



Adriana Hernández Sánchez

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6305-3255>

Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla
adriana.hernandezsanchez@correo.buap.mx

Christian Enrique De La Torre Sánchez

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7456-746X>

Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla
christian.delatorre@correo.buap.mx

LOST SYMBOLS IN THE HISTORIC CITY OF PUEBLA IN MEXICO

Abstract

Since its origin, the city of Puebla has had representative elements in its public spaces that have survived for a long time, they are ornamental and utilitarian objects which are landmarks of the city. Street furniture is a benchmark of identity too. All elements have legends, they are references that have given identity to streets and avenues. Natural elements also refer to a city's identity, like trees. But the natural element that defined origin, trace and growth of the city is one of the least visible. In the sixties, the San Francisco River was piped, as a sign of the new modernity, and today it is a boulevard where thousands of cars pass. Thus, bridges and other types of elements that the population still remember, mainly the elderly, have been forgotten. In recent years, some initiatives have emerged to rescue the historical memory of daily life and the revaluation of representative objects of the city center, such as the Casa Analco Community Museum project, coordinated by the Faculty of Architecture of BUAP in collaboration with residents of the Analco neighborhood. This article discusses both the monuments, their relics, elements of nature that shape the city's identity, as well as the gradual loss of these symbols.

Keywords:

identity, memory, historical centers, landmarks, public space, Puebla

PREFACE

In the cities whose historic centers are considered with patrimonial value and tourist vocation, the greatest attention of the visitors – and a considerable sector of residents – focuses on the monumental spaces that have cultural attractiveness and greater commercial affluence. But there are smaller – scale elements that are part of the daily life of the city and that go unnoticed despite the historical, artistic, and cultural value they have, as is the case of sculptures, fountains, and other



elements of urban furniture. Some of these objects are referent to be located on the site (a niche or fountain) or give rise to stories told by the neighbors (a stone cross on the facade or a sculpture on the roof of a house), with legends that have passed through generations, acquiring a symbolic character and settling local roots, but which, paradoxically, are not reflected in actions in favor of their conservation in both material and immaterial aspects.

Some considerations about tangible and intangible cultural heritage

Cultural heritage is a set of material and intangible assets “that constitute the heritage of a human group, that emotionally reinforce its sense of community with its own identity and that are perceived by others as characteristic” (ILAM Foundation, 2013). Assets are transmitted from generation to generation and are evidence of man’s creativity. The Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) identifies three types of material works (monuments, ensembles, and places) which it defines as follows:

1. Monuments: Architectural, sculpture or painting Works, elements or structures of an archaeological character, inscriptions, caves, and groups of elements, which have an exceptional universal value from the historical, esthetic, and artistic point of view.
2. Ensembles: Groups of buildings, isolated or assembled, whose architecture, unity and integration in the landscape give them exceptional universal value from the point of view of history, art, or science.
3. Places: Man’s works or joint works between man and nature, as well as areas, including archaeological sites, that have an exceptional universal value from the historical, esthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view (UNESCO, 1972).

In the case of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), UNESCO defines it as “the uses, representations, expressions, knowledge and techniques – along with the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces inherent to them – that communities, groups and in some cases, individuals recognize as an integral part of their cultural heritage”. As the international organization mentions, ICH is transmitted from generation to generation and fills it with “a sense of identity and continuity, contributing with this, to promote respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. Both types of cultural heritage, material, and intangible, are not static; they evolve and create new elements of identity, they are being renewed and each generation gives then a new reading”. Thus, “the cultural and natural heritage is part of the inestimable and irreplaceable assets not only of every nation but of all humanity” therefore “by their remarkable exceptional qualities, they have and “Exceptional Universal Value” and consequently deserve special protection against the growing dangers that threaten them” (UNESCO, 1972).

Alas in general terms, it is considered that heritage only refers to buildings and material aspects, which are valued as untouchable and inaccessible to non-specialized public. Such a conviction omits recognition of other expressions and a wider definition of culture. Therefore, it seems at first glance that the only purpose of heritage is to protect it and take care of it rather than speaking of complex cultural assets. Whereas the UNESCO Culture for Development Indicator (IUCD) “seek to demonstrate and highlight the potential of cultures as an engine of income – generating and job – creating economic development” (2014, p. 22). Speaking about cities there are authors who consider culture to be a social and historical construction, as they are expressing “the multiple aspects of social life and transmitting their meanings” (Margulis, 2002, p. 515).¹

The monument and the city

A monument (from the Latin “monere”, to remind) “is an object that contributes to maintaining the memory of the past through the reference of a character or a historical fact” (Bohigas, 1986, p. 148), but also “constitutes a synthesis of our national – regional public memory, it gathers the stereotypes that, at the time, were shared about the past” (Flores Chávez, 2020, p. 32). Thus, the monument is an important element of the city:

Precisely because it is a memory of the past, it constitutes a fundamental factor of the permanence of the city through the hazardous ways of its physical and social transformation. This quality of permanence makes it an agglutinative and representative of certain aspects of the collective identity, of the social group that surrounds it... (Bohigas, 1986, p. 148).

Regarding their materiality, monuments as commemorative elements placed in public spaces have been associated with statues or other symbolic ornamental elements, although since the second half of the 20th century the situation has changed:

If the statuary was the dominant paradigm for centuries, today the situation has changed radically. Traditional stone and bronze yield to iron, steel, and other materials, and even to the absence of materials. Volumetric materialization results in the dematerialization by photography, video, digital image, hologram or sound (Remesar, 2019, p. 42).

¹ In regard to this, Margulis comments that although it is not a system of signs as studied and manageable as language, the city “can also be considered expression of culture and deciphable text”: language is the symbolic code par excellence and the one that best encompasses the social connection. As a historical – social construction of men, it reflects their intimacy the ways in which each culture organizes its perceptions, its affections, its relationship with the natural and social environment (Margulis, 2002, p. 515).

LOST SYMBOLS IN HISTORICAL CITIES

Although a considerable number of monuments are identifiable in the city, there are other objects that most of the time go unnoticed in the dynamics of everyday life, but when some disappear, paradoxically leaves a void and a symbol is lost. Over time, collective memory recreates them, and different appropriations or reinterpretations arise from family legends or histories, although collective memory gets lost. These are elements that may go unnoticed by the visitor but have a special meaning for the local population or, at least, are perceptible references by the inhabitants.

In the book *The Image of the City* (1984), Kevin Lynch defines five representations of urban identity from the perception of the user:

- Paths. These are conduits that the observer follows regularly, with elements such as streets, trails, transit lines, roads, canals and roads.
- Borders: These are linear elements that the observer does not use and represent the break of continuity, which usually separate one area from another. They are physical boundaries, of natural or artificial origin, such as fences railroads, beaches or cliffs, usually with physical lateral bodies.
- Neighborhood or districts. These are sections of the environment or city of medium-large size, such as neighborhoods, colonies or districts.
- Nodes. These are strategic points of the city that denote intensity or population density, they can be focal points where the population departs or directs, and generally, it is the crossing or convergence of paths.
- Landmarks: These are points of reference the observer does not enter, usually defined physical objects that can be distinguished from various places. There are several examples of this type of elements such as buildings, monuments, religious temples, signs, mountains, shops or squares (Landín, 2011).

In the case of landmarks, these are elements that in addition to their quality as references in the location or identification of sectors are significant for the local population.

Urban significant are perceived, used and appreciated in different ways by the various groups that inhabit them; each group gives them mismatched meanings, which vary according to their cultural codes of class, ethnicity or generation. Thus, members of different groups that inhabit the city are related to each other by generational, ethnic or tribal variables and share cultural codes, including ways of perception and appreciation. The city itself, its streets, houses or landscapes, are perceived and decoded in a dissimilar way: it could be said that each of these groups imagines and experiences a different city. There would be, in a way, parallel and simultaneous cities, but different if they are distinguished from the intimacy of the experiences of the various groups of inhabitants. Each of the subcultures that live together in the city possesses their own epistemic devices that operate on their way of perceiving the city (Margulis, 2002, p. 520).

The Historic Center of Puebla city

Puebla was founded in 1531. Since its origin, a social differentiation was established in the territory: in the center, by the reticular trace destined for the Spaniards, in the periphery the neighborhoods for the indigenous people that were brought to work on the construction of the new settlement (Fig. 1). For centuries, these two delimitations formed the total extension of Puebla until the 19th century. By the mid – 20th, faced by the growth of the city the old city was defined as the historic center (Fig. 2).

Even though the historic center of Puebla has suffered the loss of a considerable part of ancient buildings, in 1987 it was inscribed on the list of Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO. It is a monumental area with a 6.9 square kilometers surface, whose urban trace is characterized by a regular grid that interrupted its continuity before the ancient natural barriers such as the “San Francisco” river (or “Almoloya”) and the “Xonaca” creek (Fig. 3). The trace of the cities is an identity element which the shape of their blocks and dimensions of the streets stands out in spite of the corresponding transformations according to the growth of the city.

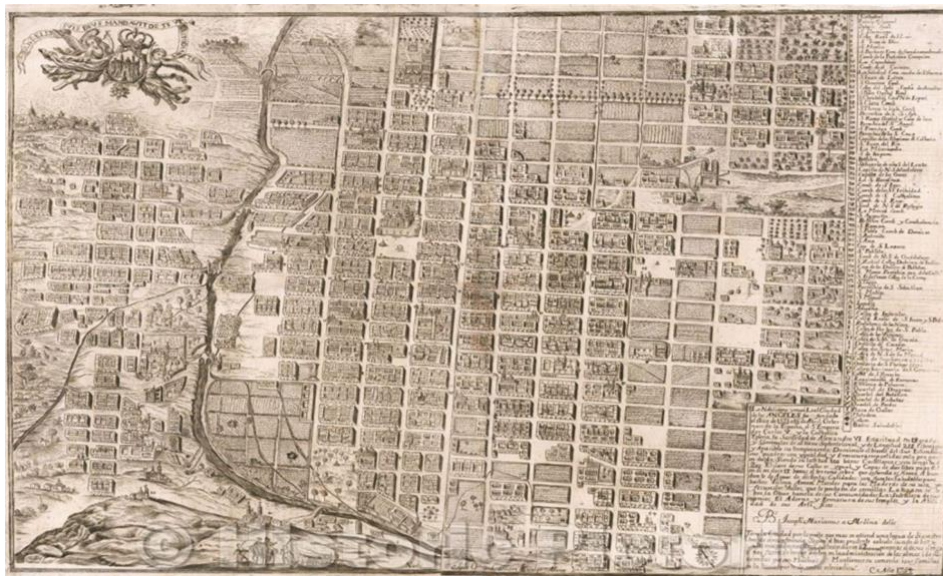


Fig. 1. Plan of the city of Puebla in 1754 prepared by Joseph de Medina: “The very noble and loyal city of »Los Angeles« was founded in 1531, April 16th, governing Spain the Emperor »Carlos V« and the catholic church, the holiness of »Alexandro VI«” (Vélez, Guzmán, 1997).

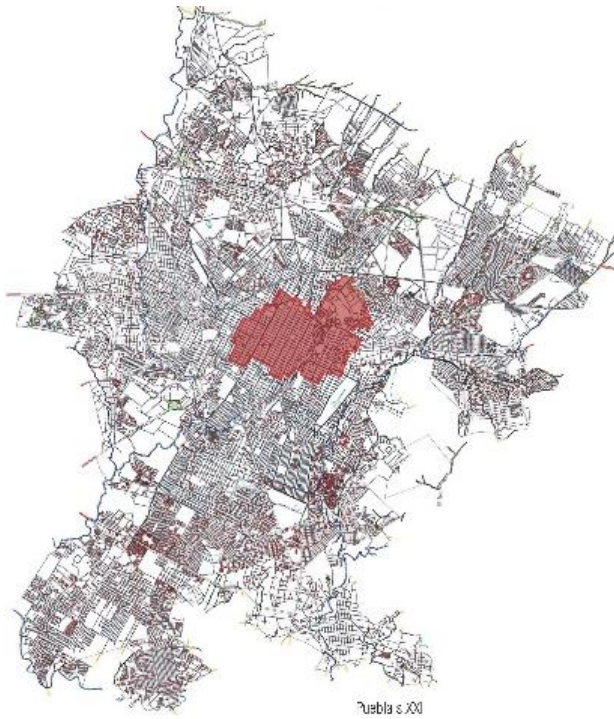


Fig. 2. Map of Puebla city in the 21st century highlighting the location of the Historic Monuments Area. Elaborated by the author (Hernández, 2009).



Fig. 3. Map of the Historic Monuments Area of Puebla city. Elaborated by the author (Hernández, 2009).

In the constructive aspect, representative buildings from the 16th to the 19th century stand out. There are notable examples of viceregal architecture with local characteristics, with a marked difference between those constructed in the city's first square, the most important and sumptuous civil monuments, and the indigenous neighborhoods, with more austere constructions, where public spaces and temples stand out.

Since its establishment, the city has important elements in public spaces that eventually lost their validity, some disappeared, and others have prevailed in its history. Of those that remain, not everyone has data that refers to their origin, if their location has always been the same or the modifications they have had over time. Some are subject of legends or have stories that only neighbors know. Although their place is the public space, only some are registered in the municipal inventories as artistic elements, ornate or urban furniture.

Puebla has had representative elements in its public spaces. In the main square, during the viceroyalty, there was an obelisk dedicated to "Carlos III" and a pillory, at the end of the 19th century a kiosk (Fig. 4) and in the 20th century a fountain dedicated to the archangel "San Miguel", the only element that remains in the place.



Fig. 4. Kiosk in the center of the main square in Puebla, that remained from 1882 to 1962, when it was replaced by the fountain dedicated to the archangel "San Miguel".

Photo: W. H. Jackson, ca. 1885 (Puebla Antigua, 2020).

In the districts outside the tourist area, it's possible to find urban furniture from the late 19th and early 20th centuries that was never replaced by the authorities: nonfunctioning lamps, benches or other elements that remain as evidence of the past, becoming a material archive of memory in the public space (Fig. 5).

We understand the city as a human community and “architectural materiality” that has been built by its inhabitants over generations, as a result, carriers and receptacles of meaning. In this sense, we must assume that cities are permanently unfinished realities and constitute “authentic archives of memory” that can be read as a text (Colom, 2016, cited after Flores Chávez, 2020, p. 26).



Fig. 5. Lantern from early 20th century located in the park of “San Antonio” neighborhood. Photo by A. Hernández, 2021.

Loss of identity

In the historic center of Puebla there are places and activities that have been partially lost or forgotten over time, but that remain in the memory of several and form part of the material and immaterial acquis. We observe objects in buildings and public spaces, whose purpose being there remains unknown, and have been revalued by different generations and we can ask ourselves: What was reading given to them at other times? What are the readings given to them nowadays? What is their story? It is the construction of stories that allows the individual to relate and develop connections between their past experiences and those of others (Velasco, 2020, p. 153) and give meaning to human experience (Danko, Meneely, Portillo, 2008, p. 11).

Within a nation – state different memories compete to become the hegemonic, so the state is a kind of field of forces in which they negotiate and impose various versions about the past... This approach seems particularly suggestive in multi-ethnic countries with a fragmented past that is the product of asymmetric constellations of power... In post-colonial contexts, hybrid remembrance practices exist and, in recent decades, have been put into circulation increasingly representations about the past (Seydel, 2014, p. 207, cited after by Flores Chávez, 2020, p. 34).

The ancient “San Francisco” river

One of the natural elements that determined the establishment of Puebla city was the “Almoloya” river, later renamed “San Francisco” from which water was obtained to supply resources and houses. From the 16th century until the beginning of the 20th century, workshops, mills and factories were established on the border of the river, as well as bridges connecting the central Spanish zone with the indigenous neighborhoods (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6. Ancient bridge of “Ovando”, current street “3 Oriente”, which connected the central square of the city with the district of Analco. Photo: authors’ archive (Puebla Antigua, 2020)

In the middle of the 20th century, the increase of the industrial activity had severe consequences: the river became the drainage of the city and the banks became unhealthy. In the 1960s, they piped and built in its place the boulevard “Heroes del 5 de Mayo” (Fig. 7, 8). Some bridges were destroyed, others were hidden under the new road and only survived as tourist attractions, such as “Ovando” bridge (3 Oriente), which connected the center of the city with the district of “Analco”. Since then, the only evidence of the river is in the stroke and variable widths of the boulevard.



Fig. 7. General view of the “San Francisco” river during the demolition of houses on the banks for the future construction of the “Héroes del 5 de Mayo” boulevard (Puebla General Municipal Archive, 1957 ca). Photo: authors’ archive.



Fig. 8. Piping of the “San Francisco” river, prior to its burying and the construction of the boulevard “Héroes del 5 de Mayo” (Puebla General Municipal Archive, 1960 ca). Photo: authors’ archive.

In the proximity of the river there were public laundry rooms that operated until the middle of the 20th century, they were public spaces where the community carried out its daily activities (Fig. 9). But the lack of valuation as patrimonial elements left them abandoned and unfortunate cases occurred like the semi-privatization of the ancient laundry rooms of “Almoloya” which are now profitable as part of the decoration of a luxury hotel (Fig. 10).



Fig. 9. Interior of the laundry rooms of “Almoloya”, which were located next to the “Paseo de San Francisco” in the “Alto” neighborhood. Photo source: Photo Library Antica.



Fig. 10. Cover of the newspaper “La Jornada de Oriente” (11.09.2017), which mentions on the headline the use of the ancient laundry rooms of “Almoloya” as part of the attractions of the new luxury hotel from the international chain Rosewood. Photo by authors.

Fountains

Other representative elements are the fountains that provided water to the city which are currently ornamental elements that give identity to public squares. Because of their location and hierarchy, they are meeting points. In the case of “San Miguel” fountain, it is the central element of the main public space in the center of Puebla city, meaning, one of its main landmarks (Fig. 11). Although some have changed places, they have created new meanings and are preserved as emblematic sites of the neighborhoods, as is the case of the “Fuente de los Muñecos” in “Xonaca”, of which there are several legends that extend the acquis of the popular imaginary (Fig. 12).



Fig. 11. Comparative picture of the “San Miguel” fountain, on the left when it was in the “San Francisco” square (1878–1961) and at its current location in the central part of the main square. Photographic composition by A. Hernández, 2021.



Fig. 12. “Fuente de los Muñecos” located in the neighborhood of “Xonaca”. Photo: authors’ archive.

Lights

About the urban furniture, one of the most important elements are the lamps. In the historical centers we find various types of lanterns that illuminate the night, but during the day, they become decorative elements. In the case of Puebla, the ornate nineteenth-century “dragon” tops are distinctive to the city, where five spherical lamps join (Fig. 13).



Fig. 13. Dragon type lamps, characteristic of the Historic Center of Puebla city. Composition by A. Hernández from photographs (2021) and drawing from the Municipal Historical Archive of Puebla published in the doctoral thesis “El Espacio público en el Centro Histórico de Puebla – México”.

Toponymy: legends and stories

Ancient street names refer to historical events and legends. In the city of Puebla, among the most disseminated stories is the “Callejón del muerto” in the district of Analco, which tells the story of a priest who was murdered after attending a religious service in a house and since then his spirit appears in the evenings. It is said that, to calm his grief, a stone cross was placed on the wall where he died. At present, the legend remains part of the imaginary in the neighborhood (Fig. 14, 15).

Another peculiar street is “La Bolsa del Diablo” located in the district “El Refugio” that has an irregular line so that it is not possible to see what happens from one end to the other (Fig. 16). There are several versions about the source of its name; the most popular says that the devil appears at night driving a wagon. Other stories refer to the illicit activities that took place in the 17th and 18th centuries, such as the trafficking of goods that did not pass through the gates and were hidden in a neighborhood where “people with bad reputation” lived, at the time there was a pottery factory. Considering that during the 18th and 19th centuries there were three lime ovens in the street, it is possible that the accumulated heat resulted in a kind of small hell (Fig. 17). During the last quarter of the 20th century, the street got a new fame, being considered the

original place of some youth criminal gangs very known in the city. Today, many families live in neighborhoods, including several children and teenagers, it became a street with little traffic (Fig. 18).



Fig. 14. “Callejón del muerto”, “12 Sur” Street, between “3 and 5 Oriente”, in barrio of Analco, in the background can be seen the main dome of the temple. Photo by A. Hernández, 2021.



Fig. 15. The stone cross above mentioned in the legend of the “Callejón del muerto”. Photo by A. Hernández, 2021.



Fig. 16. Delimitation of “El Refugio” neighborhood and location of the street known as “La Bolsa del Diablo” (edition from an aerial photography taken from Google Maps, 2018).

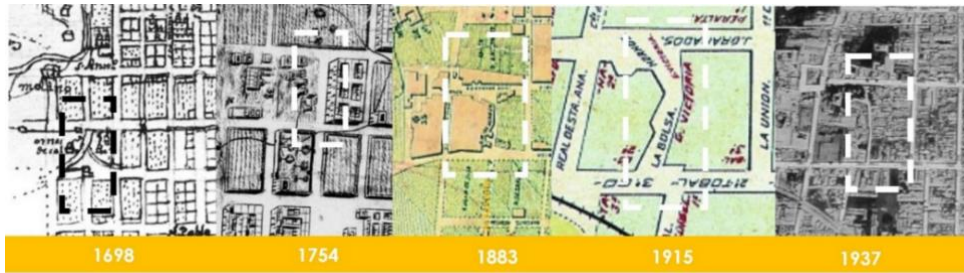


Fig. 17. Sections of maps and aerial photographs of Puebla city where the irregular shape of “La Bolsa del Diablo” is appreciated. Composition from various ancient maps consulted in the book of Historical Cartography of Puebla (Vélez, Guzmán, 1997).



Fig. 18. View of “La Bolsa del Diablo” from the “5 Norte” street. Photo by A. Hernández, 2014.

Clandestine uses

Until the middle of the 20th century, the places allowed for some activities were located in the neighborhoods outside the first square of the city. In this delimitation, the practice of prostitution, then regulated by the municipal authority, coincided with businesses such as cabarets, breweries and pulque bars.

During the first half of the 20th century, the neighborhood of “San Antonio”, located in the north – west, became the tolerance zone defined by the municipal authority (Fig. 19). Among the brothels and businesses there, a surviving element of the 19th century stood out as the arch of “San Antonio” (Fig. 20). It was the old entrance to a cemetery (19th century), which was formerly part of a convent’s garden (16th century), and then the access to a workers’ colony, until it

became a distinctive element of the tolerance zone in the city, it was known as the “Arco del padrote” until its demolition in the sixties (Fig. 21). Despite the neoclassical esthetic and its artistic and historical values, the argument given by the authorities for their destruction was that the arch represented evidence of bad customs and moral decay of an era. Currently, at the crossroads of streets where the arch and the traffic circle were located, only the thick walls of the old cemetery remain part of the adjacent housing (Fig. 22).

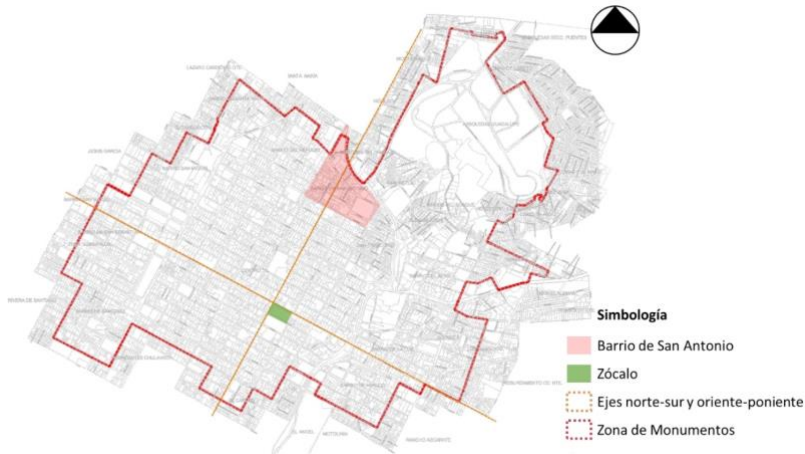
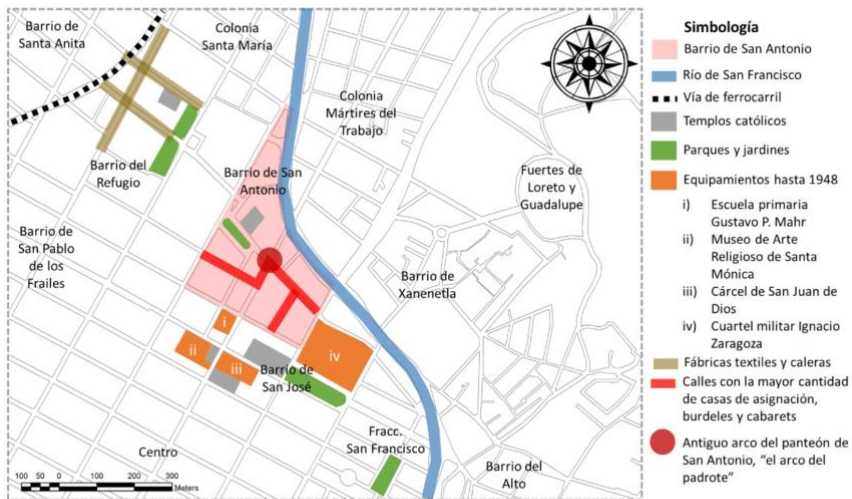


Fig. 19. Delimitation plan of the Historical Monuments Zone and location of the neighborhood of “San Antonio” in Puebla city (De La Torre, 2014).



Ilus. 2 Croquis del barrio de San Antonio, en la primera mitad del siglo xx. Elaboración Christian E. De la Torre Sánchez

Fig. 20. Sketch of the neighborhood of “San Antonio” with the location of some uses and activities from the first half of the 20th century (De La Torre, 2014).



Fig. 21. Ancient entrance of the “San Antonio” cemetery, known as the “Arco del padrote” during the existence of the tolerance zone, 1960 ca. Photo source: Pictures from Puebla, 2021.



Fig. 22. View of the crossroad of the streets “5 de Mayo” and “22 Poniente” where de arch of “San Antonio” was located. Photo by A. Hernández, 2021.

Elements with unknown origins

At various spots in the city there are elements in parks and streets whose origins remain unknown. In some cases, they go unnoticed and are lost between the vegetation and the urban furniture, despite how peculiar they seem to someone who is not a resident of the place discovers them. In the “Ángela Peralta” park (district “El Refugio”) there is a stone column, without capital, in one of the gardens (Fig. 23); in “Analco”, at the corner of one of the streets there is a large stone block known as “La piedra del encanto”, that used to be the meeting place for bakers during the 20th century, and currently is a meeting place where neighbors gather to talk, rest and eat (Fig. 24). The origin of the stone is uncertain; according to legends it appeared suddenly until it was probably an ancient landmark that pointed the old limit of the city.



Fig. 23. Stone column in one of the gardeners located in the “Ángela Peralta” park, “El Refugio” district. Photo by A. Hernández.



Fig. 24. Neighbors talking on “La piedra del Encanto,” corner formed by the “14 Sur” and “7 Oriente”, “Analco” district. Photo by A. Hernández, 2021.

Monumental trees

Natural elements such as trees are also landmarks of urban space. There are representative examples of the historical area of Puebla devoted to monumental ash trees, one outside the temple of “Xonaca” (Fig. 25), and another located in the atrium of the temple of “Santa Anita” (Fig. 26).



Fig. 25. Monumental ash tree located in the neighborhood of “Xonaca”.
Photo by A. Hernández, 2021.



Fig. 26. Monumental ash located in the atrium of the temple of “Santa Anita”.
Photo by A. Hernández, 2021.

Elements in the facade walls:
sculptures, niches, altars, and ancient nomenclature

In some buildings in the Historic Center, we find representative elements in facades and courtyards. One of the most famous elements is in the “casa del perro”, named after a sculpture, that finishes the corner of the rooftop (Fig. 27, 28).

Other corner tops are “vaulted niches and niches” that once had religious significance and today have lost validity, partly due to the fact that the original owners, no longer inhabit the properties, although the elements remain related to the history of neighborhoods and to the devotions of temples nearby (Fig. 29, 30).



Fig. 27. Exterior view of “La casa del perro”, corner formed by the streets “3 Sur” and “9 Poniente” (Reyes, 2017).



Fig. 28. Dog sculpture on the corner of the rooftop (Reyes, 2017).



Fig. 29. Location of the properties that have vault niches and niches in their facades in the Zone of the Historical Monuments of Puebla (Hernández, 2000).



Fig. 30. Example of three niches located on the facades of houses in the Historic Center of Puebla. Photos by A. Hernández, 2020–2021.

In the past, the streets had names related to trades, family last names, historical figures, natural aspects, distinguished buildings, proximity to squares and temples, legends and even nicknames given to residents from the district. In the 18th and 19th centuries, due to changes in commercial activities or the influence of wealthy families, the streets received new names; in the 20th century governmental decisions forced changes according to a new cardinal nomenclature (Hernández, 2009). As evidence of the past, it is still possible to find ceramic tiles with the ancient street names (Fig. 31, 32).

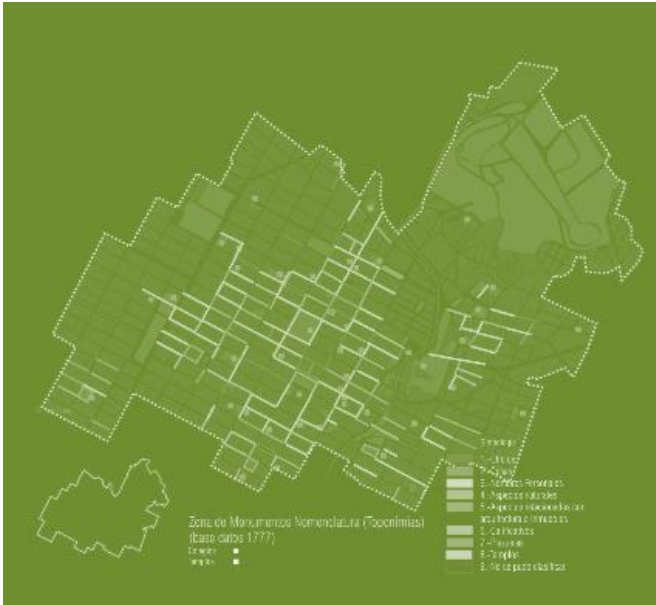


Fig. 31. Location of the nameplates with ancient street names in the Historical Monuments Zone of Puebla (Hernández, 2009).



Fig. 32. Antique nameplate of the “Calle del Cuernito,” currently “Juan de Palafox” avenue, between “12 and 14 Norte,” district of “Analco.” Photo by A. Hernández, 2021.

Las vecindades (collective houses)

The popular housing characteristic of the districts is “vecindad”, whose arrangement on the ground floor begins with one or several courtyards surrounded by rooms and distributed by families that share service areas such as laundry rooms, toilets, and courtyards. Although this type of housing has disappeared in recent years, to build private homes instead aimed at people with greater purchasing power, restaurants, or businesses, in some districts they remain as a rental

housing option for people who have lived there all their lives or who migrate from other states of the country. In “El Refugio” there is the neighborhood of “El Pocito”, which owes its name to the well in the main courtyard and that is still in operation, supplying water to the residents (Fig. 33, 34).



Fig. 33. View from the well in the main courtyard in the neighborhood on “El Refugio” district. Photo by A. Hernández, 2018.



Fig. 34. Children near the well in the neighborhood “El Pocito”, before a cleaning and maintenance day to the collective bathrooms. Photo by A. Hernández, 2018.

“Casa Analco” and the community museum proposal

The Architecture Faculty of the “Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (FABUAP)” has under its protection a property in the neighborhood of “Analco” (Fig. 35). It is a two-story building, with a central courtyard and constructed in a U form (Fig. 36). It corresponds to various constructive stages from the 18th to the 20th centuries and has suffered a significant level of damage. The physical modifications of the house indicate the different uses it has had during its history; the ground floor used to be a colonial house (18th–19th century) and the upper floor is the result of an extension made for apartments that later became a neighborhood (second half of the 20th century) (Fig. 37, 38). The interiors reflect these transformations: in floor materials, furniture fixed in kitchens and toilets, and ornamental elements such as the fountain. Despite the damage, the building can be developed through different strategies, which start from the intervention of the building along with joint work between university students, volunteers, and neighbors.



Fig. 35. General view of “Casa Analco”. Composition from photography taken of Google Maps, 2018, and map made by student of the Scientific Summer 2018 program.



Fig. 36. “Casa Analco”. Photo by A. Hernández, 2019.

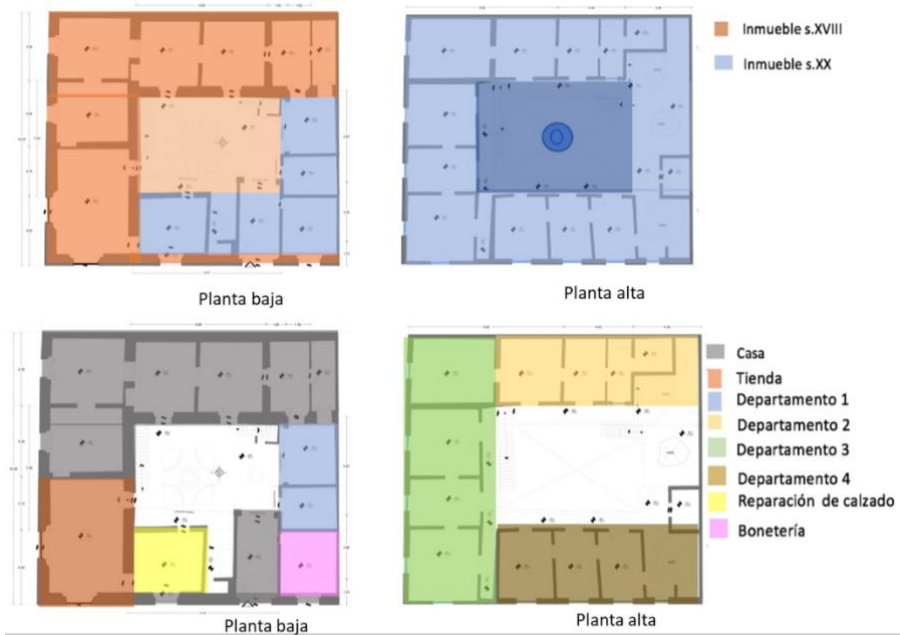


Fig. 37. Diagram of the architectural floors where the use of the spaces of the building in the middle of the 20th century is indicated (Hernández, 2019).



Fig. 38. Photograph of “Casa Analco” when it was a “vecindad”. Photo by A. Hernández, 1999.

Not all elements are visible until a cleaning of the property is done (Fig. 39). There have been constant discoveries within the space, from the colors of the floors discovered after being washed (Fig. 40), a fireplace in the kitchen that was under the debris (Fig. 41) or a fountain in the courtyard (Fig. 42), inside a garden, and where other objects have been found: pots, tiles, glass bottles, toys, cooking instruments, glass, and mud pipe (Fig. 43). Some of the pieces found were made in the workshops of the neighborhood. All these objects tell us about the daily life of the neighborhood and the families.



Fig. 39. Cleaning day in “Casa Analco”. Photo by A. Hernández, 2018.



Fig. 40. Colorful floor tiles from the rooms on the ground floor.

Photo by A. Hernández, 2018.



Fig. 41. Kitchen fireplace,

Photo by A. Hernández, 2018.



Fig. 42. Fountain found in the courtyard.

Photo by A. Hernández, 2018.

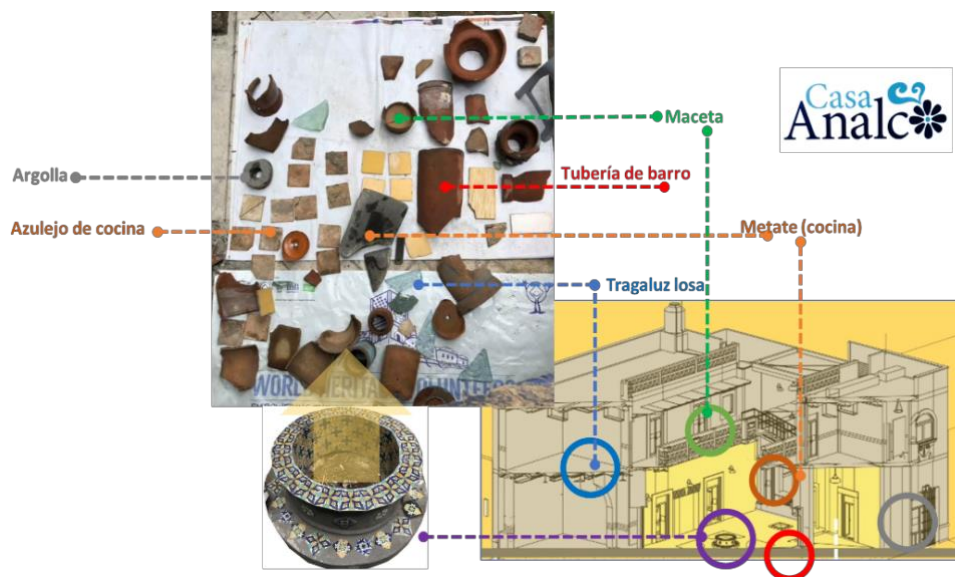


Fig. 43. Diagram indicating the relationship between the objects found in the fountain of the courtyard and their probably belonging to other spaces. Composition by A. Hernández (Hernández, 2019).

The “Casa Analco” project has consulted the local population to promote a community museum that talks about the history of the neighborhood. Various activities have been carried out with local residents, from workshops and interviews, infographics and videos that spread the story, to donation campaigns of objects from the acquis; there has been a lot of willingness and enthusiasm to carry out the activities (Fig. 44, 46).

According to Camarena y Morales (2009), a community museum has the following characteristics:

- It is about an initiative that is born from the community (although in this case it will be a connection between neighborhood and university).
- It develops though community consultation.
- Tells stories with neighbor’s own vision.
- It led by a self-organized body.
- Responds to community needs and rights.
- Strengthens community organization and action.

The community own the museum, although in this case the headquarters will be in a building property of the university (BUAP); a form of joint management will therefore be sought.



Fig. 44. Call for the configuration of the collection for “Casa Analco” community museum. Poster made by A. Hernández, 2019.



Fig. 45. Neighbors’ participation workshop to identify landmarks in the district. Photo by A. Hernández, 2019.



Fig. 46. Neighbors workshop for the configuration of the first outline of the community museum in Casa Analco. Photo by A. Hernández.

CONCLUSIONS

In cities, symbols are lost if they do not have a connotation or there is no collective memory about them; if there is historical ignorance, they become everyday objects that are not associated with any other quality and therefore lose their meaning. At best, they become a reference point to locate other places. Therefore, it is important to ask the community what qualities are given to those elements or whether they have a symbolic – historical value within their localities or in the contemporary city.

The loss of natural elements, such as the piping of a river or the modifications to a landscape, are more complicated to recover; since the memory of them remains with adults, it can be rescued through various creative projects, with support of documentary and photographic archives that can show the background of some of them.

In terms of tourist promotion, the symbols of the city have been distorted in their background and ended up referring to stories which are like elements from other cities. For example: a fountain that grants wishes to whomever throws a coin. Or new tourist elements are invented, with stories included, as is the case

in most of Mexico's historic heritage centers, where tours are announced to know the “seat of the inquisition and the place where they burned the heretics” when the inquisition only had one headquarter in Mexico City.

Symbols do not appear at the most immediate or visible level in the city, they appear when interventions are made. If one remains longer in a place, its context can be understood and we can try to answer why they contribute to the permanence and establishment of the original inhabitants and newcomers too. It is possible to revalue them through various strategies, such as carrying out actions that make them present. It must be a multidisciplinary work, involving awareness among the authorities, heritage specialists, technicians, and the general population. An option for these types of strategies could be community museums.

As far as “Casa Analco” is concerned, it is becoming a space ever closer to the population, a place to meet and reencounter, where collaborative work shows that spaces can be created from the immaterial, such as this first version of the Community Museum, this is one of the best ways to preserve cultural heritage.

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