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# Drawing to see the historic city. Urban heritage in the drawing of Fernando Chueca Goitia

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*Translation by Valerie Magar*

## **Abstract**

*This article contemplates a question pending to study regarding the work of the architect and historian Fernando Chueca Goitia (Madrid, 1911-2004), a relevant personality in the culture of heritage preservation in Spain throughout the second half of the 20th century. It focuses on the intense relationship between Chueca's drawings, carried out as a means of learning, and his research on the historic city.*

*Chueca's reflections on urban heritage and its conservation, reflected in lucid –at times accusatory– publications, were articulated with a parallel graphic argumentation. The freehand drawings, vigorous, fast and effective, which he used to illustrate his texts are not mere accompanying illustrations.*

*This paper is an approach to Chueca's interest in the urban experience, viewed as a historical and living entity and, in relation to this, to that graphic action in which he combines the sensorial and intellectual dimensions. In all his drawings –extended to large urban centers such as Madrid, New York, Seville, Rome...– the constancy of a method conducive to knowing how to see architecture and the city can be seen.*

**Keywords:** *Fernando Chueca Goitia, architectural drawing, historic city, defense, urban heritage.*

Fernando Chueca Goitia (Madrid, 1911-2004), an outstanding figure in many aspects of Spanish architectural and artistic life throughout the second half of the 20th century, carries a particular weight in the culture of heritage preservation. Beyond his professional practice as an architect who intervened in historic buildings, Chueca's singular trajectory in the field of heritage was supported by three complementary roles: his teaching mission at the Escuela Superior de Arquitectura de Madrid, as a professor of History of Architecture and Urbanism; his long research work on architecture and the city in Spain; furthermore, until his last days, his sustained zeal in defense of architectural and urban heritage. This study will focus on the heritage of historic cities, a field that characterized much of his thinking and work. We will do so by paying attention to a facet of Chueca that, still to be studied, is essential to understanding his aptitude –and attitude– concerning heritage: the action of drawing.

We speak of Chueca's action of drawing, rather than of his drawings, to emphasize the constancy in such practice, as a plan of learning and inquiry, a methodical approach that encompassed all the registers and uses of architectural drawing.<sup>1</sup> In parallel to the theoretical reflection on the historic city, which runs through his vast production of writings, we discover

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<sup>1</sup> A good part of Chueca's drawings and project plans are kept in the Library of the Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Madrid, particularly those corresponding to his work in the conservation of architectural heritage (Navascués, 2012: 35). Chueca was, from 1953, architect of the Service for the Defense of the National Artistic Heritage (Third Zone); and in the period 1974-1978, head of the Service of Monuments and Assemblages of the Comisaría Nacional del Patrimonio Artístico.

a permanent graphic argumentation –an effective counterpoint to the verbal one– on urban form and life. Thus, Chueca's drawings cannot be considered mere illustrations of the texts; they are, instead, evidence of operative graphic reasoning: the tool for analyzing, comparing, interpreting, unraveling multiple values –among them, notably, the heritage values– of architecture and the city.

### The city, a historical entity

Chueca's interest in the urban starts from the architectural discipline but goes beyond it. In his idea of the city, following Unamuno's concept of tradition, the concept of the living organism undergoing permanent change is emphasized; on the other hand, in addition to his, the notion of the city as a historical entity. Cities –he said– “more than being linked to history are themselves history”<sup>2</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 2000: 13). His perception of the urban complexion, nourished by apparent opposites –alteration/survival, material determinants/spiritual roots–, brings him closer to Spengler's thesis on the existence of the “soul of the city” or of the city contemplated as a “psychic history of culture” (Spengler, 1922).

Thus, Chueca's relationship –his *personal dealings*– with the city, both with the one he inhabits and with the one he eventually visits, is established in terms that seem to give everything urban an almost animated character. This register –to find, together with the physical construction of the city, the “soul that animates it”– is perceptible in all the inquiries carried out by Chueca. He expresses it programmatically when he states that cities “are living entities of brimming personality, and, therefore, it is no mistake to use the anthropological method to know them”<sup>3</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1974: 15).

As a result, his first urban studies were tied to two cities whose “personality” he knew well: Madrid, his own city, which he had explored in depth since his youth during long walks with his father; and New York, where he stayed for a year as a fellow of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando. *El semblante de Madrid* (1951) and *Nueva York. Forma y sociedad* (1953) are two accurate works in which Chueca, as Terán (2002: 20) pointed out, “taught us to consider many things about the city;”<sup>4</sup> two approaches to two entirely different urban phenomena, but with the same methodological attitude: treating them as something living and in transformation.

In *El semblante de Madrid*, he collected his systematic practice of walking through the city, dialoguing with it directly, discovering what the urban organism was telling him. Already the word *semblante*<sup>5</sup> in the title, which refers to qualities of animated beings even if not properly human,<sup>6</sup> indicates a distinctive approach to the city. In the preamble of the book, Chueca (1951: 3) declared that his intention in writing it was to draw a real-life portrait; in no case, a studio painting “but painted in the open air, with the easel in the open field of the city.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Original quotation: “más que ligadas a la historia, son historia ellas mismas.”

<sup>3</sup> Original quotation: “son entes vivos de rebosante personalidad y, por tanto, no es ningún desatino utilizar para conocerlas el método antropológico.”

<sup>4</sup> Original quotation: “nos enseñó a plantearnos muchas cosas sobre la ciudad.”

<sup>5</sup> *Semblance*, note from the translator.

<sup>6</sup> The countenance as a “human face or countenance” and as a “representation of some state of mind.”

<sup>7</sup> Original quotation: “sino pintado al aire libre, con el caballete en el campo abierto de la ciudad.”



The intention was to reunite the physical matter with the historical substance that animates it, and to understand the latter –with words that seem to evoke some of Ruskin's *Lamps*– as deposited “by each and every one of the inhabitants who have lived, struggled, enjoyed and suffered within its walls”<sup>8</sup>, he already pointed out his idea of human “ecology.”

This approach, “sovereignly attractive” (Marías, 1992b: 3) in its philosophical-methodological conception, is also found in the book on New York. This is a more unexpected *portrait*, that of a city he had just arrived in and which surprised him and opened him to unexpected urban extensions. Two of the aspects that astonished him as soon as he arrived in the city, and which he understood as far-reaching, were the system of parkways around the island of Manhattan and its accesses, and public housing, an organization of low-income, state-subsidized collective housing (Chueca Goitia, 1952: 13).<sup>9</sup>

Chueca's work on the historic city, which covered his entire itinerary as a scholar and researcher, was significantly concentrated from the 1960s onward; that is, when cities were growing out of control and, therefore, when Chueca felt an enormous interest in the need for conservation of historic centers and concern –if not alarm– for a heritage that was being lost.

In that decade, he published two revealing studies whose titles already highlighted the impact of this phenomenon on urban heritage: “Las ciudades históricas. (Un drama de nuestro tiempo)” (1965) and “El problema de las ciudades históricas” (1968).<sup>10</sup> The first, warning of the seriousness of the process of destruction of these cities, as something general in our contemporary culture, was motivated by statements by Gropius very critical of the latest evolution of the urban environment in historic centers: “If Gropius, the great renovator of our visual environment, the man who only a few years ago trusted the relationships of an architecture and an urbanism that he had promoted, feels perplexed, what will become of those of us who already had numerous doubts?”<sup>11</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1965: 274). In the second, more focused on the case of the destruction of Spanish historic cities (and where he distributes responsibilities among all social and professional classes, architects), he goes so far as to propose a decalogue “to save the heritage of our cities”<sup>12</sup> (1968b: 17).

In 1968, his widely disseminated *Breve historia del urbanismo* was also published, where he did not fail to dwell on the problems of the contemporary city, that phase that Chueca (1968a: 195) called “incongruent transformation” with respect to the historical one. Thus, the flaw in the background –and even in the form and drawings– of the treatise is apparent: the dislocation between the course of urban history from the first civilizations to include the baroque city, on the one hand (Figure 1); and on the other hand, the industrial city and its subsequent evolution (Figure 2).

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<sup>8</sup> Original quotation: “por todos y cada uno de los habitantes que han vivido, luchado, gozado y sufrido dentro de sus muros.”

<sup>9</sup> The imprint of his stay in New York and his reflections on the urban phenomenon he encountered there was reflected in other publications of the time (1952; 1953b); and continued to reappear in later ones. In one of his last writings (2001), after the attack on the Twin Towers, he returned to the city, contributing a propositional reflection on the symbolic and monumental value of the site of the World Trade Center.

<sup>10</sup> This writing served as the basis for the speech he delivered at the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, in Madrid, at the session held on the occasion of World Town Planning Day (November 5, 1973); later published in *Academia*, the bulletin of that corporation (1975).

<sup>11</sup> Original quotation: “Si Gropius, el gran renovador de nuestro ambiente visual, el hombre que sólo hace algunos años vivía confiado en las relaciones de una arquitectura y un urbanismo que él había impulsado, se siente perplejo, qué será de los que abrigábamos ya no pocas dudas.”

<sup>12</sup> Original quotation: “para salvar el patrimonio de nuestras ciudades.”



FIGURE 1. PARIS. PERSPECTIVE VIEW  
OF THE AVENUE DE L'OPERA.  
*Image: Chueca Goitia (1968a: 162).*

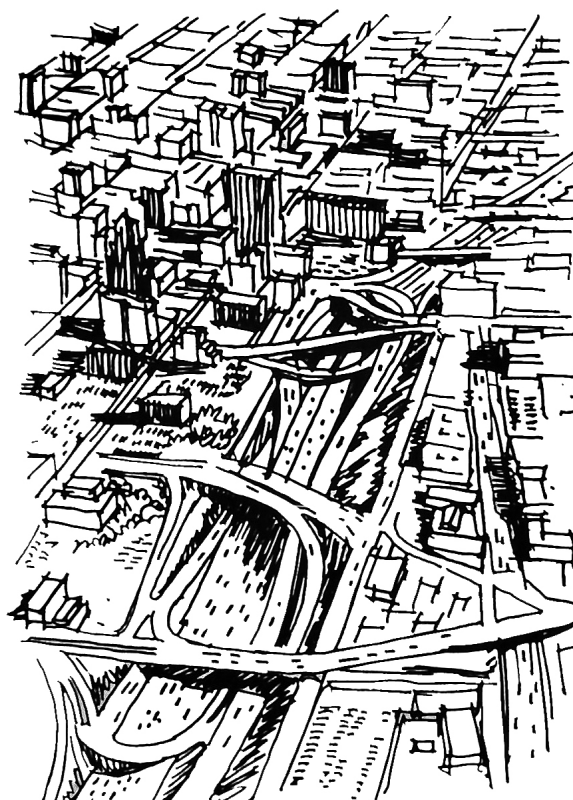


FIGURE 2. BOSTON. THE COMPLEXITY  
OF ROAD NETWORKS AND THEIR  
LINKS IN A MODERN AMERICAN CITY.  
*Image: Chueca Goitia (1968a: 206).*



In the 1970s, his studies focused mainly on the reality of Spanish cities, at a time when, with the change of political regime, new opportunities seemed to open up for the conservation of architectural heritage. In *Madrid, ciudad con vocación de capital* (1974),<sup>13</sup> a book he defined as a record of his own development over twenty years of trying to understand Madrid and fighting to save some of its urban values, he declared (Chueca Goitia, 1974: 5):

*It has been a rough and almost always unequal struggle, from which we have generally come out as losers because Madrid has been throwing overboard, like useless ballast, much of the best it had, without the clamor of a few of us who saw with pain such a senseless ammunition sale, being of any use*<sup>14</sup>  
(Chueca Goitia, 1974: 5).

In one of his chapters, with a categorical title –“Madrid como problema”–, he gathers a good number of reflections on the actions of the municipal pickaxe and the lack of conservation of urban heritage. And already at some point in this book, he escapes from the scope of Madrid to point to the general issue in Spain, referring to our old and venerable cities –in themselves, a deposit of culture although muted by lack of insight to detect it– in which “economic development could not have been more devastating, sweeping away everything in its path”<sup>15</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1974: 7).

This is the origin of his accusatory treatise *La destrucción del legado urbanístico español* (1977), a call to save the cities, which in less than two decades, had been transformed “to the point of making them unrecognizable to those of us who lived in them –he pointed out– in the period before our civil war [...]”<sup>16</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977: 7); a “raising of conscience” where, for each of the Spanish provincial capitals, he gave detailed testimony of the state of conservation of their urban heritage.

Chueca’s attention to Spanish cities naturally extended to those of Latin America. This is reflected in the aforementioned *Breve historia del urbanismo* and, above all, in his “Invariantes en la arquitectura hispanoamericana” (1966); also, establishing a “general classification of urban types” in the Introduction that, together with his teacher Torres Balbás, he wrote for the monumental work *Planos de ciudades iberoamericanas y filipinas existentes en el Archivo de Indias* (Torres Balbás y Chueca Goitia, 1951).<sup>17</sup> Chueca was particularly interested in the urban relevance of the Laws of the Indies and how Renaissance theories about the city found their real materialization in the urbanizing effort undertaken by the Spaniards of the 16th century (1968a: 126); he referred to Benevolo (1968) when he maintained that “the urban scheme devised in America in the first decades of the 16th century and consolidated by the law of 1573 is the only model of city produced by Renaissance culture and controlled in all its executive consequences”<sup>18</sup> (Benevolo, 1968: Pag. 125).<sup>19</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Chueca’s dedication to the study of Madrid was recurrent in his career. Among other contributions, in his later years, his *Madrid, pieza clave de España* (1999), in which he also incorporated drawings of the city.

<sup>14</sup> Original quotation: “Ha sido una lucha áspera y casi siempre desigual, de la que por lo general hemos salido vencidos, porque Madrid ha ido arrojando por la borda, como lastre inútil, mucho de lo mejor que tenía sin que para ello sirviese de nada el clamor de unos pocos que veíamos con dolor tan insensata almoneda”.

<sup>15</sup> Original quotation: “el desarrollo económico no pudo ser más devastador, arrollando todo a su paso”.

<sup>16</sup> Original quotation: “hasta hacerlas irreconocibles a los que las vivimos –señala– en la época anterior a nuestra guerra civil [...]”.

<sup>17</sup> This work complemented, in the urbanistic aspect, the previous work by Diego Angulo, *Planos de monumentos arquitectónicos de América y filipinas existentes en el Archivo de Indias* (University of Seville, 1939). Angulo himself, in the prologue to his work, already explained the urgency of publishing the accumulation of city plans preserved in the Archive.

<sup>18</sup> Original quotation: “el esquema urbano ideado en América en las primeras décadas del 500 y consolidado por la ley de 1573 es el único modelo de ciudad producido por la cultura renacentista y controlado en todas sus consecuencias ejecutivas.”

<sup>19</sup> Regarding the Laws of the Indies (Leyes de Indias), to which Benevolo refers, Chueca notes that “they are perhaps the first urban planning legislation known to the world”.

## Drawing the city

Approaching Chueca's architectural and urban way of thinking is inseparable from considering, at the same time, his drawing; and this, as a generative and non-segregated action of his verbal language. The philosopher Julián Marías, his longtime friend, pointed out that "Chueca writes with ease, spontaneity, sometimes carelessness, *ex abundancia*, with inspiration and that thing called –which few have– *style*"<sup>20</sup> (Marías, 1992a: 24). These same qualities are recognizable in the architect's other language, his drawing: always easy and spontaneous, essential, effective, communicative and as characteristic as his prose.

Chueca frequently quoted the advice that his father (his companion, as we have already mentioned, in his walks around Madrid) gave him in his youth about how to express himself: "Fernando," he liked to recall, "write simply, naturally, in a way that is accessible to everyone"<sup>21</sup> (Fernández Alba, 1992: 30). Moreover, this recommendation would come to characterize his writings, his lectures, his classes at the School of Architecture;<sup>22</sup> also his drawings: simple but complex; natural but easy only to the expert hand; accessible to everyone, but erudite.

With regard to this articulation between drawing and written text, Chueca left us unequivocal clues. Thus, in his book on New York, he declared:

*During my wanderings around New York, I would often take quick notes of aspects of the city that caught my attention. The written commentary and the collection of drawings grew in parallel. It seemed appropriate, therefore, to bring together in this book what was born together. The drawings have no other merit than that of being spontaneous documents, taken in the street and maintained just like that, without further retouching. In this respect, they also resemble, in their haste and casualness, what is written in this book*<sup>23</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1953: 15).

Regarding the action of drawing as a determinant factor for architectural thought, it should be noted that when Chueca insisted on the fact that "the language of the architect is drawing"<sup>24</sup> he was not only addressing the drawing of architectural creation, but he expanded it as a way of knowing the architecture already built; as an instrument of analysis and of "complete and ultimate understanding" of architectural work. An example he provided as revealing: when he undertook his study of Vandervelde's work, he was overwhelmed when he first visited the sacristy of the cathedral of Jaén and knew he had to draw it, gathering data as rigorously as possible; it was then that he acknowledged having understood that architecture "because I have drawn it" (Mosteiro, 1998: 63-64).

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<sup>20</sup> Original quotation: "Chueca escribe con facilidad, espontaneidad, a veces descuido, *ex abundancia*, con inspiración y eso que se llama –y pocos tienen– *estilo*."

<sup>21</sup> Original quotation: "Fernando –le gustaba recordar– escribe con sencillez, con naturalidad, de forma que sea asequible a todos."

<sup>22</sup> His students at the School of Architecture of Madrid appreciated the particularity of his oral and graphic language, confirming the maxim that those who really know a subject know how to expose it with plainness. On the other hand, Navascués (2012: 37) refers to Chueca's series of rapid freehand drawings "that illustrated, among others, the small manuals of his History of Western Architecture, which summarize the classes taught for so many years [...], and which are still useful to students".

<sup>23</sup> Original quotation: "Durante mis correrías por Nueva York solía a menudo tomar apuntes rápidos de los aspectos de la ciudad que me llamaban la atención. El comentario escrito y la colección de dibujos crecían en paralelo. Me ha parecido oportuno, por consiguiente, reunir en este libro aquello que nació junto. Los dibujos no tienen otro mérito que el de ser documentos espontáneos, tomados en la calle y guardados así, sin más retoque. En esto se parecen también, por premura y desenfado, a lo que va escrito."

<sup>24</sup> Original quotation: "el lenguaje del arquitecto es el dibujo."



There is in this, on the other hand, a direct reflection of the formative environment of the School of Architecture in which Chueca had been trained, immediately prior to the disaster of the Civil War, where the influence of the regenerationist line was notable, particularly in the new approach of direct encounter with reality (the so-called “intuitive” reality of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza). Naturally, this teaching ideology had the basic support of drawing.

There is nothing strange in the fact that Torres Balbás, the professor who was decisive in the formation of Chueca as an architect—especially in his relationship with the architectural heritage—had made these principles very clear a short time before (Torres Balbás, 1923: 40):

*[...] it is necessary to take the teaching of history out of the classroom, removing its exclusively verbal and erudite aspect, complementing it with the graphic and direct study of monuments. All the theoretical explanations on the Baroque in Madrid, for example, even if taught in front of the buildings that represent it, will not acquire their maximum teaching value until the students have drawn the plan of a monument of that style, drawing a door, a profile, a pinnacle, any detail of it*<sup>25</sup> (Torres Balbás, 1923: 40).

Drawing architecture and the city, a constant in Chueca's career, is fully reflected in his numerous publications, almost always illustrated with his own drawings; a discourse that is articulated with the verbal but which contains a dialectic and eloquence of its own.

### Urban perceptions

We have alluded to the condition of stroller that Chueca recognized as the origin of his interest in the city; that of establishing a reflection, a perception and a thought while walking. The fact that many of his urban writings can be ascribed to the *periegetic* genre is logically related to the *traveling gaze* of his drawings.<sup>26</sup>

The binomial drawing/perception of the city has in it an operative temperament, on the scale of the pedestrian, based on visual analysis. A character that participates in the close urban drawings—and their perceptive psychology—that Gordon Cullen would include in the celebrated *Townscape*, which he published in 1961 and which facilitated the formulation of the concept of “urban landscape”; and a character that also participates, more mediately, in the urban views of Sitte in his historical *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen*, so widespread in Spain and translated into Spanish when Chueca was about to begin his studies in Architecture. What is involved in this notion of “urban landscape,” a locution—so often used nowadays—which is sometimes misleading, is captured in the views of the city drawn by Chueca.

Those of us who had the opportunity to participate in courses and trips with Chueca, and to share with him wanderings through historic cities, witnessed the delight he experienced in the close encounter with the architecture of the city: that frequent stop on the sidewalk to observe a perspective, a detail; that living joy he felt—and made us feel—before the unmediated experience of the architectural and urban fact. Thus, in the face of Chueca's

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<sup>25</sup> Original quotation: “(...) hay que sacar la enseñanza de la historia de la cátedra, quitándole su aspecto exclusivamente verbal y erudito, complementándola con el estudio gráfico y directo de los monumentos. Todas las explicaciones teóricas sobre el barroco madrileño, por ejemplo, dadas aun delante de los edificios que lo representan, no adquirirían su máximo valor docente hasta que los alumnos no hayan levantado la planta de un monumento de ese estilo, dibujado una puerta, un perfil, un pináculo, un detalle cualquiera de él.”

<sup>26</sup> The idea of moving through the city, linked to the practice of drawing, is expressed in the very title of some of his publications (Chueca Goitia, 1983).

urban perspectives, it is possible to “restitute” the thought of that pedestrian who learns *peripatetically* as he walks; and who stops for a moment before something calls for his attention, takes his notebook out of his pocket, and draws.

We thus conjecture the draftsman, in the shadow of the Pantheon in Rome but entertained by the details of the surrounding environment (Figure 3), or surprised by the construction of the Colón Towers as a new perspective closure of the Paseo de Recoletos in the Madrid in the complete transformation of the 1970s (Figure 4), or perhaps sheltered under the arcades of the main square of Tordesillas (Figure 5) or Vigevano (Figure 6).



FIGURE 3. SIDE OF THE PANTHEON, ROME.  
Image: Ridruejo and Chueca (1968).

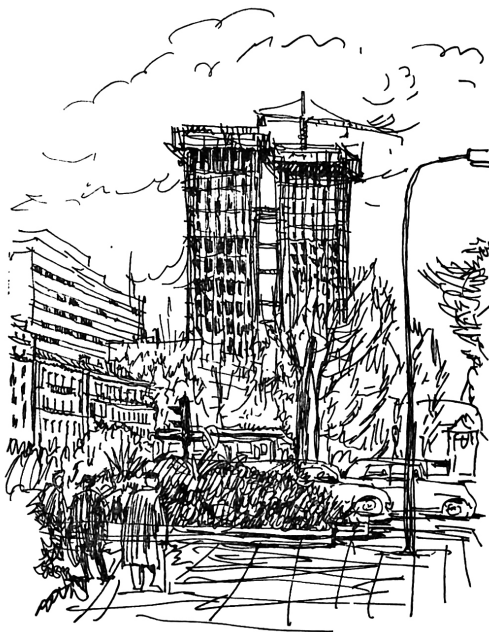


FIGURE 4. “PASEO DE RECOLETOS AND COLÓN  
TOWERS” (MADRID).  
Image: Chueca Giotia (1974: 9).





FIGURE 5. TORDESILLAS [VALLADOLID]. PORTICOED PLAZA. Image: Chueca Goitia (1968a: 124).



FIGURE 6. VIGEVANO (ITALY). GRAND PLAZA. Image: Chueca Goitia (1968a: 119).

It is the vision of the passerby, yes, but not only. It is the application to the changing reality of the urban aspect of that postulated and already mentioned "anthropological method." The act of looking at the city—the theory of the gaze—in Chueca's case has a rich background of knowledge and memories. When he refers to the fact that it is "necessary to insist on the *saper vedere* of architecture, sticking to the formal language, to the grammar of this abstract art" (Chueca Goitia, 1947: 116), he is proposing a process of discernment that is not exhausted, of course, in the visual. Even the fact that he writes Leonardo's motto in Italian reinforces the idea of a precise perceptive/cognitive system; and, thus, this *saper vedere* of architecture has an inflection that cannot be given—for lacking the strength to be transcribed in another language—in the homonymous, famous Italian title of the book Zevi published the following year.

This *knowledge of seeing* architecture is the architect's look, and this, together with the look of the historian and the humanist who knows how to discover new plans; a circumstance that should not be overlooked and that makes Chueca "a formidable interpreter of architecture" (Navascués, 1992: 66).<sup>27</sup> This is an aptitude for capturing forms, constructive syntaxes, geometries, landscapes... which is fundamental in his written work, "whose drawings usually constitute the ideal correlate to his way of looking, of knowing how to see"<sup>28</sup> (Rodríguez, 1998: 167).

Chueca's urban perceptions are not simply views of the historic city, a new episode of *vedutism*. When we observe his drawings of Madrid, Rome, New York, Seville, Salamanca... we find that these perspectives ooze a dense knowledge, a previous task of studies, and formal analysis (Figure 7). As Sambricio (1998: 140) has noted, at first glance, "one might think that the study of the architectural piece leads him to seek appearance; however, what Chueca seeks is to understand and value the essential, the deep, and the latent"<sup>29</sup>.

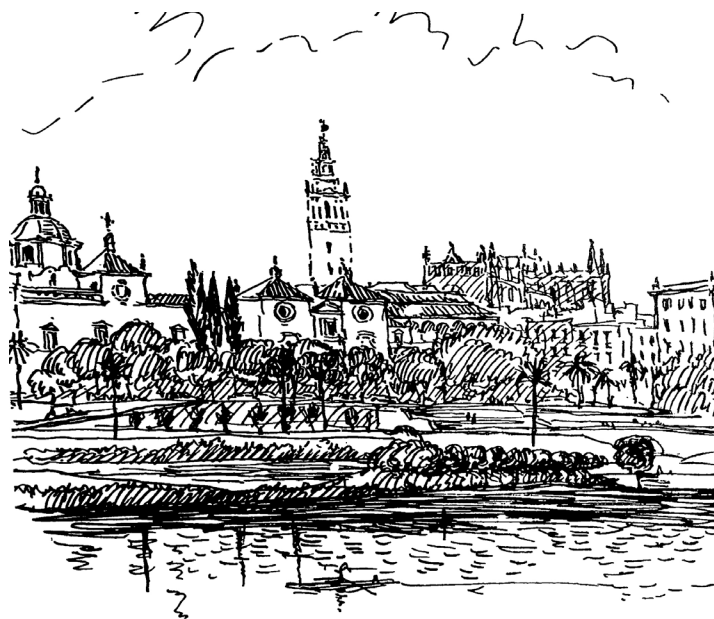


FIGURE 7. SEVILLA SEEN FROM THE GUADALQUIVIR.  
Image: Chueca Goitia (1983).

This valuation of architecture extends seamlessly to the urban context. In Chueca's thinking, Ortega y Gasset's reference point is at work; and thus, the concept of "circumstance" –environment– appears, quite appropriately, in his perception of the architecture of the city. On the other hand, it is also indicative that he chose a similar idea to Unamuno's –"the representation of the world is not identical in men, because neither their environments nor the forms of their spirit, daughters of a process of environments, are identical"<sup>30</sup>– to introduce the first part of his *Invariantes* (1947).

<sup>27</sup> With respect to Chueca's dedication –today we know it was fortunate– for the history of architecture and the city, we must refer to the unfortunate episode of the professional purge after the Civil War, which did not allow the newly qualified architect to pursue his career. He himself explained that he then considered that he had no choice since he could not carry out architectural projects, but to contemplate –and draw– what others had done and "say something about it"; that this was the origin of his condition as a historian, although he was already prepared by vocation.

<sup>28</sup> Original quotation: "cuyos dibujos suelen constituir el correlato ideal a su forma de mirar, de saber ver."

<sup>29</sup> Original: "cabría pensar que el estudio de la pieza arquitectónica le lleva a buscar la apariencia; sin embargo, lo que Chueca busca es entender y valorar lo esencial, lo profundo y latente."

<sup>30</sup> Original quotation: "la representación del mundo no es idéntica en los hombres, porque no son idénticos ni sus ambientes ni las formas de su espíritu, hijas de un proceso de ambientes."



However, his appreciation of the heritage of the urban context was determined by his teacher Torres Balbás. His thesis, coeval and in conjunction with those of Giovannoni, laid the foundations for a culture of preservation of the environment of monuments.<sup>31</sup> The Italian's ideas, in his *Vecchie città ed edilizia nuova*, explaining that "the external conditions of a monument can have as much importance as the intrinsic ones"<sup>32</sup> and that, consequently, "damaging the perspective of a monument can be almost equivalent to its complete destruction"<sup>33</sup>, were early expounded by Torres Balbás (1919). When Giovannoni (1925: 172) formulated his theory of *environmentalism*, "that is, the correlation between a work and those that surround it, the artistic harmony between collective manifestations and singular manifestations,"<sup>34</sup> he is founding the contemporary notion of *urban heritage*.

The weight that Chueca gives to the *accompanying architectures* in his urban views is inscribed in this framework; and he is categorical against that "artificial division that highlighted the monumental buildings, or at most the most characterized old quarters, of the great mass of the accompanying building, which remained in the shadows, forgotten, as something inert that lacked expression"<sup>35</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1968a: 39). Let us see, for example, the parallel in which he relates the value of the *minor architectures* on a street in the medina of Fez (Figure 8) and another in the historic center of Malaga (Figure 9); emphasizing the "intimacy of the closed street"<sup>36</sup> with the vertical feature of the minaret, in the first case, and of the tower of the cathedral in the second (Chueca Goitia, 1968a: 77), he is referring us directly to the images proposed by Torres Balbás, for the tower of the cathedral of Toledo, or by Giovannoni, for the tower of the Belfort of Bruges, from the same vindicating principles of the value of the environment –and the same didactic purpose.<sup>37</sup>

His perception of the urban context reached new dimensions during his stay in New York (1952). There he found, in addition to the scale effect of the skyscrapers (Figure 10), variables that he could not have experienced in his drawings of historical cities such as Rome or Madrid. He highlighted two of them as defining the landscape of the city, which he made very clear in the extensive series of drawings with which he illustrated his book on the city: the irruption of the automobile and the omnipresent presence of advertising. Of the first, he recognized that "until one arrives in this country, one cannot measure the truly astonishing importance that the automobile has here"<sup>38</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1953: 25); and of the second, he declared:

*The delirium of advertising influences in an obvious way the physiognomy of the city [...] All the points where the eye can stop are occupied by enormous banners that sometimes are true works of engineering. They are in great demand for the exits of the bridges, where great automobile traffic is obligatory, and the strategic avenues, always in view to the road traffic [...]*<sup>39</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1953: 147).

<sup>31</sup> In this sense, the contributions of both authors to the *Athens Charter* (1931) are well known.

<sup>32</sup> Original quotation: "las condiciones externas de un monumento pueden tener tanta importancia como las intrínsecas."

<sup>33</sup> Original quotation: "el dañar la perspectiva de un monumento puede equivaler casi a su completa destrucción."

<sup>34</sup> Original quotation: "della correlazione cioè tra un'opera e quelle che la circondano, dell'armonia artistica tra manifestazioni collettive e manifestazioni singolari."

<sup>35</sup> Original quotation: "artificial escisión que destacó los edificios monumentales, o a lo sumo los barrios antiguos más caracterizados, de la gran masa de la edificación de acompañamiento, que quedó en la sombra, olvidada, como algo inerte que carecía de expresión."

<sup>36</sup> Original quotation: "intimismo de la calle cerrada."

<sup>37</sup> Ceschi (1970: 113) notes of this drawing: "Giovannoni's example to demonstrate how the proportions of the street and the limited height of the houses put in value the perspective and the dominance of the monumental tower." This urban view can be related, going further back in time, with the perceptive considerations of Sitte himself when he includes in his treatise the perspective of the *rue Large* in Lübeck.

<sup>38</sup> Original quotation: "hasta que no se llega a este país no puede uno medir la importancia, verdaderamente asombrosa, que aquí tiene el automóvil."

<sup>39</sup> Original quotation: "El delirio de la publicidad influye de una manera evidente en la fisonomía de la urbe [...] Todos los puntos en que puede detenerse la vista están ocupados por enormes pancartas que a veces son verdaderas obras de ingeniería. Se encuentran muy solicitadas las salidas de los puentes, donde es obligada una gran circulación automóvil, y las medianeras estratégicas, siempre con vistas al tráfico rodado [...]"



FIGURE 8. FEZ. A STREET IN THE MEDINA. Image: Chueca Goitia (1968a: 77).



FIGURE 9. MÁLAGA. A STREET. Image: Chueca Goitia (1968a: 79).





FIGURE 10. MIDTOWN SKYSCRAPERS (NEW YORK). Image: Chueca Goitia (1953a).

Quite a few of the New York perspectives mentioned above, very fast and gestural, drawn with a soft pencil on the street, have automobiles and that delirious advertising as protagonists of the urban landscape (Figure 11). These expressive *snapshots* also seem to insinuate a particular *soundscape*, that “constant buzzing” that Chueca (1953: 196) discovered in the metropolis: “In New York –he affirmed– there is no silence”<sup>40</sup> (Figure 11).

Unamuno’s idea of *living tradition* focused on the perception of the urban context in Chueca; and focused, therefore, on his drawing. He rejected the concept of tradition as an ankylosed repertoire, opening himself to a “tradition that feeds on what happens and remains to sustain the things that will continue to happen [...] a system of possibilities, a platform for the future”<sup>41</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1947: 25). This idea of the city, tornadic as well as permanent, has a unique intensity in the twenty urban views for the book *Roma* that he prepared with Dioniso Ridruejo (1968).

His Roman drawings record, with very fast and radical strokes, the way of seeing the successive *città sovrapposte*: contemporary Rome superimposed on Baroque Rome, and the latter on Ancient Rome. Along with the result of intentional and monumental urban *metamorphoses*,<sup>42</sup> such as the perspectives of the *Campidoglio* (Figure 12) or Saint Peter’s Square, other views are representative –that of the *Portico d’Ottavia* is a good example– in which the main idea resides in that coexistence of *times* and *strata* that the *Urbs Aeterna* shows everywhere. In any case, what Chueca draws –and dates– is the Roman atmosphere of the 1960s: where the daily presence of the great monuments –or their vestiges– appears interwoven with their immediate surroundings, the bustle of characters, motorcycles and automobiles, advertisements, commercial signs, traffic signals... (Ridruejo y Chueca, 1968) (Figure 3).

<sup>40</sup> Original quotation: “En Nueva York no existe el silencio.”

<sup>41</sup> Original quotation: “tradición que se alimenta de lo que pasa y va quedando para sustento de las cosas que seguirán pasando [...] un sistema de posibilidades, una plataforma para el futuro.”

<sup>42</sup> We use the term coined by Antón Capitel, in his book *Metamorfosis de monumentos y teorías de la restauración* (1988).



FIGURE 11. ENTRANCE TO QUEENSBORO BRIDGE, SECOND AVENUE" (NEW YORK).  
Image: Chueca Goitia (1953a).



Il Campidoglio

FIGURE 12. IL CAMPIDOGLIO. Image: Ridruejo y Chueca (1968).

In the face of this graphic dating of the contemporary city, it is also possible to detect, in some drawings of historic cities, certain anachronistic views, and restitutions of what was and is no longer there. Among others, that of Toledo with the “interpretation of its silhouette in Muslim times”<sup>43</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1968a: 73), where the minaret of the Great Mosque can be seen instead of the tower of the cathedral; the view of the Tagus estuary in Lisbon, with the grandiose Tower of the *Terreiro do Paço* that collapsed in the earthquake of 1755 (Chueca Goitia, 1986: 200); or the aerial views, more conjecturally drawn, of the ancient Prienne and the “commercial and port city” of medieval London (Chueca Goitia, 1968a: 57, 91).<sup>44</sup> The latter, a step away from freer urban *perceptions*, such as his “Fantasía sevillana” (1993: 181). Chueca’s method of looking and drawing, as Delfín Rodríguez (1998: 169) has rightly pointed out in dealing with the *Invariantes*, “is nothing but a way of traveling in time and space, by leaps and bounds, discovering shortcuts, going back over what has been walked”.<sup>45</sup>

### Graphic analyses

Together with the drawings of perception of the city, Chueca recurrently used other graphic schemes at a cognitive level –plans, sections, volumetric sketches, diagrams– that complemented his urban studies and analysis; very often, he also resorted to the graphic parallel, that is, putting together two drawings –usually at the same scale– for a quick and, sometimes, surprising extraction of conclusions.

The use of the graphic parallel is very versatile in Chueca. It allows him to highlight successive times in the same location or, on the other hand, unexpected *synchronicities* between two cities as different as Madrid and New York (Figure 13). He can make ostensible the contrast of urban layouts in the same city, as he shows in the sketch in which he opposes the labyrinth of the historical center of Samarkand to the radial scheme of its modern extension (Chueca Goitia, 1968a: 67); or he can induce unexpected affinities between very different spaces in the same city: such as the case of his skillful comparison of *empty spaces* –enhancing the edge occupied by buildings– between the “small but charming” systematizations of the Roman squares of San Ignacio and Santa Maria della Pace (Chueca Goitia, 1968a: 148). The parallel of two notable cases of urban fabric in Islamic Spain, Cordoba, and Toledo, shows the similar maze of streets in the surroundings of the corresponding mosques/cathedrals, in which the “imported” scheme is reflected without accusing the influence of the pre-existing Roman and Visigoth layouts (Chueca Goitia, 1968a: 84).

In dealing with baroque urbanism, he also used the parallel to equate –and, at the same time, distinguish– urban layouts hierarchized by an axis. From his drawing “Perspective axes in rue Royale, Paris, and in La Granja” (Figure 14) Chueca explained:

*Whether by pure coincidence, a product of the common ideas of the time, or by voluntary inspiration, the perspective of La Granja is very similar to that of rue Royale [...] In the Paris project, however, the spaces are better proportioned, because the square of La Granja is too large. On the other hand, the Royal Site took advantage of one of the most favorable natural circumstances from any perspective: the upward direction of the terrain*<sup>46</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1987: 233).

<sup>43</sup> Original quotation: “interpretación de su silueta en época musulmana.”

<sup>44</sup> This drawing evokes the well-known recreation “Catholic town in 1440” that Pugin included, in opposition to the industrial city, in his famous *Contrasts: or a parallel between the noble edifices of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and similar buildings of the present day* (1845).

<sup>45</sup> Original quotation: “no es sino una forma de viajar en el tiempo y en el espacio, a saltos, descubriendo atajos, volviendo sobre lo andado.”

<sup>46</sup> Original quotation: “Ya por pura coincidencia, producto de las ideas comunes de la época, o por voluntaria inspiración, la perspectiva de La Granja es muy parecida a la de rue Royale [...] En el proyecto de París, sin embargo, los espacios están mejor proporcionados, pues la plaza de La Granja es demasiado grande. En cambio, en el Real Sitio se aprovechó una circunstancia natural de las más favorables en toda perspectiva: el sentido ascendente del terreno.”



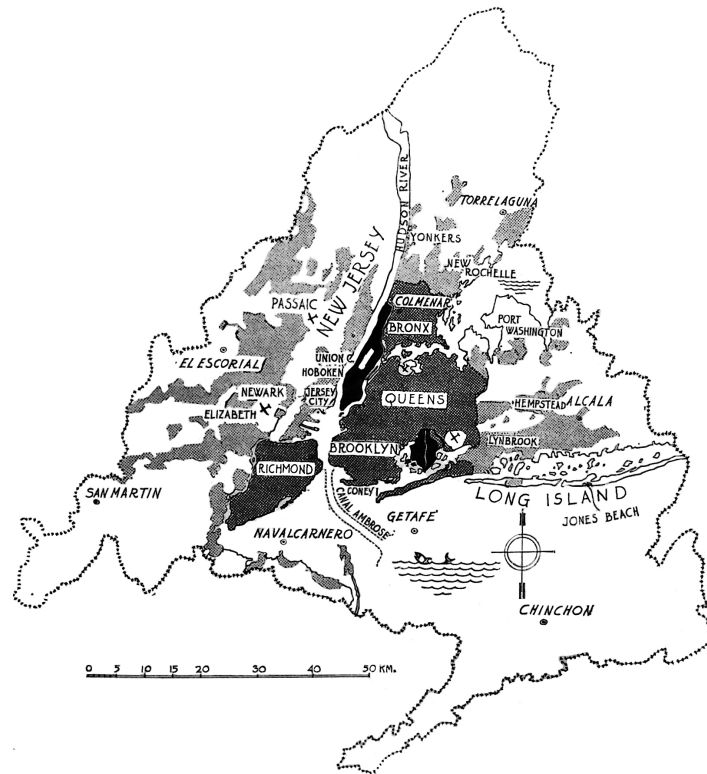


FIGURE 13. MAP OF THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN REGION, ON THE SAME SCALE AND ON THE MAP OF THE PROVINCE OF MADRID.  
*Image: Chueca Goitia (1953a: 21).*

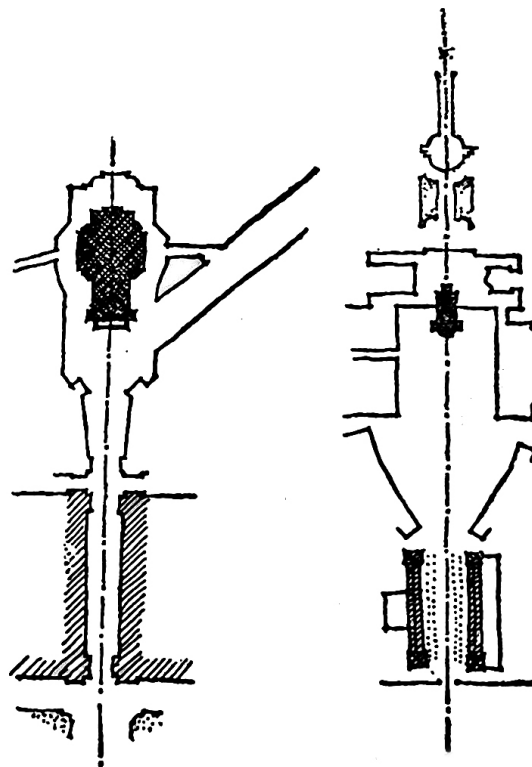


FIGURE 14. PERSPECTIVE AXES IN RUE ROYALE, PARIS, AND IN LA GRANJA (SEGOVIA). *Image: Chueca Goitia (1987: 233).*

On this last consideration about the topographic location of La Granja, Chueca had drawn an axonometric scheme —“Longitudinal axis of the composition”—, showing how well the chaining of urban spaces around that axis that “admirably formulates the baroque ideas about perspective”<sup>47</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1968a: 158); a drawing that induces, likewise, the vector of movement, the generating idea of baroque space, that August Schmarsow’s notion of “space in motion” (*Gehraum*) that Chueca (1947: 144) already pointed out in his *Invariantes*.

The idea of the baroque axis also appears in the scheme of the three aligned squares of Nancy, according to the 18th-century systematization carried out by Emmanuel Héré. In this drawing Chueca (1968a: 152) incorporates a curious “scheme of the volumes resulting from filling these spaces”<sup>48</sup>, in which, by turning into a “mass” the empty spaces of the squares, he proposes a negative reading of these urban ensembles (Figure 15). This and other resources, as an autonomous graphic argumentation but always in relation to the written text, are characteristic of his publications.

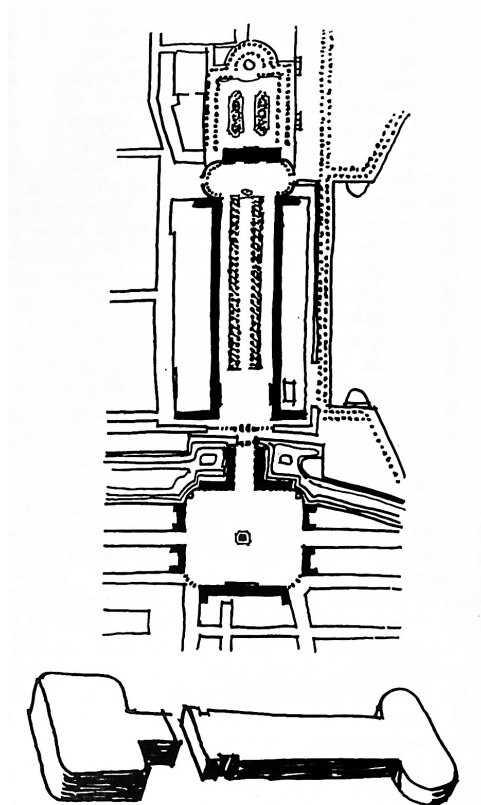


FIGURE 15. NANCY. PLAN OF THE ROYAL, CARRIÈRE AND HORSESHOE SQUARES, AND SCHEME OF THE VOLUMES RESULTING FROM FILLING THESE SPACES.

Image: Chueca Goitia (1968a: 152).

In addition to the layouts of large urban spaces, Chueca—as we have already mentioned when dealing with the city as a living organism—is particularly interested in the very layout of the city in history; in the evolution that—despite the fact that the built volume is transformed and replaced over time—maintains in general, with few rectifications, the structure in plan. This is what he calls (Chueca Goitia, 2000: 13), taking the urban planners’ term, “the law of the survival of the plan.”<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Original quotation: “admirablemente las ideas barrocas sobre la perspectiva.”

<sup>48</sup> Original quotation: “esquema de los volúmenes resultantes de llenar estos espacios.”

<sup>49</sup> Original quotation: “ley de pervivencia del plano.”

Where Chueca studied this question most thoroughly was, naturally, in the case of Madrid. At the beginning of *El Semblante* he included, as a real key to understanding the city, his “Plano estructural de Madrid” (Figure 16): a drawing he made to prove to what extent the growth of Madrid conditioned its structure. It is a scheme that graphically explains the reason for the peculiar shape of historic Madrid. A form determined by the rapid –one might say explosive– expansion of the urban fabric from the establishment of the court under Philip II (1561) to the delimitation of the fence by Philip IV (1625);<sup>50</sup> a *forma urbis*, in short, that was maintained in plan until the widening of the city in the last third of the 19th century and that continues to characterize the historic center of the present-day city.

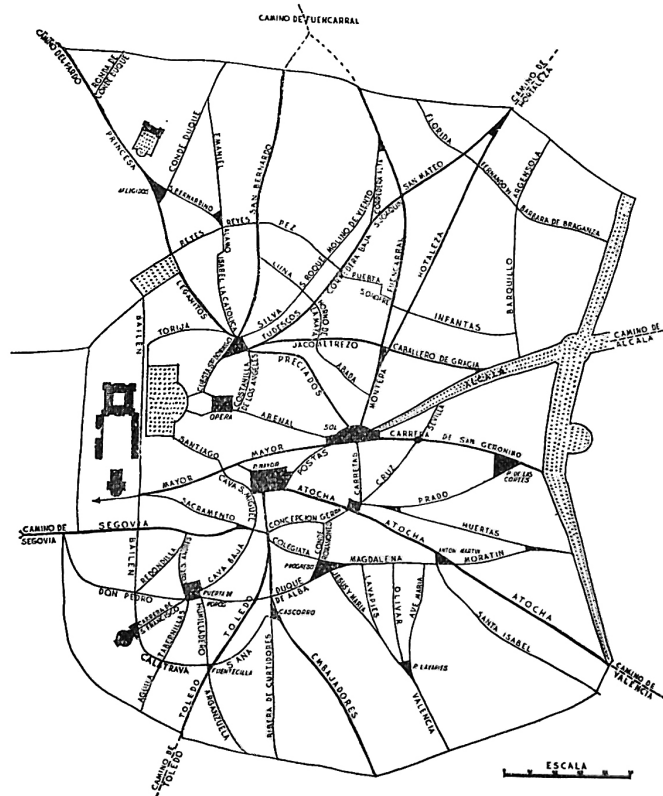


FIGURE 16. STRUCTURAL PLAN OF MADRID.  
Image: Chueca Goitia (1951: 14).

The plan, highlighting in black the knots as if it were a neuronal circuit –full of connections and interactions–, discovers and shows the strong structure, “very characteristic and sinewy”<sup>51</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1951: 12), of Madrid. With this drawing, Chueca proposed the crux to capture the physiognomy of historic Madrid, the fundamental law of the plan of Madrid, which he called “the law of the *Bivio*”: the arterial streets –as a result of the rapid connection between the gates of the successive enclosures– bifurcated, in the form of a “Y”. He exposed the sense –not as capricious as it might seem at first glance– of the urban fabric; to realize “the instinct of the walker that reveals the spider’s web of our structural plan”<sup>52</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1951: 16).

<sup>50</sup> Texeira’s plan of 1656, according to Chueca Goitia “is, in broad outline, with insignificant variations, the current plan of the capital’s city center” (Chueca Goitia, 2000: 13).

<sup>51</sup> Original quotation: “muy característica y nervuda.”

<sup>52</sup> Original quotation: “del instinto caminero que revela la tela de araña de nuestro plano estructural.”



In this *plan*, finally, the great axes that would condition the future growth of the city are also pointed out; something that Chueca specified in another scheme of the book “Articulación entre el casco viejo y los ensanches de Madrid.” And this *articulation* seems to us a pertinent link with another drawing that he would publish years later in his *Breve historia del urbanismo* (1968). Here, his “Esquema geométrico expresivo de la estructura ecológico-social de Madrid” (Figure 17) attempted to apply to the Spanish city the lessons he had learned in the United States.

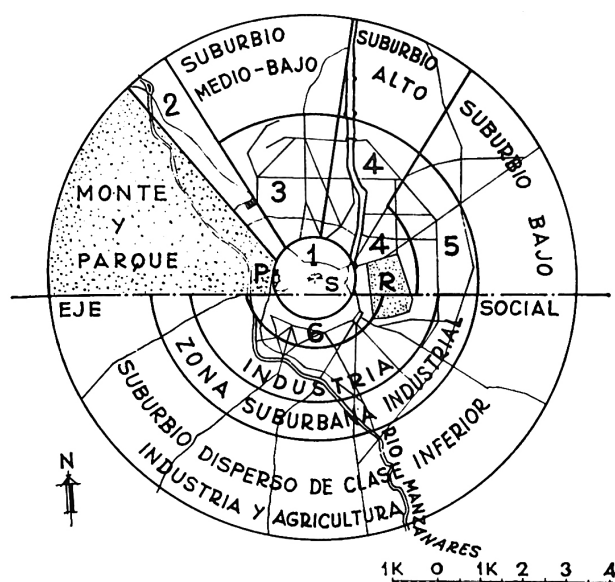


FIGURE 17. GEOMETRIC DIAGRAM EXPRESSIVE OF THE ECOLOGICAL-SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF MADRID.  
Image: Chueca (1968a: 227).

Moved, from his experience in New York, by the urban theories of American sociologists, particularly from W. Burgess’ theory of concentric zones and the subsequent adaptation of Homer Hoyt’s sectorial theory, Chueca designed his particular geometric scheme for Madrid.<sup>53</sup>

The diagram, which he would later incorporate into another publication,<sup>54</sup> shows a mixed scheme, between concentric (southern part) and sectorial (northern part), with a dividing social axis that crosses the city from east to west and clearly separates *high* Madrid from *low* Madrid: “elevation or altimetric depression that in this case also coincides with the degree of social level”<sup>55</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1974: 62). This drawing, which extends his research on urban *form* to new approaches, is faithful to his idea that “a city is an expressive diagram whose operating forces must be known in order to interpret it”<sup>56</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1968a: 222); a principle he also used in his work on New York, whose subtitle –*Forma y sociedad*– announces a clear and programmatic intention.

<sup>53</sup> Chueca Goitia (1974: 62) acknowledged how he was influenced by the theories of American sociologists to attempt such a geometrization “of the ecological reality of Madrid, to try to see if our city can be reduced in its social structure to a formally simple figure.” Compare this with the scheme “Theory of Concentric Zones of Professor Burgess, applied especially to the expansion of the city of Chicago” that Chueca included in his study of New York (1953a: 127).

<sup>54</sup> With some modifications in the graphic, it also appears in the chapter “Un esquema geométrico expresivo de la realidad social de Madrid” (Chueca Goitia, 1974: 62-66).

<sup>55</sup> Original quotation: “elevación o depresión altimétrica que en este caso coincide también con el grado de nivel social.”

<sup>56</sup> Original quotation: “una ciudad es un diagrama expresivo del que hay que conocer, para interpretarlo, las fuerzas operantes.”

In the book of New York, Chueca incorporated numerous and very dissimilar graphic schemes and comparative parallels on the growth and social constitution of the metropolis. In one of them, as a contrast with Madrid, he showed an unexpected parallel, by superimposition (Figure 13): "Plan of the metropolitan region of New York, on the same scale and on the plan of the province of Madrid. In black, Manhattan and Greater Madrid; with dark grid, the rest of the New York municipality; with light grid, the metropolitan region outside the municipal limits"<sup>57</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1953: 21). The graphic tool that allows such rhetorical uses of drawing is always open in Chueca to the way in which, with greater efficacy, he can analyze the complexity of the city.

Thus, along with the views of the New York landscape already mentioned, there are other drawings of explicit reading: diachronic diagrams ("Three phases of the growth of the city" or "Historical map of the growth of New York"); zoning studies ("Various land uses in Manhattan and nearby surroundings"); comparative diagrams of land value, on the cross-section of Manhattan,<sup>58</sup> or the graphic explanation of his own "hypothesis on how the two predominant urban centers were constituted in Manhattan",<sup>59</sup> *Downtown* and *Midtown*, established as "elongation," "rupture" –between Union Square and Madison Square– and "condensation" (1953a: 95) (Figure 18).

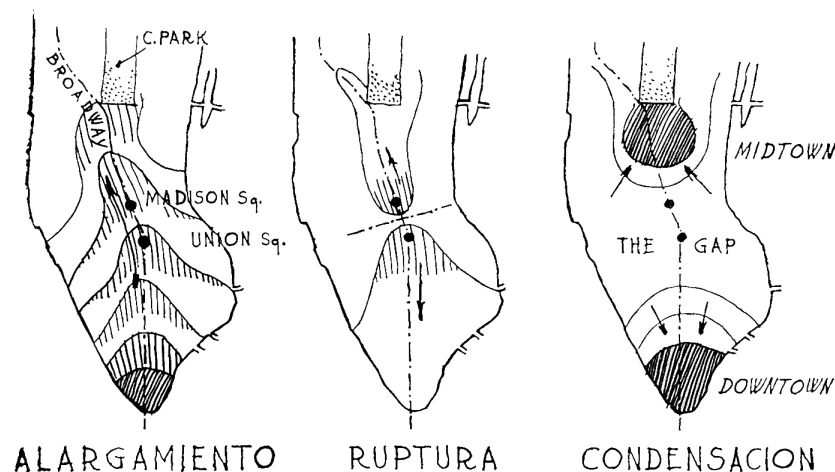


FIGURE 18. GRAPHIC EXPLANATION OF OUR HYPOTHESIS ON HOW THE TWO PREDOMINANT URBAN CENTERS WERE FORMED IN MANHATTAN.

Image: Chueca Goitia (1953a: 95).

The use of the third dimension has its role, on the other hand, in Chueca's drawing. His volumetric sketches of large urban spaces are very clarifying. In these, the system of representation used is rightly channeled to achieve the desired effect. Either, as he does in the case of the area around the Rockefeller Center, to show "a planned civic center with personality in the midst of the amorphous city"<sup>60</sup> (Chueca Goitia 1968a: 196) (Figure 19).

<sup>57</sup> Original quotation: "Plano de la región metropolitana de Nueva York, a la misma escala y sobre el plano de la provincia de Madrid. En negro, Manhattan y el Gran Madrid; con retícula oscura, el resto de la municipalidad neoyorquina; con retícula clara, la región metropolitana fuera de los límites municipales."

<sup>58</sup> It reflects three land value assumptions, taking Fifth Avenue as the axis (Chueca Goitia, 1953a: 140-141): convex diagram, with the maximum on the axis (starting situation); concave, with the maximums on the banks of the two rivers (according to Le Corbusier's proposal); and with inflection points, with the maximums distributed between the two banks and the axis of Fifth Avenue (intermediate, "compromise" solution).

<sup>59</sup> Original quotation: "hipótesis sobre cómo se constituyeron en Manhattan los dos centros urbanos predominantes."

<sup>60</sup> Original quotation: "un centro cívico planificado y con personalidad en medio de la ciudad amorfa."

Either, as he proposes in the monumental complex of Lerma (Chueca Goitia, 1968a: 123), to show by means of an aerial military perspective –and, therefore, with the plan in true magnitude– the admirable system of concatenation of squares (Figure 20); the latter scheme he puts in parallel with the “urban framing” of the Monastery of El Escorial, in which he shows the eloquent emptiness of the plan of the Lonja *against* a forcibly *compacted* volumetry of the building (Chueca Goitia, 1968a: 122).



FIGURE 19. NEW YORK. ROCKEFELLER CENTER. A PLANNED CIVIC CENTER WITH PERSONALITY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE AMORPHOUS CITY.

*Image: Chueca Goitia (1968a: 196).*

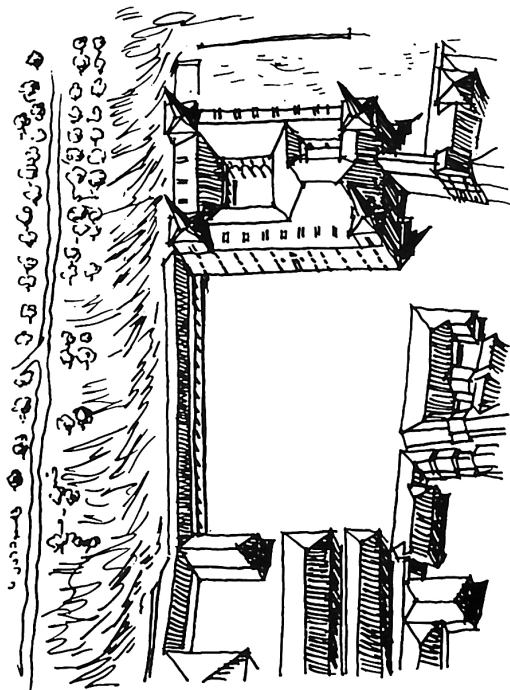


FIGURE 20. LERMA [BURGOS]. DUCAL PALACE AND SQUARES.

*Image: Chueca Goitia (1968a: 123).*



Regarding the “morphogenetic” relationship of the Escorial fabric with the Lonja, it is worth recalling the famous volumetric diagrams with which Chueca glossed his hypothesis on the projective process of El Escorial, precisely in the last lecture he gave as a professor at the School of Architecture (Chueca Goitia, 1981: 48-49). Those of us who had the opportunity to attend, as students, this culmination of his long teaching career were able to understand the importance that the professor gave to drawing as a means of unraveling –and, so to speak, making us understand– architecture and the city.

## Conclusion

The systematic study of drawing in relation to Chueca’s architectural thought is a task that should be undertaken (and is feasible because the material, as a primary source, is well located). In order to advance such research work, this paper has focused on the diversity of Chueca’s drawings on historical cities: their formation, their course, their current problems and their unforeseeable future. In this well-defined field, data and observations have been provided on the role that *drawing*, the dialectic “hand and brain” –to borrow the title of Farrington’s well-known book–, played in shaping his way of thinking and seeing architecture.

In the two categories of drawings we have considered, those of perception –predominantly *visual*– and those of analysis, the architect’s sustained attention to the urban phenomenon is evident. And both series, far from constituting disjunct classes, account for the same and specific quality of Chueca in his observation of the city and, in general, of the architectural fact: the sensory and cognitive experience. Beyond his double condition, the *saper vedere* of the architect together with that of the historian, there is in him a very singular –and we would say defining– condition: that of enjoyment before the reality of built architecture, before the architectural representation of the city (and it is worth including here, together with the historical, the contemporary city); “it is” - it is a fruition, intellectual as well as sensitive, which he incorporated into the title of one of his last and most throbbing books (argued –it must be remembered– with a good number of drawings of the historical and the more strictly contemporary city): *La arquitectura, placer del espíritu* (1993).

That delight is evident in his methodical approach to urban reality through drawing. Still, that drawing also bears witness, as an inevitable counterpart, to his constant –one might say, growing– concern for that “hecatomb of present-day urbanism.” His writings and drawings on the values of urban heritage, forming a body of striking coherence, are essential for a thorough understanding of the evolution of cities in Spain in the second half of the 20th century; and this can even be extended, without falling into any risky extrapolation, to the general case of the contemporary city.

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