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Conservation of architectural heritage and urban contexts - changes and debates in the postwar decades in Mexico

VALERIE MAGAR

Abstract

At the end of World War II, the world started to change rapidly, leading to the need to rethink concepts and approaches in the field of conservation. The massive destruction generated during the war, mainly in Europe, was one of the initial concerns. However, especially for historical centers and other urban settlements, other challenges, caused by the pressures of population growth, rural migration and rapidly changing modes of transportation, soon arose. To address this situation, the international institutions founded in the post-war period joined forces to encourage and support the formation of conservation centers and, above all, specialized training courses to prepare the professionals needed for the care and protection of heritage. This text reviews the international context and the existing situation in Mexico in order to analyze some of the approaches proposed for the conservation of built heritage and historic centers during the 1960s and the 1980s.

Keywords: *post-war, built heritage, urban settlements, international organizations, training in conservation, Mexico.*

Background

The massive damage to cultural heritage as a result of World War II, coupled with rapid urban growth and the development of motorized means of communication, meant new challenges and questions for the conservation of monuments. The post-war decades were marked by great debates, proposals of new ideas and a continuous broadening of the meaning of cultural heritage. This gave rise to new theoretical approaches aimed at a change of scale regarding what should be conserved and by whom. Of particular interest in this period, was the gradual development of international and national institutions for the protection and care of heritage. They would provide the framework for new regulations and definitions for heritage conservation. In those years, the first architectural conservation courses were also created to prepare specialized professionals.

In this rapidly changing world, many voices were raised seeking ways to preserve cultural heritage, particularly those of the historical centers, which were under great pressure. Among them were the Spanish and Mexican architects, Fernando Chueca Goitia and Carlos Flores Marini, the two central authors of this edition of *Conversaciones...* They both raised their concerns and took action to advocate for the broadening of the concept of conservation in these urban contexts. In the following pages, we will explore some of these developments from an international perspective, but also highlight the role played by Mexico during these different times.

New institutions for culture

At the end of World War II, significant changes took place in the framework of international cooperation related to the field of culture, particularly in 1945, with the founding of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) an agency of the United Nations. Simultaneously, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) was formed as a non-governmental body that would act closely with UNESCO for many years, aiding it, whenever necessary, with the participation of specialists in different fields of heritage. However, it soon became apparent that there was a need to create another international organization specialized in heritage conservation to provide advice on conservation issues, to support the establishment of conservation centers and to train professionals. This new international organization was created in 1956, under the initial name of the International Center for the Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Property, later better known as ICCROM (Jokilehto, 2011).¹

Conservation of historical heritage in Mexico

In Mexico, legislation for heritage protection had been in effect since the end of the 19th century. Initially focused on archaeological monuments,² the new legislation gradually marked changes in the perception and appreciation of other types of heritage. In 1885, the Inspection of Archaeological Monuments was created, replicating the model of public protection of cultural property initially formulated in France, and later copied by other European countries. Two decades later, the Inspections of Historical Monuments (1913) and Artistic Monuments (1915) were also established, the former to reassess the monuments produced in the colonial period³ (Flores Marini, 1966: 20; Arboleyda and Rodríguez, 2004: 5). The Society of Mexican Architects (SAM),⁴ founded in 1905, was formed by renowned architects of the time, who had been the first to issue clear calls for the assessment and protection of that heritage (Noelle, 2009: 13; Guzmán and Rodríguez, 2018: 28). SAM played a fundamental role in supporting the Inspection of Historic Monuments. The appreciation for colonial heritage was gradually taking place at the beginning of the 20th century in Mexico⁵ and Latin America. During the II Pan-American Congress of Architecture held in Santiago de Chile in 1923, a definition of what the conservation of monuments implied was proposed, and the notions of architectural, historical and archaeological value were specified.⁶ For Mexico, Manuel Toussaint, who was in contact with his Latin American colleagues in various congresses, was a key participant in researching and disseminating knowledge of Latin American colonial art. In 1935, Toussaint founded the Art Laboratory at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). A year later, it became the Institute of Aesthetic Research,⁷ which Toussaint headed until the end of his life (Díaz-Berrio, 1995: 259). During the II International Congress of American History held in Buenos Aires in 1937, Toussaint communicated his concern for colonial heritage, due to its deterioration and state of abandonment (De Nordenflycht, 2013).

¹ Mexico became a Member State of ICCROM in 1961.

² *Ley Federal sobre Monumentos Arqueológicos* dating from 1897.

³ Initially, the protection of monuments linked to the Independence or that were symbols of the nation was privileged. Gradually, other monuments were integrated, particularly former convents and civil buildings. Heritage, as in many other countries, served as an instrument to cement and unify the nation.

⁴ Sociedad de Arquitectos Mexicanos (SAM).

⁵ Let us remember that in Mexico, after the Independence movement at the beginning of the 19th century, the interest in the past was essentially focused on the pre-Hispanic, where elements had been sought to define the new independent nation. The architecture of that period, linked to the colonial regime, was not perceived as truly Mexican. Additionally, with the Nationalization of Ecclesiastical Property Law of 1859, many of the old convents and churches and other buildings belonging to the Church were sold, whole or in lots. In many cases, this implied their total or partial demolition (Lombardo de Ruiz, 2004: 201).

⁶ [dipublico.org 2014].

⁷ Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas.

The existing legislation in Mexico, at that time, regarding cultural heritage in the post-war period dated back to 1934, the *Ley sobre protección y conservación de monumentos arqueológicos e históricos, poblaciones típicas y lugares de belleza natural*.⁸ Under this single piece of legislation, all types of heritage were united, not only cultural monuments and areas,⁹ but also natural heritage. This legislation defined the role of different agencies dedicated to researching and protecting archaeological and historical heritage. In 1939, most of these agencies were regrouped into a new institution, the National Institute of Anthropology and History¹⁰ (INAH), with the broad mandate to investigate, conserve and disseminate Mexico's cultural heritage.¹¹ In 1946, a new institution was formed, the National Institute of Fine Arts and Literature¹² (INBAL), with the mandate to promote the development of arts and preserve artistic heritage.¹³

The area dedicated to conserving historic built heritage within INAH was the Directorate of Colonial Monuments,¹⁴ which Toussaint also headed between 1945 and 1954 (Díaz-Berrio, 1995: 259). Many of the activities of this office at that time were essentially focused on the identification and study of monuments. As the work of these institutions became clearer, INAH was gradually given custody of different monuments, particularly old temples and cloisters. In 1948, Toussaint published his work *Arte colonial en México* (Toussaint, 1974), which became a compulsory reference, with the analysis and comparative descriptions of the different buildings. That same year, George Kubler also published his *Arquitectura mexicana del siglo XVI*, initially in its English version. Flores Marini and Díaz-Berrio highlighted some projects for the protection, liberation and consolidation of monuments, especially those carried out by José Gorbea Trueba in the former convents of Actopan and Tlaxcala between 1932 and 1946, in Churubusco between 1936 and 1955, and Acolman between 1932 and 1957 (Flores Marini, 1966: 21; Díaz-Berrio, 1995: 260).

According to the legislation in effect since 1934, the work for the protection of colonial monuments would be coupled with the advice of a Monuments Commission, composed of the president of the Department of Monuments, and a representative from each of the following agencies: the General Directorate of National Assets of the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit,¹⁵ the Department of Tourism of the Ministry of National Economy,¹⁶ the Directorate of

⁸ Law on the Protection and Conservation of Archaeological and Historical Monuments, Typical Towns and Places of Natural Beauty.

⁹ Article 19 of the 1934 Act: "[...] a efecto de mantener el carácter propio de las poblaciones situadas en el Distrito y Territorios Federales y el de la ciudad de México especialmente, el Ejecutivo de la Unión podrá declarar de interés público la protección y conservación del aspecto típico y pintoresco de dichas poblaciones o de determinadas zonas de ellas" ("in order to maintain the character of the towns located in the Federal District and Territories, and especially that of Mexico City, the Executive of the Union may declare of public interest the protection and conservation of the typical and picturesque appearance of such towns or of certain areas of them").

¹⁰ Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.

¹¹ Since the beginning of the 20th century, an agency was also created to control federal properties. Over time, originally part of the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (Secretaría de Finanzas y Crédito Público), it changed its name and location. At the time of the creation of INAH, it was the Ministry of National Assets and Administrative Inspection, and in 1958 it became the Ministry of National Heritage (Secretaría del Patrimonio Nacional - Sepanal), whose function was to "regulate and control the possession, uses and destinations of federal properties" (Díaz-Berrio, 1996: 264). Although in principle it was not supposed to deal with historic monuments (since they were expressly under the responsibility of another agency), over time, and due to the availability of resources, the Sepanal also carried out numerous conservation and restoration interventions.

¹² Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura.

¹³ The division between historical and artistic heritage was established chronologically. The former covers heritage from the arrival of the Spaniards until the end of the 19th century. The artistic heritage corresponds to listed monuments from the 20th century.

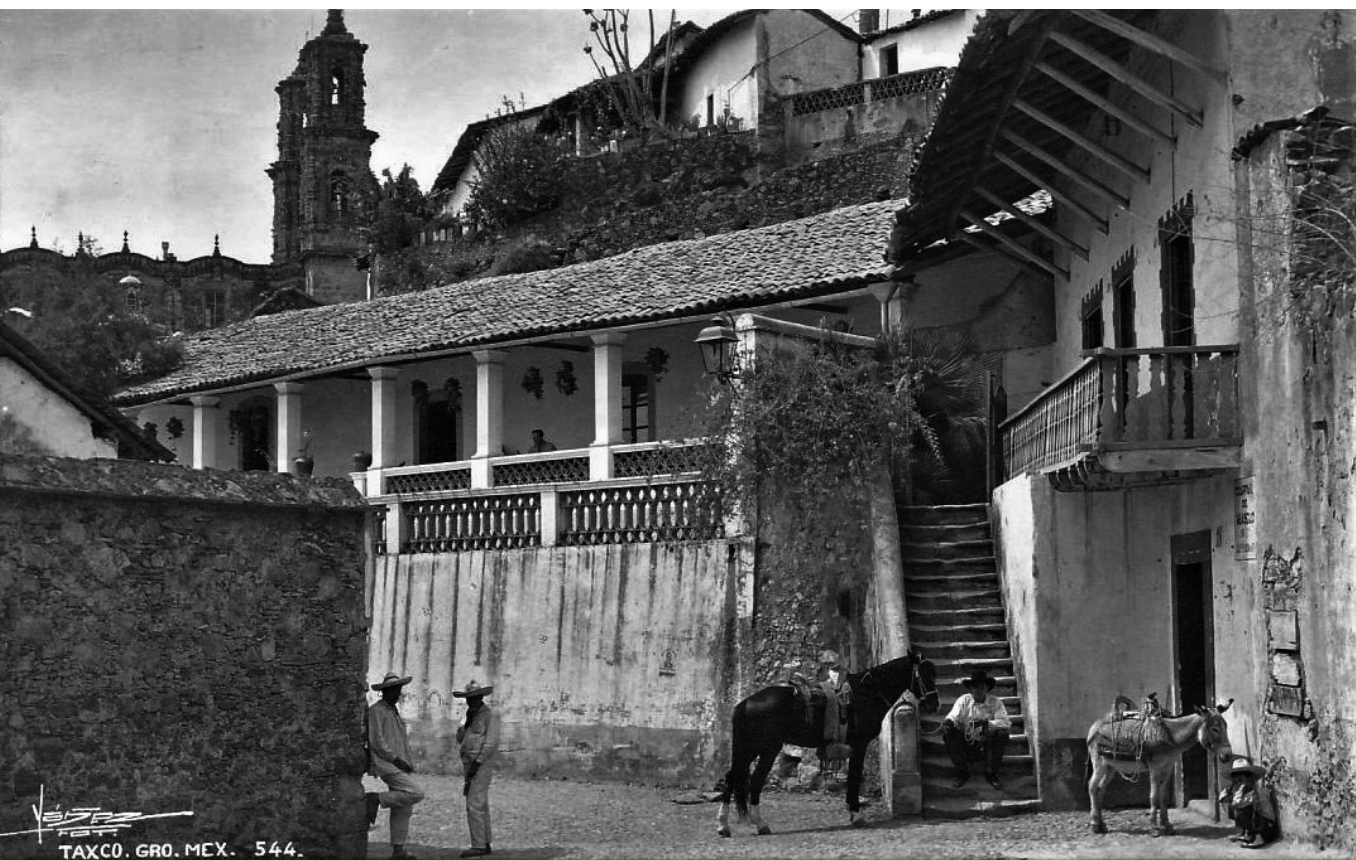
¹⁴ Dirección de Monumentos Coloniales.

¹⁵ Dirección General de Bienes Nacionales (Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público).

¹⁶ Departamento de Turismo (Secretaría Nacional de Economía).

Public Works of the Department of the Federal District,¹⁷ the Department of Buildings of the Ministry of Communications and Public Works,¹⁸ the Mexican Society of Geography and Statistics,¹⁹ the Antonio Alzate Scientific Society and the Society of Mexican Architects, as well as two representatives from the National Autonomous University of Mexico-UNAM, one specialized in technical aspects of architecture and the other in plastic arts (Díaz-Berrio, 1995: 267).²⁰

During this period, most of the conservation actions were focused on specific monuments. However, it is interesting to highlight some early cases of urban protection, among them the case of the mining city of Taxco (Flores Marini, 1976: 35). Since 1928, the State congress had issued the *Ley para la conservación de la Ciudad de Taxco de Alarcón*,²¹ a piece of legislation that gave clear instructions on the character and physiognomy of the city to be preserved, requiring, for example, a minimum percentage of roof tiles for new roofs.



TAXCO, CA. 1940. Image: Public domain.

¹⁷ Dirección de Obras Públicas (Departamento del Distrito Federal).

¹⁸ Departamento de Edificios (Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Obras Públicas).

¹⁹ Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística.

²⁰ In 1963, this Commission was modified and was composed of the Director of INAH, the General Director of Buildings of the Ministry of Public Education, the Head of the Department of Colonial Monuments of INAH and a representative of: the Ministry of National Heritage, the Ministry of Public Works, the Department of the Federal District, the Department of Tourism, the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the National Institute of Fine Arts, the Society of Architecture, the Mexican Society of Geography and Statistics and the Antonio Alzate Scientific Society (Díaz-Berrio, 1995: 269).

²¹ Act for the conservation of the city of Taxco de Alarcón.

Mexico's international role

After having participated in the formation of UNESCO, Mexico maintained an active role in promoting the activities of this organization. The interest in international cooperation and the objectives that had been proposed for UNESCO can be seen in part of Jaime Torres Bodet's speech delivered in London in 1945:

*There is in intellectual cooperation something more than a simple exchange of knowledge and ideas, professors, journals, laboratory equipment and museum collections. There is at the very basis of intellectual cooperation something infinitely more important: it is the cooperation of intellectuals, the organized force of the world of ideas to prevent the reproduction of the monstrous excesses that have led peoples to resolve their crises by violence*²² (Torres Bodet in Báez, 2016: 34).

Mexico accepted the proposal to host the second General Conference of UNESCO, which was held in Mexico City in 1947. While the themes of peace and education were central to the discussions, the conservation of monuments was also addressed. Concurrently, the first ICOM Interim Conference was held, where additional recommendations were issued to strengthen heritage conservation (ICOM, 1947; Morley, 1949). At these meetings, an expansion of the existing museum area within UNESCO was suggested, with the creation of another section dedicated explicitly to historic monuments in order to have specialized personnel in a given field.²³ In addition, a proposal was made to create an intergovernmental technical body for international cooperation in the conservation of cultural heritage. The directors of INBAL, Carlos Chávez, and INAH, Ignacio Marquina, participated in these events, accompanied by Daniel Fernando Rubín de la Borbolla and Jorge Enciso (Báez, 2016: 39).²⁴

The following year, during the Third General Conference of UNESCO, Jaime Torres Bodet²⁵ was named director-general, a position he would hold for four years and from which he would actively promote the principles of the organization. Also in 1948, Mexico formed its National Committee of ICOM, initially headed by Ignacio Marquina (then director-general of INAH), with the support of Daniel F. Rubín de la Borbolla (director of the National Museum of Anthropology) as secretary. The other members were Julio Castellanos (head of the Department of Plastic Arts of INBAL), Miguel Covarrubias, Jorge Enciso (deputy director of INAH), Fernando Gamboa (director of the Museum of Fine Arts), Franz Mayer, Julio Prieto (deputy director of INBAL), Samuel Ramos (president of the International Bureau of Intellectual Cooperation), Salvador Toscano (secretary of INAH) and Silvio Zavala (director of the Museo Nacional de Historia).

Through its Division of Museums and Monuments, UNESCO began its activities with meetings to try to develop a view of the situation of heritage in the world and thus be able to define its strategies. In Paris in 1949, it convened an international meeting of specialists to protect historic and artistic monuments and sites and discuss archaeological excavations. The meeting was

²² Original quotation: "Hay en la cooperación intelectual algo más que un simple intercambio de conocimientos y de ideas, de profesores, de revistas, de material de laboratorio y de colecciones de museos. Hay en la base misma de la cooperación intelectual algo infinitamente más importante: es la cooperación de los intelectuales, la fuerza organizada del mundo de las ideas para impedir que se reproduzcan los excesos monstruosos que han conducido a los pueblos a resolver sus crisis por la violencia."

²³ The Museums Division was initially renamed the Museums and Monuments Division, and in 1950, it was divided into two areas, one dedicated to Museums and the other to Monuments.

²⁴ At the same meeting, INAH also presented a proposal aimed at promoting actions for greater international cooperation, in particular for the reduction of illicit trafficking in cultural property, and measures to facilitate the exchange of property between institutions for educational purposes (INAH, 1947).

²⁵ Jaime Torres Bodet was Minister of Public Education between 1943 and 1946, and later from 1958 to 1964. He was director general of UNESCO from 1948 to 1952.

chaired by Paulo de Barredo Carneiro, a member of UNESCO's Executive Board and delegate from Brazil. The session included the participation of Jaime Torres Bodet and Pedro Bosch Gimpera, then director of UNESCO's Division of Philosophy and Human Studies. In preparation for this meeting, participants had been asked to send reports on the protection of historical monuments in their countries. This made it possible to observe the diversity of problems, approaches and systems of protection in the different regions of the world. It also highlighted the need for the training of conservation specialists. A summary of the results of this meeting was published in the journal *Museum* (Pane, 1950), edited by UNESCO. Although there were no representatives from Mexico at the meeting, an official communiqué was sent to UNESCO, written by Manuel Toussaint. It described the conservation and restoration needs in the country and showed details, illustrated with images of two restoration projects being carried out in Mexico at that time; one was in the church of San Agustín, in Acolman, where the level of the accumulated soil on the exterior had been lowered two meters to recover the original level of the construction, and the other was in the cloister of La Merced in Mexico City, where the material that covered the original colonial arches had been removed (Pane, 1950: 18).



ACOLMAN. Image: Public domain.

The final report of this meeting, prepared by Ronald Lee,²⁶ requested the director-general of UNESCO to form an International Advisory Committee for Monuments and Archaeological Excavations, which would collaborate closely with ICOM (Lee, 1950: 93-94).²⁷ The initial proposal foresaw that this permanent committee would be composed of 14 members with different profiles (architects, archaeologists, art historians and urban planners), initially from China, Egypt, Scandinavia, the United States, France, Greece, India, Italy, Mexico, two Near and Middle East countries,

²⁶ U.S. representative to this meeting and chief historian of the National Park Service.

²⁷ In ICOM's founding resolution, the term "museums" included all collections open to the public with artistic, technical, scientific, historical or archaeological materials, including zoos and botanical gardens; it did not include libraries, unless they had permanent exhibition rooms.

Peru, Poland and the United Kingdom. Subsequently, a rotation of members would take place. This committee was created the following year and it was considered that its main purpose would be to provide the “continuity indispensable for the safeguarding of the universal heritage of art and history” (UNESCO, 1950).²⁸ The idea at this time was that the functions of the committee should include international collaboration in the field of documentation related to sites and monuments of art and history, preservation and restoration of such sites and monuments, and archaeological excavations, as well as the exchange of information and experts and the carrying out of UNESCO missions by experts.²⁹ The recommendations also called for the creation of an international fund for the conservation and restoration of monuments, the promotion of the return of cultural heritage moved as a result of World War II, as well as the protection of public or private property of universal interest from major risks, particularly in times of armed conflict. These last two recommendations would pave the way for the first two UNESCO Conventions, The Hague Convention (1945) and the Convention against illicit trafficking (1970).

On the subject of the fund, the following year during the Fifth General Conference of UNESCO³⁰ held in Florence, the Mexican delegation presented a “Project for an international convention for the protection of historic monuments and art treasures,” prepared by Alfonso Caso (Vidargas, 2015: 98). For the implementation of this project, creating a tourism tax was proposed, which would allow the creation of an international fund for the conservation of heritage. Although this proposal was not accepted at the time, it would serve as the basis for establishing the world heritage fund a few decades later.

A changing world

In post-war Mexico, the country's health policies and economic development had important consequences on its demographics. The country's total population increased considerably, from 22.6 million inhabitants in 1940 to 25.8 million in 1950, 34.9 million in 1960, and 48.2 million in 1970.³¹ From the 1960s onwards, more than half of the country's population lived in urban areas, with Mexico City being one of the main centers of attraction. As a result, urban centers had to adapt to this influx of new inhabitants, which was not always reflected in planning that could meet the numerous challenges. These included the intensive and extensive use of urban land and the increase in the number of motorized vehicles, especially automobiles, resulting in an impact on roads, parking area requirements and the effects of environmental pollution due to the use of fossil fuels. In Mexico, in 1940, there were 149 455 registered vehicles; this figure would double in the following decade (308 206 vehicles), and a phenomenal growth would follow with 827 017 vehicles in 1960 and 1 928 816 in 1970. Between 1940 and the beginning of the 21st century, the density increased from 32.1 vehicles per square kilometer to 2 779.7 vehicles per square kilometer (Islas Rivera *et al.*, 2011).

²⁸ Antonio Castro Leal participated as Mexico's representative in this commission, beginning in April 1951 (Sanz y Tejada, 2016: 224).

²⁹ The first UNESCO technical assistance mission was carried out at the request of the government of Peru, following the major earthquake that affected the city of Cuzco in May 1950, which caused damage to 50% of the buildings, including historical and archaeological monuments. The specialists sent for this mission were George Kubler, head of the Department of Art History at Yale University, and Luis MacGregor, a Mexican architect and restorer (UNESCO, 1953).

³⁰ The Mexican delegation consisted of Paula Alegría, Alfonso Caso, Antonio Castro Leal, Francisco A. de Icaza, José Gorostiza and Fernando Moctezuma.

³¹ Figures obtained from the Instituto Nacional de Geografía e Estadística [<http://cuentame.inegi.org.mx/poblacion/habitantes.aspx?tema=P>].



INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF VEHICLES IN MEXICO.

*Image: Valerie Magar, based on data from
Islas Rivera et al. (2011).*



TRAFFIC IN MEXICO CITY IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY. *Image: Public domain.*

Since the end of the 1930s, another important element was cultural tourism, which would have a significant impact on the perception and vision of Mexico's archaeological and historical monuments over the following decades. In the speech made on the occasion of the creation of the INAH in 1938, President Lázaro Cárdenas said the following

*On the other hand, the exploration of archaeological ruins and the preservation of colonial monuments have shown that, in addition to scientific results, it can produce magnificent economic returns in terms of attracting foreign tourism, as demonstrated, for example, by the recent case of the explorations in Oaxaca, which is already having a decisive influence on the economic life of that state*³² (Lombardo de Ruiz, 2004: 208).

In this scenario, the historic centers of large cities were subjected to many changes, often with substantial impacts on their conservation. In some cases, there was a pauperization of the centers due to the development of peripheral areas. In response, starting in the 1950s, actions began to be taken in the squares of the historic centers of several cities. In these, the idea of giving an increased "colonial" feel to these spaces was often favored. Thus, starting in 1954, a project to cover the historic buildings in the central square in Mexico City with tezontle was initiated. In other cities, stone slabs or white paint were favored, for example, in Xochimilco, Toluca and in smaller towns in the State of Mexico (Díaz Berrio, 1990: 66). In other places, the choice was made to eliminate plasters and renders to show the "noblest materials," as in the case of Morelia. In this way, a vision of what colonial architecture implied was privileged under a new perspective, which did not necessarily correspond to historical data. An aesthetic criterion was thus favored, but with new characteristics, substantially altering the features and physiognomy of the buildings and urban complexes (Flores Marini, 1986: 30).

On the topic of direct intervention treatments on monuments, many of the actions carried out between 1958 and 1964 focused on efforts dedicated to the conversion of numerous monuments into museums. Multiple interventions were carried out by the Ministry of National Heritage³³ (SEPANAL) in former convents and temples in Morelos and Oaxaca. In these projects, considerable reconstructions were undertaken. Flores Marini listed them in his article "La restauración de monumentos coloniales en México" without making any judgment on these actions. Years later, he described that these reconstructions were undertaken, as in the case of Yanhuatlán, due to the poor quality of the original stone. The aim had been to secure the structural stability of the buildings (Flores Marini, 1976: 37).

Flores Marini was also closely linked to the restoration project of the former convent of Tepotzotlán, transformed into a national museum, described as the first interdisciplinary conservation and restoration project, and whose research and interventions were published in 1964. It was one of the first volumes dedicated to the conservation of historic monuments (Flores Marini, 1964).

³² Original quotation: "Por otra parte, la exploración de las ruinas arqueológicas y la conservación de los monumentos coloniales ha demostrado que además de los resultados científicos puede producir magníficos rendimientos económicos en cuanto significa atracción para el turismo extranjero, como lo ha demostrado, por ejemplo, el caso reciente de las exploraciones de Oaxaca, que influye ya decididamente en la vida económica de ese Estado."

³³ Secretaría de Patrimonio Nacional.



CITY HALL, MEXICO CITY. *Image: Public domain.*



PALACE OF THE COUNTS SAN MATEO DE VALPARAISO, WITH THE FAÇADE COVERED WITH TEZONTLE STONE. *Image: Public domain.*



TEPOTZOTLÁN. Image: Public domain.

International architecture meetings

The concern for urban growth on a global scale and the development of infrastructure works that marked the late 1950s and 1960s led to the generation of international meetings and proposals for new documents and guidelines to protect heritage, particularly urban heritage.

The Second International Conference of Architects and Monuments Technicians was held in Paris in 1957.³⁴ There was a broad discussion on the need to create an "ICOM of Monuments" (Centre International, 1964: 11), to give greater weight to the conservation of built heritage. An important part of the discussions also focused on the need to codify and maintain principles for conservation. Piero Gazzola offered the venue of Venice to organize a third meeting where this could take place. The importance of creating state agencies dedicated to the conservation and protection of historic monuments was also underlined for those countries that did not already have them and urged the necessary recognition that conservation and restoration actions could only be carried out by qualified professionals.

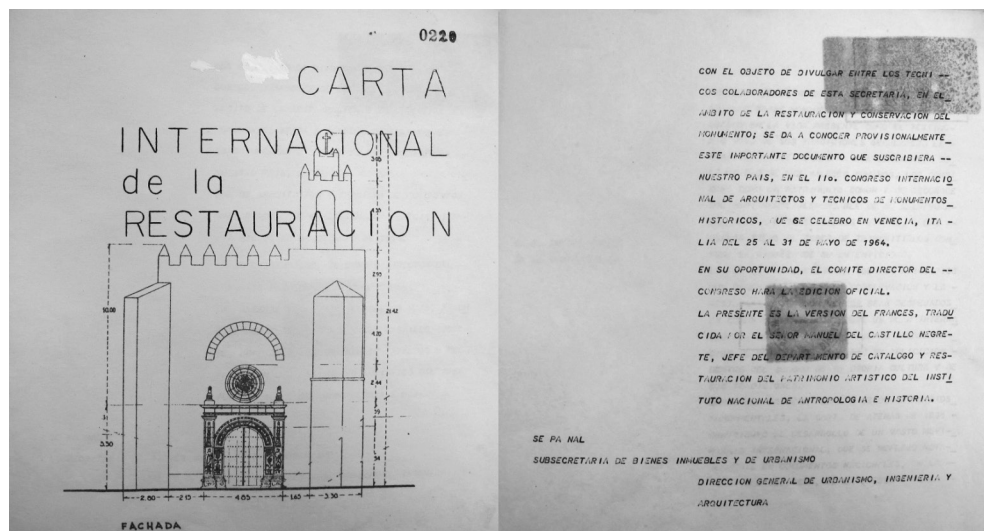
Meetings were also held at the national level in European countries, including those that led to the drafting of the 1960 Gubbio document in Italy and the *Loi Malraux* in France in 1962, which promoted the safeguarding of urban sectors (Flores Marini, 1966; Díaz-Berrio, 1990).

The Third International Conference of Architects and Monuments Technicians was not held until 1964, under the presidency of Guglielmo De Angelis d'Ossat. It generated an enormous attendance, with 622 participants and 170 accompanying persons from 62 countries. The

³⁴ The first Conference was held in Athens in 1931, which led to the drafting of the *Athens Charter*.

Mexican delegation included Salvador Aceves, Carlos Flores Marini and Ruth Rivera. The sessions of the proceedings were published in 1971.³⁵ In addition to the thematic sessions of the conference, parallel meetings with specific objectives were planned from the outset, one of which was the drafting of a new international document to replace the *Athens Charter* of 1931 for two essential reasons. First, it aimed to adapt the principles and criteria of conservation to recent events in all the countries affected by the war, as well as to the change and new relationships generated by a growing urbanization. And second, it intended to eliminate a few indications that were too specific in the *Athens Charter*, in particular, those related to the use of modern building materials (Lemaire, 1999; Magar, 2014).

Piero Gazzola headed the drafting committee, which included 23 conservation professionals, essentially European, and three professionals from other regions, including Mexican architect Carlos Flores Marini, who was director of the Colonial Monuments area of INAH, and Peruvian architect Víctor Pimentel. Both had been students in the first courses on architectural conservation at the University of La Sapienza in Rome. A few years ago, Claudine Houbart made an excellent analysis of the archives of Raymond Lemaire, who acted as rapporteur, to identify the influences and possible hands in the drafting of this important document (Houbart, 2014).³⁶



FRONT COVER. Translation of the *Venice Charter*, by Manuel del Castillo Negrete in 1964.
Image: Valerie Magar.

In addition to the *Venice Charter*, this conference generated and approved other documents that would be interesting to mention here. On the one hand, it was resolved to create an international non-governmental organization for monuments and sites and an international publication of "doctrine, technique and legislation on the conservation and restoration of monuments"³⁷ (Díaz-Berrio, 2012: 38). This organization would be formed the following years

³⁵ They are available almost in their entirety on the ICOMOS website [<http://www.international.icomos.org/venicecharter2004/index.html>] (accessed on 10 December 2021).

³⁶ In 1966, the National Institute of Anthropology and History published the *Venice Charter* under the title *International Charter of Restoration*, translated by Manuel del Castillo Negrete (INAH, 1966).

³⁷ Original quotation: "doctrina, de técnica y de legislación en materia de conservación y restauración de monumentos."

the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). It took the *Venice Charter* as its founding document, which is still an international reference. In that same year, the Committee of ICOMOS Mexico was created, promoted by Jaime Torres Bodet, who was its first president. Later, the Committee was presided over for eleven years by José Villagrán García. Carlos Flores Marini served as treasurer for many years and would also be its president in the 1990s.

A resolution was also issued concerning training in conservation and restoration of monuments. It proposed the inclusion of “an initiation to the problems of conservation and restoration of ancient monuments, in the program of all university faculties that include the teaching of Architecture, Art History and Archaeology”³⁸ (Díaz-Berrio, 2012: 38). The lack of conservation specialists was an issue that continued to be discussed in the following years. Fernando Chueca Goitia and Carlos Flores Marini devoted specific sections to this topic in the texts collected in this volume. It is clear at this time that restoration and conservation had to be recognized as a specialized discipline, which required duly trained professionals.

Creation of conservation specialization programs

Until the late 1950s, there were few training centers specialized in architectural conservation. Through its School of Specialization, the University of La Sapienza in Rome had launched its first course in 1957. ICCROM joined forces with this university, with the first students enrolled in 1960-1961. The program extended over thirty weeks, with many of the courses initially taught in English and a gradual increase in the number of foreign students. From 1965 onwards, ICCROM took over the running of the courses, with entirely international participants. In the mid-1970s, this led to a division into two courses, one taught in Italian (or course A), and the other in English (course B), both at ICCROM’s headquarters. Course A was extended to a two-year program, leading to a master’s degree in architectural conservation. Other countries later adopted this model to generate new training programs at the graduate level. ICCROM has continued with specialization courses that, over time, focused on continuing education courses dedicated to professionals already trained in the field of architectural conservation (ICCROM, 1969; Jokilehto, 2011; Magar *et al.*, 2020). Nivaldo Andrade published an excellent article with the first results of archival research that is still ongoing. He has analyzed the impact of the Rome courses in Latin America and the Caribbean and the marked influence of that school of thought (Andrade, 2020).³⁹

Meanwhile in Mexico, several early initiatives were also generated. Since the late 1950s, several courses in architectural conservation were held, which were later formalized into postgraduate degrees. In 1959, the School of Architecture of the University of Guanajuato opened a Master’s Degree in Architectural Restoration (Díaz-Berrio, 1994: 266), the first in the country. In 1966, UNESCO, in collaboration with INAH, inaugurated the Latin American Regional Center for Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage (CERLACOR), located in the ex-convent of Churubusco, at the headquarters of the Department of Catalog and Restoration of Artistic Heritage, where the first program in conservation of movable property was initiated (Montero, 1994; Pérez Ballesteros, 2021). CERLACOR was headed by Manuel

³⁸ Original quotation: “una iniciación a los problemas de conservación y restauración de monumentos antiguos, en el programa de todas las facultades universitarias que comprendan la enseñanza de la Arquitectura, de la Historia del arte y de la Arqueología.”

³⁹ This work by Nivaldo Andrade has continued. It has been augmented by a collaboration between the Federal University of Bahia (Brazil), the University of Playa Ancha (Chile), and ICCROM, where interviews are being conducted with the first students of the Rome courses, both at the University of La Sapienza and ICCROM, to further analyze the impact they had on the definition of the theory and practice of built heritage conservation in Latin America and the Caribbean. In parallel, the ICCROM Archives and Library was initiated in 2022, an ambitious project to digitize the information related to the architectural conservation courses, later better known as ARC.

del Castillo Negrete. The program of this course was designed with ICCROM and with the participation of numerous foreign teachers; thanks to the system of scholarships granted by UNESCO, it allowed the training of numerous generations of specialists in the region (Díaz-Berrio, 1995: 263). In 1967, UNAM also opened a Master's program in Monument Restoration at the National School of Architecture, in which Carlos Flores Marini participated as a founding member. In 1973, INAH opened its own Master's program in Monuments Restoration, also at the ex-convent of Churubusco at the National School of Conservation, Restoration and Museography⁴⁰ (ENCRyM). UNESCO scholarships also supported this program, and later by the Organization of American States (OAS),⁴¹ which generated an international environment that promoted the development of generations of professionals and the confrontation of theory and practice in the Latin American context.

Ideas under debate in Latin America and Mexico

Parallel to these advances in the training and creation of specialists, Mexico's urbanization and infrastructure development projects, affecting numerous areas of historical monuments, had to be confronted. Díaz-Berrio refers to 21 projects undertaken to open streets and avenues in Mexico City, which altered or destroyed historic buildings and green areas (Díaz-Berrio, 1990: 235), thus resulting in numerous controversies. There were also discussions regarding other types of heritage, particularly with the interventions with numerous reconstructions carried out on pre-Hispanic monuments, for example in Teotihuacan and Cholula, and on movable and immovable historical heritage, following the fire in the metropolitan cathedral of Mexico City in 1967. These were confronted with the *Venice Charter*.



MEXICO CITY'S MAIN SQUARE, WITH THE BROAD AVENIDA 20 DE NOVIEMBRE.

Image: Magdalena Vences Vidal, 2004.

⁴⁰ Escuela Nacional de Conservación, Restauración y Museografía (ENCRyM).

⁴¹ The scholarship agreement with UNESCO lasted for 10 years, from 1967 to 1977, while that with the OAS lasted from 1971 to 1981. In 1979, 172 students were enrolled in courses at the Churubusco school, 65 of whom were foreigners (Díaz-Berrio, 1987: 279).

Therefore, it is not surprising that spaces for discussion and reflection arose, seeking to establish guidelines for heritage conservation. One of the first was during the meeting organized by the OAS in 1967, which led to the drafting of the *Norms of Quito*. This important document took up the ideas put forward in the *Venice Charter* in light of the Latin American reality. It included a detailed description of the threats to numerous cultural properties in Latin America, mainly due to a lack of adequate state conservation policies. Manuel del Castillo Negrete and Carlos Flores Marini from Mexico participated in drafting the *Norms of Quito*.⁴² An interesting aspect of the norms is that they emphasize the potential of heritage as an economic value, which can be linked to social and economic development, particularly through tourism. The *Norms of Quito* also defined the concept of protected areas,⁴³ considered in their surroundings, that should be protected as a whole, even though isolated elements may not merit designation (Flores Marini, 1976: 23).

In Mexico, in those years, numerous specialists passed through the Churubusco Center, including Giovanni Astengo, A. Bonet Correa, Fernando Chueca Goitia, Graziano Gasparini, Paul Guinand, Hans Foramitti, George Kubler and Roberto Pane, just to mention a few. This favored an environment conducive to the exchange of ideas and the comparison of problems related to the conservation of monuments and urban ensembles in different spheres.

In that same year, a major fire occurred in the cathedral of Mexico City. The different proposals made for intervention after the incident, together with proposals to modify the roads around the cathedral generated important controversies at the time (O’Gorman, 1968; Piña Dreinhofer, 1968; 1970; Rodríguez Kuri, 2007). All this resulted in numerous discussions, disseminated by the press, to analyze the alternatives and define possible intervention treatments. In the end, the burned elements of the cathedral were rebuilt identically, while the projects to enlarge streets were not carried out (Díaz Berrio, 1990: 315), to the relief of many conservation professionals. The numerous discussions about the cathedral led to important reflections and the participation of different sectors of society in the discussion about heritage conservation (Piña Dreinhofer, 1970).

The following decade was also fundamental in the definition of new regulatory frameworks for conservation. In Mexico, in 1972 the *Ley Federal sobre Zonas y Monumentos Arqueológicos, Artísticos e Históricos*⁴⁴ was issued, which better defined the competence of different institutions and allowed the declaration of areas of historic monument. The first declarations for the protection of historic centers were those of San Cristóbal de las Casas (in 1974, with an area of three square kilometers), Oaxaca (in 1976, with an area of five square kilometers) and Puebla (in 1977, with an area of seven square kilometers) and Mexico (with an area of nine square kilometers) (Díaz Berrio, 1990: 204; 1995: 269). In 1973, a list of 50 cities and towns whose conservation was considered a priority was also established (Díaz Berrio, 1990: 205). Many of these studies involved the participation of graduate students from the different architectural conservation programs.

⁴² The document was drafted by a group composed of Guillermo de Zéndegui, Technical Secretary of the meeting, Benjamín Carrión, Hernán Crespo Toral, Lidia C. de Camacho, Oswaldo de la Torre, Manuel del Castillo Negrete, Manuel E. del Monte, Carlos Flores Marini, Graziano Gasparini, José Manuel González Valcárcel, Carlos M. Larrea, Jorge Luján M., Agustín Moreno, Earle W. Newton, Filoteo Samaniego, Fernando Silva Santiesteban, Renato Soeiro, Christopher Tunnard, José María Vargas, Miguel A. Vasco, and Carlos Zevallos.

⁴³ This concept had already been addressed before, in particular in the Gubbio Charter (1960) in Italy, and through the Malraux Law (1962) in France.

⁴⁴ Federal Act on Archaeological, Artistic and Historic Areas and Monuments.



BURNT ORGAN, MEXICO CATHEDRAL, 1967. Image: E. Sánchez, Fototeca CNCPC-INAH.

Also in 1972, two important UNESCO documents were approved. The most well-known is the *Convention for the Protection of the World, Natural and Cultural Heritage*, which Mexico ratified in 1984. This convention, in whose application Mexico has shown continuous interest, has allowed the questioning of approaches to heritage conservation, the definition and clarification of terminology, and the constant development of methodologies for the conservation and management of this heritage. The other document, often forgotten, was the *Recommendation concerning the protection, at the national level, of the cultural and natural heritage* which aimed at reminding and emphasizing the importance for every country to conserve all relevant elements of their heritage, and not focus on those sites listed as world heritage.

In October 1972, an international ICOMOS colloquium on the theme “The Revival of Historic Towns and Villages, according to the Venice Charter” was held in Mexico City. As a result of the discussions and presentations, recommendations were issued to governments and organizations to generate conservation policies for this type of heritage, whose priorities could be drawn from inventories of the properties. They promoted the use of various means to “increase awareness in communities of the values of cultural heritage”⁴⁵ (INBA and INAH, 1972), as well as the inclusion of knowledge about cultural heritage in educational plans at the primary level. This issue of the importance of citizen or civil organization participation became increasingly relevant in the Mexican context, especially in relation to historical heritage. Additionally, they stressed the need to train specialized technicians in this field. They also proposed the search for credit systems and financial solutions for owners of historic buildings. Finally, the need to generate development and housing plans, as well as pilot conservation plans for cities, towns and historic sites was proposed (INBA and INAH, 1972; CEDOCLA, 1973).

⁴⁵ Original quotation: “crear en las comunidades conciencia de los valores del patrimonio cultural.”

In 1973, the First Latin American Regional Seminar on Conservation and Restoration (Serlacor, 1973; CEDOCLA, 1974: 23-24) was held at the Churubusco Center, an international event in which fundamental issues of conservation theory and regulations, professional training, as well as specific topics of conservation of movable and immovable heritage were discussed.⁴⁶ The conclusion of the event in particular

*calls upon all states to take all legislative, administrative and financial measures urgently needed to enable the creation of a framework of professional restorers comparable to the framework of scientific personnel in museums and similar institutions*⁴⁷ (Serlacor, 1973: 2)

A document developed by ICCROM⁴⁸ in 1969 on the status of conservation professionals was taken up again, insisting that for interventions there should be “highly qualified personnel in the offices responsible for approving and directing restoration and urban intervention projects”⁴⁹ (Serlacor, 1973: 4). It also sought to strengthen cooperation between restoration and training centers in Latin America and the Caribbean, by compiling a list of existing centers, and through the proposal

*to organize a Latin American Association of Professional Restorers that will be the maximum organization where the efforts of all in the fight for the Defense of Cultural Heritage will be united, will be the basis for structuring our task, will serve as a watchdog and will regulate the technical and specialized action in this field*⁵⁰ (Serlacor, 1973: 2-3)

The Serlacor stressed the importance of the principles and criteria defined in the *Venice Charter* and the *Norms of Quito*, and urged governments to incorporate them into their cultural heritage conservation policies. These principles, applicable to the field of movable and immovable property, should be widely disseminated as an indispensable measure to ensure positive results (Serlacor, 1973: 3). The analysis of numerous case studies of the region were a subject of concern at the seminar, in particular the situation of numerous historic centers “frequently subjected to demolition, destruction and scenographic adulterations”⁵¹; they urged ICOMOS to broaden its principles, in order to be able to direct solutions towards historic centers and thus guarantee their conservation, including their values without “altering the social, cultural and economic conditions of their inhabitants”⁵² (Serlacor, 1973: 4). Another issue of concern, translated into strong criticism, was the numerous reconstruction projects, carried out both in historical and archaeological monuments, and

condemn the proliferation of works that –far from the spirit of the Venice Charter– falsify and nullify the values of the monument understood as a document of history and art. They reject the mistaken “reconstructions” such as those of Cholula and

⁴⁶ Participants in this meeting included Karl-Werner Bachman, Guillermo Bonfil, Juan Corradini, Guglielmo De Angelis d'Ossat, Salvador Díaz-Berrio, Graziano Gasparini, Alejandro Gertz Manero, Henry M.W. Hodges, José Luis Lorenzo, Edson Motta, Paul Philippot, Víctor Pimentel, Francisco Stastny, Johannes Taubert, Giorgio Torracca, Luis Torres, and Jorge Zepeda, with participants from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Venezuela, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Venezuela.

⁴⁷ Original quotation: “hace un llamado a todos los estados para que tomen todas las medidas legislativas, administrativas y financieras urgentes, necesarias para permitir la constitución de un marco de restauradores profesionales asimilables al marco del personal científico de los museos e instituciones similares.”

⁴⁸ This text had been drafted by Getrud Tripp, P. Rotondi, P. Sneyers y Paul Philippot.

⁴⁹ Original quotation: “personal altamente calificado en las oficinas responsables de aprobar y dirigir los proyectos de restauración y de intervención urbanística.”

⁵⁰ Original quotation: “organizar una Asociación Latinoamericana de Restauradores Profesionales que sea el máximo organismo donde se aglutinen los esfuerzos de todos en la lucha por la Defensa del Patrimonio Cultural, sea la base para estructurar nuestra tarea, sirva de organismo de vigilancia y norme la actuación técnica y especializada en este campo.”

⁵¹ Original quotation: “frecuentemente sometidos a demoliciones, destrucciones y adulteraciones escenográficas.”

⁵² Original quotation: “alterar las condiciones sociales, culturales y económicas de sus habitantes.”

Tiwanaku; they do not accept the scenographic inventions such as those made in some urban environments of Arequipa, Xochimilco, in the plaza of San Agustín in Morelia, or in the construction of Guatavita. They also express their concern for the danger that threatens the integrity of the Plaza de Armas of Cuzco, one of the most important urban spaces of the continent, where it is intended to erect a monument that, without judging the importance of the deserved homage, would damage the total value of the whole⁵³ (Serlacor, 1973: 5).



CHOLULA. Image: Valerie Magar.

In analyzing the use of conservation and restoration techniques not always adapted to local contexts, they recommended the need to “adapt theoretical knowledge to local situations and the use of the available materials”⁵⁴ (Serlacor, 1973: 10), and the

importance of maintaining adequate climatic conditions for the conservation of cultural objects and the dangers of the indiscriminate use of air conditioning devices, which should not be used without a prior evaluation of their effectiveness, are of decisive importance. These devices can be very convenient in certain circumstances and totally inadequate in others, as is the case in humid tropical zones⁵⁵ (Serlacor, 1973: 11).

⁵³ Original quotation: “condena por la proliferación de obras que —alejadas del espíritu de la Carta de Venecia— falsifican y anulan los valores del monumento entendido como documento de historia y de arte. Rechazan las equivocadas “reconstrucciones” como las de Cholula y Tiwanaku; no aceptan las invenciones escenográficas como las realizadas en algunos ambientes urbanos de Arequipa, Xochimilco, en la plaza de San Agustín de Morelia o en la construcción de Guatavita. Expresan igualmente su preocupación por el peligro que amenaza la integridad de la plaza de Armas del Cuzco, uno de los espacios urbanos más importantes del continente, donde se pretende levantar un monumento que, sin juzgar la importancia del merecido homenaje, perjudicaría el valor total del conjunto.”

⁵⁴ Original quotation: “adaptar los conocimientos teóricos a las situaciones locales y al uso de los materiales disponibles.”

⁵⁵ Original quotation: “importancia decisiva en la conservación de los objetos culturales que tiene el mantenimiento de condiciones climáticas adecuadas y sobre los peligros del uso indiscriminado de los aparatos de climatización, los cuales no deben emplearse sin hacer previamente una evaluación de su efectividad. Es uso de estos aparatos puede ser muy conveniente en ciertas circunstancias y totalmente inadecuado en otras como es el caso de las zonas tropicales húmedas.”

Other topics related to the conservation of movable property and museums were also addressed during the conference. Many of the recommendations proposed at this seminar are still very relevant today. Thanks to the large attendance at the Serlacor, many issues could be discussed openly, which would lead to the search for solutions in the following years.

INAH, the Institute of Anthropological Research⁵⁶ of UNAM, and the Mexican Society of Anthropology organized a meeting on the conservation of monuments and archaeological sites in 1974. Important recommendations were derived from it on the importance of consolidating the pre-Hispanic monuments, taking care of their environment and avoiding any reconstruction. In his publication *La restauración arquitectónica de edificios arqueológicos* (1975), Augusto Molina strongly criticized the practice of archaeological conservation in Mexico, with excessive reconstructions. This gradually led to a rethinking of the methods and materials used.

New perceptions of historical centers and the conservation of built heritage were also reflected in the publications of those years. Salvador Díaz-Berrio published "Bases para rehabilitar poblaciones y ciudades históricas de México" in 1974, a text that responded to the needs created by the earthquake in Mexico City in 1973, but which already outlined the idea of considering cities as organisms that should remain alive (Díaz-Berrio, 1990: 345). Carlos Flores Marini published *Restauración de ciudades* in 1976, where he emphasized the need to consider not only monuments but the broader environment (Flores Marini, 2014: 59), a theme that would be taken up again and on, which much would be insisted in the following years (Díaz-Berrio and Orive Bellinger, 1981; González Pozo, 1984).

In 1974, the Inter-American Seminar on Experiences in the Conservation and Restoration of Monumental Heritage of the Colonial and Republican Periods was held under the auspices of the OAS. This seminar led to the drafting of the *Santo Domingo Resolution*, in which Carlos Chanfón, Carlos Flores Marini, Graziano Gasparini (Venezuela), José Manuel González Valcarcel (Spain), Enrique Govenanto (United States), José B. Lacret (OAS), Eugenio Pérez Montás (Dominican Republic) and Roberto de la Vega (Colombia) participated (Flores Marini, 1976: 62-63). This text stressed the importance of preserving historic centers in Latin America, taking into account the societies that inhabit them. They also proposed the formation of an Inter-American Association of architects and specialists in the protection of monumental heritage, which would promote the exchange of information among its members.

That same year, INAH and the Mexican Attorney General's Office organized the International Meeting on the Defense of Cultural Heritage as a Reunion with Social Solidarity and National Unity, which was held at the National Museum of Anthropology.⁵⁷ As a result of this meeting, a document known as the *Charter of Mexico in defense of cultural heritage* was adopted, which is extremely interesting for its social and anthropological approach to the protection of cultural heritage. The charter comprises seven points that include the defense of the creativity of each community, with the appropriate resources for this purpose;

⁵⁶ Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas.

⁵⁷ Participants in this meeting included Darcy Ribeiro (Brazil), Gammar Mojtar (Deputy Minister of Culture, Egypt), Bonnie Burham (International Foundation for Art Research, New York), Luis Luján Muñoz (Museum of Anthropology, Guatemala), M.N. Despande (Central Bureau of Research, India), Peider Konz and Giuliana Luna (UNSDRI), Francesco Negri (Fine Arts Administration, Italy), Alejandro Gertz Manero (Oficial Mayor de la PGR, Mexico), Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, Augusto Molina Montes, Carlos Chanfón, Jaime Cama, José Luis Lorenzo (INAH), Salomón Nahmad (Instituto Nacional Indigenista, Mexico), Alejandro Henestrosa Solórzano (Mexico), Roberto Fernández Iglesias (Panama), Luis Guillermo Lumbreras (Museo Nacional de Antropología y Arqueología, Peru) and Stefano Varese and Franklin Pease (Peru) (INAH, 1976).

the inclusion of the defense of heritage in development programs; the recognition of cultural diversity and the rights of ethnic communities to conserve and develop their cultural heritage; and finally, the emphasis on the link between natural and cultural heritage. The last paragraph of the text stresses the importance of knowledge of the heritage in order to conserve and protect it, "through continuous research that commits the participation of the local population. It is also essential that this documentation and its results be returned to the community as an instrument to defend the authenticity and protection of their heritage" (*Charter of Mexico*, 1976).

In the late 1970s, a new Ministry for Human Settlements and Public Works (SAHOP) was created in Mexico, which generated an Urban Development Plan in 1977. According to Díaz-Berrio, this allowed for the integration of heritage into land-use strategies and plans (Díaz-Berrio, 1986: 46-47). This same ministry promoted the unification of methods and systems for the inventory of built heritage (Díaz-Berrio, 1986: 49), an essential element to gather information for informed planning.

In the following decade, meetings were held to reflect on heritage conservation actions, in light of the various recommendations and seminars held, which led to a review of the ways of acting in the conservation of cultural heritage. The 1972 legislation had opened up new possibilities for the protection of larger areas of heritage, but it was still burdened with relatively narrow terminology and definitions, with the concepts of monuments and areas of monument (the latter understood as a series of monuments rather than as larger ensembles). In particular, the piece of legislation continued to prioritize archaeological heritage over historical or artistic heritage. This was evident in the decisions taken in the Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlan from 1973, where the pre-Hispanic settlement became a priority over colonial monuments, despite the criticisms raised at the time. In an interview conducted by Salvador Díaz-Berrio, Paul Philippot mentioned that, despite the knowledge and the strengthening of the discipline in the last years, in Mexico

Regarding the work done on monuments, there is a lack of correlation between archaeology and art history, as happens in all countries to a certain extent. But here in Mexico, it manifests itself with sometimes serious consequences due to the lack of understanding and a policy oriented towards this correlation.

The case of the Templo Mayor is a crucial example that shows, on the one hand, an important advance in archaeological conservation that also includes an adequate presentation of the archaeological elements; but, on the other hand, it highlights a rupture in the consideration and presentation of other historical periods. Having known that site before, I wonder why the continuity and stratification of all the cultural elements that could have coexisted there could not be maintained.

Regarding the monuments of the colonial period, they give the impression of projecting a modern taste for stone materials without a systematic search for the real and historical appearance of the immovable heritage. This tendency seems to be reinforced by the current appearance of the pre-Hispanic monuments, devoid of renders, finishes and colors. Thus, a recent taste and a modern vision of the ancient is projected, and on some occasions, a mythical past is sought in false images of ancient elements (Díaz-Berrio, 1986a: 7).

This severe analysis coincided with numerous criticisms made by Mexican professionals and led to several meetings at INAH in the following years to evaluate conservation policies and strategies, which led to the issuance of new guidelines and approaches seeking to limit excessive reconstructions.

The 1980s were marked by severe economic crises in many countries, which significantly affected Mexico and coincided with the end of the agreement with the OAS that allowed scholarships to be offered to Latin American students at Churubusco. Consequently, the number of foreign participants in the courses was reduced. This also coincided with the creation of postgraduate courses in architectural conservation in universities in other Latin American countries. However, international activities linked to the Churubusco center were maintained, particularly a course organized by INAH and the OAS on methodologies for working in historic sites (Díaz-Berrio, 1986a). Also, following the terrible earthquake that affected Mexico City in 1985, a workshop was held on the rehabilitation of housing in seismic zones, organized by INAH, ICCROM, the United Nations Center for Human Settlements (UNCHS-Habitat), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Ministries of Public Education (SEP), Foreign Affairs (SRE) and Urban Development and Ecology (SEDUE), and the Institute and Faculty of Engineering of UNAM (Anon, 1986).

In that same decade, and with the support of the OAS, CARIMOS was launched. Initially conceived as a ten-year Caribbean Plan for Monuments and Sites, to restore and conserve monuments in the Greater Caribbean region on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America. Later, CARIMOS was maintained as a regional organization whose activity continues to date. From this platform, Carlos Flores Marini promoted the link between conservation specialists in Latin America (Flores Marini, 2003), fostering a broad vision of heritage and seeking to maintain a continuous collaboration.

Final considerations

In the three decades following the end of World War II, and in the face of rapid global changes in all sectors, there has been a growing reflection on what the discipline of conservation is and who should practice it. The notion of what is to be protected has been growing as more elements are subjected to internal and external pressures for the current society and for future generations. In the field of built heritage, there has been a shift from an approach focused on monumental heritage to one that contemplates diverse buildings and groups of monuments understood more widely, considering their broader cultural and natural setting and environment, seen as in dissociable elements.

During this period, fundamental texts were adopted to regulate the work of conservation, particularly the *Venice Charter*, which has been a fundamental guiding document, coupled with other documents adapted to the realities of other countries or regions, in particular, the *Norms of Quito* and the *Mexico Charter in defense of cultural heritage*. Architectural conservation courses were also developed during this period, which allowed for the preparation of specialized professionals. Of particular relevance for Latin America were the courses delivered at CERLACOR, and later at the National School of Conservation, Restoration and Museography, where the coexistence of scholarship holders and international teachers allowed for a rich exchange of ideas, as well as the generation of knowledge and approaches of their own. Those who participated in these initial moments, including Manuel del Castillo Negrete, Salvador Díaz-Berrio, Carlos Flores Marini, Salvador Aceves, Carlos Chanfón, Luis Torres, Jaime Cama Villafranca and Sergio Arturo Montero, promoted communication in different spheres, both at the level of training courses in the different teaching centers, but also by participating in ICCROM's activities, particularly in the General Assembly meetings, or as members of its Council. All these were fruitful spaces for exchange where theory and practice could be compared and discussed and where the needs and achievements of different countries and regions of the world could be put into perspective. For many years, the spirit of international cooperation, promoted by UNESCO and ICCROM from its inception, and driven by the *Venice Charter* and the recommendations of the 1964 conference, was predominant.

The 1960s and 1970s were pivotal, in response to calls for attention, in building new visions of conservation practice in many countries. The strong economic crises of the following decade, especially in Mexico from 1982 onwards, marked a substantial change in the possibilities for exchange. With the end of the agreement with the OAS, the possibility of mobilizing Latin American students at Centro Churubusco became more complex. In those years, there were also fewer Mexicans in ICCROM courses.

The decades following the meeting in Venice in 1964 and the adoption of the *Venice Charter* were fundamental in setting a new period in the conservation of built heritage. The road leading to policies and models for the conservation of built heritage in Mexico has not been easy due to the numerous social, economic and political pressures that have marked each era. The definition of clear frameworks for action continues to be a priority in Mexico (and beyond) and an action that should be remembered continuously as generations of conservation professionals work on it. Our profession always requires a delicate balance to put theory into practice, understanding each case as unique in its context and environment.

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