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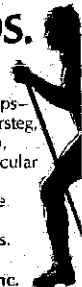
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LETTER FROM CHINA

FAKING IT

How the Italians have taught the Chinese to preserve their ancient masterpieces instead of copying them.

BY ALEXANDER STILLE

MICHELE CORDARO, the director of Italy's Central Conservation Institute, in Rome, has devoted most of his fifty-five years to antiquities. Tall and overweight, with a head of unruly gray hair, Cordaro has, despite his bearly figure, a refined and professorial look, in his dark corduroys, checked tweed jacket, green sweater-vest, and tortoiseshell glasses. He grew up in Sicily, surrounded by Greek ruins, and studied art history amid the exquisite decadence of Palermo, with its converted mosques, fading red-domed churches, abandoned Norman palaces, and collapsing Baroque façades. So his interest in conservation was natural. In the sixties, he attended the lectures of Cesare Brandi, who founded the renowned Conservation Institute and has been the director since 1995. In that job he has overseen the restoration of parts of the ancient Roman Forum and Pompeii. Yet even he was astonished when he saw the tomb of China's first emperor, Qin Shihuang, near the city of Xi'an: vast underground pits lined with row after row of terra-cotta soldiers, some seven thousand in all, each individually sculpted and slightly larger than life. "Perhaps the only tomb one can compare it to in scale is the Pyramids in Egypt," he says.

In addition to being one of the great sites of the ancient world, Qin Shihuang's tomb represents a great leap of civilization: ancient Chinese kings actually had their retinues buried alive so that they would be well attended in the next life. Qin Shihuang, who unified China and standardized its written language before he died, in 210 B.C., decided that clay statues of his soldiers could meet his needs for eternity. Much like the Egyptian Pharaohs, Shihuang was "creating a 'double' of the world above the ground underground," explains Cordaro, who first visited Xi'an in 1995.

Nothing in Cordaro's experience, however, had prepared him for the next stop on that trip. His Chinese colleagues took him straight from the ancient tomb to a modern factory where replicas of the terra-cotta soldiers are being churned out. "They proudly pointed to the copies, as if to say, 'See, we can still do it!'" Cordaro says. It was as if Italian art authorities were to take a foreign visitor to a plant outside Florence where plaster knockoffs of Michelangelo's "David" were being manufactured. But the Chinese copies were carefully produced, with the government's permission, from molds made from the original statues, and were speckled with small imperfections and flecks of mud, as if they had been recently dug out of the ground. "Many of the warriors that have gone touring around the West are fakes," Cordaro says. "We call them fakes, but the Chinese have a different sense of the value of original and copy." This difference has caused some moments of friction between Chinese and Western art historians when it has come to organizing exhibitions. A few years ago, the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, cancelled a show of ancient Chinese bells when it discovered that the Chinese were planning to send reproductions.

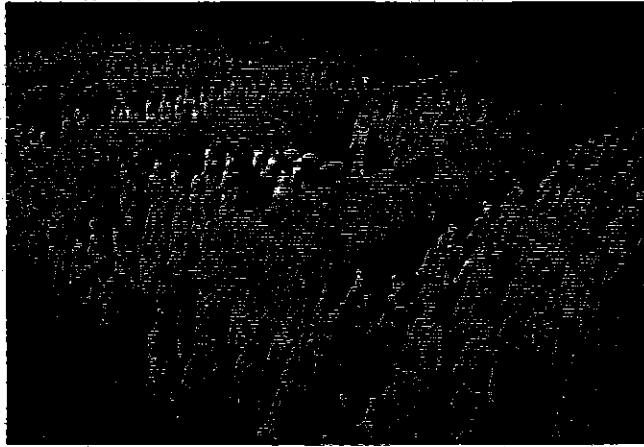
The Italians had been asked by the Chinese government to set up a modern laboratory and school of art conservation in Xi'an, but when Cordaro arrived he quickly realized that he and his colleagues would be confronting a set of attitudes toward the past and toward art conservation which was radically at odds with cherished Western ideas of antiquity and originality. "The Chinese, like the Japanese and some other Asian nations, have a tradition of conserving by copying, or rebuilding," he says. This made considerable sense in China, where until recently almost every-

thing—including palaces, temples, and houses—was built of wood. Ever since the pyramid age in Egypt, Westerners have created monuments in stone, hoping that they would last forever. The Chinese pursued a different kind of permanence by working in perishable materials that could simply be replaced as needed, the way our own bodies replace old cells with new ones while we

In a world that was both eternal and ever-changing, rebuilding monuments made perfect sense. Similarly, copying an existing work of art was seen as a sign of reverence rather than as a lack of originality. Though Westerners have long copied the masters as an art-school exercise, China's best artists, even at the height of their fame, would reproduce the work of earlier painters, right down

gan to falter, and fell completely out of favor in 1949, when the Communists came to power and condemned most of the imperial art as uselessly baggage of a feudal society.

In Beijing alone, during the Cultural Revolution of the late nineteen-sixties, Chairman Mao's Red Guards are known to have destroyed some 4,922 out of 6,843 officially designated sites of his-



Original—and fake—terra-cotta soldiers from the tomb of China's first emperor have toured the world's museums. Right: "Tibetan Women with Mastiff and Puppy," 1945, by the respected artist and master forger Chang Dai-chien.

remain "ourselves." A famous example of this seemingly Zen approach to conservation is the Ise Shrine, in Japan—a Shinto temple that was originally built in the seventh century A.D. and is ritually destroyed and rebuilt every twenty years. The Japanese think of it as being thirteen hundred years old, yet no single piece dates back further than 1993, when it was last remade. This concept is so alien to Western art historians that the Ise Shrine and many other Japanese monuments are not on the list of World Heritage Sites recognized by UNESCO, because they are not considered "ancient" and "authentic."

These different approaches to conservation are related to profound cultural divisions. Westerners have a linear sense of time. In their view, the clock starts at one fixed point in time. China and Japan have traditionally regarded time as cyclical, and they re-started the calendar for each new emperor, assuming that dynasties rose and fell while society remained fundamentally the same.

to fake signatures and seals. The most famous Chinese artist of the twentieth century, Chang Dai-chien, was a well-known forger, who made and sold thousands of paintings attributed to ancient Chinese masters while also enjoying widespread acclaim for the work that he signed with his own name.

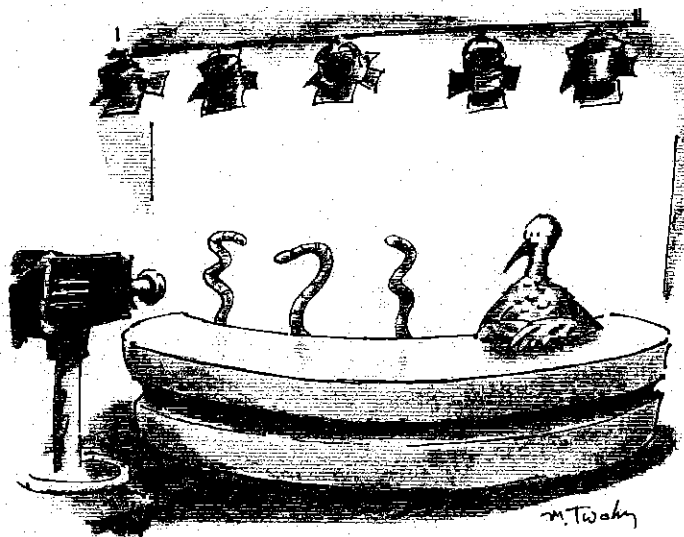
"This system of conserving by copying or rebuilding works well as long as you keep the artisan traditions intact," Cordaro explained to me. "The problem is that those traditions have broken down in China, as they have in many countries. Now builders there are replacing wood with concrete and cement." Once the continuity of Chinese imperial civilization came to an end, knowledge of traditional pigments, resins, and textiles, and techniques of painting, wood carving, and building, quickly began to disappear. With the first wave of industrialization, following the Republican Revolution, which overthrew the last emperor, in 1911, the tradition of conserving by rebuilding be-

torical and cultural interest, burning temples, hacking at statues, and defiling imperial tombs. At a certain point, they approached the Forbidden City itself, but here the Chinese Premier, Zhou Enlai, drew the line, and dispatched Red Army troops to protect the old Imperial Palace.

Yet even the Forbidden City is hardly ancient as we in the West understand the term. The imperial palace was erected in the fifteenth century and has been rebuilt countless times. Today, the paint is shiny-new fire-engine red, and the detail work is surprisingly unrefined. The Summer Palace, the imperial residence outside Beijing, looks more like a Disneyland re-creation or a Chinatown restaurant than like a genuine eighteenth-century relic of the Qing dynasty.

Just in the last few years, the Chinese have awakened to the fact that—because the artisan tradition has broken down—precious little of their physical past will remain if they don't adopt

DINING ROOM/CHINA STOCK COURTESY WILSON CORNUSCHIL, PARIS



"And now here's Jerome with an overview."

Western conservation strategies. But this is not a culturally neutral act. Recognizing the importance of the original hand of the artist places a value on individualism that is foreign to Chinese culture. Indeed, the struggles of Cordaro—the Western missionary of conservation—against copying and re-making are related to the difficulties that Western businesses face when they try to stop the Chinese from pirating computer software, music CDs, and movie videos. “The Chinese do not have a particular sense of individual ownership of cultural monuments or of intellectual property,” Ken DeWoskin, a professor of Chinese studies at the University of Michigan, explains. “The great books of Chinese literature—‘The Romance of the Three Kingdoms,’ ‘The Water Margin’—have been rewritten many times. There are different versions by different authors; some might have a happy ending, others not.”

It was natural that China, in seeking conservation help, would turn to Italy—another nation rich in antiquities, but with a four-hundred-year tradition of digging them up and trying to

preserve them. In 1995, the Chinese and Italian governments signed an agreement to set up the Xi’an Center for the Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Relics, with the Italians providing more than three million dollars in high-tech equipment and a staff of instructors from Cordaro’s Conservation Institute, and the Chinese supplying offices, personnel, and twenty-three students to learn a Western approach to art conservation. Xi’an was chosen as the site of the new center because it had been the capital of ancient China on and off from the accession of the first emperor, in 221 B.C., until the collapse of the Tang dynasty, in 907 A.D., and has vast archeological riches that are largely unexcavated.

When Cordaro made a follow-up visit to China in April, I decided to accompany him.

Driving in from the Xi’an airport, through the lush green valley of the Wei River, we passed more than a dozen enormous grassy man-made mounds, some several hundred feet long and thirty or forty feet high: each one was an unexcavated imperial tomb. Here, as in Rome, it is difficult to put a shovel to the ground without striking

something ancient. In 1974, a peasant digging a well uncovered fragments from Emperor Qin Shihuang’s vast terra-cotta army. Exploratory digging at one of the burial mounds near the airport has revealed another army of warriors, also vast in number but with each figure only about two and a half feet high. The other mounds have not yet been explored and may well yield armies of their own.

But the riches of China’s past still underground stand in stark contrast with the wasteland aboveground. Like other large Chinese cities, Xi’an today looks like one enormous construction site, its skyline bristling with tall cranes and the giant concrete shells of new high-rise buildings. With the Chinese economy growing at nearly ten per cent a year—five times as fast as the economies of most Western countries—capitalism in China is on fast-

forward, and shifts of construction and demolition crews often work twenty-four hours a day. The air in Xi’an, as in most of China’s other urban areas, is so horribly polluted that the weather is permanently overcast, the sky like a lead-colored roof close overhead.

Although Xi’an once rivalled Rome and Constantinople in beauty and importance, little of the ancient city is left, and the few remaining temples and shrines have been crudely restored and repainted. Only the medieval city walls, which date from the fourteenth century, before the Ming dynasty moved the capital to Beijing, are authentically old. But they are festooned with strings of light bulbs and illuminated at night with a purple-filtered spotlight—which gives the city a kind of disco feel. The center of Xi’an looks like a sprawling version of Times Square, with block after block of flashing electronic billboards.

When you see the city during the daytime, though, you realize that it actually looks better lit up at night: almost all the new buildings in Xi’an—and, indeed, in almost all of China—are simply reinforced-concrete boxes covered with the kind of industrial white tile you might find in a gas-station rest

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room. "Swimming-pool architecture," the Italians at the Xi'an conservation center call it. Almost as a guilty afterthought on the part of the architect, many of these modern buildings have been capped with upturned Chinese eaves, which perch on the buildings like ill-fitting wigs. Whole neighborhoods of traditional courtyard houses, crafted in brick and wood during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, have been bulldozed to widen roads and build high-rises, though a few of the old quarters have been preserved for tourists. The Chinese, for the most part, are surprisingly un sentimental about these changes. "The Cultural Revolution not only destroyed our monuments; it destroyed people's feeling for them," said a sensitive young architect we met on the trip—one of a very few Chinese who appeared to have thought about the present situation. "It killed off the sense of beauty."

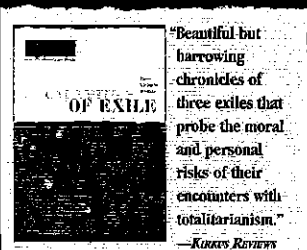
THE Xi'an conservation center is housed within the recently constructed Shaanxi History Museum. The building is typical of the new Chinese architecture: a set of concrete boxes with a few "traditional" Chinese elements, made of cement, tacked on. On the upper floor of the center are a main classroom; a small library, with texts in Chinese, Italian, and English; a computer room; a laboratory; and a



storeroom for the art objects in various states of conservation. On the lower floor are scientific laboratories, where technicians are trained in using X-ray equipment and electron microscopes, and in performing chemical analysis on art objects. Students in white coats sitting on stools are hunched over ancient objects: a woman with something that looks like a dentist's drill is removing encrusted dirt from the interior of a cracked bronze vessel; another is working on a terra-cotta figure whose head sits detached and alone on a table a few feet away. Technicians X-ray a vase to find its hidden stress lines and to determine whether its handles are original. There is a rotating faculty of seven or eight Italian instructors, who generally come for several weeks or a few months at a time.

"We have an interdisciplinary approach," Cordaro says, in which archeology, art history, conservation, and scientific analysis are combined. He explains that, in order to understand the current condition of an object, one often needs to know where it was found and how it was used, yet the Chinese have had a tendency to separate archeology and conservation, sending objects out for "conservation" the way a doctor might send off a blood sample for tests. This can be damaging to the artifacts. For example, in Lintong, the suburb of Xi'an where Qin Shihuang's tomb was discovered, the terra-cotta warriors that had originally been painted in bright colors lost their paint during the excavation: because the statues dried more quickly than the earth around them, the paint adhered to the moister ground. "It's a problem that could be solved, but a very difficult and expensive one," Cordaro explained. "One would have to create a hermetically sealed environment at the excavation site." The Chinese understand the problem but do not have the resources or the expertise to deal with it themselves, and though Cordaro's center was situated in Xi'an partly to address this problem, he now understands that "the Chinese will never let any Westerners work at Lintong." When the tomb was unearthed, in 1974, during the Cultural Revolution, Mao's supporters quickly turned the discovery to their political advantage, comparing Mao to the first emperor and promoting the site as an important symbol of national unity. Even today, ceding control of its conservation would be a blow to national pride.

In a sense, the Italian-Chinese experiment in art conservation is a microcosm of China's larger dilemma: the Chinese authorities are happy to have Western equipment, money, and expertise but are anxious to maintain political control over a project, whatever it may be. As has happened with economic reform in general, the Italians found cooperation and enthusiasm among top-level officials but pockets of intense resistance among local officials fearful of losing power. The Ital-



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ians began to realize that many of the officials in Xi'an saw the center primarily as a means of acquiring control of the expensive high-tech laboratories after the initial three-year agreement concludes, later this year. Indeed, the Italians' contract has not been renewed, and that means they will quit Xi'an, leaving all their equipment behind.

Nevertheless, Cordaro considers the experiment a success. In two years, the center has managed to conserve enough artifacts to fill an excellent small museum: Zhou-dynasty bronzes from the second millennium B.C., with beautifully crafted handles in animal shapes; neolithic ceramic pots, with elegant geometric designs; menacing-looking deities that stood guard over a royal tomb of the Han dynasty (206 B.C. to 220 A.D.); an extraordinary bronze "tree of life" sculpture, with a fluttering of delicate bronze leaves; and two miniature terracotta warriors—one still covered in mud and the other almost perfectly intact, its colors nearly as bright as the day they were painted.

The Italians have found that they

need to break the Chinese students of certain ingrained habits of thought. "They want to remake the object," Paola Donati, a conservator from Rome who specializes in ancient bronzes, says. The approach of the Italian Conservation Institute—an approach shared in most Western conservation labs—is based on three principles: all work must be "recognizable," "reversible," and "compatible." Thus, a Western conservator would piece together the fragments of a bronze vase with a removable glue, which would leave faintly visible cracks, so that the viewer could distinguish the workmanship of the original craftsman from that of the conservator, and any material used to reconstruct missing parts would be compatible with the original, both chemically and aesthetically. In most Chinese museums, the tendency would be to solder the pieces together—a process that is both irreversible and generally unrecognizable.

While we were in Xi'an, Cordaro taught a course in the theory of conservation, with special emphasis on copying and rebuilding works of art. His

slides of famous classical statues—the Winged Victory, the Venus de Milo, the Laocoön, and the Apollo Belvedere, among others—were a veritable parade of mutilation, from missing arms and missing legs to chopped-off noses. The Chinese students, with no background in Western art history, probably found the pictures quite strange, and the Chinese interpreter appeared to have a highly uncertain grasp of Italian—she kept asking what the word "reversible" meant—so the opportunities for lost meaning were many. All this heightened the sense that we were at several removes from the Chinese. The students at the school were refreshingly open and candid—products of a much freer, post-Mao culture—but considerable diffidence and rigidity were evident in people over forty, and especially in those who worked for the state bureaucracy. Whenever I asked to speak with archeologists or museum curators in Xi'an about problems of art conservation, the Chinese-Italian interpreter became panicky. "Please don't, these are very delicate political questions here," he said. "Wait until we go to Luoyang."

IN Luoyang, however, my efforts to interview Chinese officials met with only slightly more success. Luoyang, about two hundred miles east of Xi'an, in the province of Henan, is another former Chinese capital. The city, whose history goes back to about 2100 B.C., had vied with Xi'an to accommodate the conservation center, and now that the Italians were going to be leaving Xi'an the cultural authorities of Luoyang saw an opportunity to get some help from the Italians for their own monuments, which include the famous Buddhist Longmen Caves.

We were scheduled to visit the caves with the director of the site and one of Luoyang's chief archeologists, and they insisted on picking us up in Xi'an, even though it was an eight-hour drive each way and we could have easily taken the train. It was not clear if this was an example of extreme Chinese courtesy or a kind of holiday from the two officials' work routine, giving them the chance to commandeer banquets on the expense account and drive around in big black cars with tinted windows



"Good news, honey! Dr. Bingham couldn't detect any impotence."

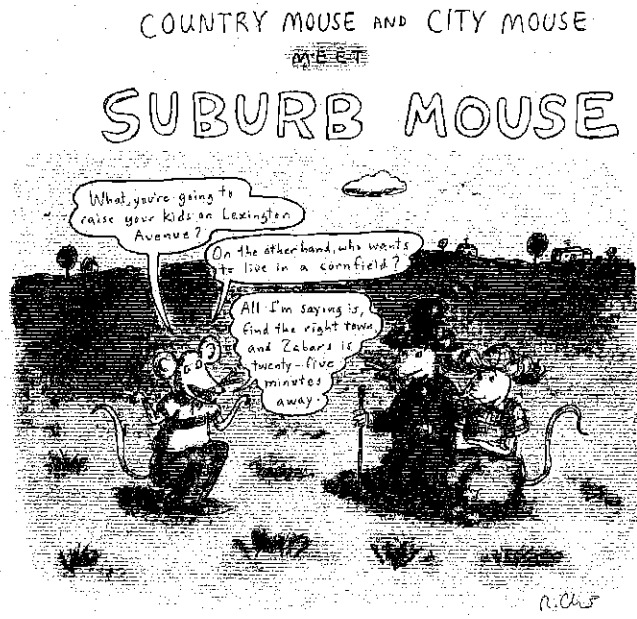
LETTER FROM CHINA

marked "V.I.P." Certainly their objective was not to provide an opportunity to discuss the problems of Luoyang's artistic patrimony, because Cordaro and I were put in one car and the Chinese drove off in the other.

We reconvened for lunch at a roadside restaurant, in what turned out to be the first in a series of increasingly elaborate, highly choreographed banquets in the course of three days. At each meal, the seat of honor was marked by a glass with a napkin in it, folded to form a dragon—the symbol of the emperor's power. The other napkins were folded like lotus flowers. The ranking official occupied the dragon seat while the rest of us were arranged by strict protocol to his left and right. Apart from continual toasts, the Chinese did not address a word to either Cordaro or me but talked animatedly among themselves. At the next meal, we would be introduced to a local official a notch or two up the political pecking order, who took the dragon seat and bumped the "emperor" of the previous banquet over into the lotus flowers.

Eventually, I was able to ask a few questions about China's attitude toward its antiquities. Invariably, I received stock replies: "China's rich and glorious past is extremely important and must be safeguarded." But one seemingly innocuous question caused consternation: "Do you think it is particularly important, in this moment in which China has opened itself to the West, that it act in order to protect its own cultural identity?" At each banquet, the presiding Chinese official suggested that the question would be better answered by someone higher in the government. This continued until I was granted a twenty-minute audience with the mayor of Luoyang, who, by way of answering my inquiries, directed me to a previously published speech he'd made, "Protect and Develop the Famous City of Luoyang and Bring It to a More Splendid Future."

THE Longmen Caves cover an entire cliffside, nearly a mile long and a hundred feet high, that runs along the banks of the Yellow River outside Luoyang. From a distance, the cliff, of honey-colored limestone, looks



like a beehive, because its surface is pocked with 2,345 caves, niches, and grottoes. The caves contain an estimated hundred thousand images of the Buddha, carved between 493 A.D. and 960 A.D. The Buddhas range in size from a few inches to, in one case, about the height of a five-story building. The quality of the sculptures—the work of countless hands over hundreds of years—varies greatly, but the best work is comparable to the finest sculptures anywhere in the world. The largest group of statues, in what is called the Fengxiansi Cave, is also among the most expressive and the most delicately carved. At the center of this group sits a fifty-foot Buddha, his eyes downcast in serene contemplation; on one side of him a Heavenly King nimbly crushes a demon with an elegant swagger and a muscular thirty-foot Lishi guardian figure wards off evil with an angry expression and eyes that seem to shoot lightning. Pictures of the caves had not prepared Cordaro for the scale and the beauty of the site, which is one of the most important in Buddhist art. The quality of the sculpture far surpassed that of the terra-cotta warriors, he said. "This is truly a work of world

importance, and it must be protected."

There was a steady rain on the day of our visit, and that made it easier to understand the conservation problems at the site. Water was running everywhere, on the walls of the caves and down the sides of the statues. Because Luoyang became a major industrial city after the Communist revolution, this precipitation is part acid rain. Many of the figures had originally been painted, and one can still see dabs of red pigment sticking to them tenaciously amid rivulets of water. "The amazing thing is not how much has been lost but how there is any paint left at all," said Cordaro, whose large, somewhat awkward-seeming body became suddenly agile whenever it was time to examine a conservation problem. Some of the grottoes have a coating that craftsmen of the Tang dynasty (from 618 to 907 A.D.) applied to them to prevent wind and water erosion, but no one knows any longer what the coating consists of. The chemists at the conservation center in Xi'an are trying to unravel this mystery, which could be crucial to giving the grottoes another thousand years of life. More than a million people a year

come to see the Longmen Caves, and they are one of China's most popular tourist sites, after Beijing's Forbidden City, the Great Wall, and the terra-cotta army in Xi'an. Luoyang's giant factories are now laying off workers in an effort to compete in the market economy, and city officials hope that tourism can become the engine of a new service economy.

Next, our hosts took us to see the Luoyang Museum of the Tombs, where the city displays recent discoveries from nearby archeological sites that date back well over two thousand years. Twenty-six ancient tombs have been painstakingly dismantled and reassembled in the museum. But instead of placing them in a temperature- and humidity-controlled environment aboveground the curators rebuilt the tombs underground and lined them up in a row along a dank basement corridor, in order to re-create the atmosphere of an actual tomb complex. It was an imaginative idea, but from a conservation point of view it has been a disaster. One reason for removing the tombs from their original site was to protect them from excessive moisture, but rebuilding them underground has aggravated the problem severely. The tombs are small, generally about ten or fifteen feet long by six feet wide, and they fill up with humidity like a sauna until the walls, which are frescoed, are dripping with water. Under these conditions, allowing visitors to enter the tombs is particularly bad, because opening and closing the doors changes the relative humidity, making the frescoed surfaces expand and contract. One could see flakes of paint literally curling off the ceiling. Since the tombs have no artificial lighting, one can get only glimpses, by flickering candlelight, of this vanishing world of ancient emperors riding chariots and of chimerical animals, copulating dragons, fierce tomb guardians, and a trompe-l'oeil painting of a woman peering out of a window.

From photographs one could see that the color of the paint had faded dramatically in the five years the museum has been open. As a result, most of the tombs have already been closed to the public—entirely defeating the purpose of the museum. Throughout

our visit, Cordaro kept shaking his head with a mixture of amusement and horror. "To dismantle underground tombs and re-create them underground," he said at one point. "This is the quintessence of China: they have created a fake out of something real!"

The Chinese archeologist who excavated most of the tombs recognizes the gravity of the situation. He has the pieces of another tomb stored in boxes, because he is reluctant to rebuild it underground. Cordaro asked if we could see some of those fragments. "I will show them to you if you promise not to be angry with me," the archeologist said, humorously. Museum workers hauled several large wooden crates out of a storeroom and opened them with a crowbar. Inside were hundreds of small pieces of delicately painted frescoes, in brilliantly preserved reds, blacks, and whites. "They're perfect," Cordaro said, noting the astonishing contrast with the badly faded colors of the reassembled tombs.

The following morning, our Luoyang hosts took us to see a wooden Qing-dynasty house, completed in 1733, that, miraculously, has not been restored or rebuilt. A walled compound, with four pavilions spaced across three internal courtyards, the building complex had been a merchants' guildhall during the imperial era. The pavilions were dilapidated, and the wood was unpainted and infested with termites, but their forms were almost perfectly intact, and they were infinitely more elaborate and more beautiful than any of the twentieth-century remakes of ancient buildings that we had seen. The eaves were an explosion of architectural detail, actual works of sculpture in wood, like the flying buttresses of a Gothic cathedral that mutated into gargoyles. The finials were fashioned into writhing serpents or roaring dragons; the latticework was carved, like lace, into a pattern of peonies and birds. The wooden beams on the ceilings were painted in astonishing vermillions, lapis lazulis, and gold leaf—the colors at once more brilliant and more subtle than anything in the Forbidden City. There was a remarkable glazed terra-cotta emblem of a dragon and a phoenix—simultaneously a painting and a sculpture—which rivaled the ceramic sculptures of

the Della Robbia brothers in Renaissance Florence. After seeing all the crude modern reconstructions of ancient buildings, we suddenly experienced the sensation of looking at the real thing. But the excitement of discovery was tempered by the realization of how much has been lost in China: if a merchants' guildhall in a provincial city was as elaborate and beautiful as this, what must the more important buildings—the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace—have been like before they were rebuilt?

"As a conservation job, this is so easy as to be banal," Cordaro said to me. "It's in almost perfectly preserved condition. You need to do as little as possible to protect what is already here. Get rid of the termites, plug the leaks in the roof, and apply a consolidant to the wood to keep it from disintegrating any further. Above all, we have to keep them from 'restoring' it."

As we drove out of Luoyang, we passed through a long stretch of verdant uncultivated fields. As is true of Xi'an, there are vast unexcavated parts of this city's ancient past—tombs of emperors and Chinese nobility. To its credit, the city of Luoyang has prevented any building near the archeological sites, so the fields stretch for miles of brilliant green, like a bumper crop of antiquities waiting to be harvested. "The cities are lost," Cordaro said, noting the monotonous drab squalor of modern Luoyang. But China is pregnant with the richness of its past, which lies just within the belly of the soil. Chinese archeology is still in its infancy—about where Egyptology was in the middle of the nineteenth century—and there are many major discoveries ahead. And China itself is changing so rapidly that it is impossible to predict how the landscape may be transformed in a single generation. What has gone will not return, but perhaps large segments of China's buried past—even entire terra-cotta cities and imperial courts—will emerge from underground. ♦

ANTICLIMAX DEPARTMENT

[From the Santa Fe New Mexican]

Someone entered a home in the 400 block of Hillside Avenue Tuesday and stole two televisions, a microwave and a Golden Delicious apple.