wind and rare atmospheric precipitation. The proximity of the water table and the salinity of the soil and air constitute additional dangers for the adobe structures, which are fragile due to the fragility of the material itself : unbaked bricks of clay mixed with dried straw. Houses and palaces alike were covered with terraces, but as the wooden beams which supported them disappeared in the 17th century, the walls are no longer sheltered. The very existence of the immense network of screens toward which the Chan Chan site is beginning to evolve is raising serious problems of doctrine and strategy.

- Ought archaeological exploration to be carried out at all cost without guaranteeing the protection of the structures which are discovered ?

- Should the salvation of the site be at the high cost of massive restoration which was the case with the "Palacio Tschudi" from 1964 to 1969 ? And would there not be a danger that this type of highly criticized pastiche might proliferate in order to satisfy the demands of mass tourism ?

- Will the inclusion of the site on the World Heritage List be sufficient to halt dangerous development projects (a road crossing the site) and the endemic plundering of tombs which continues to provide riches for private collections of precious artefacts (ceremonial knives, bracelets, breastplates, diadems, masks, necklaces, etc.) ?

ICOMOS, April 1986.



CHAN CHAN : zone archéologique.

DIST. HUANCHACO

OCEANO PACIFICO

DIST. VICTOR LARCO

DIST. TRUJILLO

RUINAS DE CHANCHAN

COLONIA MILITAR
RAMON CASTILLA

CAR LAREDO LTDA. 10

COMUN. DE SIERRAS

BARRIO DE SIERRAS

MAZA CONCHA

PARRA DE ALGODON

EL BORTIJO

CAR LAREDO LTDA. 10