

The Protection of Traditional Architecture in Spain and Italy¹

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This paper is the result of the joint research process carried out by the authors in the context of the visiting professor programme of Sapienza University of Rome, in which they have had the opportunity to participate on several occasions. The work focuses on a comparative analysis of the treatment given to vernacular architecture in Spain and Italy (the authors' countries of origin). The subject is approached both from a conceptual and legislative point of view. Already at the conceptual level - from the very definition of the cultural phenomenon itself - a different approach to the matter can be appreciated, defining it as popular architecture in Spain and minor architecture in Italy. At the normative and legislative level, the three fundamental aspects in which the normative framework encompasses vernacular architecture in both Spain and Italy have been studied in depth: the valuation, protection and conservation of this architecture.

Introduction

The concept of historical heritage has evolved from an interest in monuments and works of art to more complex realities such as ethnology or intangible heritage. Vernacular architecture started to attract interest between the 1930s and 1960s, with different approaches resulting in different terminology in different regions. While in Anglo-Saxon influenced countries the term “vernacular architecture” is used in reference to its link with a specific territory or place - by assimilation of the term referring to local ways of speaking, in France the expression “architecture traditionnelle” is used for its generation by mechanisms inherited from the experience accumulated by previous generations - both in construction and architecture. In both Spain and Portugal the term “arquitectura popular” is used for its link with the vital experience of the people who build and inhabit it. In Italy the expression “minor architecture” is generally used, due to the exclusion of its vast park of monumental architecture and the legacy of Gustavo Giovannoni's environmentalism.² Other more contemporary and poetic references allude to anonymous architecture or architecture without an architect,³ since its definition process does not start from

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1. This text is the result of the collaboration of the authors, who have produced the chapters independently. Vidal Gómez Martínez words 1 to 2655 (1st to 6th page) and Maria Grazia Turco words 2656 to 5000 (6th to 12th page).

2. Stabile, FC “Gustavo Giovannoni e la cultura dell’ambientismo”. *Bollettino del Centro di studi per la storia dell’architettura Casa dei Crescenzi*. 1 nuova serie (2017): 135-146.

3. Rudofsky, B (1964) *Architecture without architects*. A short introduction to non-pedigreed architecture, New York: Doubleday & Company Inc.

the architect's expressed reflection in each case, but is based on the heritage received through typologies.

In any case, all these expressions attempt to summarize in a single adjective the essence of a patrimonial reality too complex and extensive to be defined with a single word. Of the many definitions made by scholars of the subject, that of Carlos Flores, which needed a theoretical body based on twenty-four points to describe it, should be highlighted for its breadth.⁴ It is, in fact, an architecture with strong local roots in both material and functional terms, based on typological and constructive knowledge passed down from generation to generation, executed by the people and for the people who inhabit it, who do not have the formal power of great monuments, constitute the vast majority of the suburb of historic cities, and is realized without the participation of architects.

In recent years, particular emphasis has been placed on the cultural factors of this architecture,⁵ which supports the intimate life of people and is defined by their concrete way of living - before geographical factors or available material resources - that is, it is the fruit and refuge of the culture of the people who build and inhabit it. It is therefore an architecture of great value and relevance to each people and at the same time acquires universal value in the map of cultures to which humanity has given rise in its development.

Folk architecture has a late cultural recognition. From the romantic interest in the picturesque and the valorization of the urban fabric as support and environment for the monument, we arrive at the concept of the Historic Centre and from there the express reference to vernacular architecture as a heritage reality with its own values.

From the 1930s onwards, large-scale studies of popular architecture began to be conducted in countries such as Spain,⁶ Portugal⁷ and Italy^{8,9,10}. However, this interest was not reflected in international charters until a few decades later, first with the 1964 Venice Charter,¹¹ in which the first explicit allusion to the Historic Centre is included, and finally in the 1999 Vernacular Heritage Charter,¹² dedicated strictly to vernacular architecture. More recently, ICOMOS emphasizes the relevance and heritage values of vernacular architecture, particularly in the recognition of the rural landscape as cultural heritage.¹³

4. Flores, C (1973) *Arquitectura popular española*, Madrid: Aguilar SA de ediciones.

5. Gómez Martínez, V (2017) *La casa sin nombre Una casa popular tradicional en la provincial de Sevilla*, Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla.

6. Torres Balbás L (1930) *La vivienda popular en España*. In *Folklore y costumbres de España*. Bracelona: Casa editorial Alberto Martín. Vol. 3, 139-504.

7. Tavora F, Pimentel R (1961) *Arquitectura popular em Portugal*. Lisboa: Sindicato nacional dos arquitectos.

8. Astorri G, Pasolini M, Ciarrochi L (1926), *Architettura minore in Italia. Vol. I. Roma*. Roma: C. Crudo & C.

9. Astorri G, Pasolini M, Ciarrochi L (1926), *Architettura minore in Italia. Vol. II. Roma*. Roma: C. Crudo & C.

10. Zocca M (1940) *Architettura minore in Italia. Vol. III. Suburbio di Roma e Lazio*. Roma: Casa editrice Carlo Colombo.

11. International Charter on the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, 1964. II International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, Venice, 1964.

12. Charter of the Built Vernacular Heritage, 1999. 12th General Assembly of ICOMOS, Mexico, 1999.

13. Principles Concerning the Rural Landscape as Heritage. 19th ICOMOS General Assembly,

At the same time - usually with some delay - the recognition of these values is gaining ground in society through historic heritage legislation, which has included among its objectives the protection of the surrounding environment first and historic monuments and towns later. At present, vernacular architecture is included in heritage legislation and plans with some difficulty.

Methodology and Objectives

The different approaches to the subject found in different countries result in equally different cultural perceptions, heritage valuation and legal protection, each with its own potentials and shortcomings. The fundamental aim of this contribution is to promote the mutual enrichment of heritage visions and legal regimes of popular architecture in Europe - as a common cultural environment from a wide range of perspectives.

To this end, a comparative analysis is made of the three fundamental aspects of heritage protection: evaluation, protection and preservation. First, the studies carried out since the beginning of interest in the subject and its influence on society are analysed. This is followed by a collection and analysis of the legal framework and standards of heritage protection for the specific case of popular architecture. Finally, the results of cultural perception and heritage protection are analysed on the basis of a constructive approach, i.e., the state of conservation of popular architecture.

This contribution focuses on the case of Spain and Italy, due to their parallel paths, with sometimes shared and sometimes antagonistic concepts.

Different Approaches to the Subject

Spain and Italy close the northern arc of the Mediterranean and share a long history through their maritime routes from the landing of the troops of Cnaeus and Publius Cornelius Escipion in Emporion - now Ampurias. In Roman times, Roman culture, technology and traditions reached the Iberian Peninsula and emperors of Hispanic origin such as Trajan reached Rome. The Catholic religion and the different periods of Spanish rule in Naples and Sicily crystallised over time into two cultures of their own but with numerous connections and similarities.

Since the awakening of socio-cultural interest in the knowledge and conservation of the historical heritage, Italy has been a world-leading agent in the theoretical reflection and practical development of intervention on this heritage with the approaches of authors such as Camilo Boito or Gustavo Giovannoni, who have had a strong influence on the Spanish scene where the experience of Leopoldo Torres Balbás emerges. However, in the case of vernacular architecture, the approaches are radically different.

Due to these geographical, social and cultural proximities, this paper makes a comparative analysis between Spanish and Italian experiences. Due to the limitations of the article's format, it focuses on the traditional domestic architecture - the traditional house - of medium-sized urban nuclei, where the historic residential urban fabric has not been subjected to the pressures and replacement processes of large cities. In both countries, the protection regulations move within a dual legal framework at national and regional level, so that the regions of Lazio in Italy and Andalusia in Spain are taken into account to obtain a similar perception of the realities studied.

The Spanish Case

The interest of architects and historians in popular architecture in Spain is evident from the first quarter of the 20th century and focuses mainly on residential architecture, the popular house. Besides the aforementioned works by Leopoldo Torres Balbás (1930) and Carlos Flores (1973), the initiatives of the Dirección General de Arquitectura (1942)¹⁴ and Luis Feduchi¹⁵ (1978) stand out. These are large-scale works that attempt to tour the entire geography, collecting the most representative examples of the popular case.

On a regional scale, the frustrated “Inventario de arquitectura popular de Andalucía” (Inventory of popular architecture in Andalusia) stands out, which sought a complete cataloguing in three biennial campaigns dedicated to productive architecture (1992-93), residence (1994-95) and welfare (1996-97). After a spontaneous but fruitful first campaign, and despite attempts to improve the organisation, the campaign dedicated to social housing failed due to a lack of resources and above all due to the lack of transdisciplinarity of the teams - composed exclusively of ethnologists - unable to recognise and process in an orderly manner the vast traditional housing heritage present in Andalusia.

On a smaller scale, there are numerous works by local researchers analysing popular housing in municipal and regional contexts, achieving a greater level of detail and depth but losing the reference to the real territorial layout of the object they are studying.

In the legal field, since the 1931 constitution, the Basic Laws^{16 17 18 19} have clearly defined society's rights to the historical heritage and the mandatory nature of its protection by the state, both by the central and regional administrations. Consequently, the corresponding laws for the protection of historical heritage^{20 21}

14. Dirección General de Arquitectura (1942) *Plan nacional de mejoramiento de la vivienda en los poblados de pescadores*. Madrid: Dirección General de Arquitectura.

15. Feduchi L, Borrego F, Temprano J (1978) *Itinerarios de arquitectura popular española*. Barcelona: Editorial Blume.

16. Constitución de la República española, 1931.

17. Constitución española, 1978.

18. Estatuto de autonomía para Andalucía, Ley Orgánica 6/1981.

19. Reforma del Estatuto de autonomía para Andalucía, Ley Orgánica 2/2007.

20. Ley relativa al Patrimonio Artístico Nacional, Gaceta de Madrid N° 145, 1933.

21. Ley 16/1985, de 25 de junio, del Patrimonio Histórico Español.

²² ²³ are issued with an overlapping national and regional legal framework. Since the 1933 law, express reference has been made to both monuments and 'urban and rustic ensembles' in which the traditional domestic fabric is embedded.

Since the 1985 law, a series of categories of assets of cultural interest have been established according to the characteristics that define the different elements of the Historical Heritage and, although there is no explicit reference to popular architecture, the definition of "Conjunto Histórico" (Historical Ensemble) includes the essence that defines it:

“la agrupación de bienes inmuebles que forman una unidad de asentamiento, continua o dispersa, condicionada por una estructura física representativa de la evolución de una comunidad humana por ser testimonio de su cultura o constituir un valor de uso y disfrute para la colectividad. Asimismo es Conjunto Histórico cualquier núcleo individualizado de inmuebles comprendidos en una unidad superior de población que reúna esas mismas características y pueda ser claramente delimitado.”²⁴

This legislation uses a positive designation criterion, i.e. only those elements expressly declared by the administrations responsible for Culture and Historical Heritage are considered Historical Heritage and subject to legal protection. It therefore urges the aforementioned administrations to declare as Goods of Cultural Interest - or a similar figure - the set of buildings and urban nuclei with the aforementioned cultural values and establishes the obligation to draw up or adapt urban planning for their knowledge and protection. This translates into the drafting of general planning figures that analyse the entire historic city in depth, both in its urban and architectural aspects, protecting not only the singular elements, but also the popular architecture in each of its component buildings.

On the other hand, town planning includes among its fundamental functions the protection of Historical Heritage, which establishes a second mechanism for the protection of popular architecture, which allows this architecture to be protected even when it is not recognised as part of a Historical Complex - through the catalogues included in the General Urban Plans.

The protection of historical heritage in Andalusia has, in addition to the 'Consejería de Cultura', the 'Instituto Andaluz de Patrimonio Histórico', which advises on and promotes the knowledge and protection of historical heritage. Through the digital guide it is possible to consult the General Catalogue of Historical Heritage of Andalusia, which includes 117 Historical Sites, where popular architecture is one of the main heritage values. Of these 117 declared Historic Sites, in November 2017 almost half (57) had protection documents drawn up and approved.

Faced with legislative duplication and in order to avoid the problems of regional management of Historic Heritage - such as methodological contradictions

22. Ley 1/1991, de 3 de julio, de Patrimonio Histórico de Andalucía.

23. Ley 14/2007, de 26 de noviembre, del Patrimonio Histórico de Andalucía.

24. In English it would read: the grouping of immovable properties forming a unit of settlement, continuous or dispersed, conditioned by a physical structure representative of the evolution of a human community because it bears witness to its culture or constitutes a value for the use and enjoyment of the community. Likewise, a Historic Site is any individualised nucleus of properties included in a higher unit of population which has the same characteristics and can be clearly delimited.

or the partial perception of cultural realities developed in territories embraced by different administrative realities - the "Plan Nacional de Arquitectura Tradicional"²⁵ was drafted in 2014 as a document from which to establish common strategies.

In practice, this strong legislative protection is translated into the supervision by the administration responsible for Culture and Historical Heritage of intervention projects on popular architecture in declared Historical Centres up to the elaboration of protection plans, which are also controlled by the administration itself. Once these plans are approved, the local administrations are in charge of controlling interventions on popular architecture.

The results of this protection are often compromised by an insufficient knowledge of its values and potential on the part of society - which values it as part of its culture but perceives its preservation as a burden - and by an architectural discipline with little technical training in heritage and restoration - which is not a fundamental part of the compulsory curricula for obtaining the title of architect and which has few specialised post-graduate studies.

The Italian Case

In the 1920s, the Associazione Artistica fra i Cultori di Architettura, under the auspices of Countess Maria Pasolini Pomti, launched an ambitious programme for the study of minor Italian architecture organised in regional volumes so that its content would be coherent in terms of history, style and architecture. The introduction to the programme recognises the need to study minor architecture - as the true essence of cities - and expresses a premonitory lament for the lack of interest in the subject in Italy - compared to initiatives in countries such as Switzerland. It is a collection of photographs of modest architecture, basically residential and religious. The first two volumes are dedicated to Rome and the third and last - published after the countess' death - to the suburbs of Rome and Lazio^{26 27 28}.

The most relevant figure in these early years is undoubtedly that of Gustavo Giovannoni, who refers to minor architecture with the poetic image of flowers growing at the foot of large buildings, without losing sight of its main distinguishing features such as spontaneity, use of local materials, adaptation to the climate and, above all, that it is a clear and modest reflection of popular life. He proposes it as an irreplaceable environment for large works, warning that replacing the modest elements of the historic urban fabric will deprive monuments of their relationship with the environment and their significance as art.²⁹

25. Carrión Gutierrez A (2015) *Plan Nacional de Arquitectura Tradicional*. Madrid: Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. Secretaría General Técnica. Subdirección General de Documentación y Publicaciones.

26. Astorri G, Pasolini M, Ciarrochi L (1926), *Architettura minore in Italia. Vol. I. Roma*. Roma: C. Crudo & C.

27. Astorri G, Pasolini M, Ciarrochi L (1927), *Architettura minore in Italia. Vol. II. Roma*. Roma: C. Crudo & C.

28. Zocca M (1940) *Architettura minore in Italia. Vol. III. Suburbio di Roma e Lazio*. Roma: Casa editrice Carlo Colombo.

29. Giovannoni G (1940) *Architettura minore di Roma e del Lazio*.

In the following decades, works of regional and local scope were produced, covering different parts of the Italian geography such as Apulia,³⁰ Venice,³¹ Sardinia,³² Pisa,³³ Chieti.³⁴ With the exception of the work dedicated to Venice - which involves an exercise in profound recognition of residential architecture with notes, plans and elevations of great precision - we generally find collections of photographs and drawings, with the format of a travel notebook as a clear reference.

From the 1980s onwards, the concept of “minor centres” began to take hold and studies began to offer a more complete view of them thanks to a more structured methodology.^{35,36,37} It is precisely in Lazio that we find one of the highest resolution works dedicated to the minor centres of the Aniene valley.³⁸

The - modern - protection of Italy's historical heritage began in the 19th century with the edict of Cardinal Pacca in 1820. After unification, the General Directorate for Excavations and Monuments first and the General Directorate for Academies and Libraries and for the Diffusion of Culture later, were to be the institutions responsible for the protection of the Historic Heritage. The first structured laws on the subject are Law no. 364 on Antiquities and Fine Arts of 1909 and above all Law no. 1089 of June 1939 on the Protection of Things of Artistic and Historical Interest.³⁹

The 1948 Constitution⁴⁰ states in Article 9 that the republic “*Tutela il paesaggio e il patrimonio storico e artistico della Nazione*” (protects the landscape and the historical and artistic heritage of the nation).

In this way, the duty of safeguarding Cultural Heritage is entrusted to the State, which develops it through national and regional laws. In 1960, the Gubbio Charter⁴¹ for the protection of Historic Centres was drawn up, perhaps the document with the most direct relationship with minor architecture, comparing it with the conformation of the historic city. In the 1960s and 1970s, commissions were set up (Franceschini and Papaldo) to organise the work necessary for the drafting of a new law, which would not arrive until the single text of 1999.⁴² Already in the 21st

30. Ceschi C (1935) Architettura minore in Puglia. *Lapigia, rivista di Archeologia, Storia e Arte* 13.87-93.

31. Trincanato E R (1948) *Venezia minore*. Milano: Edizioni del Milione.

32. Mossa V (1953) *Architettura religiosa minore in Sardegna*. Sassari: Edizioni Gallizzi.

33. Curuni A (1976) Aspetti della cosiddetta architettura minore pisana. *Bollettino del Centro di studi per la storia dell'architettura*. 24. 145-155.

34. Mancini R (2013) *Architettura minore nel Chietino*. Pescara: Mancini Pescara.

35. Tronca P (1987) *Tipologie dell'architettura minore. La media valle dell'Aterno*. L'Aquila: Amministrazione Provinciale di L'Aquila.

36. Coletta T (2005) *La conservazione dei centri storici minori abbandonati. Il caso della Campania*. Napoli: Università degli studi di Napoli “Federico II”.

37. Stabile F R, Zampilli M, Cortesi C (2009) *Centri storici minori. Progetti per il recupero della bellezza*. Roma: Gangemi editore.

38. Longo C, Albisini P, Avenaboli E (1979) *Centri storici minori nel Lazio: metodologie d'indagine e proposte di intervento campione nella valle dell'Aniene*. Roma: Edizioni Kappa.

39. Ferretti A (2010) *Legislazione dei beni culturali e del paesaggio. Nozioni essenziali*. Arzano: Edizioni Simone.

40. Costituzione della Repubblica Italiana, 1948.

41. Carta di Gubbio, Convegno Nazionale per la Salvaguardia e il Risanamento dei Centri Storici, Gubbio, 1960.

42. D. L. 29 ottobre 1999, n. 490 Testo unico delle disposizioni legislative in materia di beni culturali e ambientali, a norma dell'Art. 1 della legge 8 ottobre, n. 352.

century, the jurisprudence was completed with the 2004 Cultural Heritage and Landscape Code⁴³ and its subsequent corrections.

The law of 1939 protects "*le cose, immobili e mobili, che presentano interesse artistico, storico, archeologico o etnográfico*" (things, immovable and movable, that are of artistic, historical, archaeological or ethnográfico interest), which will later generate the concept of Cultural Heritage and which will be progressively incorporated expressly in numerous expressions of Italian culture for which a negative protection criterion is established, i.e., all the elements listed in the law remain under the protection of the law, whose owners must justify their exclusion if they deem it appropriate - establishing an antiquity criterion for works of art -.

Among the elements listed in the different national legislations, there is no explicit mention of historic centres or minor architecture. The only explicit definition of historic centres can be found in the 1999 Legge urbanística della regione Lazio.⁴⁴

"sono centri storici gli organismi urbani di antica formazione che hanno dato origine alle città contemporanee. Essi si individuano come strutture urbane che hanno mantenuto la riconoscibilità delle tradizioni, dei processi e delle regole che hanno presieduto alla loro formazione e sono costituiti da patrimonio edilizio, rete viaria e spazi inedificati"⁴⁵

In Lazio, in addition to this urban planning legislation, there are the 1997 Norme in materia di beni e servizi culturali del Lazio⁴⁶ [40], focused on cultural management, and the Regional Commission for the Cultural Heritage of Lazio.

For its part, urban planning legislation establishes - starting from the bridge law on town planning (Law no. 765/67)⁴⁷ [41] - the need to integrate historic centres into the general plan, as well as the need to establish specific parameters according to their historical and artistic values.

The Ministry of Culture provides an on-line catalogue with 831,114 registers, organised in 3 categories and 9 disciplinary sectors, among which there is no direct reference to minor architecture or historic centres.

Despite the scarce specific references and mechanisms for the protection of minor architecture or historic centres, Italy in general and Lazio in particular conserve a large part of its historic urban fabric, probably due to the generic protection of elements of historic, artistic and cultural interest, as well as to the deep tradition of restoration, both in the society itself and in the universities where it is part of the curricula and to which many highly specialised courses are dedicated.

43. D. L. 22 gennaio 2004, n. 42, Codice dei beni culturali e del paesaggio, ai sensi dell'articolo 10 Legge 6 luglio 2002, n. 137.

44. L. R. 22 dicembre 1999, n. 38, Norme sul governo del territorio del Lazio.

45. In English: historic centres are the ancient urban organisms that gave rise to contemporary cities. They are identified as urban structures that have retained the recognisability of the traditions, processes and rules that have presided over their formation and are made up of built heritage, the road network and unbuilt spaces.

46. L.R. 24 Novembre 1997, n. 42, Norme in materia di beni e servizi culturali del Lazio.

47. Legge 6 agosto 1967, n. 765, Modifiche ed integrazioni alla legge urbanistica 17 agosto 1942, n. 1150.

Conclusions

Although there are no studies that allow a direct comparison on the conservation of vernacular architecture or historic ensembles, it is clear that the strategies developed over the years in both countries offer key elements for the proper protection and conservation of this heritage. A cumulative strategy of both experiences could benefit from the main potentials and correct the shortcomings of each.

- Specific recognition of the heritage values of vernacular architecture, beyond the environmental values of monuments, both as part of the historic city and as architecture with its own entity and values.
- Generic protection of all traditional architecture, without the need to establish specific declarations, in order to guarantee the preservation of the ensemble of buildings and with it the historic urban fabric.
- Development of specific study and protection plans for vernacular architecture, both in the field of town planning and architecture.
- Obligation to set up transdisciplinary working groups with professionals from the fields of architecture, history, archaeology and ethnology to develop these plans.
- Creation of specific professional profiles with specialised training as an essential condition for intervention in vernacular architecture as in other heritage disciplines.

It would be advisable for a clear improvement of the results of the evaluation, protection and conservation policies to extend this study to other countries in the European sphere, establishing a system of common indicators - levels of replacement of vernacular architecture, use of traditional building systems, levels of occupation, suitability to the needs of current daily life,..... - which allows a comparative analysis of the results in terms of the state of conservation of popular architecture.

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