

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° 441

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : The Qin Shi Huang Mausoleum

Location : Shaanxi Province

State Party : China

Date : December 29, 1986

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

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

C) JUSTIFICATION

The first emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang -Ying Zheng- (221-210 B.C.) arranged for his burial place long before his accession to the seat of supreme power. When he became king of Qin in 247 B.C., Zheng had his geomancers choose a favorable site at the foot of Mount Li. Work was commenced and was carried out more energetically with each new political and military success over his rivals Han, Zhao, Wei, Chu, Yan and Qi. Following the proclamation of the Empire of Ten Thousand Generations in 221, work at the burial place took on extraordinary dimensions. According to Sima Qian (circa 145-95 B.C.), the great memorialist who collected all the extant oral traditions of his day, 700,000 workers from every province of the Empire toiled unceasingly until the death of the Emperor in 210 in order to construct a subterranean city within a gigantic mound. The place was a veritable scale model of the palace, the empire and the world. Its treasures were safeguarded by automatically triggered weapons designed to thwart tomb robbers. After Qin Shi Huang's death, the principal craftsmen of the hypogeum were walled up upon order by the second emperor, as a precaution that they not betray their secrets.

The mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang, located 35 kms from Xian, is still landmarked by an imposing mound 43m high. The interior is built within a first square enclosure, with doors in the middle of each of the four walls corresponding to the four cardinal points. This in turn is surrounded by a second rectangular enclosure running north-south. The mausoleum's superstructures have disappeared and there remains only a wooded knoll resembling a truncated pyramid on a 350m square base. Its historic significance being obvious, the site, which covers an area of 56,250 square kilometres, was classified by decree as early as

1961.

In 1974, a chance discovery made the mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang one of the most famous archaeological sites in the world. While sinking a well 1.5 km from the exterior eastern wall of the mausoleum's inner room, three peasants from the small village of Yangeun-west came upon a pit in which there were life-size terracotta statues of warriors. Excavations were immediately begun. Pit n°1 contained a veritable army of 1,087 warriors (provisional 1985 figure), the infantry and cavalry corps standing in battle formation with archers protecting the flanks. Today it is estimated that there are a potential 6,000 statues of warriors and horses in that one pit alone, which has flooded galleries 230m long. It is now entirely enclosed by the site museum inaugurated on 1 October 1979. Two other pits were discovered just north of Pit n°1 and were found to contain similar items - 1,500 warriors, carts and horses in Pit n° 2; 68 officers and dignitaries, a cart with four horses in Pit n° 3. These pits were provisionally backfilled and the objects extracted from them displayed in exhibition rooms flanking the north and south ends of the great hall of the site museum. Other finds were made on the western slope of the mound. These included notably two half-life-size molten bronze quadrigae. According to current estimates, the statue army of the Qin Shi Huang Mausoleum must have represented the exact number of the imperial guards, i.e. more than 8,000 warriors and horses. Over the past thirteen years, discoveries have revealed the dimensions of the mausoleum, and the site constitutes one of the most fabulous archaeological reserves in the world.

ICOMOS gives a wholeheartedly favorable opinion on the inclusion of the Qin Shi Huang Mausoleum on the World Heritage List, on the basis of criteria I, III, IV and VI.

- **Criterion I.** Because of their exceptional technical and artistic qualities, the terracotta warriors and horses, and the funerary carts in bronze are major works in the history of Chinese sculpture prior to the reign of the Han dynasty.

- **Criterion III.** The army of statues bears unique testimony to the military organization in China at the time of the Warring Kingdoms (475-221 B.C.) and that of the short-lived Empire of a Thousand Generations (221-210 B.C.). The direct testimony of the objects found in situ (lances, swords, axes, halberds, bows, arrows, etc.) is evident. The documentary value of a group of hyperrealistic sculptures where no detail has been neglected - from the uniforms of the warriors, their arms, to even the horses' halters- is enormous. Furthermore, the information to be gleaned from the statues concerning the craft and techniques of potters and bronze-workers is immeasurable.

- Criterion IV. The mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang is the largest preserved one in China. It is a unique architectural ensemble whose layout echoes the urban plan of the capital, Xianyang, with the imperial palace enclosed by the walls of the city, themselves encircled by other walls. This capital of the Qin (to which succeeded on the present site of Xian the capitals of the Han, Sui, Tang, Ming and Qing dynasties) is a microcosm of the Zhongguo (Middle Country) that Qin Shi Huang wanted both to unify (he imposed throughout the land a single system of writing, money, weights and measures) and to protect from the barbarians that could arrive from any direction (the army which watches over the dead emperor faces outward from the tomb).

- Criterion VI. The mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang is associated with an event of universal significance : the first unification of the Chinese territory by a centralized state created by an absolute monarch in 221 B.C.

ICOMOS, however, believes that the World Heritage Committee ought to be more fully informed concerning the museum development projects announced in 1985.

The total surface of the exhibition rooms will increase from 60,000 m² to 300,000 m². Four new units will be set up next to the present Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum; there will be a Bronze Chariots and Horses Museum, a Stable Pit Museum, a Tomb Builders Museum, and a Rare Birds and Exotic Animals Museum.

It should be recalled that, from October 1979 to December 1984, the Museum received 6,400,000 visitors, with daily numbers as high as 50,000.

The public and touristic exploitation of a sensational discovery has created a movement which is probably irreversible; however, two questions arise :

1. Will not these museum structures threaten the integrity of the site and the monument by juxtaposing the functional areas of exhibition rooms to the significant size of the mausoleum ?

2. Should the construction of specific exhibition units, based on a teaching-oriented program elaborated a priori, precede excavation work whose results will be known only in several years ?

Without prejudging the medium and long-term results of the cultural policy adopted by the authorities in charge, ICOMOS considers the measures taken to protect the site to be insufficient.

The only such measure, at the present time, is a limited zone non aedificandi which extends 1 km from the tomb itself. A much larger buffer zone would therefore have to be established. If it

does not appear realistic to extend that zone all the way to Xianyang, the ancient capital of Qin Shi Huang which is north of the present town of Xian, it would be desirable at least to maintain, through appropriate conservation measures (such as, perhaps, the creation of a natural and archaeological park), the special relation of the mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang with the first imperial city of China. Xian, one of the most historically significant cities in China, could, furthermore, be jointly nominated for inclusion on the World Heritage List.

ICOMOS, April 1987