

# Conversaciones...

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AYUNTAMIENTO TARAZONA  
*Imagen: Irene Ruiz Bazán.*





## Fernando Chueca Goitia and Carlos Flores Marini. Editorial

The 11th issue of *Conversaciones...* focuses once more on urban heritage. This subject has not ceased to attract attention since the beginning of the 20th century, with the questions and proposals of the Modern Movement, but particularly since the 1950s, with the growing concerns about the conservation of historic places. These spaces, since ancient times, have generated a fascination for their ability to combine historical facts, collective memories and family or personal memories. Quatremère de Quincy's *Letters to Miranda*, containing his passionate defense of Rome and its sculptures that were the object of desire of Napoleonic campaigns, already spoke of the spirit of place. Cities bear witness to scenarios of power, technological advances and, on many occasions, the adaptation and use of the environment and available materials. Throughout history, they have been fluctuating spaces, adapting to the very changes of the societies that inhabit them. They have also been the scene of wars and the object of destruction and plundering. Finally, for decades, they have been considered consumer goods subject to economic fluctuations, which often threaten the preservation of the city's historical, artistic and cultural values.

The great turning point has been the designation of many of these spaces as heritage sites, aiming to preserve the values expressed in the design, materials and evolution of historic cities, which often contain stories of resilience of generations of groups of. The conservation of historical centers was seen in many Ibero-American countries as a matter of public interest, but this implied major challenges generated by land tenure and use, the pressures exerted by the growing empire of motorized traffic, population growth and industrialization. The two principal authors of this issue, Fernando Chueca Goitia and Carlos Flores Marini, were members of the post-war generations of the 20th century, interested in safeguarding this urban heritage, both in their native countries and internationally. Despite the relevance of both figures, there is little knowledge of them outside their natural national environment, so it was relevant to recover their texts to learn more about their way of thinking, given that some of the ideas put forward by them have been premonitory about the threats and dangers affecting the historic city since the middle of the 20th century.

Madrid-born Chueca Goitia, renowned for his work in architecture and urban planning, addressed not only the conservation of historical centers and cities, but the subject of modern architecture. The texts presented in this issue, "*Las ciudades históricas (Un drama de nuestro tiempo)*" (1965) and *El problema de las ciudades históricas* (1968), bear witness to the strongly critical attitude with which he approached the defense of Spanish heritage and highlighted the links and parallels existing between contemporary Spanish and Italian professionals. Chueca Goitia was active on the international scene and carried out UNESCO missions to various countries, including Mexico, which allowed him to see the magnitude of the challenge

of protecting this heritage. He also promoted the need for specialists, duly trained in the discipline of architectural conservation. He was a militant activist in favor of conserving the historical city during the Franco dictatorship, a difficult and controversial time.

On his part, the Mexican Flores Marini published texts that echoed Chueca Goitia's calls for attention. We reproduce three of them in this volume, "La restauración de monumentos coloniales en México" (1966), "Algunos conceptos sobre la problemática de la restauración monumental en América Latina" (1973) and "El futuro del pasado" (1976), which reflect the growing concern to consider not only monuments, but also the urban fabric of heritage spaces. Carlos Flores Marini was also influenced by his activities at the international level, first with his participation in the drafting of the *Venice Charter* and later with his work with the Organization of American States in numerous historic cities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In addition to their writings, both authors dealt not only with conservation but also with urban planning and construction issues. They had an important impact through their teaching positions, both in academia and in courses and conferences given at the international level. In Spain, Chueca Goitia promoted and participated in the drafting of the *Alhambra Manifesto* (1953), which reflected the desire for a renewal of contemporary Spanish architecture; in Mexico, Flores Marini participated in the drafting of another important document, the *Norms of Quito* (1967), which emphasized the social role of heritage and introduced proposals to try to reconcile tourism with the conservation of heritage sites.

Accompanying the central texts of this edition are the reflections of six authors who share their vision of what the contributions or points of view of Chueca Goitia and Flores Marini were coming from different regions. Giovanni Carbonara analyzes the central texts, highlighting how the two authors emphasized the importance of considering historic centers in their broader territory. He also explores how protection, for both authors, should be coupled with social benefits.

The following three texts focus on Chueca Goitia's career and ideas. Javier Mosteiro makes a detailed and engaging analysis of the accompaniment of Chueca Goitia's drawings with his writings. Richly illustrated, this article takes us through the thought and pen of the author and in his way of approaching and knowing the cities, in which drawing, as a tool for thinking and documenting reality, plays a decisive role. Ascensión Hernández Martínez takes the analysis of Chueca Goitia's work to an even broader context, emphasizing the effects of development in many countries but focusing on the case of Spain. She takes us from the 1950s to the 1970s, when changes in cities generated heated discussions. She contrasts Chueca Goitia's ideas with those of other significant contemporary figures, such as Jane Jacobs, Cesare Brandi and Giulio Carlo Argan. All of them aimed at seeking new models to reconcile urban development with the preservation of the historic character of heritage cities. Irene Ruiz Bazán focuses on one of Chueca Goitia's texts and analyzes his ideas with those expressed by Walter Gropius, quoted by Chueca himself, and those of Leonardo Benevolo. Thus, Ruiz Bazán addresses the complexity of preserving historic cities and the ever-present challenges of inserting contemporary architecture into monumental ensembles.

Valerie Magar portrays the trajectory of Carlos Flores Marini, inserted in the developments of architectural conservation in Mexico between 1960 and 1980. She describes the evolution of the legal framework in Mexico, which accompanied the creation of specialized institutions for heritage conservation, particularly the first postgraduate courses focused on architectural conservation. The text shows the relevance for Mexico of the cooperation with UNESCO, particularly with ICCROM, for the development of specialists and of a theoretical approach that marked conservation in Latin America.

The last text, by Jukka Jokilehto, presents a revision of the English translation of the *Venice Charter*, originally written in French. It mainly shows the variations of concepts and terms in the foreword written by Paul Philippot, which emanated largely from Cesare Brandi's *Teoria del Restauro*, published the year before the Venice meeting. Jokilehto also takes the opportunity to show what has been the history and impact of this international normative document, which has marked the discipline of conservation for nearly sixty years.

Since Chueca Goitia and Flores Marini wrote their texts, numerous principles and guidelines have been generated that have guided some actions to conserve and protect historical centers, protected areas and cultural landscapes. But at the same time, the risks and threats to this rich heritage continue to grow, subject to infrastructure works, financial speculation, changes in the demographics of cities, and above all, the effects of climate change, which force us to rethink many of our ways of acting and thinking. There is still room for further reflection on our built environment and its societies in their broader context with the help of texts by masters such as those collected here. We hope you will enjoy them.

We are deeply grateful to the relatives of both authors for having authorized us to reproduce the documents presented here. We also thank Fernando Chueca Aguinaga, son of Chueca Goitia, for his work in preserving his father's legacy, and Rosa María Sánchez Lara, life companion of Flores Marini, for her words of encouragement for this volume.

Ascensión Hernández Martínez and Valerie Magar  
Zaragoza and Rome, May 2022