

Chapter 2

An Approach on the Application of Preventive Archaeology in Havana's Historic Center, Cuba

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Development projects constitute one of the greatest physical threats to the archaeological heritage. A duty for developers to ensure that archaeological heritage impact studies are carried out before development schemes are implemented, should therefore be embodied in appropriate legislation...

Article 3, Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage (1990) ICOMOS.

Abstract Archaeological endeavors undertaken under rehabilitation programs underway in historic urban centers have allowed us to approach the city from another perspective that goes beyond town planning and architecture, deeply rooted in those programs. Archaeology, seen as a discipline that contributes to the knowledge of the city, has developed under situations of emergency related to the restoration of the built heritage. However, the management of archaeological heritage is rarely planned. Today, there is clear-cut evidence on the need to develop more comprehensive working models to evaluate archaeological resources. This would help recording, studying, and integrating them within town planning schemes. In this way, archaeological practice within urban environments is scientifically planned from the standpoint of prevention. This issue is thoroughly addressed in this paper presented for Havana's historic center.

Keywords Archaeological heritage • Preventive archaeology • Historic centers

Havana's historic center and the fortresses therein are under protection schemes agreed upon at home and abroad, and this has given top priority to the management involved therewith. In 1978, the area was awarded the title of National Monument,

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the highest form of protection for Cuba, and in 1982 it was inscribed World Heritage Site by UNESCO. These awards have been the result of a hard work, which in turn has given rise to new plans and approaches within the dynamics of work and researches going on there.

Restoration and rehabilitation work undertaken by the Office of the Historian of Havana covers several disciplines intertwined under actual practice. It is in this regard that historical archaeology, a discipline that produces a wealth of knowledge on the development of the city, contributes with views that enrich other disciplines' views. They are all involved in the process and together complement each other.

Archaeological development in urban areas has gradually shifted towards the implementation of strategies that address the protection of archaeological soils within urban management plans. This issue is particularly dealt with by preventive archaeology (Bozóki-Ernyey, 2007; Castillo 2009, 2010), a branch involved with the efficient management and order of the archaeological heritage as found in soils endangered by disturbance caused by construction companies. The implementation of this form of archaeology within historic centers contributes to know, characterize, and protect archaeological values and proposes research topics on a short- and long-term basis. Likewise, it also helps with an effective planning of restoration.

Thus, this paper proposes the implementation of a management plan for the city's archaeological heritage that would be integrated into rehabilitation programs and thus would contribute to know and improve the treatment of the city's values within urban planning.

Historical Background

Old Havana contains in itself the original settlement of the former town of San Cristóbal de la Habana. It was finally settled there to the west of a pocket bay (Havana's bay, then known as the Puerto de Carenas by 1519). The town enjoyed the privileges of proximity to the port and the geographical position of the island (Fig. 2.1). This newly founded town served as the port of call during the conquest of Mexico and later to disembark and get fresh supplies for the fleets going back to Spain with the riches from various regions of continental America.

When the town was declared the capital city of the country and the economic and political powers were strengthened, the urban layout followed the pattern of an array of perpendicular streets that started in a square that acted as the main axis.¹

¹ According to the ordinances for urban layout in Spanish America, the cities should be structured like a checkerboard, arranged into rectangular blocs having a square as the axis. The streets started in this square, a criterion close to Renaissance ideas in force in medieval Europe and basically fuelled by the rediscovery of Vitruvius. As noted by the researcher García Santana: "*Together with the conquest of America with the means defined for the secular process of the Reconquest, the troops of Charles V met with the most advanced urban theories when they continued with the fight started by the Aragonese in Italy.*" This influence was reflected in the Legislation for the West Indies, contemplated in the Municipal Ordinances of Alonso de Cáceres of 1573.

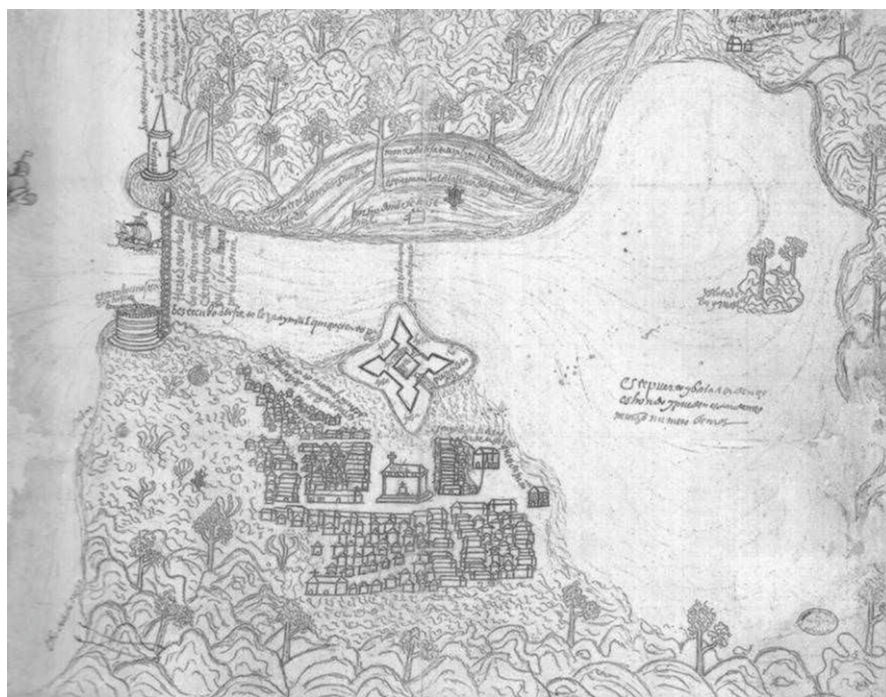


Fig. 2.1 A plan of the town of San Cristóbal de La Habana, sixteenth century. Author unknown

This layout would be reproduced after new lots were allotted to continue with the town development. So, by the second half of the seventeenth century, there was already a city with several centers having the civil, military, and religious powers arranged around a system of squares. The city was demarcated by military fortresses: to the west there were the banks of the bay where fortresses had been built in different points, and to the southwest there was a section of the wall surrounding the city in land. This was how walled Havana was shaped. Right into the eighteenth century, Havana had an urban and architectural layout made up by five main squares, eleven small squares, eight churches, seven convents, three monasteries, six hospitals, and two schools. At the time, the city had a population of 51,561. Out of this figure, 40,337 lived in 5,172 houses located in the walled area of the town (García, 2008).

The city expanded beyond the walls between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries for several reasons: the call to improve sanitation in the walled city contributed to move facilities dedicated to slaughter houses and raise animals out of the walls. On the other hand, an increasing population required new homes, and the rising bourgeoisie influenced by the latest in Europe had its homes for recreation and rest built far from the hustle and bustle of the center. Likewise, the existence of facilities involved with services and production that had been built out of the walls

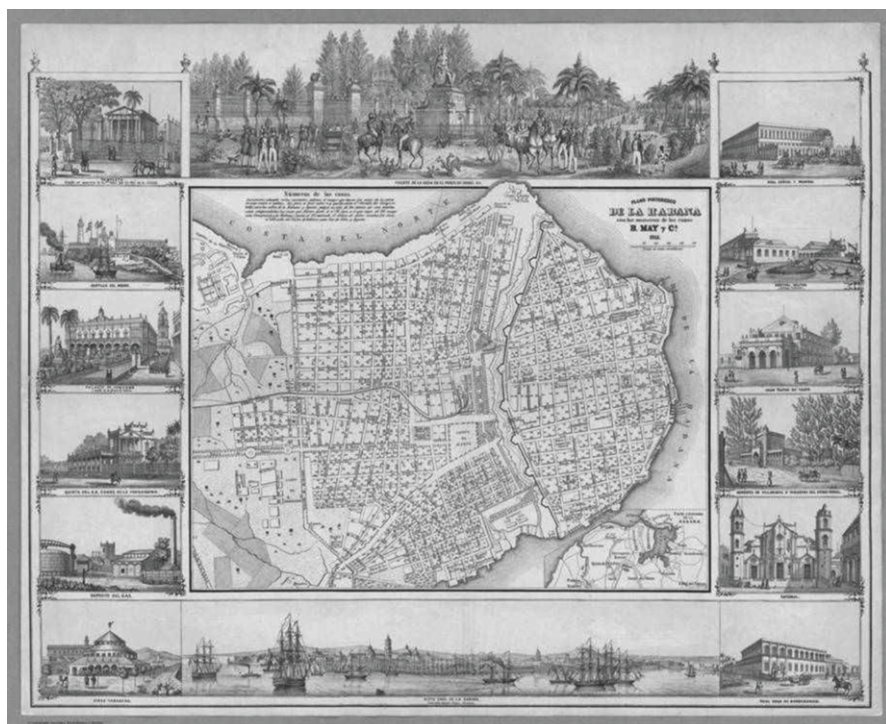


Fig. 2.2 Picturesque plan of Havana, 1854

also helped the construction of housing next to them. By 1863 the whole city wall had been almost demolished, so we are dealing with a city of more than 400 years of history, a city that developed horizontally and vertically (Fig. 2.2).

Institutional Framework

The Office of the Historian of Havana, hereinafter OHC, is the institution that studies and protects heritage. It dates as far back as 1938, when praiseworthy actions were undertaken for the rescue and protection of civil and religious buildings threatened by the greed of foreign and local construction companies. There have been plenty of examples of the active participation of intellectuals and workers struggling for the defense of the historic heritage. They have turned into an evidence of a strong feeling of identity with the environment where this people lived. Following the endorsement of heritage legislations in 1977—*Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage and the Law on Local and National Monuments* (Asamblea Nacional del

Poder Popular, 1977)—the city's historic center² and the system of fortresses there were declared as a National Monument, and a new stage of research and rehabilitation financed by the state began for the old center. Four years later, Havana's historic center was inscribed a World Heritage Site by UNESCO and was included in the WH list. At the end of the 1980s, the process of rehabilitation coincided with a deep economic crisis that almost stopped all the areas of production and had an impact on the State's policy of financial priorities. Eventually, this situation of crisis led to a change in the strategies followed by OHC, and new approaches closer to the free market economy had to be endorsed. In 1993, the Council of State endorsed Decree-Law 143 (*Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba*, 2011) which empowered OHC with financial and legal powers and legal personality. In this way OHC would have more freedom of action to find the financial resources required for the restoration of the city. Thus, new arrangements were agreed upon, and since then OHC has directly worked with the Council of State and any red tape is avoided. This Decree-Law is unprecedented and provided the organization (headed in a particular way with far reaching prospects) with the legal tools needed to carry out conservation work and research and disseminate historical heritage, whether tangible or intangible. Similarly, this new situation allowed the creation of new jobs, and professionals were occupied in several specialties. They were not only involved with the disciplines of restoration, and their frame of action was extended to the social management of communities living in these protected areas. The scope of restoration has consistently extended to several centers of the historic center. Following the pattern of the city's growth and its squares, a plan of rehabilitation for the historic center that covers 214 hectares has been designed (UNESCO-Plan Maestro, 2006). It is worth mentioning the creation of the Master Plan (MP) in 1994, involved with the comprehensive renovation of Old Havana (Fig. 2.3). The goals of MP are aimed at the preservation of the legacy inherited, but the residential character of the area has also been considered. Similarly, a balance between socioeconomic development and cultural values and also self-financing strategies to boost the local economy and promote sustainable development has been considered. In short, MP studies and proposes strategic development guidelines that make the city a lively entity and would not turn it into a city looking like a museum.

Foundation of Management Models

Historical archaeology is the branch of archaeology that studies social and historical process through the physical evidences left by former societies, right after the sixteenth century until industrialization and according to the specifics of each

²Historic center means the combination of urban buildings, public and private spaces, streets, squares, and the geography or topography of the surroundings where it is settled. At one point in history, it had a clear-cut appearance of a social community, particularized and organized. Havana's historic center covers the area enclosed by the former city walls and the sea.

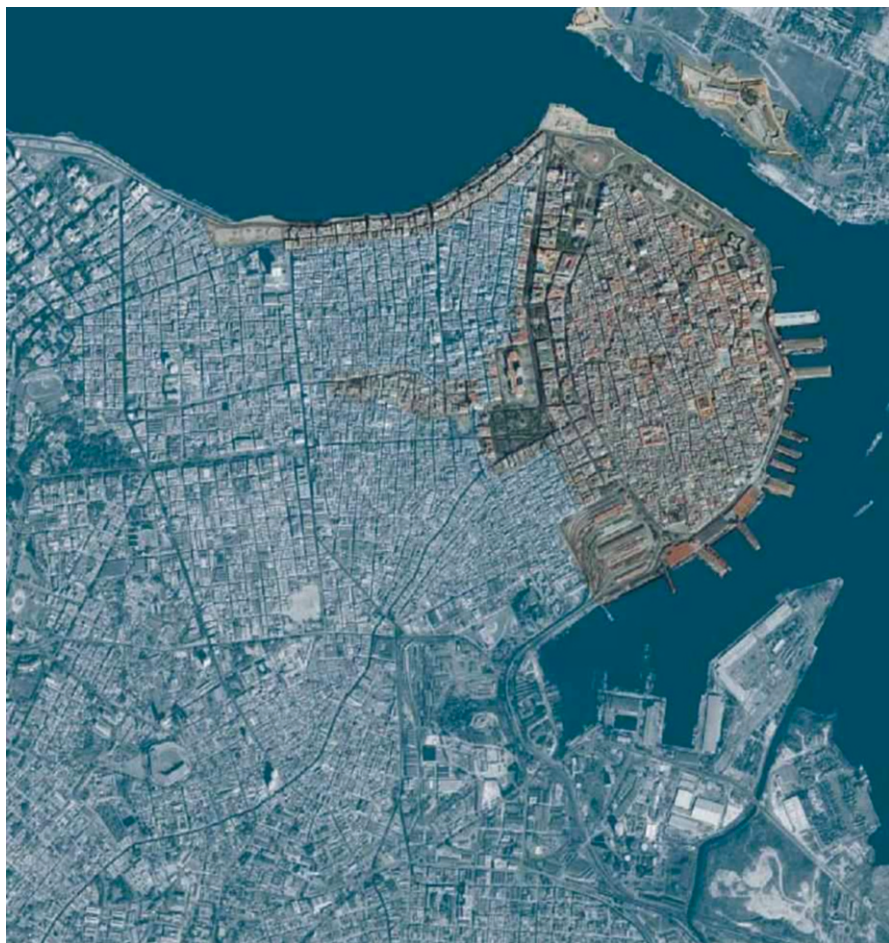


Fig. 2.3 Zones envisaged for rehabilitation under the Master Plan in formerly walled Havana and out of the walls

region (Orser, 2000). The actual practice of this type of archaeology in urban centers has made its way close to the rehabilitation process. It is a discipline that has matured and expanded its scope since the study area includes both the subsoil and the structures built above ground. In this sense, historical archaeology in urban areas should focus on the study of the city as a single site, together with the changes and different construction stages along its development.

The archaeological work underway in the historic center of Old Havana since the end of the 1960s has provided the city with the basics of archaeology, formerly unnoticed (Romero, 1995). It has contributed to this dimension that goes beyond the city's rich architecture, one of its features. However, we believe that not only greater visibility of the archaeological heritage is necessary but also it should be better understood. This would allow the management of this heritage and set the

guidelines for effective management plans of resources within urban rehabilitation (Castillo & Menéndez, 2014). To do this, we must develop a management model to characterize, classify, protect, and disseminate the archaeological values of the city. The model should also serve as a reference within the work of restoration and validate, upon consultation, planning work prior to execution.

Theoretical Framework

Preventive Archaeology (PAC) provides a frame of concepts that extend the theoretical and instrumental horizon of urban archaeological practice.

The goal of PAC is to avoid the impact of construction works and earthworks in archaeological sites, preserving them untouched for the future. (...) within the concept of PAC that we uphold, there are actions included such as those involving documentation and making a better use of remains for the benefit of History and society. These remains are destroyed because of social and economic reasons and very often, because of political motivation. Naturally, the main goal of modern PAC is that the number of “preserved” sites should be greater than the number of “excavated” sites and that the addition of both be greater than the number of those “destroyed without previous documentation (Querol, 2010, p 215)

The actual practice of this kind of work begins by giving priority to the sites. In this way, each site is rated according to its value. This is done based on a number of attributes previously established. In line with this plan of action, Reserve Areas are established. They have the highest values and are introduced in urban planning as “protected land” and would be untouched by the works. Caution Areas are those with an average degree of protection and are included in the plans as soils with a special treatment. Archaeological work would be conducted before approval of any construction project. So, actions would be conducted in the different areas so as to determine the degrees of protection and consequently be included in the plans for land use, whether general or territorial. Thus, the following is defined:

First stage preventive archaeology: This stage includes surveying and giving priority to the sites when there is a general plan for town planning or any other planning or change involved with respect thereof. It aims to establish lands of Reserve Areas and Areas of Caution. In this case, the procedure is performed through surface surveys, supported by background information on the sites listed or known—literature, photography, mapping, surveys, etc. Boreholes are not included in this stage. The result is a series of sites located and documented and areas where their presence is suspected. This will be delivered along with a list of sites with the corresponding degrees of protection (Querol, 2010).

Second stage preventive archaeology: This stage includes surveys and boreholes if required in Areas of Caution before any project is endorsed or earthworks are started which may damage the sites. Its aim is to determine the size and importance of sites so that they may be turned into Reserve Areas or be integrated or demolished with or without previous excavation. The procedure includes surveys and boreholes with the aims that construction disturbs archaeological remains the least possible (Querol, 2010).

It also provides for the integration of archaeological sites rated as Reserve Areas. They should be integrated within public spaces or green areas within the construction project so that they would not be disturbed by any earthworks. PAC “*endeavors to defend preservation versus intervention, integration of the archaeological heritage versus “free intervention of developers in the land” ... in this way the remains of the past would have a future or vice versa, and the future would be able to enjoy the past*” (Querol, 2010, p 216). This can only be achieved if we investigate and evaluate the archaeological heritage before any planning. In this regard, the strategy should be arranged with the relevant parties involved with the management and rehabilitation plans of the city. The result is the knowledge and appreciation of archaeological heritage before any planning is done, and guidelines are timely introduced depending on actual needs.

PAC has given way to a new stage in the management of archaeological heritage. This will preserve the sites before the destruction implied by an excavation made without a plan for assessment and conservation when this excavation is not linked with a research project, and data would be gathered at the expense of historical knowledge. Likewise, the destruction of archaeological soils caused by construction works is prevented.

General Goals

For the implementation of our proposal, the following is required:

- Characterization of areas of archaeological interest
- Establishment of different degrees of protection
- Draw intervention strategies based on the historical knowledge of the city
- Present regulations which control implementation of the proposal within management plans for the rehabilitation of the built heritage

Specific Goals

- To prioritize the sites under investigation, defining the object of study, either by following chronological guidelines or space-time which may represent changes and development within the city
- To integrate the results into a database that includes these values, characterization, and possible variations

Procedure

According to PAC there would be a first stage to make the analysis and documentation of spaces, built or not, covered by the research framework mentioned before and defines the degree of protection. Then, there would be a second stage to determine the form of intervention depending on the degree of protection.

Havana’s historic center has the highest degree for heritage protection in Cuba, and the area has been rated as an endangered archaeological zone, so:

As long as urban archaeology continues growing and becomes troublesome for private and state developers, the need to integrate archaeology in a way that it does not become an

obstacle for city development would be increasingly evident [...] In this case, it would not suffice to point out areas with an archaeological interest. As it has been clearly put forth by V. Negri (1995:311 ss), there would be a change in the concept of archaeological zone. When it is applied in an urban setting it would mean "archaeological risk zone." By defining this zone we not only mean that there is an area where constructions are prohibited but also we are warned on the existence of risks and a high level of responsibility implied. Therefore, developers must not only consider that event, but also, they must guarantee reasonable management of the archaeological heritage, being there a mutually beneficial understanding among the parties involved. The archaeological risks implied (the need for the physical elimination of a large percentage of archaeological evidences) should be brought into a financial language or price payable by the developers, all of which would allow for the documentation of the archaeological site. (Rodríguez, 2004, p. 165)

This term implies a level of awareness and responsibility for the space or site proposed for intervention. Numbers corresponding to classification levels of the sites would be designated in this case.

Archaeological risk zone 1 (ZrA-1): On the suspicion of significance of this zone within the urban and social setting of the city, it should not be disturbed by the developers. Instead, it should be integrated within projects that do not disturb soils, walls, or surfaces which should be reserved for future archaeological works (the subsoil and elevations are included as well) according to the concrete goals of a research. The following are zoning examples: the layout of the city walls (the section facing the sea and the section right inland), religious spaces and possible burial sites, public spaces and buildings in the vicinity which feature the space, spaces devoted to the military, and remarkable urban infrastructure works.

Archaeological risk zone 2 (ZrA-2): Under this concept, zones apparently less important would be included. Before any development plan is started, they should be intervened (boreholes or surface surveys) to determine extent, integration, or change of category into ZrA-1. So, under the first stage of PAC, sites would be classified as ZrA-1 and ZrA-2, depending on the degree for protection. In the case of ZrA-1, these sites should remain undisturbed and be reserved for researches. There would be programs which would integrate and assess them for the benefit of society. In the case of the second stage of preventive archaeology zones under ZrA-2, they would be intervened before any earthwork is undertaken (Menéndez, 2010).

These works would be implemented through surface surveys or boreholes. Depending on the importance, the results may be integrated or not within the project of construction. If required, there would also be an archaeological assessment during the period construction takes place.

Defining Zones for Protection

The determination of zones for protection calls for an interpretation of the city as a single site where development and changes are closely linked to the people living there. The human landscape is structured actively and constantly, following patterns of space organization where the buildings are evidences of different periods of history.

Our work is then based on the study and analysis of historical and archaeological sources available on the development of the city's urban space structure and the buildings that have become landmarks of their time. This involves establishing assessment levels for the archaeological, architectural, and historical record. In this regard, the proposal includes different stages of work which will correspondingly interact.

- Study of documents representing the city's growth over time. Their analysis would contribute to clearly demarcate space and time in terms of historical and archaeological knowledge.
- Creating an inventory of archaeological interventions that have been made in the city. This data field will be recorded in forms containing information. They will also help in diagnosis.
- Assessment of those areas that have not been intervened but could possibly have an archaeological interest. Likewise, this evaluation would allow for a diagnostic study of a particular area and compare with the hypotheses and produce new approaches.
- Based on the information analyzed, classifications of Archaeological Risk Zone 1 and 2 (ZrA-1 and ZrA-2) would be proposed.
- Intertwining our results with urban management and rehabilitation plans of the city.
- Create joint work agreements and observe archaeological assessment before and during construction works.
- Computerization of results and creation of a database for search and reference which would make urban interventions viable and allow for the effective treatment of archaeological values of the city.

According to the first stage of work that has been planned, the studies that have been conducted up to date have focused on the area of foundation of the city (first sector). These have produced a data system that allows characterizing and evaluating the area with the highest degree for protection based on historical and archaeological significance (Fig. 2.4).

Conclusions

The implementation of the project establishes an initial town planning scheme, which will include a list with a number of sites listed and cataloged. The information may be consulted before the design of any rehabilitation plan, which eventually would contribute to manage and complement the said plan. In this way, damages that may result from the intervention itself in the subsoil and elevations would be minimal.

On the other hand, considering there is a plan for the protection of soils and elevations, long-term and short-term research strategies may be laid down. They will provide the answers for different goals, whether general or specific.

The implementation of this model would mark a change on the approach of archaeology, adding prestige to the discipline's social outlook, particularly when "salvage,



Fig. 2.4 Stage I: Archaeological map. Study and classification of spaces intervened. Demarcation of zones with the corresponding degrees for protection (ZrA-1 to ZrA-2)

rescue, or emergency excavations” would not be made anymore. Its application in line with the principles of preventive archaeology allows the organization of restoration works of heritage, thus making integral planning involved possible. Therefore, there is quality in the treatment of archaeological heritage, which is ultimately the quality of its knowledge, management and administration, and integration and preservation.

Town planning schemes should be submitted to the departments and organizations linked with the study, planning, management, and dissemination of rehabilitation work in the city. Likewise, a great importance is considered for the standardization of the plan's execution. This can be done through the National Commission of Monuments of the Ministry of Culture, which is the authority on archaeological issues in this regard in Cuba. By creating these protocols there would be a positive impact for the management of the archaeological heritage of historic centers in the rest of the island. Within this framework, we have created the Working Group for the Management of Archaeological Heritage in the Historic Centers of Cuba (GPACC). It is made up by teams from several departments within the country, entrusted with the study, discussion, and suggestion of alternatives to guide the archaeological work in urban areas.

Moreover, teaching is one of the fields where planning and building this type of archaeological practice should be done. Integral education and training under a multidisciplinary approach within the management of cultural heritage is increasingly demanded. On the other hand, we must bear and be aware of the social responsibility ahead of us as the producers and defenders of archaeological and historical knowledge. The implementation of any research in this field similarly implies a social, ethical, and scientific commitment. Therefore,

... knowing that the concept of Historical Heritage (...) gathers several entities from past bestowed by certain qualities by our society so as to turn them into the means and foundation of current claims and desires, we say (...) Archaeology, History, the History of Art and other disciplines involved in historic heritage and its management are nothing but an interpretation, and as such triggers hermeneutic and cognitive dimensions and produces and manipulates intellectual values and knowledge, and involves different type and level instances. (Criado, 1996, pp. 73–78)

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