LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

A) IDENTIFICATION

Bien proposé: Parc National du Kakadu

Lieu: Territoire du Nord

État partie: Australie

Date: 25 Aout 1980

B) RECOMMANDATION DE L'ICOMOS

Que le bien culturel proposé soit inscrit sur la Liste du Patrimoine Mondial.

C) JUSTIFICATION

L'ICOMOS donne, à la suite de l'IUCN, un avis favorable à l'inscription du Parc National du Kakadu sur la Liste du Patrimoine Mondial.

Outre l'intérêt exceptionnel d'un site naturel préservé sur une superficie de 614,400 hectares depuis le 5 Avril 1979, le Parc du Kakadu présente celui d'une réserve archéologique et ethnologique considérable. Les premiers vestiges d'occupation humaine en Australie, datant de 40,000 ans environ, y ont été identifiés. Sur d'autres sites, les fouilles ont fait connaître des ensembles d'outillage lithique qui comptent parmi les plus anciens du monde en ce qui concerne les haches en pierre polie; enfin, en relation avec les sites de peintures rupestres, des ateliers de préparation de pigments remontant au moins à 18,000 ans ont pu être étudiés.

Ce sont, bien entendu, les peintures rupestres aborigènes du Kakadu qui constituent l'argument décisif pour l'inscription.

WORLD HERITAGE LIST N° 147

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination: The National Park of Kakadu

Location: Northern Territory

State party: Australia

Date: August 25, 1980

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed cultural property be included on the World Heritage List.

C) JUSTIFICATION

Following IUCN, ICOMOS submits its evaluation which favors the inscription of the National Park of Kakadu on the World Heritage List.

Besides its exceptional interest as a natural site extending over an area of 614,400 hectares (approx. 275,000 acres), classed as a preserve since April 5, 1979, the Park of Kakadu is of interest as an extensive archaeological and ethnological reservation. The first remains of human occupation in Australia, dating from nearly 40,000 years ago, have been identified there. On various sites, excavations have brought to light groups of stone tools, which, because of the axes of polished stone they include, are counted among the oldest in the world; further, in conjunction with the sites of rock paintings, ateliers for preparing pigments have been studied which date back at least 18,000 years.

It is, of course, the aboriginal rock
paintings of Kakadu which constitute the decisive argument for the inscription of this cultural property on the World Heritage List based on criteria 1, 3 and 4.

These paintings, executed in the open on rock walls, cover a long chronological span, since the oldest date back nearly 20,000 years and the most recent are from contemporary times.

For the historian, they constitute a fund of documentary evidence of primordial importance and a source which is unique. In fact, they serve as a source of information on the primal resources, the hunting and fishing activities, the social structure and the ritual ceremonies of the aboriginal population which have succeeded one another on the site of Kakadu. They bear witness to vanished species, such as the Tasmanian wolf, and allow one to follow, in the details of equipment and of costume, the modifications brought to bear on traditional life by the contacts which were established with the Macanese fishermen from the 16th century, and then with the Europeans.

For the art historian, the ensemble of paintings and pictograms of Kakadu is unique in the extent that it combines multiple figurative and non-figurative styles, which vary in their apparent chronology with those ensembles, recently inventoried, in southern Africa and in the Sahara. An aesthetic, peculiar to representations of animals and humans in the area of Arnhem, may have, moreover, had an influence on graphic forms which appeared after 1930.

For the ethnologist, Kakadu offers a privileged field of exploration and observation, as the aborigines who continue to inhabit this site contribute to the maintenance of the balance of the ecosystem and, through traditional techniques, ensure the necessary preservation of the most recent rock paintings. The social - if not the ritual - function of these is preserved to a certain extent.
Kakadu :
1. Peinture rupestre, crocodile / Rock painting, crocodile
2. Peinture rupestre, "contact art" / Rock painting, contact art