

Conversaciones...

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Roberto Pane. Editorial

We have dedicated two volumes of *Conversaciones...* to Roberto Pane (1897-1987), a singularly important figure, but who is still relatively unknown in some countries, particularly outside Europe. Roberto Pane, originally from Taranto but who lived for a long time in Naples, was not only a humanist and architect, but also a painter, photographer, and prolific writer.

We have chosen seven texts from his vast bibliography to attempt to show the diversity of the themes he developed, as well as the evolution of some of his ideas. Through his writings, we discover a man with a clear passion for conserving heritage in a world severely affected by the post-war period and by the rapid urban changes that followed in the subsequent decades. Throughout his life, he maintained an unwavering commitment, supported by admirable criticism and lucidity, and was able to adjust to changes and reformulate theoretical approaches. In his texts, we find novel ideas, which anticipated many of the discourses still relevant today, such as the social importance of heritage, and the global vision of the territory in order to understand the heritage in its environment.

At a crucial moment, when theory and practice had to be reconsidered, Roberto Pane played an important role in the development of the discipline of conservation. From the 1930s he taught at the School of Architecture of Naples and in the following years he promoted a conservation study program in Naples, establishing in 1969 the second Italian School of Specialization in Restoration after Rome in which he maintained the importance of informed critical judgment, combined with creativity, to generate solutions that made possible the coexistence of the old and the new. In 1949, he was associated with UNESCO, at a time when the nature of conservation was being debated, as was the need for countries to adopt measures for the protection of a global heritage.

The texts presented here, many of which are translated for the first time in Spanish and English, are a testimony to his desire to conserve heritage, as well as to his sensitivity to textures, images, volumes, light and shadow, and the scale of buildings and urban centers. They also denote his love for his country and its territory, and for the important link between the urban and the natural, concepts that continue to be absolutely valid.

The first text we chose “Il restauro dei monumenti e la chiesa di s. Chiara in Napoli” was published in 1944, and again in 1948 and in 1987 with minor modifications. That early text frames a reflection on the conservation of heritage confronted by the magnitude of the destruction caused by the war, and the urgent and necessary nature of restoration. After a critique of stylistic restorations, Pane focuses his attention on what should be the restoration of monuments and urban ensembles, stressing that each case is unique as a work of art (in

a clear nod to the ideas of Benedetto Croce), and requires specific solutions. He focuses his analysis on the case of the church of Santa Chiara in Naples, and the implications of the destruction caused by the bombing of this important site at the heart of the city. His discussion deals with possible interventions inside the church, but also includes in the analysis the immediate surroundings of the church, following the ideas of his master Gustavo Giovannoni, and the possibilities for liberating spaces in the surrounding environment.

“Le Corbusier e le tendenze meccanicistiche dell’architettura moderna”, first published in 1944 and again in 1948, in 1956 and in 1987 with minor modifications, contains an analysis of the ideas of the polemical French-Swiss architect, in particular those on mechanistic architecture and the notion of the house as a “machine for living,” which clashes with Pane’s notion of architecture as art. For Pane in fact, it is not possible to separate or isolate the practical program from its aesthetic design, and he therefore advocates for an architecture that responds to post-war expectations, where rationalism does not dictate everything.

“Architettura e letteratura”, published in 1948, considers the analysis of the controversy in architecture between the advocates of functional architecture with modern techniques and materials, and the supporters of architecture as art. Taking up Croce’s ideas, Pane compares literature, guided by reason, with poetry, which transcends the practical and equates rational architecture with architecture as art, with a clear preference, however, for the latter. This short article, often shared and quoted by many famous scholars in Italy, as Bruno Zevi, is maybe one of his most influential texts on architectural critic.

The following text “Città antiche edilizia nuova” (1959) analyzes the important theme of the insertion of new buildings and elements in ancient cities, a theme of particular relevance with the rapid urban changes that were already taking shape at the end of the 1950s. It is a text that denounces the destruction of the Italian landscape. But Pane also seeks solutions to the issue of compatibility between old and new buildings, which for him should be an obvious evolution of cities. His reference to the “greater beauty of a city [which] consists in its value as an organism” shows the importance for Pane of maintaining the living character of cities, with the “choral value of historical stratifications.” Here Pane dissociates himself from those who proposed the need to preserve historic centers as spaces frozen in time, and promotes the idea of centers in which old buildings could coexist harmoniously with new proposals.

The “Conférence introductive” was the paper that opened the well-known architects’ congress held in Venice in May 1964 which gave birth to the *Venice Charter*, and offers a clear vision of the elements that were at stake at that time on the subject of the conservation of monuments and urban ensembles. The text stresses the importance of heritage conservation and restoration in the post-war context, and focuses on the limits and possibilities of actions in different situations. In particular, it confronts the case of ruins with that of historic centers, for which it is necessary to consider their cultural continuity. This presentation caused strong controversy due to the criticism of the reconstruction interventions carried out by the Americans in the Stoà of Attalus in Athens, as well as the transfer of “The Cloisters” complex, to form the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of New York. In that text, Pane advocated for greater clarity in the regulations for conservation, and the need for a dialogue between disciplines and actors to find appropriate solutions.

The last two texts show Roberto Pane’s interest in Latin America. The first of these, “Restauro e conservazione nell’America Latina” (1973) is the result of an analysis of the publication compiled by Graziano Gasparini, which had been published the previous year in the *Boletín del Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Estéticas* of Caracas. Pane comments on each of the

texts. That volume of the *Boletín* also contained the recently approved document of the *Norms of Quito*. While Pane acknowledges the merit of some of the approaches in this document, he makes a clear recommendation to be cautious about the implications of tourism on heritage sites. The second text is a narrative and analysis of Roberto Pane's first trip to Mexico in 1962, published as a text of a lecture in 1965. In addition to describing different sites in this country, he describes the problems of conservation and urban planning, particularly in Mexico City.

Each of these texts has been illustrated with photographs and a selection of drawings by Roberto Pane, and we are deeply grateful to Giulio Pane and, in particular, to Andrea Pane for their collaboration in obtaining the images, and for the permission to use them to complement the texts published here. The texts are translated, as always, into Spanish, and for the first time are also presented in English.

The second volume dedicated to Roberto Pane contains the contributions of the authors invited to comment on the texts and the influence of this important architect, confronted with the ideas of these authors. The volume closes with the updated bibliography of Roberto Pane, re-elaborated and updated for *Conversaciones...*

Andrea Pane and Giulio Pane, grandson and son of Roberto Pane, open this volume. Andrea Pane develops a text on the three trips to Mexico made by Roberto Pane from 1962 to 1974, using the images to reflect on the impressions caused by those visits, and the changes seen in that short period of time due to restoration projects.

Giulio Pane offers us a personal vision of what photography meant to Roberto Pane, both personally and professionally. The text takes us back to the not-so-distant context in which magazine layouts were made by hand, and where the selection and design of the images required prints in the chosen format, in a process that allowed the tonality and saturation of the photographs to be controlled.

Beatriz M. Kühl, with her usual clarity, after situating Roberto Pane's development, reflects on the lessons that are still valid today, and in particular for the Brazilian context. She shows the importance of rescuing the real debate, with all its inflections, instead of falling into binary discussions on heritage conservation. Kühl is also working on a publication that will allow Portuguese-speaking readers access to Roberto Pane's main texts.

Nicolas Detry and Luigi Guerriero focus their attention on methodological approaches to the restoration of the church of Santa Chiara. To do so, they begin with a description of the modifications made to the Angevin church in the 18th century. On that basis, and with the support of archival research and detailed archaeological analysis, they seek to highlight the decisions made after the bombing of 1943. They offer an interesting reflection on other alternatives that could have been adopted for the restoration of Santa Chiara.

Nivaldo Andrade moves the analysis to the Latin American continent, with particular emphasis on the 1960s and 1970s. With the support of archival information, he reviews the contact and exchange of ideas that took place at that time, particularly with the participation of Latin American students in the restoration courses at the University of La Sapienza in Rome, as well as at ICCROM, and looks for connections and influences with the postgraduate courses that were later opened in Latin America. Through specific research in the Pane Archives, it also reveals Roberto Pane's correspondence with the Brazilian milieu, highlighting the existence of a program for a study trip of his to Salvador de Bahia in 1969, also aimed at giving some lectures; this trip in the end never took place.

The last three contributions by Stella Casiello, Marco Dezzi Bardeschi and Giovanni Carbonara are actually previously published texts, all in the tribute volume *Roberto Pane tra storia e restauro. Architettura, città, paesaggio* (Marsilio, 2010) but whose relevance seemed important for this volume. We thank the authors and their families for permission to reproduce and translate them in *Conversaciones...*

Stella Casiello, a student and then assistant of Roberto Pane, focuses on the impact this important teacher had on her own understanding of conservation. In a personal tribute text, which served as an introduction to the aforementioned tribute volume, she shares the vision of what for Roberto Pane was the built heritage and its wider environment, and how this had an impact on his work as a restoration architect and as a teacher, both in Naples and in other parts of Italy and beyond.

Marco Dezzi Bardeschi (1934-2018) dedicated this article to review Roberto Pane's vision of built heritage, in particular his understanding of monumental buildings accompanied by so-called minor architecture, which, together with the wider environment, should guide conservation. He emphasizes the social, psychological aspect of heritage and its fundamental role in understanding the continuity that exists in historic centers, whose life and memory must be maintained.

The volume closes with the contribution by Giovanni Carbonara (1942-2023), in which the author analyzes the importance of Roberto Pane's contributions to the *restauro critico* in order to address fundamental conservation and restoration issues. In particular, he takes up Pane's reflections on issues that are still valid, especially the complex subject of the conservation of historic centers, contrasting Pane's ideas with his own and with a broader theoretical discussion, with the clarity that always characterized him.

We hope that this double issue dedicated to Roberto Pane will serve to make known the way of thinking of this important architect and humanist, whose ideas resonate to this day, in the face of the challenges of heritage conservation.

Rome and Naples, Valerie Magar and Andrea Pane
June 2024