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en INGLÉS

# The historic city as an urban planning problem in the 1970s. Fernando Chueca Goitia's contribution to the European debate

ASCENSIÓN HERNÁNDEZ MARTÍNEZ

*Translation by Valerie Magar*

## **Abstract**

*During the 1960s and 1970s, European cities underwent a profound transformation process in which relevant elements of Western architectural heritage were sacrificed. Spain was no exception, and the impact of developmentalism (1959-1975) was devastating in our country. As a consequence of this situation, the argument of the historic city emerged as a severe urban planning problem, which gave rise to virulent discussions. In this context, the architect Fernando Chueca Goitia became a critical spectator of the phenomenon, which he denounced in public on repeated occasions, assessing the causes and effects, identifying the agents and protagonists and denouncing institutional neglect through an active work of dissemination that included articles in the press and specialized magazines, conferences and books such as *La destrucción del legado urbanístico español* (1977). His ideas should be considered in relation to the thinking of contemporary figures such as Jane Jacobs, Cesare Brandi and Giulio Carlo Argan, among other professionals, whose opinions show how in the 1960s and 1970s, there was a growing feeling of disgust and rejection of the effects of the urban theories of the modern movement on the historic city and urban life in general; this would be the seed of the demand for another urban model more respectful of the historical heritage and also of its social uses.*

**Keywords:** *historic center, destruction, conservation, urbanism.*

## Relevance and topicality of the debate on historic cities

*The problem of the fate or destiny that historic cities must endure is extremely serious and, in my opinion, it must be listed as one of the core concerns. What is to be done with these cities, which are the majority in the Old World? The rest of the educated world will not be indifferent to whatever is done in Segovia or Toledo or Salamanca. I believe Unamuno was the one who said: I want to write the universal history of Cerezo de Abajo<sup>1</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1965: 274).*

The conservation of the historic city was a matter of fundamental reflection throughout the professional career of Fernando Chueca Goitia; as an expert historian of architecture and urban planning, Goitia noted in the 1960s and 1970s the progressive destruction of some of the most significant historic cities in our country, victims of the accelerated process of economic and social transformation of the European continent (more acute in Spain, a country that was beginning to recover from a terrible post-war period). At that time, the historic centers appeared not only as the definition of a part of the city that had its own personality,

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<sup>1</sup> Original quotation: "El problema de la suerte o destino que han de sufrir las ciudades históricas, es de una gravedad extraordinaria y a mi juicio debe inscribirse en el centro de las preocupaciones de nuestra época. ¿Qué va a hacerse en el viejo mundo con estas ciudades que son la mayoría? Lo que se haga en Segovia o en Toledo o en Salamanca, no será indiferente al resto del mundo culto. Me parece que fue Unamuno quien dijo: quiero escribir la historia universal de Cerezo de Abajo."

defined values and morphology, but also as a problem that could not be solved with the simple extinction or consumption of the area for speculative purposes. In this challenging context in which the notion of a monument considered to be an isolated historic building had been expanded to include its surroundings, whether or not it had constructions of particular relevance since its environmental value was beginning to be appreciated; there were many voices and authors who reflected on this issue at that time. Although European cases have been studied, especially in Italy (Pane, 2008), little or nothing is known about the debates in Spain or the contributions made by Spanish professionals. In this regard, it is necessary to highlight the set of reflections on the historic city contributed for decades by Fernando Chueca Goitia, who made urban heritage conservation a central aspect of his work as an architect and as a historian, the best-known facets of his professional task<sup>2</sup> (Figure 1).



FIGURE 1. FERNANDO CHUECA GOITIA IN HIS STUDY.  
Image: Colección Fernando Chueca Aguinaga.

A critical spectator and active denouncer of this situation, Fernando Chueca not only gave lectures and supported platforms and actions in defense of the endangered heritage but also developed a prolific career as a writer in this field. He produced an extensive series of articles and texts (Chueca Goitia, 1963; 1965; 1968; 1975), among them a little known essay, *La destrucción del legado urbanístico español* (Chueca Goitia, 1977b), which has been considered a “courageous, critical contribution to the problem of our historic cities”<sup>3</sup> (Navascués Palacio, 1992: 108). As a whole, these works have gone unnoticed, if not directly ignored by artistic historiography, but today they are compulsory reading due to the interest and topicality of their contents (Hernández, 2019). Through the analysis of these texts, we complete both the professional and intellectual profile of a key figure in contemporary Spanish artistic culture, as well as the study of a defining episode in the history of Spanish urban planning in the last century: the effects of the urban speculation processes produced in the 1960’s and 1970’s framed in the Spanish developmentalism on the conservation of our historic cities.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> On the biographical and professional profile of the architect Fernando Chueca Goitia (1911-2004, qualified as an architect in 1936), numerous references can be consulted (Anés, 2007; García, 2002; Navascués, 1992; Sambricio, 1998; Sambricio, 2004 y 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Original quotation: “valiente aportación crítica al problema de nuestras ciudades históricas.”

<sup>4</sup> This article is the development of an initial paper presented at the Spanish Congress of Art History held in Salamanca in May 2021 (Hernández, 2021), and is part of the research project *Los arquitectos restauradores en la España del Franquismo. De la continuidad de la Ley de 1933 a la recepción de la teoría europea* (proyecto I+D+i 2015-2019, ref. HAR2015- 68109-P), and in the reference research group *Vestigium* (H19\_20R), funded by the Department of Science, Universidad y Sociedad del Conocimiento del Gobierno de Aragón, and co-financed by the Programa Operativo Feder Aragón, from 2020 to 2022.

Chueca's reflection is inserted in a context of growing alertness and awareness toward the conservation of European cultural heritage that resulted in several international meetings and documents, including the XII UNESCO Conference (Paris, 1962), the V Meeting of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 1964), the *European Charter of Architectural Heritage* and the *Amsterdam Declaration*, both in 1975, a year dedicated to European architectural heritage, in addition to the numerous congresses held throughout the continent, including those of Gubbio in 1960 and Bergamo in 1972 (Italy). In this country, the deterioration of the historic city as a product of the industrial recovery that took place in the fifteen years following the end of World War II was being discussed, as denounced by the architect Antonio Cederna in 1961.

*The city and the Italian landscape are going through a crucial moment in their history. Our country is suffering the consequences of the industrial revolution a century late: today, so great is the speed of transformations, so changed are the dimensions of urban problems, so imperfect is our consciousness of public interest, so overwhelming are the forces that lead to chaos, that if we do not all make an effort to understand how things stand, if we do not all commit ourselves to contribute to changing the current state of affairs, we can reasonably say that soon the 'country of art' will become an archaeological expression, and the 'garden of Europe' a lunar desert dotted with extinct craters<sup>5</sup> (Cederna, 1961: 49).*

A debate that was also developing in Spain,<sup>6</sup> since the safeguarding and revitalization of historic centers was the subject addressed in several congresses such as the Urban and Territorial Planning Congress in Santiago de Compostela in 1961,<sup>7</sup> or the ICOMOS Congress in Cáceres in 1967 (*ABC*, 1967c: 95).<sup>8</sup> A few years later, in 1972, and as a reaction to the massive destruction of historic architecture in our country, the archives of the professional associations of architects held several meetings to address the issue, which resulted in the *Declaration of Palma de Mallorca* (1972) (Martí, 1974). This document called for measures to be taken against "the uncontrolled expansion of cities and the deterioration and destruction of the cultural, architectural and environmental wealth of the national heritage"<sup>9</sup> in the face of the uselessness of the administration. It demanded the drafting of special urban development plans in the Historic-Artistic Ensembles to protect historic cities.

Indeed, there were numerous articles published in the Spanish press that expressed concern about the situation of our cultural heritage, as shown in the editorial of the *ABC* newspaper of July 10, 1963, entitled "La Gallina de los Huevos de Oro."<sup>10</sup> It defended the need to draw up a national plan to protect urban centers of archaeological, historical-artistic and tourist value, which would then filter down to local plans to protect these areas with appropriate

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<sup>5</sup> Original quotation: "La città e il paesaggio italiano stanno attraversando il momento cruciale della loro storia. Il nostro Paese sconta con un secolo di ritardo le conseguenze della rivoluzione industriale: così grande è oggi la velocità delle trasformazioni, così mutate sono le dimensioni dei problemi urbanistici, così imperfetta è la nostra coscienza dell'interesse pubblico, così strapotenti le forze che portano al caos, che se tutti non facciamo lo sforzo di capire come stanno le cose, se tutti non ci impegniamo per contribuire a mutare l'attuale stato di fatto, possiamo ben dire che presto il 'paese dell'arte' diventerà un'espressione archeologica, e il 'giardino d'Europa' un deserto lunare punteggiato di crateri spenti."

<sup>6</sup> We cannot analyze this debate in-depth on this occasion, but we can point out that there is an abundant bibliography that shows how many professionals and media were interested in the subject (Beltrán, 1959; Allanegui, 1968; Borobio, 1968; Martí, 1974; González-Valcárcel, 1975; Menéndez, 1975; Humanes, 1978).

<sup>7</sup> The congress held in Santiago had as its theme "the enhancement of monuments and historic urban centers," with the participation of professionals from all over Europe, and its conclusions were published in numerous international journals (Ostrowski, 1962).

<sup>8</sup> Organized by the Directorate General of Fine Arts, this congress was attended, among others, by Piero Gazzola, *soprintendente* of Veneto and one of the drafters of the *Venice Charter*, François Serlin, Inspector General of Monuments of France, Gratiniano Nieto, Director General of Fine Arts, and Gabriel Alomar, General Commissioner of National Artistic Heritage.

<sup>9</sup> Original quotation: "la expansión incontrolada de las ciudades y el deterioro y la destrucción de la riqueza cultural, arquitectónica y ambiental del patrimonio nacional."

<sup>10</sup> The Hen with the Golden Eggs.

ordinances. This was the only feasible solution to avoid the construction of skyscrapers in front of a cathedral, it was said. "A city is not a collection of real estate interests. It is a way of life, a historical crystallization, a monumental ensemble"<sup>11</sup> (ABC, 1963: 32).

In the midst of this intense debate, of which we can only point out a few highlights in this article, but which was picked up in the press at the time as evidenced by the monographic issue dedicated to endangered architecture in the journal *CAU. Cuadernos de Arquitectura y Urbanismo* (1975) (Figures 2a and 2b). Chueca turned to the defense of heritage not only through written texts such as those published in this magazine and others that have been collected recently to which we will allude later (Hernández, 2019), but also in punctual actions such as conferences and newspaper articles in which he pronounced himself on specific aspects and cases. For example, in 1962, he publicly opposed the sale of the portrait of the Duke of Lerma by Rubens, which could have meant the departure from our country of this masterpiece by the Dutch artist.<sup>12</sup> The following year, in 1963, Chueca joined those against the demolition of the Teatro Real, an option that was being considered after the Juan March Foundation announced its intention to build a new opera house. Architects as relevant on the national scene as Secundino Zuazo, Luis Gutiérrez Soto, Miguel Fisac, José Luis Fernández del Amo, whom Chueca Goitia joined, expressed their firm opposition to such a proposal. Chueca, in particular, deplored the initiative as a monstrosity, considering this building as a key piece in Madrid's urban planning (ABC, 1963a: 28-29). A year later, in 1964, Chueca participated in a series of conferences held in Segovia as part of a social movement against the construction of a block of apartments on the northern façade of the city (ABC, 1964a: 54). And in January 1965, as a member of the Spanish Association of Art Critics, he opposed the intention of the City Council of Soria to demolish the Museo Numantino (ABC, 1965a: 53). That same month Chueca Goitia gave a conference in the Official Chamber of Industry of Madrid with the title "Madrid, as a problem." In it, he exposed the problems of congestion of the city and the need to articulate its interior without making radical reforms (ABC, 1965b: 51). A year later, in 1966, he returned to reflect on the difficulties of the capital in another conference entitled "Panorama urbanístico de Madrid," at the Real Sociedad Económica Matritense de Amigos del País, and took this opportunity to express his opinion on the absence of "an urban policy of great style, developed on three levels: that which could be called the vegetative or growth, the functional and the spiritual and representative"<sup>13</sup> (ABC, 1966: 104).

Two years later, in 1967, Chueca spoke out in favor of the preservation of a unique fragment of nineteenth-century Madrid, an exceptional testimony of Elizabethan architecture and urban planning: the neighborhood of Las Pozas, a modest urban complex for workers and small merchants located in a triangular space between the streets of Princesa, Alberto Aguilera and Serrano, designed by the architect Cirilo Uribarri in 1860, which was to be the victim of a fabulous operation of urban speculation that implied the forced eviction of its inhabitants. In an interview, Chueca stated that it would be very convenient to save this urbanization of the last century, since in Madrid we jumped without transition, from the urbanization of the Austrias and the monuments of Charles III to the nonsensical and colossal architecture of the first period of the Gran Vía, and worse yet of the contemporary skyscrapers, without aesthetics, or grace, while we have lost the popular urbanization of the nineteenth century<sup>14</sup> (ABC, 1967a: 13).

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<sup>11</sup> Original quotation: "Una ciudad no es un conjunto de intereses inmobiliarios. Es una forma de vida, una cristalización histórica, un conjunto monumental."

<sup>12</sup> On the occasion of the sale of this work on March 7, 1962, a public colloquium was held, directed by the Marquis of Lozoya in addition to Chueca Goitia, Juan Antonio Gaya Nuño, Luis Figuerola Ferreti, Ramón Serrano Súñer and Francisco de Cossío also participated. "El retrato del Duque de Lerma no puede salir de España", ABC, 8 marzo 1962, 45-46.

<sup>13</sup> Original quotation: "una política urbanística de gran estilo, desarrollada en tres niveles: el que pudiera llamarse vegetativo o de crecimiento, el funcional, y el espiritual y representativo."

<sup>14</sup> Original quotation: "sería muy conveniente salvar esta urbanización del siglo pasado, ya que en Madrid saltamos sin transición, de la urbanización de los Austrias y los monumentos de Carlos III, a la disparatada y colosalista arquitectura de la primera época de la Gran Vía, y la peor aún de los actuales rascacielos, sin estética, ni gracia, mientras que hemos perdido la urbanización popular del siglo XIX."

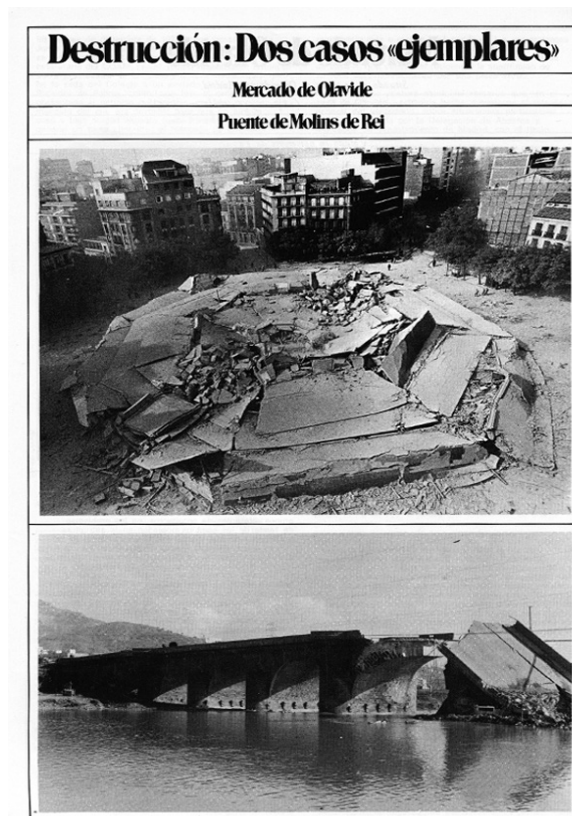


FIGURE 2A AND 2B. DEMOLITION OF THE OLAVIDE MARKET, MADRID. Image: Cover and interior of the journal CAU. Construcción. Arquitectura. Urbanismo, Barcelona, Colegio Oficial de Aparejadores y Arquitectos Técnicos de Barcelona, nº 33 (1975).

Finally, between October 1969 and February 1972, the complex was demolished, and a large shopping center was built on the site (Figures 3a and 3b).



FIGURE 3A. VIEW OF THE CALLE PRINCESA AT THE CORNER WITH CALLE ALBERTO AGUILERA, IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF LAS POZAS, MADRID, BEFORE ITS DESTRUCTION, 1969. Image: Collection Anmagón, Archivo Regional de la Comunidad de Madrid, Fondo Portillo, signatura 75946-013.



FIGURE 3B. VIEW OF CALLE DE HERMOSA IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF LAS POZAS, MADRID, DURING THE PROCESS OF DEMOLITION OF THE HOUSES, OCTOBER 1969. Image: Collection Anmagón, Archivo Regional de la Comunidad de Madrid, Fondo Portillo, signatura 77311-023.

All this information, in addition to other actions such as the historic-artistic reports he carried out to declare and protect monuments and historical sites throughout the country,<sup>15</sup> show Chueca Goitia's commitment to the conservation of Spain's artistic heritage. The architect's contribution to the national and international debate on the conservation of historic centers goes beyond this: his opinions gained particular relevance given his status as a scholar and expert in the theory and history of architecture and western urbanism and his vast experience in the conservation and restoration of monumental Spanish heritage was highly regarded; from the early 1950s to late 1970s, during three decades, he carried out numerous interventions in monuments and historical sites throughout the country, a work that is progressively being recovered, studied and valued in recent years.<sup>16</sup>

### The dangers threatening the preservation of Spanish historic centers in the 1960s

*The cities, I would say that all the cities are historical and you could say ancient, but not old. In Spain, what has usually happened is that the cities have been abandoned to force them to grow old so that, driven by atavism or convenience, they can be passed off as decrepit [...] Spain is a permanent and constant ruin, Spain is in ruins, as Julio Senador used to say of Castile with a fortunate phrase<sup>17</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977a: 144-145).*

Chueca Goitia denounced with great regret and repeatedly throughout his professional career the taste of Spaniards for the pickaxe: "to demolish, all Spaniards agree because it is an exercise that we love"<sup>18</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1971: 6), "Of course, no one is better than we at crushing, to a microscopic gravel, the urban legacy that we had received"<sup>19</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977a: 350), he would say on another occasion. An attitude that evidenced the lack of social appreciation of the authorities and the Spanish population for the monumental heritage, all the more acute, the more recent the architecture, which was evident in the abandonment in which our historic cities were submerged fifty years ago.

This situation was even more severe in the case of 19th-century architecture, which was not even considered of interest by professionals, as evidenced by the plea launched by Chueca Goitia in 1970, in defense of Madrid's neo-Mudejar architecture in the face of the danger of demolition of the Escuelas Aguirre, by Rodríguez Ayuso (*ABC*, 1970: 8-9).

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<sup>15</sup> These reports were made for the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando and the Real Academia de la Historia, and were published in their media: *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia y Academia*. For information purposes, among the numerous reports he wrote, the following can be mentioned "La plaza mayor de Navalcarnero (Madrid)" (Chueca, 1976); "La villa de Pasajes de San Juan (Guipúzcoa)" (Chueca Goitia, 1977b); "Abastecimiento romano de aguas a Toledo. Declaración de Monumento Histórico-Artístico" (Chueca Goitia, 1982).

<sup>16</sup> Specifically, Fernando Chueca Goitia worked for the Dirección General de Bellas Artes, the institution in charge of the conservation of Spanish historical and artistic heritage, from 1952 when he joined the Comisaría de Defensa del Patrimonio Artístico Nacional as Assistant Architect of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Zone (Aragón, Basque Country and La Rioja), until the end of the seventies. In this position, Chueca Goitia restored numerous monuments throughout the country. In addition, he held other positions as Chief Architect of the Service of Sites and Monuments of the National Commissariat of Artistic Heritage between 1974 and 1978 (Hernández Martínez, 2008, 2009a, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2018).

<sup>17</sup> Original quotation: "Las ciudades, yo diría que todas las ciudades, son históricas y si se quiere antiguas, pero no viejas. En España lo que ha solido ocurrir es que a las ciudades se las ha abandonado para hacerlas envejecer a la fuerza, para, llevados de un atavismo o de una conveniencia poderlas hacer pasar por decrepitas [...] España es una permanente y constante ruina, España está en escombros, como decía de Castilla con frase afortunada Julio Senador."

<sup>18</sup> Original quotation: "para demoler, todos los españoles nos ponemos de acuerdo por ser un ejercicio que nos encanta."

<sup>19</sup> Original quotation: "Desde luego nos hemos pintado solos para triturar, como si de grava microscópica se tratara, el legado urbanístico que habíamos recibido."



*The masterpiece of an architect who did not leave many and of whom, few remain [...] worthy of being among the very first of our contemporary architecture, alongside those of Gaudí, Domenech, or Palacios. More than neo-Mudejar, it is a work of pre-modern art, equivalent in dignity to those of a Labrouste, a Richardson, a Sullivan, or an Otto Wagner*<sup>20</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1971: 1).

To the absence of social sensitivity toward monumental heritage was added –according to Chueca Goitia– the lack of protection of historical centers and the inefficiency and idleness of the Spanish public administration: “Within the measures adopted, I believe that we lack an immense awareness of the value of these things. I say this not only at the level of those who watch over the conservation of the National Heritage but at a broader level, which could be that of the leaders of local organizations, Provincial Councils, City Councils, and the active forces of each city”<sup>21</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1971: 1). Moreover, he assessed the situation by differentiating between the protection afforded to monuments and ensembles:

*In general, if we refer to a historical-artistic consideration, it can be said that monuments themselves are better protected than the ensembles and environments. We have taken a significant step forward in conserving and restoring monuments. However, this does not mean that there are not still, throughout the Peninsula, others that are poorly protected or unrestored. However, it must be recognized that in this sense, much progress has been made [...] However, the problem we face is precisely the ‘monument’s environment.’ Almost all Spanish cities have a value not only for their own monuments but also for the value represented, evidently, by the urban ensemble. This, which is a much more difficult problem to tackle, is the most distressing today and in which, unfortunately, we have regressed in recent years*<sup>22</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1971: 1).

Insisting on the need to protect historic centers through their declaration as historic-artistic ensembles, Chueca pointed out how, paradoxically, in 1967, the General Directorate of Fine Arts had inventoried 1,055 municipalities of historic-artistic interest out of the 9,052 in Spain, but of these only 80 had some protection. Only two cities (Toledo and Santiago) were fully protected (Chueca, 1977a: 153). That is 7.58% of those declared and 0.88% of the total, laughable figures compared to the total number of localities that could be listed and, therefore, protected.

In his opinion, it was also necessary to increase the economic, technical and professional capacity of the General Directorate of Fine Arts to be able to address the conservation issues of all this enormous heritage: “Each province is supposed to have a delegate of Fine Arts,

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<sup>20</sup> Original quotation: “La obra maestra de un arquitecto que no dejó muchas y del que nos quedan pocas [...] digna de figurar entre las primerísimas de nuestra arquitectura contemporánea, junto a las de Gaudí, Domenech o Palacios. Más que neomudéjar es una obra del arte premoderno, equivalente en dignidad a las de un Labrouste, un Richardson, un Sullivan o un Otto Wagner.”

<sup>21</sup> Original quotation: “Dentro de las medidas adoptadas, yo creo que nos falta una alta conciencia del valor de estas cosas. Digo esto a nivel no sólo de los que velan por la conservación del Patrimonio Nacional, sino a un nivel más amplio, que puede ser el de los dirigentes de los organismos locales, Diputaciones, Ayuntamientos y fuerzas vivas de cada ciudad.”

<sup>22</sup> Original quotation: “En general, si nos referimos a una consideración histórico-artística, puede señalarse que los monumentos, en sí, están mejor protegidos que los conjuntos y los ambientes. Hemos dado un paso notable en la conservación y restauración de monumentos, aunque esto no quiera decir que no existan todavía, en toda la Península, otros mal protegidos o sin restaurar. Sin embargo, hay que reconocerlo, en este sentido se ha adelantado mucho [...] Ahora bien, el problema que tenemos planteado, es precisamente, el ‘entorno del monumento’. Casi todas las ciudades españolas tienen un valor no sólo por sus propios monumentos, sino también por el que representa, evidentemente, el conjunto urbano. Este, que es un problema mucho más difícil de acometer, es el que más angustia hoy y en el que desgraciadamente hemos retrocedido en los últimos años”.

but this, when it exists, is unable to monitor everything, besides being short of the means to do so. The architects who make up the Monuments Service are only a few dozen and should exceed one hundred"<sup>23</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977a: 154).

Chueca insisted that, compared to the reality of other countries, we must preserve the historic city in order to maintain our cultural personality or, on the contrary, we will find ourselves faced with

*a bitter awakening in twenty years, when we find that our country, which had some characteristics that made it interesting in the concert of Europe, has ceased to have them [...] You walk around France, England, let alone Denmark, and see villages that are in a state of maintenance and liveliness that retains all its freshness and character, something that here we are destroying, I repeat, senselessly, without realizing it and what is worse, sometimes without any real benefit for the development of the country*<sup>24</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1971: 1).

But his criticisms were mainly devoted to the state's neglect (obviously the responsibility of Franco's dictatorship) which showed "the same insensitivity toward cultural and historical values, the same anarchy and corruption in public administration, the same unbridled selfishness and the same lack of ideals"<sup>25</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977a: 10).

In his most virulent work on this subject, *La destrucción del legado urbanístico español*, Chueca, who was an avowed liberal and had been repressed after the civil war,<sup>26</sup> blamed Franco. His victory meant the triumph of the power of mediocrity (Chueca Goitia, 1977a:17), for the lack of concern for culture and heritage.

*If we had had a Lyautey as the head of the State, instead of a Franco, we would not be writing this book today. But we have never heard from Franco's lips a single word that revealed the slightest concern for our monumental, artistic, and cultural past—he who claimed to be the depositary of the best Spanish tradition—. He went through it all with the cruelest indifference, as if it had hardly anything to do with him, and gave free rein to the most unbridled appetites as long as he was allowed to rule in peace*<sup>27</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977a: 17).

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<sup>23</sup> Original quotation: "Cada provincia se supone que tiene un delegado de Bellas Artes, pero éste, cuando existe, es incapaz de vigilarlo todo, a más de estar ayuno de medios para hacerlo. Los arquitectos que componen el Servicio de Monumentos son sólo unas pocas decenas y deberían pasar de cien."

<sup>24</sup> Original quotation: "un amargo despertar dentro de veinte años, al encontrarnos que nuestro país, que tenía unas características que le hacían interesante en el concierto de Europa, haya dejado de tenerlas [...] Usted se pasea por Francia, Inglaterra, y no digamos Dinamarca, y ve pueblos que están en un estado de mantenimiento y de viveza que conserva toda su frescura y su carácter, cosa que aquí estamos destruyendo, repito, insensatamente, sin darnos cuenta y lo que es peor, a veces sin ningún provecho real para el desarrollo del país."

<sup>25</sup> Original quotation: "la misma insensibilidad ante los valores culturales e históricos, la anarquía y corrupción en la administración pública, el mismo egoísmo desenfrenado y la misma falta de ideales."

<sup>26</sup> Fernando Chueca was a conservative liberal, as was his friend Julián Marías (1998: 39). Chueca maintained contacts with different anti-Franco politicians and intellectuals and signed all the communications addressed to Franco requesting general amnesty for the exiles, he even participated in the so-called "Munich" contubernium" that gave rise to the Spanish Committee of the Congress for the Freedom of Culture, together with intellectuals such as José Luis Aranguren, Dionisio Ridruejo, José Antonio Maraval and Pedro Laín Entralgo (Anés, 2007).

<sup>27</sup> Original quotation: "Si en lugar de un Franco hubiéramos tenido un Lyautey a la cabeza del Estado hoy no escribiríamos este libro. Pero jamás hemos oído de labios de Franco una sola palabra que revelara la mínima preocupación por nuestro pasado monumental, artístico y cultural —él que se decía depositario de la mejor tradición española—. Pasó por todo ello con la más cruel indiferencia, como si todo aquello apenas tuviera que ver con él, y dio rienda suelta a los apetitos más desenfrenados con tal de que le dejaran mandar en paz".

Nor did the Church escape these criticisms since Chueca systematically denounced the uncontrolled alienation of its goods: "a Church under transformation that makes an auction of its treasures without knowing that they are not its own, works of art that emigrate due to the purchasing power of other currencies"<sup>28</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977a: 274). The same fate befell the Spanish aristocracy.

*Those upper classes are fleeing farther and farther away from the city they once ruled from their palaces on the Castellana or from their old mansions in the historic districts [referring to Madrid]. But where are now the Infantado, Fernán Núñez, Alba, Medinaceli, Medina-Sidonia, Altamira, Astorga, Villahermosa, Miraflores? Certainly not in their palaces, which have disappeared or have become bank headquarters or luxurious multinational offices. The blue blood aristocracy has largely been replaced by that of money, and it is now the banks that most ostentatiously manifest their power*<sup>29</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977a: 302).

In this situation and faced with the inanity of state action, Chueca Goitia, several decades ahead of today's cultural activism, surprisingly (considering the Spanish political situation), called for social action: "In view of the fact that the instruments of central power are insufficient and impotent, the most aware and educated citizens must themselves take up the safeguard of their cultural values"<sup>30</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1965: 290), "If we do not oppose it, if we do not mount a closed and vigilant guard to at least denounce the excesses that are perpetrated before us, we will allow real places that we dearly love to perish due to an excess of conformity and good sense"<sup>31</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1965: 276).

But, above all, Chueca considered that the main destructive agent of the Spanish historic cities during developmentalism had been the speculation encouraged by the various agents (real estate companies, large companies and the banks themselves): "Everything has been ruined by the relentless speculation and the vulgar taste of the authorities, the developers and the chorus of simpletons"<sup>32</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977a: 381), and the submission of the public authorities to the interests of certain private groups that saw the city as an appetizing economic good subject to speculation. In fact, Chueca alluded in his writings to a managerial class:

*[...] the managerial class, constituted by the high representatives of the great interests, chairmen, and executives of the strongest industries, banks, credit societies and great companies that today, more than ever, exercise an enormous influence on the urban evolution of the cities, without politics [...] being able to do anything to stop the process, either for lack of authority or because the*

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<sup>28</sup> Original quotation. "una Iglesia en transformación que hace almoneda de sus tesoros sin saber que no son suyos, unas obras de arte que emigran por la fuerza adquisitiva de otras divisas."

<sup>29</sup> Original quotation: "Esas clases altas cada vez huyen más lejos de la ciudad que antes señoreaban desde sus palacios de la Castellana o desde sus viejas casonas de los barrios históricos [se refiere a Madrid]. Pero ¿dónde están ahora los Infantado, Fernán Núñez, Alba, Medinaceli, Medina-Sidonia, Altamira, Astorga, Villahermosa, Miraflores? Desde luego, no en sus palacios, que han desaparecido o se han convertido en sedes bancarias o en lujosas oficinas multinacionales. A la aristocracia de sangre ha sustituido en gran parte la del dinero y son ahora los bancos lo que con más ostentación manifiestan su poderío."

<sup>30</sup> Original quotation. "En vista de que los instrumentos del poder central son insuficientes e impotentes, los ciudadanos más conscientes y educados deben tomar por sí mismos la salvaguardia de sus valores culturales."

<sup>31</sup> Original quotation: "Si no nos oponemos, si no montamos una guardia cerrada y vigilante para, por lo menos, denunciar los desmanes que ante nosotros se perpetran, lograremos que unas realidades que entrañablemente amamos perezcan por exceso de conformismo y sensatez."

<sup>32</sup> Original quotation: "Todo lo ha echado al traste la implacable especulación y el gusto vulgarísimo de las autoridades, los promotores y el coro de papanatas."

*politicians are an integral part of that same chain of economic interests. In today's capitalist world, cities are toys in the hands of this managerial class and of this concert of high interests*<sup>33</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977a: 227).

Finally, a new destructive agent unknown until then in our country, which decisively changed the physiognomy of our historic cities, was tourism. The architect described Toledo, a city with which Chueca maintained a close relationship, as “the most fabulous storehouse of art that the centuries have kept in proportion to a given physical space. The greatest density of artistic wealth per square meter”<sup>34</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977a: 314), but it was also an example of the progressive *touristization* of our cities, a phenomenon that –unfortunately– has only worsened with the passage of time.

*Toledo still had its last invasion. Fate repeats itself; we do not know until when. Now the invaders do not arrive with weapons or warrior equipment. They are peaceful armed escorts that throw themselves on the city with their cameras, movie recorders, plans and guides to prepare for the bloodless siege. They are the tourists who arrive in waves from all over the world [...] The tourist, especially Toledo tourists, passes through the city without almost touching it. Their contact is as brief as it is tangential. It does not penetrate the city, nor does it interest him, but its incessant dripping is modifying its structures, transforming the old and dormant city that can reawaken. Tourism can change many things, and the important thing is that the inhabitant of Toledo knows how to channel that force, to understand it, and to direct the water to his mill*<sup>35</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977a: 330).

### Contemporary architecture a threat to the historic city

In Chueca's opinion, one of the main threats to the conservation of the monumental heritage was, the rupture introduced by the modern movement since it had meant a dramatic split with the continuity of the historic city, and posed a real threat to its existence.<sup>36</sup>

*[...] the functional city imposed on us by the pioneers of architectural rationalism and whose guidelines we still follow (although an ever more corpulent critique is heard everywhere) is a city with characteristics that radically separate it*

<sup>33</sup> Original quotation: “[...] *the managerial class*, constituida por los altos representantes de los grandes intereses, *chairmans*, y ejecutivos de las industrias más fuertes, bancos, sociedades de crédito y grandes empresas que hoy, más que nunca, ejercen una enorme influencia sobre la evolución urbanística de las ciudades, sin que la política [...] pueda hacer nada para frenar el proceso, bien por falta de autoridad, bien por ser los políticos parte integrante de esa misma cadena de intereses económicos. Las ciudades son hoy por hoy en el mundo capitalista juguetes en manos de esa *managerial class* y de ese concierto de altos intereses.”

<sup>34</sup> Original quotation: “el más fabuloso almacén de arte que han guardado los siglos en proporción a un determinado espacio físico. La mayor densidad de riqueza artística por metro cuadrado.”

<sup>35</sup> Original quotation: “Todavía le quedaba a Toledo su última invasión. El sino se repite, no sabemos hasta cuándo. Ahora los invasores no llegan con armas ni pertrechos guerreros. Son pacíficas mesnadas que se arrojan sobre la ciudad con sus cámaras fotográficas, sus tomavistas, con planos y guías para preparar el incruento asedio. Son los turistas que llegan en oleadas desde todas partes del mundo [...] El turista, sobre todo el turista toledano, pasa por la ciudad sin rozarla casi. Su contacto es tan breve como tangencial. No cala en la ciudad ni le interesa, pero su gotear incesante va modificando sus estructuras, transformando la añeja y dormida ciudad que puede volver a despertar. El turismo puede llegar a cambiar muchas cosas, lo importante es que el toledano sepa canalizar esa fuerza, comprenderla y llevar el agua a su molino.”

<sup>36</sup> In relation to the criticisms of rationalism, Chueca includes those raised by Lewis Mumford in an article published in *The New Yorker* magazine, in October 1947, and the book, *The City of the Man*, by Christopher Tunnard, published in 1953 (Chueca Goitia, 1963: 339).

*from the evolutionary process of the city as a historical entity. That is why we can continue to affirm that this rupture with the historical is the fundamental sign that characterizes the city's transformation in our days. A change that we do not know to what extent it can be consummated but that today threatens us*<sup>37</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1963: 337).

Chueca conceived the historic city as an integral work of art in which the human being was recognized as a product of the joint action of man and nature. He shared this idea with the Italian historian Giulio Carlo Argan.<sup>38</sup> And it was precisely his respect for it that led him to adopt a categorical attitude toward the contemporary city "increasingly strident for the same reason that it is increasingly vulgar"<sup>39</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1963: 333). A lack of harmony that he blamed on the fact that, as an effect of neo-capitalism, the city had become a toy of urban speculation, a place that incited mass consumption<sup>40</sup> and was itself an object of consumption (Chueca, 1963: 334-335).

Chueca also denounced the subjugation of the contemporary city to street traffic,<sup>41</sup> a disintegrating element of the city, because the Madrid architect conceived the city as a concentrated entity to facilitate sociability and human exchange. The tyranny of the automobile was part of a broader phenomenon, which was the uncontrolled growth of contemporary cities. A process encouraged by Spanish politicians and technicians, for whom the architect spared no criticism,<sup>42</sup> because their behavior led to an imitation of foreign models (the American city or the English garden cities), which had little to do with local geography and climatology: "The young Spanish urban planner knows better what is done in Helsingfors or Malmö than the reality that surrounds him. He then confuses the nature of Vicálvaro with that of a Norwegian fjord"<sup>43</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1963: 344).

Faced with this situation, Chueca resolutely defended the traditional city as the setting for a more humane and harmonious way of life, and hence also his radical opposition to the introduction of contemporary architecture in historic centers because it would distort the balance acquired by the city over the centuries (Figure 4). In this sense, the tool used to protect the traditional image of Spanish cities was the recommendation to establish "strict stylistic control," which included the express prohibition of inserting elements of contemporary architecture into the historic city.

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<sup>37</sup> Original quotation: "[...] la ciudad funcional que nos impusieron los pioneros del racionalismo arquitectónico y cuyas directrices todavía seguimos (aunque por todas partes se deja oír una crítica cada vez más corpulenta), es una ciudad de características tales que la separan radicalmente del proceso evolutivo de la ciudad como ente histórico. Por eso podemos seguir afirmando que esta rotura con lo histórico es el signo fundamental que caracteriza la transformación de la ciudad en nuestros días. Transformación que no sabemos hasta qué punto podrá consumarse, pero que hoy por hoy nos amenaza."

<sup>38</sup> Chueca knew Giulio Carlo Argan personally. In fact, it was he who introduced him in public when in November 1964 the Italian historian, director of the Institute of Art History at the University of Rome, gave a lecture at the Spanish Museum of Contemporary Art on "The Situation of Contemporary Art" (*ABC*, 1964b, 63).

<sup>39</sup> Original quotation: "cada vez más estridente por la misma razón que cada vez es más vulgar."

<sup>40</sup> A connoisseur of contemporary philosophy, Chueca recurrently uses in his arguments the concept formulated by Ortega y Gasset of the dehumanized mass that has no ideas, but only appetites (Chueca Goitia, 1963: 334).

<sup>41</sup> He returns to the problem of circulation on numerous occasions, echoing the ideas put forward by other authors such as Alfred Sauvy, "Le développement économique et les villes", a lecture delivered in Madrid in 1964 (Chueca Goitia, 1965: 284).

<sup>42</sup> Original quotation: "Si a la condición de técnico se suma la de burócrata obtendremos un centauro en el que se unirán la autoestimación y la fuerza. Este híbrido no condescenderá fácilmente al diálogo, ni dejará que nadie influya en sus determinaciones. Salvemos todas las honrosísimas excepciones que se quiera, pero este técnico egocéntrico cada día abunda más y cada día influye más en el comportamiento del conjunto" (Chueca Goitia, 1965: 276).

<sup>43</sup> Original quotation: "El joven urbanista español conoce mejor lo que se hace en Helsingfors o en Malmö que la realidad que le rodea. Confunde luego la naturaleza de Vicálvaro con la de un fiordo noruego."

*No project should be authorized without this prior control, absolutely forbidding the current aggressive architecture, its overhangs and stentorian structures, its contradictory modules and proportions, the textures and surface treatments that contradict the local accent*<sup>44</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1968: 18).



FIGURE 4. MALAGA, AN EXAMPLE OF A TRADITIONAL CITY. A sketch of the historic center by Chueca Goitia and published in his work *Breve historia del urbanismo* (Madrid, 1968).

A controversial idea according to today's parameters (also in his time), but which was not new in our country, was presented by Chueca in March 1968, at a conference held at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Granada, at the invitation of the cultural association Granada Nuestra (Chueca Goitia, 1968).

Tellingly, an architect as radically contemporary (and opposed to Chueca Goitia in so many respects) as the Catalan Oriol Bohigas, a key figure in the urban renewal of Barcelona in the second half of the 20th century, upheld a similar defense of historic centers in 1961 as a model for compact cities in the face of the crisis of the functional city, in an article in which he vindicated the interest of the Spanish People of Barcelona, a "museum of open-air architecture" that had brought together the best of popular Spanish architecture on the occasion of the 1929 Barcelona International Exposition.

<sup>44</sup> Original quotation: "Ningún proyecto deberá autorizarse sin ese previo control, proscribiendo en absoluto la agresiva arquitectura actual, sus vuelos y estentóreas estructuras, sus módulos y proporciones contradictorias, las texturas y tratamientos superficiales que contradigan el acento local."

*The current urban planning crisis is an unquestionable fact since, in London or Madrid, in Banyuls or Barcelona, in Brasilia or Harlow, we have been able to verify the strange degeneration that the courageous ideas of the pioneers of the 1930s have suffered. Now we have confirmed that almost all the urban planning realities at our disposal –despite having fought a terrible fight for sanitation, for rationalization– are not exactly useful for us to live in. The realization of such beautiful urban programs has provided elements for a high material standard of living but has subtracted from our neighborhoods their ancient and traditional ‘habitability.’ The functionalist thesis should still receive the sedative of a well-interpreted tradition.*

*For this reason, it is now very interesting to make a careful visit –with a sympathetic and selective air– to the ‘Spanish People.’ And now, for the first time, we are in a position to find in it and to seriously judge some urbanistic and architectural themes that until now we had confused with the simple adornment of the cheerful and touristy carousel.*

*[...] in addition, it must be recognized that the ‘People’ have some formal values –a summary of the values of so many authentic villages in Spain– that could have had a certain continuity and that, instead, have been unduly forgotten and often sacrificed by the new urbanistic ideas<sup>45</sup> (Bohigas, 1961: 20-21).*

Bohigas referred explicitly to the relevance of streets and squares as generating elements of the city’s urban fabric and social life. Bohigas was convinced that “the absence of streets is one of the aspects of the failure –formal and psychological, at least– of the new urbanism”<sup>46</sup> (Bohigas, 1961: 21), which had been characterized by the substitution of “the corridor-street by the aesthetics of isolated blocks,”<sup>47</sup> also noting “the uncontrollable desire to erase from the modern urban fabric such a fundamental element as the street”<sup>48</sup> (Bohigas, 1961: 22). As a reaction to this diffuse urban model, the Catalan architect added the need to recover the closed block, together with the vindication of the street and the square, as critical elements to overcome the crisis of the western city in the sixties.

He was not the only one to vindicate the compact city model also defended by Chueca and evident in Barcelona’s Spanish People. The Navarrese architect Francisco De Inza, one of the most active and interesting architects in Spain in the 1960s, said in this respect:

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<sup>45</sup> Original quotation: “La crisis actual del urbanismo es un hecho incuestionable desde que en Londres o en Madrid, en Banyuls o en Barcelona, en Brasilia o en Harlow hemos podido comprobar la extraña degeneración que han sufrido las valientes ideas de los pioneros del año 30. Ahora hemos comprobado que casi todas las realidades urbanísticas de que disponemos –a pesar de haber librado una lucha terrible por la higienización, por la racionalización– no nos sirven exactamente para vivir. Que la realización de tan bellos programas urbanísticos ha aportado elementos para un elevado standard material de vida, pero ha restado a nuestros barrios su antigua y tradicional ‘habitabilidad’. Que la tesis funcionalista debía recibir aún el sedante de una tradición bien interpretada.

Por esta razón es ahora muy interesante volver a hacer una visita detenida –con aire comprensivo y seleccionador– al ‘Pueblo Español’. Y ahora, por primera vez, estamos en condiciones de encontrar en él y juzgar seriamente unos temas urbanísticos y arquitectónicos que hasta ahora habíamos tenido confundidos con el simple adorno del alegre y turístico tío-vivo. [...] hay que reconocer que el ‘Pueblo’ tiene, además, unos valores formales –resumen de los valores de tantos pueblos auténticos de España– que podrían haber tenido una cierta continuidad y que, en cambio, han sido indebidamente olvidados y a menudo sacrificados por las nuevas ideas urbanísticas.”

<sup>46</sup> Original quotation: “en la ausencia de calles está uno de los aspectos del fracaso –formal y psicológico, por lo menos– del nuevo urbanismo.”

<sup>47</sup> Original quotation: “la calle-corredor por la estética de los bloquecitos aislados.”

<sup>48</sup> Original quotation: “las ganas incontenibles de borrar del tejido urbano moderno un elemento tan fundamental como la calle.”

*Given the delightful shape of streets and squares, with a life of their own, mastering the enormous difficulty of manipulating with elements –let's say dissected– it must be said that the authors of the 'Spanish People' made good architecture because they created some very fine urban spaces, because they created open environments in which it is a real pleasure to move around. This is probably as necessary as sleeping, with a minimum admissible number of cubic meters of air –'orderly' speaking.*

*And this architecture of the 'Spanish People' –which is not lived in– stands out even more in contrast with the many boring blocks that have been served to us some years later, under the spell of some internal functionalisms of each of these blocks, and many other material functionalisms that, perhaps, should be reviewed<sup>49</sup> (De Inza, 1961: 24).*

In the same line of defense of the environmental value of the historic center and the rejection of contemporary architecture, advocating mimicry in the intervention are manifestations of professionals contemporary to Chueca, such as the art historian Juan José Martín González, who, in relation to the monumental heritage located in the rural world, argued as follows:

*[...] The environment is seriously threatened by the appearance of volumes of significant vertical development, such as water tanks, electrical transformers and silos. Their usefulness is beyond any doubt, but it is necessary to know how to place them at distant points so that they do not interfere with the perspective.*

*[...] When it is necessary to build a new building in an area of great artistic unity, the imitative criterion is usually imposed. It is sufficient to maintain harmony in heights, volumes, colors, spans and massifs<sup>50</sup> (Martín, 1975: 15-ff).*

Martín González also defended the conservation of the alignment of the streets, the relevance of squares and arcades, the usefulness of the traditional masonry, and the plastering on the facades. His opinions were not without reason since they arose in the face of the destruction of popular architecture in Spanish towns in the 1960s and 1970s due to confusion or misunderstanding of progress. In these cases, most of the population conceived the modernization of their homes as a symbol of social and economic development, an intervention that in most cases involved the destruction of valuable buildings that responded to the types adapted to the different territories in time and space, to be replaced by an anodyne and homogeneous contemporary architecture. Today, decades later, we regret the effects of this developmentalism on many localities of our country (Figures 5a, 5b, 5c and 5d).

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<sup>49</sup> Original quotation: A la vista de la deliciosa formación de unas calles y unas plazas, con vida propia, dominando la enorme dificultad de manipular con elementos –que dijéramos disecados–, resulta que hay que decir que los autores del 'Pueblo Español' hicieron arquitectura de la buena. Porque crearon unos espacios urbanos finísimos. Porque crearon unos ambientes abiertos en los que resulta un verdadero placer moverse. Lo cual es posible que sea tan necesario como el dormir, con un número mínimo admisible –'ordenancísticamente' hablando- de metros cúbicos de aire.

Y destaca aún más esta arquitectura del 'Pueblo Español' -que no se vive- en contraste con muchísimos aburridos manojos de bloques que se nos han ido sirviendo algunos años después, al conjuero de unos funcionalismos internos de cada uno de dichos bloques, y de otros muchos funcionalismos materiales que, a lo mejor, conviene revisar."

<sup>50</sup> Original quotation: "Si el perfil es necesario preservarlo para mantener la esencia de un poblado, igual garantía hay que extender a favor del entorno. No se trata de eliminar la edificación circundante, sino de condicionarla a unos volúmenes moderados, a unos colores armonizados con el objetivo visual del caserío monumental.

[...] El entorno está seriamente amenazado por la aparición de volúmenes de gran desarrollo vertical, como son los depósitos del agua, transformadores eléctricos y silos. Su utilidad está fuera de toda duda, pero hay que saber situarlos en puntos alejados y que no interfieran la perspectiva.

[...] Cuando hay que edificar de nueva planta en zona de una gran unidad artística suele imponerse el criterio imitativo. Basta que se mantenga armonía en alturas, volúmenes, colores, vanos y macizos."



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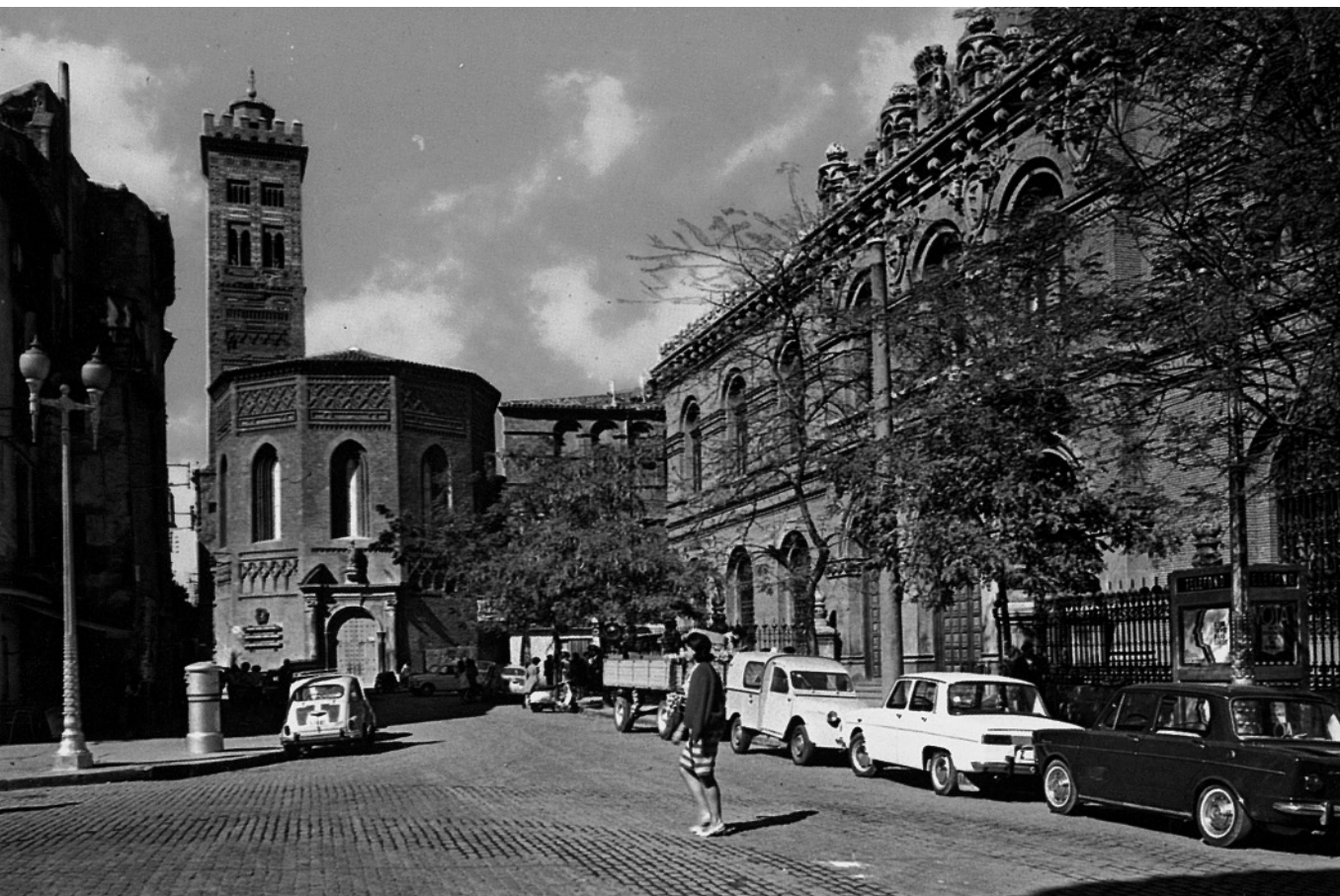




FIGURE 5. A SAD EXAMPLE OF THE EFFECT OF DEVELOPMENT IN SPANISH CITIES: THE DESTRUCTION OF THE OLD LITERARY UNIVERSITY SITUATED IN PLAZA DE LA MAGDALENA, ZARAGOZA. 5a. Original building in 1910. *Image: Municipal Archives of Zaragoza.* 5b. The University in a postcard from the 1960s. *Image: private collection.* 5c. Demolition in 1968 of the historic building, the oldest of the University of Zaragoza dating back to the end of the 15th century, with a major renovation at the beginning of the 20th century. *Image: Ángel San Vicente Pino collection.* 5d. Current state of the square with the secondary school was erected by the Ministry of Education in 1973. *Image: Irene Ruiz Bazán.*

Returning to Chueca, it is paradoxical that he opted for an extremely conservative choice four years after the drafting of the famous *Venice Charter* (1964), in which, rejecting stylistic restoration, the introduction of contemporary architecture in the historical one was allowed<sup>51</sup> seeking harmony between the two. This position reflects in part a broader debate that was taking place in the field of Italian artistic culture and that Chueca, so up to date with what was happening throughout Europe, had to be aware of.

The post-war reconstruction of Italy raised serious doubts and bitter discussions during the 1950s, which eventually led to the criterion assumed in the *Venice Charter*. This document followed the Congress of Bobbio, which had generated an important debate in Italy (*Urbanistica*, 1960; Pane, 2008). There had also been such significant interventions from the architectural language of the 20th century as Carlo Scarpa's work on the Castelvecchio in Verona (1957-1974) or the provocative and controversial construction of the Torre Velasca designed by the BBPR group in Milan (1958). In this sense, Chueca coincided with the radical position of one of the most important Italian historians and theorists of the 20th century: Cesare Brandi,<sup>52</sup> who had clearly stated on numerous occasions, starting with a famous conference given in February 1956 in Turin under the title *Il vecchio e il nuovo nelle antiche città italiane*, his opposition to the introduction of contemporary architecture in historic centers, because it distorted their perception, generating a heated controversy in his country.<sup>53</sup> Brandi did not deny the interest or artistic quality of contemporary architecture at all. However, he considered that "modern architecture, just as it has the right to call itself such, cannot be inserted in an old urban complex without disturbing it and without self-distorting it"<sup>54</sup> (Brandi, 1956b: 359) because its spatiality was completely different from that of historical architecture and therefore it was impossible for the two to coexist. In an article published in 1956 in the journal *L'Architettura Cronache e storia*, Brandi claimed that contemporary architecture "non ha il diritto di distruggere un passato che è giunto sino alla nostra stessa sponda, e che non può in nessun modo convivere nella stessa piazza e nella stessa strada"<sup>55</sup> (Brandi, 1956b: 360), an argument (the impossible coexistence between historical and contemporary architecture) that will be reiterated in later writings, including his famous *Theory of Restoration*.<sup>56</sup>

*Modern architecture is necessarily, constitutionally, "extra muros." Continuing the absurdity of inserting modernist buildings, more or less castrated in order to be able to re-enter the cadastral limits of the area and the elevation, means producing architectural cancers whose destructiveness, on the old urban tissues, becomes catastrophic without the barricade, in which the new building is located, allowing it to develop within the range of its own spatiality, as well*

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<sup>51</sup> In defining the concept of restoration, the *Venice Charter* admitted, "It must stop at the point where conjecture begins, and in this case moreover any extra work which is indispensable must be distinct from the architectural composition and must bear a contemporary stamp" (Article 9). It also added that "Replacements of missing parts must integrate harmoniously with the whole, but at the same time must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the artistic or historic evidence" (Article 12) [[https://www.icomos.org/charters/venice\\_e.pdf](https://www.icomos.org/charters/venice_e.pdf)] (accessed on 15 March 2022).

<sup>52</sup> Chueca Goitia knew Brandi's work since he quotes him in some of his works; specifically in *La crisis del lenguaje arquitectónico*, an essay published in 1972, when he alludes to Brandi's *Struttura e architettura*, published in 1967 (Chueca Goitia, 1972: 8).

<sup>53</sup> There are numerous texts by the Sieneese historian on this argument (Brandi, 1956a, 1956b, 1956c, 1963, 1964). His opinions also unleashed the reaction of some of his contemporaries, sparking an open and heated polemic with the architectural historian Bruno Zevi, among others (Zevi, 1956). On this episode should be consulted Pane (2008) and Kühl (2009: 158-162).

<sup>54</sup> Original quotation: "l'architettura moderna, proprio in quanto ha il diritto di chiamarsi tale, non può essere inserita in un antico complesso urbano senza distruggerlo e senza autodistruggersi."

<sup>55</sup> Original quotation: "non ha il diritto di distruggere un passato che è giunto sino alla nostra stessa sponda, e che non può in nessun modo convivere nella stessa piazza e nella stessa strada."

<sup>56</sup> In this text, first published in Italy in 1963 and in Spain more than twenty years later, in 1988, Brandi reaffirmed his opposition to the construction of contemporary buildings in historic centers: "the insertion of a truly modern architecture in an ancient context is unacceptable, given the distinctive spatiality that characterizes modern architecture. Thus, in no way –whether it is architecture or not–can one accept the alteration of an ancient architectural environment, with the substitution of the parts that provide its connective tissue, which, although amorphous, is coeval and historically valid" (Brandi, 1988: 61).

*as its own utility. Either we make entirely modern neighborhoods and respect the old ones, or our civilization will continue to destroy itself, even where it thinks it can save some remnants*<sup>57</sup> (Brandi, 1956c: 252, quoted in Pane, 2008: 322).

As Chueca would argue years later, in his texts Brandi lashed out against the skyscraper as a monster that lacerates the historic city, destroying the centuries-old harmony, the product of respectful additions and stratifications over the centuries, and gave as an example what was happening in Naples, a symbol of the process that affected all Italy.

*But the isolated skyscraper is mostly an architectural monster like the whale is a monster in the sea: and it is enough to think of the permanent spatial laceration that it produces in the beautiful Turin of Juvara and Guarino, that arm pointing its index finger at the sky that escapes it. This laceration, certainly not lesser nor less reprehensible, is now being introduced into the living flesh of Naples in via Medina, with the skyscraper first laboriously limited to 55 meters, then raised to 60, then to 70, and now, we hope, to the original 90. After all, it was inevitable that in the Babel of the Rione Carità, which is more congested than before, there would also be towers of Babel, to confuse the language of architecture with that of building speculation, with the result that, by inserting a piece of urban planning of South American taste in the very heart of Partepone, we transform the noblest Naples into the city... of the natives. [...] But it will be said: many years have passed, Naples is growing, it is becoming less old... But the more than half a million tourists who come to Naples and from whom Naples draws more life than from luxury construction certainly do not come to admire the skyscrapers of Via Medina, they come to see the ancient city, with its monuments and this arch of the sea, this marvelous volcanic crown from which dominate not skyscrapers, but the serried granite forms of castles, palaces, and convents, whose correspondence to the very structure of the land is amazing. Naples is the gateway to the homeland. The construction of skyscrapers, which irreversibly alter the profile of the city and the panorama of the gulf, does not interest only Naples but all of Italy. Naples is the gateway to the homeland, and this is not rhetoric. It is the most solemn arrival that exists in Europe; and to see Naples, to disembark in Naples, is the dream that everyone cherishes to realize: but without having to visit the Maschio Angioino reduced to an embattled inkwell by the presumptuous incumbency of the skyscrapers swarming in the vicinity*<sup>58</sup> (Brandi, 1956b: 360).

<sup>57</sup> Original quotation: "L'architettura moderna è necessariamente, costituzionalmente, extra moenia. Continuare l'assurdo di inserire edifici modernistici, più o meno castrati per potere rientrare nei limiti catastrali dell'area e dell'alzato, significa produrre dei cancri architettonici la quale distruttività, sui vecchi tessuti urbani, s'avvera catastrofica, senza che l'asserragliamento, in cui l'edificio nuovo si trova, permetta a questo di svilupparsi nel raggio della propria spazialità, come della propria utensilità. O si fanno dei quartieri integralmente moderni e si rispettano quegli antichi, oppure la nostra civiltà continuerà a distruggere sé stessa, anche dove crede di salvare qualche residuo."

<sup>58</sup> Original quotation: "Ma il grattacielo isolato è per lo più un mostro architettonico, come la balena è un mostro nel mare: e basti pensare alla lacerazione spaziale permanente che produce nella bellissima Torino dello Juvara e del Guarino, quel braccio che punta l'indice contro il cielo che gli sfugge. Codesta lacerazione, non certo minore nè meno deprecabile, sta per essere ora introdotta nella carne viva di Napoli in via Medina, col grattacielo prima faticosamente limitato a 55 metri, poi portato a 60, poi a 70, e ora, speriamo pure, ai 90 originari. In fondo era inevitabile che nella Babele del Rione Carità, che è più congestionato di prima, ci fossero anche le torri di Babele, a confondere la lingua dell'architettura in quella della speculazione edilizia, col risultato che, inserendo un pezzo urbanistico di gusto sudamericano nel cuore stesso di Partepone, si trasforma la Napoli nobilissima nella città... degli oriundi. [...] Ma si dirà: molti anni sono passati, Napoli cresce, si svecchia... Ma il più che mezzo milione di turista che viene a Napoli e da cui Napoli, trae più vita che dall'edilizia di lusso, non viene certo per ammirare i grattacieli di via Medina, viene proprio per vedere l'antica città, coi suoi monumento e quest'arco di mare, questa meravigliosa corona vulcanica da cui dominano non già grattacieli, ma serrate granitiche forme di Castelli, di reggie e di conventi, la cui corrispondenza alla struttura stessa del terreno è stupefacente.

Napoli è la porta della patria, e la costruzione di grattacieli, che alterino irrimediabilmente il profilo della città e il panorama del golfo, non interessa solo Napoli, ma l'Italia tutta. Napoli è la porta della patria, e non è retorica questa. È il più solenne arrivo che esista in Europa; e veder Napoli, sbarcare a Napoli, è il sogno che ciascuno accarezza di realizzare: ma senza dovere vedere ridotto il Maschio Angioino ad un merlato calamaio, dall'incombenza presuntuosa dei grattacieli pullulati in vicinanza."

Cesare Brandi also defended the integral conservation of the historic city, another of the arguments supported by Chueca Goitia.

*The ancient cities, in their valid nucleus, must be saved and respected in their entirety, without perfidious utilitarian distinctions between the notified palace and the small house or the building apparently without character, yet consonant by now and attached, like the hand to the arm, to the street, to the square, to the Monument<sup>59</sup> (Brandi, 1956b: 360).*

Finally, he stressed and insisted on society's commitment to preserving the historic city, considering this task as a moral imperative and a demonstration of civility and civilization.

*The conclusion is only one: the responsibility for these facts falls on everyone because the protection of a sacred heritage, such as art must be assumed by all citizens, by those who recognize themselves as the subject and not the object of civilization, nor can they believe in unloading it on the so-called competent offices, well before, to pose as a technical task, is a moral instance<sup>60</sup> (Brandi, 1956b: 360).*

Opinions that, without a doubt, could have been assumed and expressed perfectly by Chueca Goitia and that reveal a coincidence of thought between two significant figures of contemporary heritage protection in Italy and Spain, Brandi and Chueca.

This almost visceral rejection of the introduction of contemporary architecture in the historic city, which, however, did not mean the denial of its interest,<sup>61</sup> was based, in Chueca Goitia's opinion, on "the lack of humanistic training in teaching. The School of Architecture has been integrated into the Technical Schools group for years, which imprints character. The teaching of history is very scarce, and the teachers who cultivate it are few. The students consider it a residual subject, a memory of other times"<sup>62</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1965: 294). For Chueca, this lack of training meant that contemporary architects were incapable "of understanding, analyzing and intervening in the architecture and cities of our past"<sup>63</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977: 154), and that, victims of a dazzled modernism, they were not sensitive to the local context.

*These young people have idolized the significant figures of the international movement, Gropius, Mies, Le Corbusier, Aalto, etc., and have mythologized them. They have entered into a pact of fidelity with them –on the other hand, rabidly Iberian– and they have fulfilled it above all else. If one of these young*

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<sup>59</sup> Original quotation: "Le antiche città, nel nucleo valido, vanno salvate e rispettate per intero, senza perfide distinzioni utilitarie fra il palazzo notificato e la casetta o il fabbricato apparentemente senza carattere, eppure consono ormai e legato, come la mano al braccio, alla strada, alla piazza, al Monumento."

<sup>60</sup> Original quotation: "La conclusione è una sola: la responsabilità per questi fatti ricade su tutti, perchè la tutela di un patrimonio sacro come quello dell'arte deve essere assunta in proprio da tutti i cittadini, da chi si riconosce soggetto e non oggetto di una civiltà, nè può credere di scaricarsene su i cosiddetti uffici competenti, Prima, assai prima, di porsi come un compito tecnico, è un'istanza morale."

<sup>61</sup> Chueca Goitia did not reject contemporary architecture; on the contrary, he defended and supported it whenever he had the opportunity, as shown by the 1967 exhibition in homage to Le Corbusier, organized by the French Embassy and the National Museum of Contemporary Art, of which Chueca Goitia was then director (ABC, 1967b: 57). And in the same sense, point to the articles written by Chueca to disseminate the work of contemporary professionals, for example, the reflection published on the occasion of an exhibition on Finnish architecture organized by the Official College of Architects of Madrid in collaboration with the Museum of Architects of Helsinki, in 1960 in Madrid, an architecture that Chueca especially valued for its humanity, its purity, its essentiality (Chueca, 1960). But Chueca shares with other professionals of the time a particular fear of the creative capacity of his contemporaries, especially when he notes the abysmal quality of architecture in the outskirts of the city of his time.

<sup>62</sup> Original quotation: "la falta de formación humanística en la enseñanza. La Escuela de Arquitectura está integrada desde hace años en el grupo de las Escuelas Técnicas y esto imprime carácter. La enseñanza de Historia es muy escasa, y los maestros que la cultivan, pocos. Los estudiantes la consideran una asignatura residual, recuerdo de otros tiempos."

<sup>63</sup> Original quotation: "de comprender, analizar e intervenir en la arquitectura y las ciudades de nuestro pasado."

*people has to build a house in the Segovian Azoguejo, faithful to the sealed pact, he will consider himself more obliged to Mies van der Rohe than to the Aqueduct and will build his iron and glass box with the faith of an enlightened person*<sup>64</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1965: 295).

To this was added the consideration that contemporary architecture was in crisis, an argument that Chueca developed extensively in an essay published in 1972, significantly entitled *La crisis del lenguaje arquitectónico* (1972). In this work, he dealt with the crisis of rationalism and the problems of communication in 20th-century architecture: "This is the sign of our time, of the art of our time, narcissistically enclosed within itself"<sup>65</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977: 44); a situation that leads the architect to propose a necessary reflection and some change in this regard: "The sad uniformity into which our architectural language has fallen is something that impoverishes us all, and that would deserve a meditation, if possible with a purpose of amendment"<sup>66</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977: 376).

The crisis of functionalism to which Chueca alluded had already been highlighted in a visionary text recovered a few years ago: *Muerte y vida de las grandes ciudades*, by Jane Jacobs.<sup>67</sup> The original work, published in the United States in 1961, reflects the coincidence of thought between Jacobs and Chueca regarding the criticism of a city model exported from North America to the West and which had proved to be a failure at various levels (urban, social, economic, etc.). Although Jacobs' focus was mainly centered on anthropological aspects, on the needs of the population and the social use of the city, shifting the center of interest from urban design to the user, he shared with the Spanish architect key issues such as the defense of the compact city and the relevance of the street and the square as spaces that bring together urban life. Like Chueca, Jacobs lashed out against an urban design that grants supremacy to traffic and a simplistic and self-interested vision of the city in terms of economic profit. They both claimed the need for critical thinking involving the population. They denounced the systematic destruction of cities due to a perverse alliance between politicians, businessmen, architects and urban planners.

*But let us look at what we have built with the first billions: neighborhoods of cheap housing that have become worse centers of crime, vandalism, and social despair than the slums they were to replace. Middle-income housing*

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<sup>64</sup> Original quotation: "Estos jóvenes han idolatrado a las grandes figuras del movimiento internacional, Gropius, Mies, Le Corbusier, Aalto, etc., y los han mitificado. Han concertado con ellos un pacto de fidelidad—por otro lado, rabiosamente ibérico—y lo han cumplido por encima de todo. Si uno de estos jóvenes tiene que construir una casa en el Azoguejo segoviano, fiel al pacto sellado, se considerará más obligado a Mies van der Rohe que al Acueducto y construirá su caja de hierro y cristal con la fe de un iluminado."

<sup>65</sup> Original quotation: "Este es el signo de nuestro tiempo, del arte de nuestro tiempo, encerrado narcisísticamente dentro de sí mismo."

<sup>66</sup> Original quotation: "La triste uniformidad en la que ha caído nuestro lenguaje arquitectónico es algo que a todos nos empobrece y que merecería una meditación a ser posible con propósito de enmienda."

<sup>67</sup> Jacobs' original text was published in 1961, but the topicality of his thought has led to a recent reprint in Spain in 2011 (Jacobs, 2011). In the introduction to this text, Zaida Muxí Martínez, professor of Urban Planning at the Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Barcelona, and Blanca Gutiérrez Valdivia, urban sociologist, both members of Col.lectiu Punt 6, underline the timeliness of this work. "We can see that his criticisms and his gaze continue to be valid, and this should lead us to ask ourselves why it is so valid. We think that in fifty years the shape and life of cities have changed. However, the problems, the threats that Jane Jacobs saw in the territorial dispersion, the segmentation of uses, the primacy of the private vehicle, the destruction of neighborhoods for the 'modernization' of the city, in the insecurity derived from segregated uses are still similar. This model of urban growth, which has proven ineffective at social, environmental, economic, and symbolic levels, is not only still present in the countries that spread it (especially the United States and England) but in territories with other urban traditions, such as Spain, we find that they have abandoned the compact city model to grow in new low-density, monofunctional and fragmented suburbs, where the private vehicle is the only guarantee of connection with the rest. The lesson of Jane Jacobs is still essential to reverse the trends pointed out. What has happened? How can it be that her voice and that of some of her contemporaries [Chueca Goitia among them], who today we would say clairvoyant, have gone unnoticed for years and are today essential to think about the cities of today and tomorrow?" (Muxí and Gutiérrez, 2011: 7-8).

*developments, veritable miracles of monotony and regimentation, have been walled off from the vitality and exuberance of civic life. Luxury residential neighborhoods that mitigate their inanity, or so they try, through a bland vulgarity. Cultural centers that cannot house a good bookstore. Civic centers frequented only by the indigent, those who cannot choose their places of recreation. Shopping malls are a pale imitation of those of the usual commercial avenues, full of franchises. Promenades that go from nowhere to nowhere and have no walkers. Expressways that gut big cities... This is not reordering cities. This is plundering them<sup>68</sup> (Jacobs, 2011: 30).*

They were not the only ones to denounce this situation. At the same time, essential personalities such as the Italian historian Giulio Carlo Argan criticized the damage caused by street traffic to historical centers and the need to take the historic city out of the economic circuit. Thus, in the report presented by the Italian historian to the 7th General Assembly of the International Center for Conservation held in Rome in 1973, Argan reflected on the conservation policy of historic centers stating that:

*Any hypothesis for a methodology for the protection of historic centers must consider the fact –proven by scientific research and practical experience– that no historic center, no urban settlement dating from the preindustrial era can be adapted to modern traffic and functional requirements nor to such future problems. All such attempts that have been made in this direction have not had enough success to compensate for the serious sacrifices they have imposed: demolition of ancient road patterns, destruction of entire quarters, loss of architecture improperly defined as minor or current, dismantling of monuments and their reconstructions on other sites. [...] Because it is easy to foresee a continuous increase of motorized traffic, it is also easy to see that within a short time the successive adaptations will have practically destroyed the historic centers without having solved a single problem (Argan, 1975: 17).*

At the same time, Argan claimed the cultural value of the historic city as a total work of art: “They [historic centers] should be considered cultural property to be preserved with the same scientific criteria applied to works of art [...] The image of a historic city should not be preserved as a document in an archive, but as a cultural valuable retaining reason and function” (Argan, 1975: 17), whose conservation was based on the maintenance of the original population, already threatened in the 1970’s by the phenomenon of gentrification.

*It is a fact that forms are not easily conserved when their contents change. Among the lower and middle classes who reside in the historic centers, there is a tendency to move to modern, popular areas on the periphery. Within certain limits, the trend is spontaneous, but there is also strong pressure on these classes to move from the historic centers, and the populations that traditionally live there become the object of speculation.*

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<sup>68</sup> Original quotation: “Pero veamos lo que hemos construido con los primeros miles de millones: barrios de viviendas baratas que se han vuelto peores centros de delincuencia, vandalismo y desesperanza social que los barrios bajos que iban a sustituir. Promociones de viviendas de renta media, auténticos milagros de monotonía y regimentación, que se han parapetado contra la vitalidad y exuberancia de la vida ciudadana. Barrios residenciales de lujo que mitigan su inanidad, o eso intentan, mediante una insulsa vulgaridad. Centros culturales que no pueden albergar una buena librería. Centros cívicos que sólo frecuentan los indigentes, los que no pueden elegir sus lugares de esparcimiento. Centros comerciales que son una imitación sin lustre de los de las avenidas comerciales al uso, plagadas de franquicias. Paseos que van de ningún sitio a ninguna parte y que no tienen paseantes. Vías rápidas que destripan las grandes ciudades... Esto no es reordenar las ciudades. Esto es saquearlas.”

*[...] The replacement of the poor classes in the historic centers with the more affluent lovers of the 'picturesque' is an artificial and partial solution. In practice, it serves only to conserve facades while eliminating all the tertiary infrastructures, social activities, crafts and small businesses. Such a solution also substantially increases automotive traffic in the ancient streets and, inevitably, finally transforms the exterior aspects of the buildings through increased height, additions, etc. (Argan, 1975: 18).*

The opinions of Jacobs and Argan, together with those of Chueca Goitia in Spain, show how in the 1960s and 1970s, there was a growing feeling of disgust and rejection of the effects of functionalism on the historic city and on urban life in general, shared by numerous professionals who demanded another urban model that was more respectful of the historical heritage and also of its social uses. Chueca, moreover, based his criticisms on his personal experience of decades of work restoring monuments throughout the country, during which he had pointed out the growing intrusion of urban elements that substantially altered urban and, to a large extent, rural historical sites (Chueca Goitia, 1977a: 102-103).

The limited and practical knowledge of the national territorial reality leads Chueca to affirm that contemporary Spanish architecture was dominated by vulgarity. Everything is filled with "modern constructions of the most vulgar architecture,"<sup>69</sup> he expressed about Lugo (Chueca, 1977a: 360), but he said the same of so many other cities: in Bilbao, the eclectic architecture of 19th-century quality was being replaced "by the most vulgar speculative architecture without any character"<sup>70</sup> (Chueca, 1977a: 342); in Zamora, the convent of Santa Clara was demolished by the authorities to build the modern Delegation of the Treasury, "which unfortunately came to happen"<sup>71</sup> (1977a: 381); in León, where "The poor quality of the historic center has caused it not to be respected and to be gradually destroyed, constantly demolishing the old buildings to replace them with the most vulgar consumer architecture"<sup>72</sup> (1977: 357); not to mention what happened in Zaragoza, Seville, Salamanca or Jaén (Chueca Goitia, 1977a).

Undoubtedly these opinions, expressed at a time when progress and modernity were synonymous, earned Chueca the enmity of an essential part of contemporary architects, giving rise to the image of conservative and traditionalist to the extreme that he still has today, an idea that clashes with the artistic modernity that he defended for ten years (from 1958 to 1968), from his position as an art critic and director of the Spanish Museum of Contemporary Art in a very committed stage of the same, (Jiménez-Blanco, 1989: 112). At the head of this institution, besides promoting the creation of a museum guide (Chueca, 1962), Chueca promoted important exhibitions of renowned artists, such as the international exhibition of Picasso's engravings (1961),<sup>73</sup> the first of the artist in our country since the civil war, or the exhibition *La nueva pintura americana* with funds from the MOMA in New York exhibited for the first time in our country (*ABC*, 1958), without forgetting other important exhibitions such as the exhibition of George Labouchere's collection, which included radically modern works by Dubuffet, Max Ernst, H Moore, Barbara Heptword, Hartung, Saura, Pablo Serrano, among other artists (1965), or the exhibition dedicated to Spanish artists in the School of Paris (1969) (Figure 6).

<sup>69</sup> Original quotation: "construcciones modernas de la más vulgar arquitectura."

<sup>70</sup> Original quotation: "por la más vulgar arquitectura especulativa sin ningún carácter."

<sup>71</sup> Original quotation: "que en malhora se hizo."

<sup>72</sup> Original quotation: "La escasa calidad del núcleo histórico ha hecho que éste no se respete y se destruya paulatinamente, derribando constantemente los antiguos edificios para sustituirlos por la más vulgar arquitectura de consumo."

<sup>73</sup> On the relation between Chueca and Picasso, see an article by the architect (Chueca Goitia, 1981). Several articles and press releases were published on the exhibition, including one by Chueca himself (Chueca Goitia, 1961).





FIGURE 6. VIEWS OF SOME OF THE ROOMS OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART IN 1959, WHEN THE ARCHITECT FERNANDO CHUECA GOITIA WAS DIRECTOR OF THIS INSTITUTION. Image: *Revista Goya*, n. 32, 1959, p. 121.

### The future of monumental heritage through education

In this sense, and from a contemporary perspective, it is striking that Chueca saw few (if any) positive elements in twentieth-century urban planning. However, the truth is that beyond his radical criticism, a product of direct knowledge of the demolitions that led to the excessive growth of Spanish cities, Chueca did not limit himself to denouncing but proposed other options that did not entail the sacrifice of the historic city for the sake of supposed progress.

Chueca warned that one of the main obstacles to the preservation of the historical city was public opinion and the professional milieu and, of course, the administration and pressure groups, who considered the historic city as a hindrance to the development of modern life and thus addressed this issue in the article “Las ciudades históricas (*Un drama de nuestro tiempo*)” published in 1965, again in the *Revista de Occidente* (Chueca Goitia, 1965). As a solution to this situation, the architect proposed two instruments: education and accepting a certain change.

In the first place, Chueca argued that it was essential to educate society aesthetically because: “The lack of visual education is the first stumbling block we will always come up against when we encounter the unfortunate situation of our cities, old and new”<sup>74</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1965: 280). Chueca lamented “the growing brutality that is drying up the sources of aesthetic perception, destroying the horizon of our near visual world”<sup>75</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1965:

<sup>74</sup> Original quotation: “La falta de una educación visual es el primer escollo con que tropezaremos siempre cuando nos encontremos con la desgraciada situación de nuestras ciudades, viejas y nuevas.”

<sup>75</sup> Original quotation: “la creciente brutalidad que está secando las fuentes de la percepción estética, destruyendo el horizonte de nuestro mundo visual cercano.”

289), “[...] he does not give a damn about the city. What is more, he understands the city as an obstacle and sees with joy that the obstacle falls and leaves his path open, a path that he himself does not know to where it leads”<sup>76</sup> (Chueca Goitia 1965: 289). Therefore, education was essential to react and protect the historic city.

As for the possibility of admitting some novelty, being aware that historic cities had been created as a palimpsest and that their salvation depended on a minimum capacity for transformation, Chueca introduced the idea of rehabilitation through the introduction of new uses: “These old urban centers are perfectly adaptable to current life when the uses bend to the type of building and not the other way around, as now happens that the building has to bend to uses for which it was not intended”<sup>77</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1965: 293). In this way, Chueca proposed the insertion of cultural uses in historic buildings twenty years before this was a common practice in Spain with the first democratic city councils (Hernández Martínez, 2017). What, in his opinion, should always be avoided is that the city should be folded to the economic interests of certain groups. “The city is not and should not be a mere economic gear. There is no choice: either we save the city, limiting economic interests, isolating it from that gear, or we let it perish because we consider that its importance is minor in the face of these material values”<sup>78</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1965: 292). The premonitory character of this reflection must be recognized without palliatives since today, the city in general and the public space, in particular, have been converted from an economic perspective into prized objects of consumption by powerful companies and investment funds that obtained through speculation huge profits that only lead to the privatization of goods and resources and the increase of social inequality.

### What more could be done to preserve the historic city?

In addition to controlling the style of the buildings and educating the population aesthetically, Chueca recommended in his articles and lectures to precisely delimit the historic centers, making their perimeter coincide with the form acquired in 1900 and, in tune with the ideas of Gustavo Giovannoni, he recommended decongesting these areas as far as possible: “The old city instead of becoming massive should become more and more porous, taking advantage of every occasion to enrich it with a garden, a square, a courtyard;”<sup>79</sup> he also urged prohibiting the increase in building volume in these areas “No building located within them should exceed the maximum height of five floors”<sup>80</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1968: 18). A measure that was recommended to curb the abuse of building experienced in all Spanish cities during developmentalism: “If there has been anything serious in the urban planning of the sixties and seventies, it has been the excessive tolerance of building heights”<sup>81</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977a: 14): “The epidemic of *skyscraperism* has destroyed endearing landscapes, has sullied

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<sup>76</sup> Original quotation: “[...] le importa un bledo la ciudad. Es más, entiende a la ciudad como un obstáculo y ve con alegría que el obstáculo caiga y deje su vía expedita, una vía que ni él mismo sabe a dónde conduce.”

<sup>77</sup> Original quotation: “Estos viejos centros urbanos son perfectamente adaptables a la vida actual cuando los usos se pliegan al tipo de edificación y no al contrario, como ahora sucede, que la edificación tiene que plegarse a usos para los que no fue pensada.”

<sup>78</sup> Original quotation: “La ciudad no es ni debe ser un mero engranaje económico. No cabe opción: o salvamos la ciudad, limitando los intereses económicos, aislándola de ese engranaje, o la dejamos perecer por considerar que su importancia es menor frente a estos valores materiales.”

<sup>79</sup> Original quotation: “La ciudad vieja en lugar de macizarse deberá hacerse cada vez más porosa, aprovechando cada ocasión para enriquecerla con un jardín, una plaza, un patio.”

<sup>80</sup> Original quotation: “Ningún edificio situado dentro de ellos deberá sobrepasar la altura máxima de cinco plantas.”

<sup>81</sup> Original quotation: “Si ha existido algo grave en el urbanismo de esta época de los años sesenta y setenta ha sido la tolerancia desmedida de las alturas de la edificación.”

the beauty of our coasts, has broken the best physiognomy of our cities, has infringed on distinguished perspectives, has crushed venerable buildings by its indiscriminate appearance in places and circumstances where it should never have arrived"<sup>92</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977a: 62) (Figures 7a and 7b).



FIGURE 7. VALENCIA TOWER IN MADRID. 7a. Its construction was one of the most controversial examples of rupture with the historical city in the 1970s. It aroused a sharp controversy at the time, as evidenced by the cartoon by the humorist Mingote in the Madrid newspaper *ABC* (1971). Image: *ABC*. 8 de agosto de 2010. 7b. On the left its current state. Image: Irene Ruiz Bazán.

<sup>92</sup> Original quotation: "La epidemia del *rascacielismo* ha destruido paisajes entrañables, ha mancillado la belleza de nuestras costas, ha roto la mejor fisonomía de nuestras ciudades, ha vulnerado perspectivas insignes, ha aplastado venerables edificios por esa indiscriminada aparición suya en los lugares y circunstancias donde nunca debía haber llegado."

Chueca also defended the need for a strict urban planning code to control this situation, an issue that had already been raised years earlier in Italy,<sup>83</sup> “[...] a basic Urban Planning Code that would govern the entire nation, and to which all must submit: individuals, entities, corporations”<sup>84</sup> (1977a: 50), which would function as a framework within which the municipalities would then develop specific plans, all this to tackle the severe problem of the granting of municipal licenses without a minimum of state control and higher legal regulation. This situation, according to Chueca, had produced “a catastrophe of incalculable consequences that has meant nothing less than the destruction of our most beautiful cities in the space of a few years, turning urban organizations that had a sense and structural coherence into monsters where the most dreadful chaos reigns, where life becomes increasingly unbearable and where a functional imbalance is joined by the most unsightly appearance”<sup>85</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977a: 56). This code would arrive in our country years later, specifically with the approval in 1985 of the *Ley de Patrimonio Histórico Español*, which obliged municipalities with historical centers to draw up unique plans for their protection. Years earlier, from his position as senator for Toledo, Chueca Goitia had repeatedly called for protecting the Spanish urbanistic legacy (Hernández Martínez, 2019: 11).

In these areas, Chueca also suggested a strict control of demolitions, “authorizing them only in extreme cases and trying, if possible, to save facades and courtyards”<sup>86</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1968: 18).

*We cannot [Chueca Goitia would add years later], therefore, go to the city with Le Corbusier's utopian and demolishing criteria in the 1920s. We must extend the city under the structural forms that our problems demand, but we must maintain an intact almond as a historical-social center [...] The city is a plural and progressive organism in which each stage must respect the previous one*<sup>87</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977a: 41).

However, this defense of the preservation of facades for their environmental values produces today a certain suspicion considering that it has facilitated the phenomenon of *façadism*, a type of action of emptying historic buildings that freezes the image of the building in its outer skin, denying the interest of the structure, materials and construction techniques that disappear in a demolition. On the contrary, the proposal to eliminate “all chronological discrimination, considering that, from the most remote antiquity up to and including the 19th century, buildings

<sup>83</sup> In the 1960's, many Italian professionals proposed the need to develop specific urban planning regulations as the only possible measure to control the transformation of historic centers and prevent their disappearance. For example, Antonio Cederna stated in 1961: “Che la nostra campagna in difesa dell'antico deve diventare la nostra campagna in difesa dell'urbanistica moderna, cioè della pianificazione unitaria e coordinata” (“That our campaign in defense of the ancient must become our campaign in defense of modern urbanism, that is, of unified and coordinated planning”) (Cederna, 1961: 52). Cederna defended the use of the regulatory plan because, conceiving the city as a living organism, it served to attribute a precise function to each zone of the territory and, therefore, also to the historical center, “per il semplice fatto che un centro storico, con il suo tessuto antico e i suoi comprensori naturali, non si può difendere soltanto con vincoli e divieti ma solo se sappiamo quale funzione attribuirgli in un quadro urbano così mutato di dimensioni, solo quindi se si stabiliscono nel territorio, per così dire strategicamente, le premesse pratiche per la sua sopravvivenza” (“for the simple fact that a historical center, with its ancient fabric and its natural components, cannot differ only from its historical center, with its ancient fabric and its natural components, cannot be differentiated only by means of boundaries and divisions, but only if we know which function to attribute to it in an urban framework of such changed dimensions, only then if the practical measures for its survival are established in the territory, so to speak strategically”) (Cederna, 1961: 52).

<sup>84</sup> Original quotation: “[...] un Código Urbanístico básico que rija para la totalidad de la nación, y al que hayan de someterse todos: particulares, entidades, corporaciones.”

<sup>85</sup> Original quotation: “una catástrofe de incalculables consecuencias que ha supuesto nada menos que la destrucción de nuestras más hermosas ciudades en el lapso de pocos años, convirtiendo organismos urbanos que tenían un sentido y una coherencia estructural en unos monstruos donde reina el más espantoso caos, donde la vida se hace cada vez más insufrible y donde al desequilibrio funcional se une la apariencia más antiestética.”

<sup>86</sup> Original quotation: “no autorizándose éstos más que en casos extremos y procurando, si es posible, el salvamento de fachadas y patios.”

<sup>87</sup> Original quotation: “No podemos [añadiría Chueca Goitia años después], por lo tanto, ir a la ciudad con el criterio utópico y demoleedor del Le Corbusier de los años veinte. Debemos extender la ciudad bajo las formas estructurales que nuestros problemas exijan, pero debemos mantener una almendra intacta como centro histórico-social [...] La ciudad es un organismo plural y progresivo en la que cada etapa debe respetar la anterior.”

should not be treated differently, in view of their age"<sup>88</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1968: 18) is of great interest. In this sense, Chueca Goitia was ahead of his time, claiming for the nineteenth century a heritage value that during the 1960s was not yet granted, which is why so many excellent works of that century disappeared under the demolition pickaxe (Hernández Martínez, 2009b). Likewise, Chueca urged "scrupulous respect for all street elements, pavements, statues, fountains, lampposts, etc."<sup>89</sup> including vegetation, gardens and trees, which for the architect, "are as important as the monuments themselves and should be cataloged as such"<sup>90</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1968: 19). Moreover, he urged to direct the growth of the modern city toward the periphery, connecting it "with streets, roads, parks, boulevards, gardens, etc., which provide the essential differentiation of environments"<sup>91</sup> concerning the historic city (Chueca Goitia, 1968: 19).

Another of the measures suggested by Chueca Goitia was a novel reflection at that time on the need to implement tax incentives to help the owners of heritage assets for their maintenance, comparing the absence of measures in Spain with the situation in other countries, especially England (Chueca Goitia, 1977a: 79-87). It was also a question of encouraging the participation of other institutions (foundations and associations) in managing Spanish cultural heritage. The State could not cover all the needs, according to Chueca, an issue of absolute topicality at present.

### Validity of Chueca Goitia's theory of the historical city

It is paradoxical that half a century later, amid a crisis produced by globalization and the effects of uncontrolled capitalism, to which has been added the general pandemic of COVID that forces us to consider our ways of life and our being in the world, we substantially coincide with Chueca in defense of the values of historical and traditional architecture. The defense of the urban fabric as a fundamental element of our cultural heritage and a crucial part of our cultural identity, the need to legally delimit the historic areas of the city to be protected and to respect the form and volumes of historic buildings, the possibility of giving life to the architecture of the past through new and appropriate uses, the limit of street traffic and construction, the protection of the population settled in these areas against the progressive *gentrification* of historical centers, were some of the issues raised by Chueca Goitia in the decades of developmentalism. He did so simultaneously as the scandalous destruction of Spain's historic cities, which were falling victim to a lack of social appreciation, ignorance, institutional neglect and real estate speculation. Not only this, at a time like the present, when the opinion in favor of a more democratic and participatory urban planning is growing, it is inspiring to read again the opinion of this architect, who, even before the arrival of democracy in Spain, said: "Because it is not interesting who plans, nor how it is planned, but to know in whose name it is planned and what democratic consensus lends its weight, its support, and its authority to planning"<sup>92</sup> (Chueca Goitia, 1977: 44). These words of Chueca Goitia, published more than four decades ago, acquire today a premonitory tinge that we cannot ignore, hence the need to reread the texts of an already classic author, and at the same time rabidly modern, who appeals both to historical and critical reflection on the historic city and the need for its conservation, and to morality and social action in our condition as citizens committed to the present, just as he was during his time.

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<sup>88</sup> Original quotation: "toda discriminación cronológica, considerando que, desde la más remota antigüedad hasta el siglo XIX inclusive, los edificios no deben recibir trato diferente, en atención a su antigüedad."

<sup>89</sup> Original quotation: "un escrupuloso respeto a todos los elementos viales, pavimentos, estatuas, fuentes, farolas de iluminación, etc.."

<sup>90</sup> Original quotation: "son tan importantes como los propios monumentos y deberían catalogarse como tales."

<sup>91</sup> Original quotation: "con vías, parques, bulevares, jardines, etc., que procuren la esencial diferenciación de ambientes."

<sup>92</sup> Original quotation: "Porque no es lo interesante quién planifica, ni cómo se planifica, sino saber en nombre de quién se planifica y qué consenso democrático prestan su peso, su respaldo y su autoridad a la planificación."

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