

ICCROM-SCD 2006 was to focus on the rationale that prevails in the act of making decisions, providing further understanding of the mechanisms that lie at its ‘operational’ core, and generating reflection on the way in which conservators, other professionals and social agents can influence the process (Varoli-Piazza, 2007, p. 34). This thought-provoking perspective stimulated my interest in the epistemological nature of the decision-making process. Thus, I began to study a notion proposed by Cesare Brandi (1963): the “critical judgement”. This is a procedure that, according to his *Teoria del Restauro*, defines restoration methodology but which unfortunately is not fully explained in his book.

My own research on “critical judgement” revealed that this concept, although frequently employed, is often taken for granted by conservators; therefore, its foundations and operational details are often obscure. Nevertheless, on the basis of contemporary theoretical literature, I propose that critical judgement involves at least three cognitive sequences:

- Reasonable conclusions “made on the basis of indicators and probabilities” (Abercromby, 1960).
- Weighing up of relevant information, experience, alternative solutions which are put to test in a “reality testing” (Caple, 2000).
- Fair use of theory, normative assessment and ethics (González Tirado, 2010a, 2010b; Muñoz-Viñas, 2010).

Therefore, my contention is that the decision-making process constitutes both the origin and derivation mechanism of critical judgement; this is a transverse axis through theory, method and praxis (Medina-González, 2011).

Method and praxis

As shown above, the teaching of ICCROM SDC 2006 on strategic planning and decision-making improved my insight into conservation, which, in turn, produced considerable benefits for my professional praxis when I returned home. On the one hand, I made use of the knowledge and methods gained when I resumed my activities as Senior Conservator at Coordinación Nacional de Conservación del Patrimonio Cultural (CNCPC),² Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH).³ On the other hand, a broader view of the conservation rationale became central when I faced one of the most important challenges of my professional career. From 2006 to 2009, I was appointed Lecturer on Conservation Planning, for the Seminar-Workshop on Archaeological Conservation, and for the Seminar-Workshop on Conservation of Archaeological Sites and the Theory of Archaeological Conservation. These were all training units of the Bachelor’s Degree in Restoration on Movable Heritage and the Master’s Degree in Architectural Conservation at the successor of the famous Centro Churubusco, the Escuela Nacional de