

Decisiones

Observatorio Arqueoastronómico Chankillo

INDICE

Contenido

44 COM – 2020 / 2021	2
Whc/21/44.COM/18 Paris, 31 July 2021 Original: English / French Extended forty-fourth sesión Fuzhou (China) / Online meeting 16 – 31 July 2021 - Decisions adopted during the 44th sesión of the World Heritage Committee (Fuzhou, 2021).....	2
169. Chankillo Solar Observatory and ceremonial center, Peru – Page 361 - 363.....	3

44 COM – 2020 / 2021

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forty-fourth sesión Fuzhou (China) / Online meeting 16 – 31 July 2021 -
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World Heritage

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Paris, 31 July 2021

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**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Extended forty-fourth session

**Fuzhou (China) / Online meeting
16 - 31 July 2021**

**Decisions adopted
during the extended 44th session
of the World Heritage Committee
(Fuzhou (China) / Online meeting, 2021)**

Decision: 44 COM 8B.29

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/21/44.COM/8B and WHC/21/44.COM/INF.8B1,
2. Inscribes the **Chankillo Solar Observatory and ceremonial center, Peru**, on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (i)** and **(iv)**;
3. Adopts the following Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:

Brief synthesis

The Chankillo Solar Observatory and ceremonial center is a prehistoric site, located on the north-central coast of Peru, in the Casma Valley, comprising a set of constructions in a desert landscape that, together with natural features, functioned as a calendrical instrument, using the sun to define dates throughout the seasonal year.

The property includes a triple-walled hilltop complex, known as the Fortified Temple, two building complexes called Observatory and Administrative Centre, a line of thirteen cuboidal towers stretching along the ridge of a hill, and the Cerro Mucho Malo that complements the Thirteen Towers as a natural marker.

Criterion (i): Chankillo Archaeoastronomical Complex is an outstanding example of ancient landscape timekeeping, a practice of ancient civilizations worldwide, which used visible natural or cultural features. Incorporated in the Thirteen Towers, it permitted the time of year to be accurately determined not just on one date but throughout the seasonal year. Unlike architectural alignments upon a single astronomical target found at many ancient sites around the world, the line of towers spans the entire annual solar rising and setting arcs as viewed, respectively, from two distinct observation points, one of which is still clearly visible above ground. The astronomical facilities at Chankillo represent a masterpiece of human creative genius.

Criterion (iv): Chankillo was in use for a relatively brief period of time between 250 and 200 BC, during a late phase of the Early Horizon Period (500-200 BC) of Peruvian prehistory, after which it was destroyed and abandoned. The Chankillo Complex is a very particular type of building representing an early stage in the development of native astronomy in the Americas. It shows great innovation by using the solar cycle and an artificial horizon to mark the solstices, the equinoxes, and every other date within the year with a precision of 1-2 days. The solar observatory at Chankillo is thus a testimony of the culmination of a long historical evolution of astronomical practices in the Casma Valley.

Integrity

All the elements necessary to express the Outstanding Universal Value of Chankillo Complex centred on calendrical observations of the sun are included within the property boundaries. Chankillo and the wider setting of related monuments that form the property take advantage of built and natural horizon markers to track the progressive passage of the sun along the horizon throughout the entire year. The natural environment and climatic conditions, that are the basis of the good visibility needed for astronomical observations at the site, are maintained to a large extent. The viewsheds that contain the main astronomical sightlines are generally unobstructed, but their preservation has to be monitored closely. Also, the visual integrity of the general setting of the property has to be maintained. Any infringement on the property by urban development or expansion of agricultural areas has to be avoided.

The advancing collapse of structural elements, with the loss of clear edges (e.g. at the tower buildings and the observatories), jeopardises the exactness of the astronomical observations. The conservation of monumental elements is fragile and needs to be closely monitored in the future.

In case the information from future research indicates relationships of the central monuments with other elements of the property and beyond, a boundary adjustment should be considered.

Authenticity

The position of the Western and Eastern Observation Points in relation to the Thirteen Towers at Chankillo, identified by archaeological excavation and geophysical survey, and supported by archaeoastronomical data, suggests that the primary purpose of all these structures was to act together as a calendrical instrument. Since the 3rd century BC the sun has shifted slightly at and around the solstices, less at other times in the year. This small change has a negligible effect on the solar and possibly lunar alignments around the site but does not affect the ability of a present-day spectator to observe and understand the way in which the Chankillo functioned. Some aspects of the archaeoastronomical interpretations of the property may need further discussion.

Since no invasive conservation and reconstruction campaigns have changed the material substance of the property, the conditions of authenticity in terms of material and form, are met.

Protection and management requirements

The property has been declared as National Cultural Heritage, through National Direction Resolution 075/INC of January 18, 2008. The property has been inventoried nationally by the Ministry of Culture and is registered in the National Superintendence of Public Registry (SUNARP). The property is reinforced by a buffer zone that extends around the site and includes part of the San Rafael Valley, Cerro Mongón, Lomas Las Haldas, Pampa Los Médanos, Cerro Manchán, Cerro San Francisco, and Cerro Monte Grande.

The Management Plan, recently approved, identifies the current conservation and management conditions of the property and its context, the risks and threats to the cultural and natural features of the property and its surroundings, and establishes the policies that govern conservation and heritage management, the strategies and protection measures, and the regulation of the use of the property and its buffer zone through zoning, as well as the programmes and projects focused on sustainability in the conservation of the property.

The effectiveness of the management system will have to be proven in practice. Participation of local communities in future planning should be reinforced, and protection and conservation efforts, which will be key in avoiding any negative impacts through, for example, inadequate tourism development, should be closely monitored.

4. Recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Developing a long-term conservation programme which should include preventive actions such as reinforcements and construction of temporary roofs, as well as conservation, restoration and maintenance works, and, according to intervention phases, specific procedures, follow-up routines and monitoring,
- b) Implementing the Management Plan and setting in motion all the elements of the Management Structure,
- c) Securing the necessary funds to ensure the implementation of the conservation measures for the property,

- d) Taking the necessary measures to face potential increased visitation to the property and undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment before any infrastructure project is implemented,
- e) Involving local communities in the protection, conservation and promotion of the property, as well as in all of the planning processes,
- f) Continuing archaeological research and analysis of the data for the understanding of the wider archaeological context of the area;

5. Decides that the name of the property be changed to “**Chankillo Archaeoastronomical Complex**”.