

Italia Resurgens Lusitanis Fratribus Anhelat Corde **Urban Policies and the “Shared Latinity” in Marcello Piacentini’s Projects for the City of Porto**

Marcello Piacentini, Giovanni Muzio, City of Porto, Italian Studies in Portugal, Urban Morphology

/Abstract

This contribution aims to explore the cultural and architectural dynamics between Italy and Portugal during the 1930s and 1940s, focusing on the significance of the cultural exchanges between the two countries in promoting a sense of “shared Latinity” and in diffusing the Italian language and architectural culture within the Lusitanian context. A series of initiatives such as the journal “Italian Studies in Portugal” and university courses offered by the Italian Cultural Institute aims to show the crucial role played by urban planning projects in consolidating the relationships between the two countries. Under the direction of people such as Aldo Bizzarri and Guido Vitaletti, the Italian Cultural Institute has organized exhibitions, conferences, and translations that fostered a rich and multifaceted cultural exchange. Within this cultural climate, collaborations in the field of city urban planning were started between Italian architects such as Marcello Piacentini and Giovanni Muzio. This contribution investigates the lesser-known aspects of these exchanges, enabling a deeper understanding of the cultural interactions between Italy and Portugal. Through the analysis of archives and unpublished documents, this study aims to clarify how these relationships shaped Portuguese architecture and cultural identity, highlighting the impact of Italian urban theories on the urban models applied in Porto and, reflexively, on the Estado Novo’s urban policies.

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Marcello Piacentini, the “Great Contemporary”¹

The episode under discussion is a relatively negligible one in the career of the Roman architect. It took place in 1939, when he received a commission for the city plan of Porto. At that time, he was at the height of his national and international success: he was working on numerous important buildings across many Italian cities and on the design or supervision of the design of town plans for several cities, such as Rome. He had also been commissioned to design various foreign exhibition pavilions and the new university city, and, later, the town plan for Rio de Janeiro. He was the dominus of Italian Architecture Departments, the Department Dean in Rome, and the promoter of all academic careers as well as Lead Editor of academic journals, Italian Scholar, and member of the Consiglio superiore delle Belle Arti² (High Council of Fine Arts). He is “the Great Contemporary”, as Theodor W. Adorno³ defined Richard Strauss as opposed to the Gustav Mahler’s out-dated style (who, similarly, may be associated with Armando Brasini).⁴ [Fig. 1]

It has rightly been observed that, when referring to Piacentini, it would be more appropriate to speak of his “operativity” instead of his “work”, thereby placing on the same level his activities as a designer and those as an architectural coordinator of large building projects, a judge in competitions and design disputes, a consultant, a cultural events organiser, a writer, and an expert critic⁵ [Fig. 2]

As the dominant figure of the cultural scene of the so-called Ventennio, especially during the 1930s, he was therefore chosen by Salazar — a great admirer of Fascism and of Mussolini — for the plan of the Portuguese city. [Fig. 3]

Before telling this minor story, in which - as we will see later, he was scarcely involved and quite unwilling to play a part, we would like to try to understand what idea of architecture, and especially of the city, he had in mind, if he had a specific one. From a practical point of view, the decisive moment in the development of a city form and style was the project for the university town — an experiment which, as Pagano said, was worth a hundred debates. It was then

1 This contribution is the result of numerous comparisons and a common reflection of the authors. Nevertheless, the first of the two paragraphs was written by Gian Paolo Consoli and the second one and Conclusions were written by Antonio Labalestra.

2 For Marcello Piacentini’s references, see: Luigi Angelini, “L’architetto Marcello Piacentini,” *La rivista di Bergamo* 3, no. 35 (November 1924): 385–93; Antonio Muñoz, “Marcello Piacentini,” *Architettura e arti decorative* 5, no. 1–2 (September–October 1925): 3–96; Bruno Zevi, “Marcello Piacentini: morì nel 1925,” *L’architettura, cronache e storia*, no. 58 (August 1960): 220; Fulvio Irace and Mario Lupano, “Marcello Piacentini,” in *The Dictionary of Art*, vol. 24 (New York: Grove, London: Macmillan, 1996); Bruno Regni and Martina Sennato, eds., “Marcello Piacentini (1881–1960): l’edilizia cittadina e l’urbanistica,” *Storia dell’urbanistica* 3, no. 5 (July–December 1983); Mario Lupano, *Marcello Piacentini* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1991); Arianna S. De Rose, *Marcello Piacentini: opere 1903–1926* (Modena: Panini, 1995); Sandro Scarrocchia, *Albert Speer e Marcello Piacentini: l’architettura del totalitarismo negli anni Trenta* (Milan: Skira, 1999); Sandro Scarrocchia, “Piazza della Vittoria a Brescia di Marcello Piacentini: premessa all’attualismo architettonico italiano,” in *Anni Venti e Trenta. L’arte a Brescia fra le due guerre*, ed. Carlo Zani (Brescia: Com & Print, 2002); Mario Pisani, *Architetture di Marcello Piacentini: Le opere maestre* (Rome: Clear, 2004); Giorgio Ciucci, Simonetta Lux, and Franco Purini, eds., *Marcello Piacentini architetto 1881–1960* (Rome: Gangemi Editore, 2013); Paolo Nicoloso, *Marcello Piacentini: architettura e potere: una biografia* (Udine: Gaspari, 2018).

3 Richard Wattenbarger, “A ‘Very German Process’: The Contexts of Adorno’s Strauss Critique,” *19th-Century Music* 25, no. 2–3 (November 1, 2001): 313–36.

4 Antonio Labalestra, *Il palazzo del Governo di Taranto: la politica, i progetti e il ruolo di Armando Brasini* (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 2018).

5 Mario Lupano, “Stile impersonale,” in *Marcello Piacentini architetto 1881–1960*, 27.



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that the academician explored a new style — both modern and classical — but it was also then that his idea of the city was refined: an idea of the relationship between architecture and the city that he had been developing for years. It was the idea of “urban planning”, which he even taught for some time — an approach that subordinated the work of the individual architect to the urban project itself, aiming for an architecture that was essentially impersonal. Urban planning “to be conceived as a practical discipline, similar to but distinct from, and sometimes parallel to, both architecture and urban design”⁶, wrote Lupano. And Piacentini applied it in his many urban projects, or in his supervision of them, correcting the more openly subjective visions of architecture that had become detached from the rules of urban construction.⁷ All architectural works had to follow this idea of the city, which was closely tied to its environmental context. You cannot conceive a building — however beautiful — whose individual features conflict with the city’s own form and identity.

Already in 1917, in a letter to Angelini, he wrote:

I always see the architectural work within its environment; I cannot see it otherwise. I do not believe in the internationalism of art, nor do I think that architecture can be nationalist, regional or local. Architecture is locality itself — the environment conceived in its most limited and circumscribed sense. Every building should be in the place where it stands, as if rooted in the soil from which it rises.⁸

6 Lupano, “Stile impersonale,” 31. All the translations in English were done by the authors.

7 Lupano, “Stile impersonale,” 31.

8 Marcello Piacentini to Luigi Angelini, letter of November 29, 1917, quoted in Paolo Nicoloso, *Marcello Piacentini*, 44. Translation from Italian by authors.

Fig. 1

Portraits of Marcello Piacentini and Armando Brasini (Private Collection)



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This idea that architecture should arise from its environment led him to very conservative positions, particularly in the early twentieth century. His essays “on the preservation of Roman beauties”⁹ (1917) and the later work for the Great Rome (1920), revisited several times, reveal a Piacentini who was rigorously environmentalist. In that work, he proposed relocating the monumental centre of the Fascist city to the site of Termini Station. The events of the 1929 Exhibition and Congress on town plans – including the project he presented with the GUR and the lively debate about Giovannoni’s project La Burbera – further confirm this attitude.

In the same year, writing in “Pegaso” he criticised demolitions and reaffirmed what he called “the intangibility of the historic core of the city.”¹⁰ Yet in his intense activity as a builder and urban designer, he was not always consistent with this idea. Already during the long development of the plan for Bergamo, the Roman architect showed a different attitude. The same attitude can be seen in Piazza della Vittoria in Brescia, in Via Roma in Turin, and in the events surrounding the plan for Rome which, although largely directed by him, shows no trace of the earlier idea of shifting the city centre. This contradiction ultimately culminated in the most emblematic urban demolition of Via della Conciliazione.

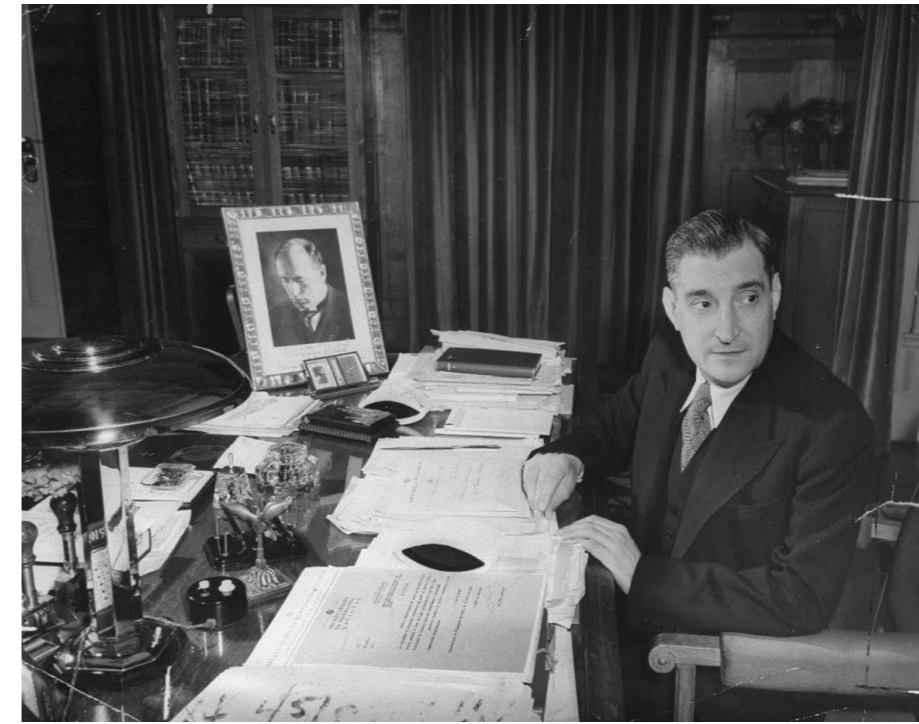
To understand these contradictions, we must recall what was said earlier. Piacentini saw himself as serving the city – a city that he wanted to be largely uniform, representative of a collective identity and subject to a form of state aesthetic control. He even theorised this idea, going so far as to propose the

9 Marcello Piacentini, *Sulla conservazione delle bellezze di Roma e sullo sviluppo della città moderna* (Rome: Stab. Tip. Aternum, 1916).

10 Marcello Piacentini, “Roma e l’arte edilizia,” *Pegaso*, September 9, 1929, 319, quoted in Nicoloso, Marcello Piacentini, 111.

Fig. 2

Marcello Piacentini presenting the model of the E42 to Mussolini, 1937 (Archivio Luce)



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figure of a Civic architect responsible for the city’s design. To meet the regime’s economic, political and social demands, he set aside, at least in part, his earlier conservative ideas. Yet he continued to uphold the idea of a city that renews itself starting from what already exists without introducing elements that would clash with the features of the existing buildings.

The project for the city of Porto clearly reflected this attitude – both flexible and rigorous – yet the Roman architect, overwhelmed by an exceptional workload and poor health, remained unconvinced. In June 1939, as he wrote to Pellati, he was commissioned to design the plan for the Portuguese city. Lacking both the desire and the strength to travel, he intended to send Giorgio Calza Bini and Vincenzo Civico – two of his many collaborators – in his place. It is not known whether they ever reached Porto as well as Piacentini himself, who was expected to go there in September, and tried to avoid travelling there. The plan he presented to the municipality included the creation of several new streets within the city, and reflected his shift away from a conservative approach, aiming instead to create a city that was easy to move through and that maintained consistent architectural features together with the planned buildings. In the end, however, the plan was not carried out by Piacentini, and its realisation was largely due to Giovanni Muzio.

The Urban Projects for the City of Porto and the Contribution of Italian Architects

The project for the city of Porto is, of course, the result of Piacentini’s flexible yet rigorous approach. However, the Roman architect was not convinced

Fig. 3

Portrait of António de Oliveira Salazar. Bernard Hoffman, 1940 (LIFE Photo Collection)

of his own role, overwhelmed by his intense activity and numerous commitments, which prevented him from leaving Italy. As a result, he accepts the invitation from the municipality of Porto without much interest and fails to give the appointment the importance it deserves.

Although Piacentini's involvement in the planning of the city of Porto has already been examined in previous studies, this research aims to shed new light on the topic, and to introduce new contributions, bringing to light details and little-known aspects of the architectural exchanges between the two countries.

This cultural exchange is exemplified by the journal "Italian Studies in Portugal" and by the university courses organised by the Italian Cultural Institute. The motto "Italia resurgens lusitanis fratribus anhelat corde" printed on the Institute of Culture's official map reflects Fascist Italy's intention to promote a shared Latin identity with Portugal, aiming to limit foreign cultural influences. The primary role of the Institute was to follow the directives of the so-called Reale Accademia d'Italia, the cultural body of the Fascist government, to which many prominent intellectuals and writers of the period belonged, including Luigi Pirandello, Gabriele D'Annunzio and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti. Established in 1928, the Regio Istituto Luso-Italiano in Lisbon and Coimbra, directed by Guido Battelli, sought to bring together Italian communities and promote the Italian language and culture, with financial support from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One of the highest points was the inauguration of the new headquarters in 1936, when two conferences were held: one on the Italian corporatist system and another on Fascist art. In this pivotal year for the Estado Novo Português, the Cultural Institute helped foster ideological alignment between the two regimes through a series of meetings and lectures on culture, the legal system, and the historical ties between Italy and Portugal, organised by its director at the time, Aldo Bizzarri.¹¹

These initiatives aimed to export to Portugal the achievements claimed by Fascism and to lay the foundations for closer relations between the two countries. The discussion on a new plan for Porto began in 1934, due to the rising strategic role of its commercial port within Europe.¹² After several evaluations and following the visit to Rome of two envoys sent by the president of the municipality, António Augusto Mendes Correia, Piacentini was formally invited on 30 December 1938 to travel to Portugal to discuss the commission. He gave his official response in February 1939.

According to the minutes of the Câmara Municipal do Porto meeting of 9 March 1939, Mendes Correia stated:

¹¹ School and educational activities for Italians were instead housed in the Casa degli Italiani, established in 1927 and permanently located in 1936 in a pombalino building on Rua do Salitre, today the headquarters of the Istituto Italiano di Cultura. The first director, Aldo Bizzarri, promoted the ideological rapprochement between the two regimes by organising a series of lectures on culture, the legal system, and historical relations, and from 1939 onwards he founded the journal *Estudos Italianos em Portugal*. Over the decades, this forum for scholarly exchange has published historical, artistic, literary, scientific, and legal studies by Italian Lusitanists and Portuguese Italianists, and has undoubtedly contributed to a deeper mutual understanding of the two cultures. See: Simone Muraca, "Cultural Activity and Intellectual Networks: Lisbon's Italian Cultural Institute from Fascism to the Second World War (1928–45)," *Modern Italy* 25, no. 4 (2020): 375–87.

¹² José Alberto Vieira Rio Fernandes, *Porto: cidade e comércio* (Porto: AHMP, 1997); Antão de Almeida Garrett, *História da evolução dos planos gerais de urbanização do Porto* (Porto: FEUP, 1974); Goffredo Adinolfi, *Ai confini del fascismo: propaganda e consenso nel Portogallo salazarista (1932–1944)* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2007).

the distinguished Italian architect and urban planner Marcello Piacentini has accepted the role of consultant for the preparation of the general urban plan of the city. Two of his collaborators, the architect Calza Bini and the engineer Vincenzo Civico, will begin their work next month.¹³

On 10 April, the two actually travelled to Porto for an inspection intended to gain a direct understanding of the city and, above all, to assess its distinctive topography – something that could not be clearly understood from the plans provided to the working group. Piacentini himself was supposed to return in September, but tried to avoid the trip, citing, as noted, his poor health, writing that he had "no wish to undertake a tedious journey and a considerable effort, especially after my duodenal problem."¹⁴ At that time, however, he was too absorbed in the design of the district for the Esposizione Universale di Roma (EUR), scheduled for 1942.¹⁵ The project offered a unique opportunity to use architecture to celebrate Fascist ideology and to shape Mussolini's vision of a "new Rome". Marcello Piacentini was appointed to lead the design of the district, and he was determined to seize the chance to define a new national architectural style. His aim was to combine rationalist principles with monumental ambitions, in line with the regime's idea of an "Art of the State". As has been observed, "what happens between January and February 1938 is decisive not only for the history of the E42, but also for the architecture of Fascist Italy."¹⁶ In order to honour the commitment made to the municipality of Porto, and following the visits by Calza Bini and Civico, Piacentini sent another of his collaborators to the site: Augusto Baccin, who stayed there from 7 July to 17 August 1939. Working with local technicians, he tried to develop a road network suited to the city's topography, trying to reconcile the plans of the Roman architect with the difficult level changes and with the established structure of the city.¹⁷

In November 1939, once this preliminary phase had been completed, Piacentini submitted twenty-five drawings setting out a new traffic plan and three distinct alternatives, all based on establishing a hierarchical street network for the central areas between the cathedral, the bridge, and the station.¹⁸ The proposal essentially involved creating several new streets within the city, following a logic that set aside both preservation concerns and the topography, aiming to produce an urban layout that was easier to move through and visually unified by the planned architecture. [Fig. 4] Among proposals involving substantial demolitions and little attention to urban morphology, the option proposed by Giovannoni was chosen, which envisaged

¹³ Minutes of the meeting, March 9, 1939.

¹⁴ Piacentini to Angelini, letter of November 29, 1917, quoted in Nicoloso, *Marcello Piacentini*, 44.

¹⁵ Maurizio Calvesi, *E42: utopia e scenario del Regime* (Venice: Cataloghi Marsilio, 1987).

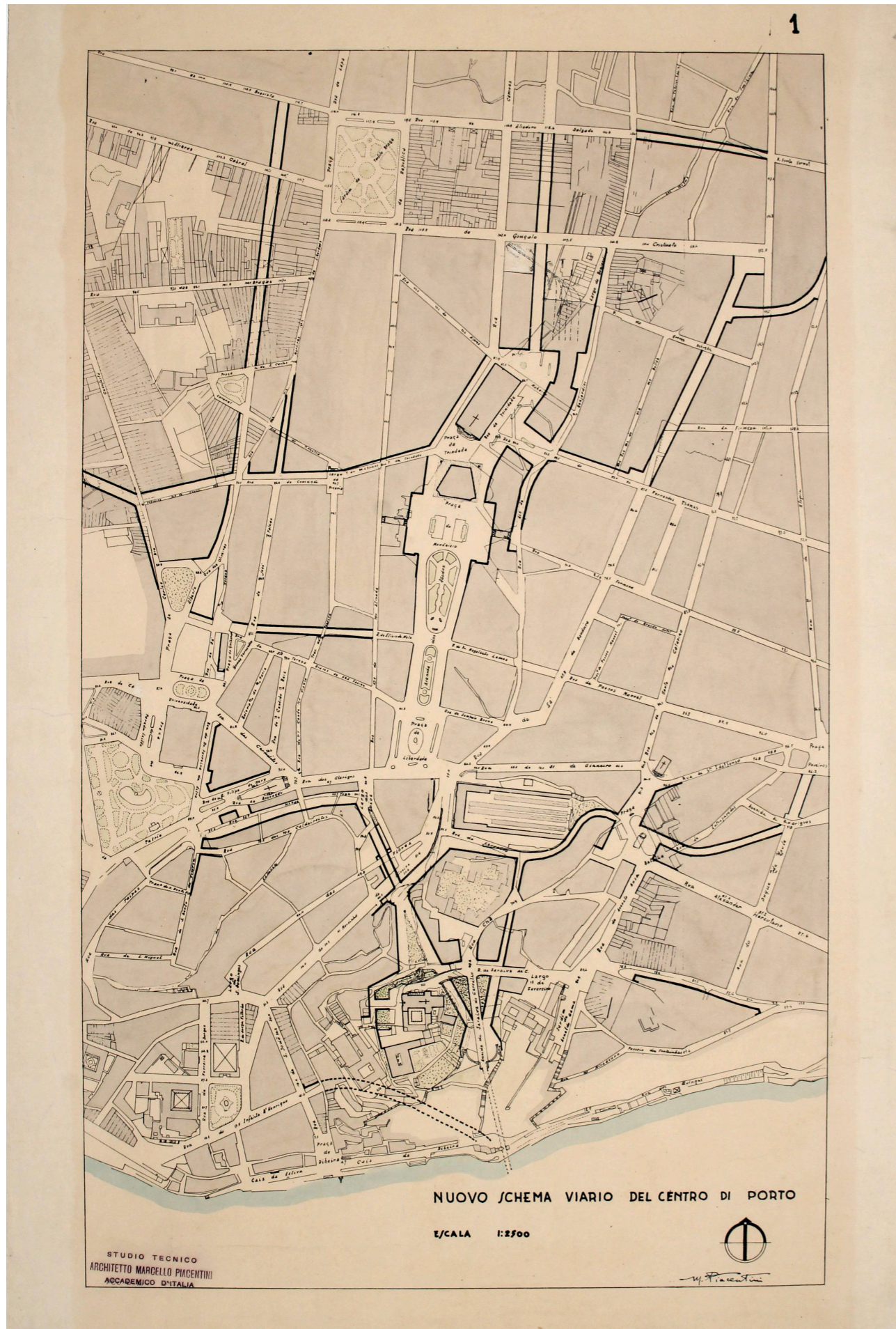
¹⁶ Paolo Nicoloso, *Mussolini architetto: Propaganda e paesaggio urbano nell'Italia fascista* (Turin: Einaudi, 2011), 215.

¹⁷ José Manuel Pereira de Oliveira, *O espaço urbano do Porto, condições naturais e desenvolvimento* (Coimbra: Instituto de Alta Cultura, Centro de Estudos Geográficos, Anexo à Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra, 1973).

¹⁸ Manuel de Azeredo and Maria Augusta Azeredo, *As Pontes do Porto: história de uma paixão. Bridges of Oporto: A Love Story* (Porto: FEUP edições, 2002).

Fig. 4

Marcello Piacentini, new traffic plan for Porto, 1939 (Arquivo Municipal do Porto, PT-CMP-AM/PUB/CMPRT/DSUO-RUE-GEPGU/3538/D.CDT.A4.175)



reducing the urban density around monuments and isolating them, rather than preserving the existing urban fabric.¹⁹ However, the work did not entirely satisfy the expectations of the client, and at the end of 1939 the collaboration with Piacentini was discontinued. This decision resulted from misunderstandings between Piacentini and the Municipality of Porto, mainly caused by the technical and financial difficulties of carrying out the expropriations and demolitions required.

Despite this situation, Piacentini requested additional cartographic material to analyse the intervention area more thoroughly. The material was never provided, further weakening an already fragile relationship and preventing the implementation of his proposals. Nevertheless, his observations and detailed planning studies became an important point of reference for the subsequent work of the Italian architect Giovanni Muzio. He was entrusted with continuing the project, and he deserves great credit for developing his predecessor's ideas to an advanced stage, contributing significantly to the present form of many urban areas in Porto.²⁰ In the historical archive of Porto Municipality, sixteen of the twenty-five drawings submitted by Piacentini are preserved. They are accompanied by a brief explanatory report in which the Roman architect focuses on addressing one of the most critical issues facing the city at the time: urban circulation.²¹ [Fig. 5]

Piacentini's proposal acknowledges the limitations of the existing road network and puts forward practical solutions to improve circulation and access within the consolidated urban fabric, particularly in areas where the topography is more complex and marked by significant changes in level. The project focuses on a set of proposals for the central areas of the city, complementing the general plan previously discussed with the technical offices of the Câmara Municipal. In the scheme, a new primary artery would connect the Dom Luís Bridge to the central system of Piazza della Libertà, avoiding a direct passage through the square. Before reaching a crossroads, the route bifurcates: one branch directed towards Piazza della Stazione, the other towards Largo dos Lóios. [Fig. 6]

A new, wide street running parallel to Rua dos Clérigos would then link Piazza Carlo Alberto and the north-western districts with the new western expansion areas, extending towards the sea. In summary, Piacentini aimed to reorganise the traffic in Porto through new streets and arteries to improve the circulation across the city and, as he often did, to enhance the monumental features of key symbolic sites.²² [Fig. 7] The final version of the plan was designed largely by Giovanni Muzio and, later – and more decisively – by Antão Almeida Garrett. The latter had followed the

19 Gustavo Giovannoni, "Vecchie città ed edilizia nuova," *Nuova Antologia* 48, no. 995 (1931): 449–72.

20 Orlando Manuel Fernandes Lopes da Sé, "Marcello Piacentini, Giovanni Muzio, A Avenida da Ponte e o contributo italiano num laboratório de experimentação urbanística" (undergraduate thesis, Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto, 2007).

21 Arquivo Municipal do Porto (AMP), Estudos do arquiteto Piacentini, 1939, series "Estudos do arquiteto italiano Marcello Piacentini, como consultor para a elaboração de um plano geral de urbanização da cidade do Porto." On the Italian side, see the materials preserved in the Piacentini Collection within the Archival Collections of the University of Florence's University Library System.

22 Regni and Sennato, "Marcello Piacentini (1881–1960)."

Fig. 5

Marcello Piacentini, bridge-city-centre connection, solution A (Arquivo Municipal do Porto, PT-CMP-AM/PUB/CMPRT/DSUO-RUE-GEPGU/3538/D.CDT.A4.177)

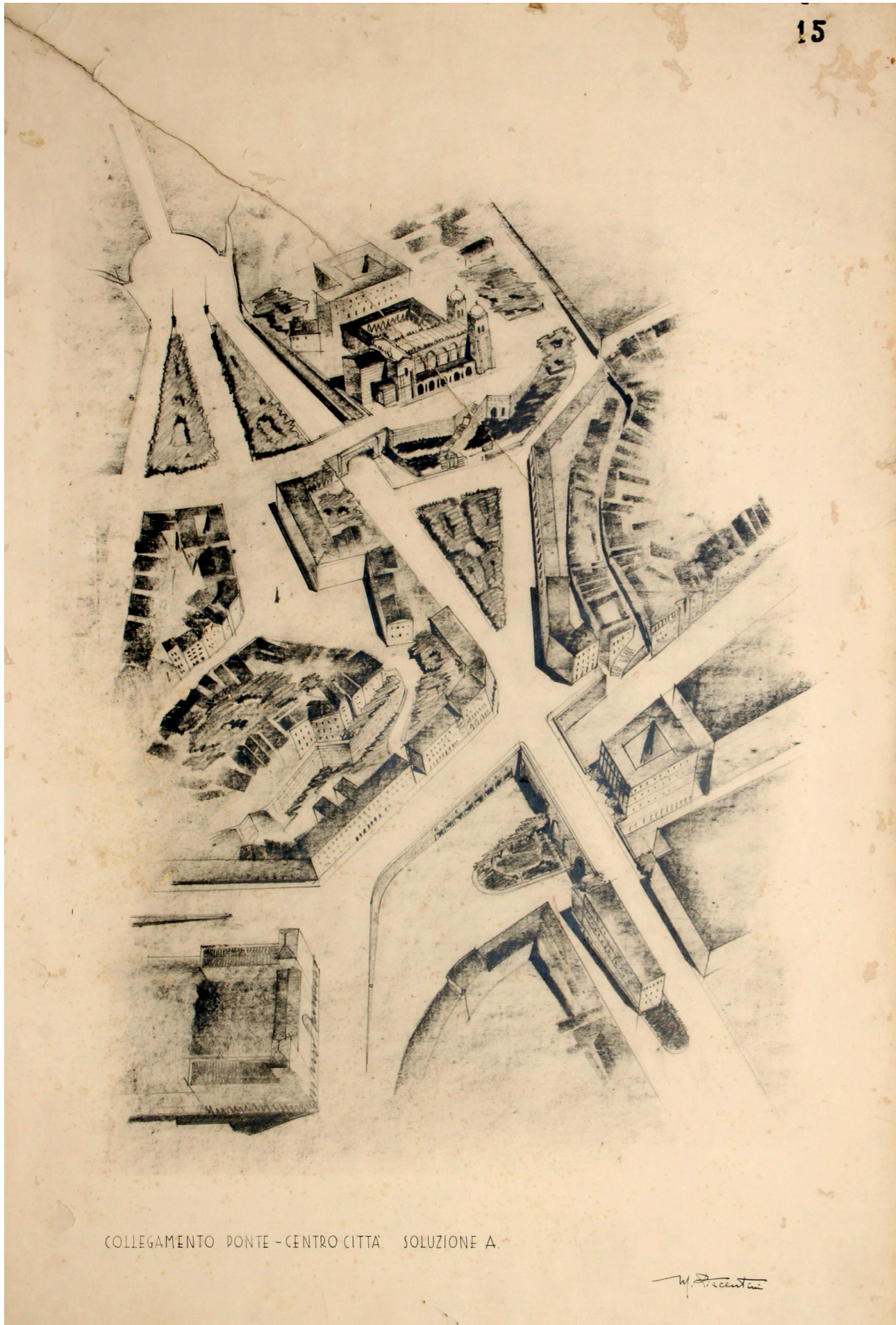
Fig. 6

Marcello Piacentini, bridge-city-centre connection, solution A (Arquivo Municipal do Porto, PT-CMP-AM/PUB/CMPRT/DSUO-RUE-GEPGU/3538/D.PIN.e.6.3)

Fig. 7

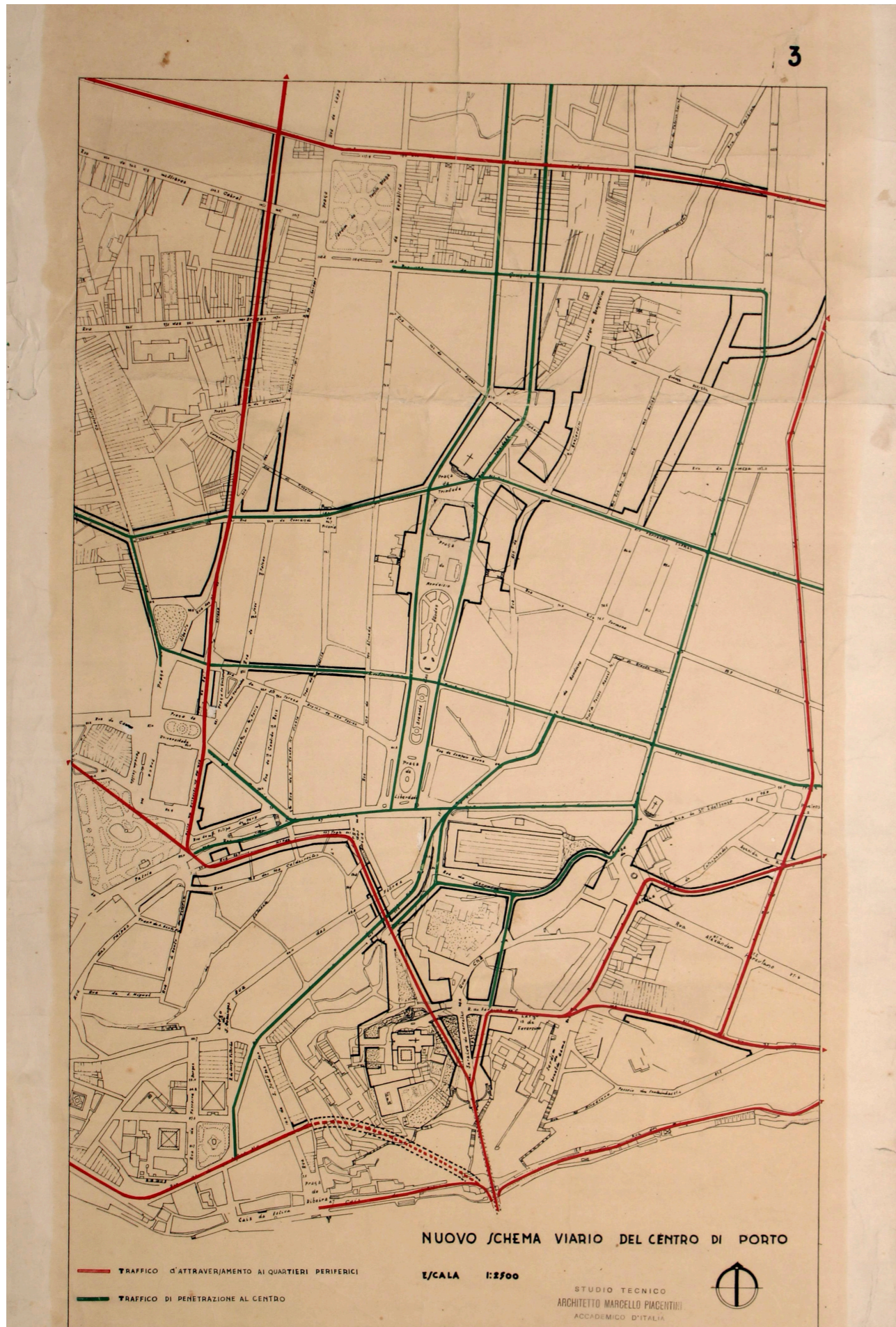
Marcello Piacentini, new traffic plan for Porto, 1939 (Arquivo Municipal do Porto, PT-CMP-AM/PUB/CMPRT/DSUO-RUE-GEPGU/3538/D.CDT.A4.174)

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development of the project under the guidance of the Italian architects and, in 1945, became the sole authority responsible for Porto's town plan.²³ [Fig. 8]

Muzio arrived in Porto on 7 April 1940 for an initial visit, and on 26 June 1940 he presented two urban development plans. His proposals included establishing a hierarchy of roads along a primary north-south axis, introducing a new monumental square, creating a residential district between the city centre and Foz, and identifying the industrial areas of Campanhã, Lordelo do Ouro and Viso de Baixo.

Conclusions... a Terrain Forged by the Devils

My city of Porto rests upon rugged granite – a terrain that has, for centuries, repelled hasty urban plans. The built fabric climbs the hills and opens squares wherever the ground allows, settling itself in forms that no manual could propose. The walls contain the sliding fabric; only a bishop or a diocese enriched (or immediately supported by some new-rich) erect autonomous architectures, free from rock and narrow houses, through an implacable geometry that, dissolving into round sculptures, returns to the petrified Nature. The slopes require walls of painstakingly cut stone, platforms embracing the essential logic of the landscape above the Douro, to create the wine that feeds the city, the wine that pays for the inner gardens of the blocks, the great courtyards on the river, with trees of 18th century prints, palm trees, colorful camellias, orchards, rose bushes, scandalously fresh colors against austere facades.²⁴

In 1998, Álvaro Siza used these poetic words to describe the challenges of intervening in his beloved Porto.²⁵ Among the hasty urban plans that the city's rugged granite has repelled over the centuries was that of Marcello Piacentini, conceived in the spirit of a "shared Latinity" that, in the late 1930s, was thought to bind Mussolini's Italy to Salazar's Portugal. The town plan for Porto was never completed by the Roman architect, yet it profoundly influenced the development of the city's form, also thanks to the contribution of other Italian architects. It represents an important case in the complex and later controversial relationship between the two countries.

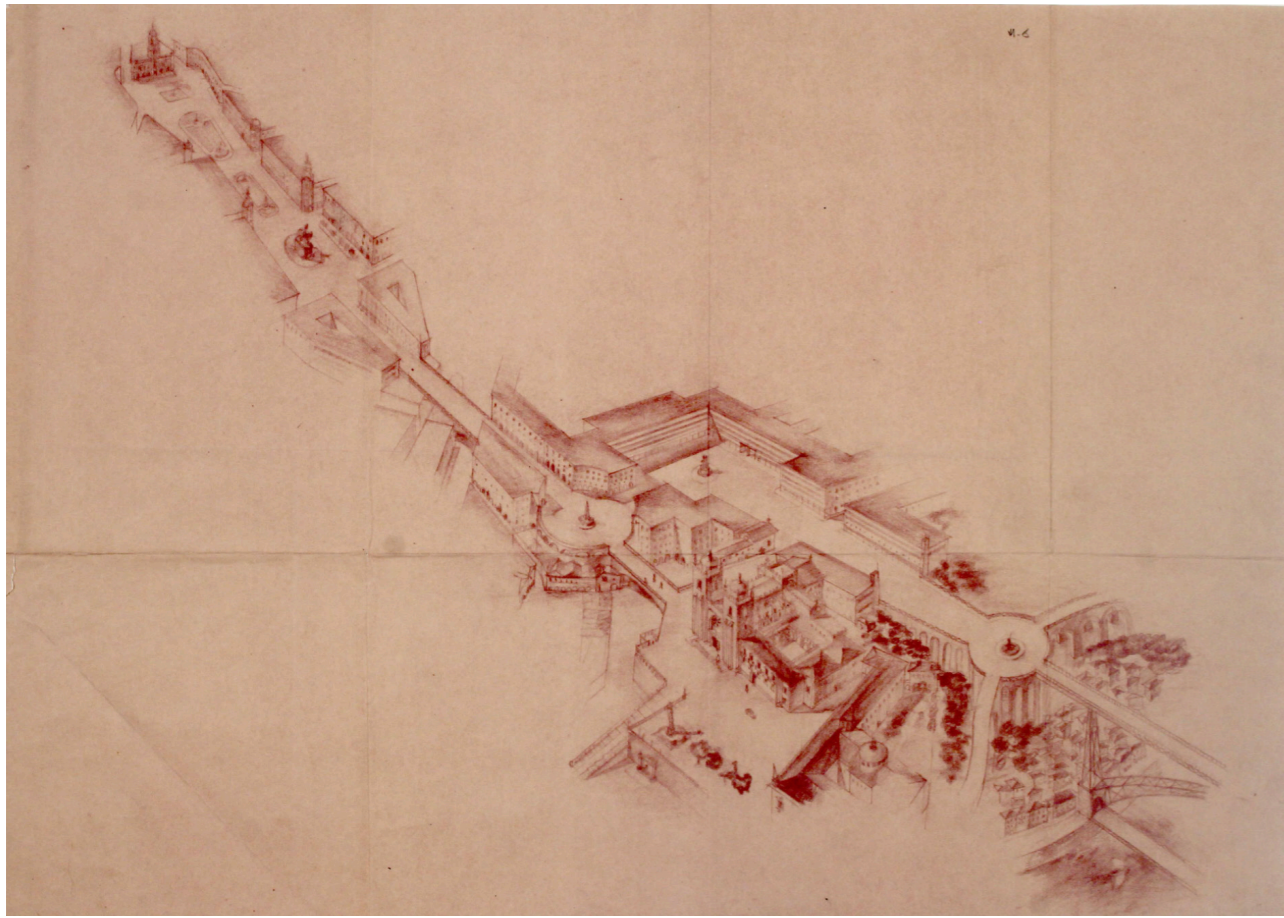
At the same time, this episode is fundamental for understanding the ideas and convictions that shaped Marcello Piacentini's concept of the city and, more broadly, the contemporary debate in Italy on urban design and on the role of the new figure of the "integral architect", as defined by Gustavo Giovannoni.²⁶

²³ Antão de Almeida Garrett, "O realojamento da população do Porto" (Lecture, Gabinete de história da Câmara Municipal do Porto, July 1, 1949).

²⁴ Álvaro Siza, Porto, May 15, 1998.

²⁵ Manuel C. Teixeira and Margarida Valla, *O urbanismo português: séculos 13-18* (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 1999); Alexandre Alves Costa, "Introdução ao estudo da história da arquitectura portuguesa" (undergraduate thesis, Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto, 2007).

²⁶ Gustavo Giovannoni, *Gli architetti e gli studi di architettura in Italia* (Rome: Istituto Italiano d'Arti Grafiche, 1916).



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Although the plan was completed only through the intervention of Antão Almeida Garrett, architect of the municipal technical office, the involvement of Italian architects in shaping Porto highlights the value and growing importance that the Portuguese city was acquiring in the international economy, particularly in relation to the strategic role of its commercial port. Under the Salazar regime, this infrastructure – like all Portuguese ports – was placed under strict state control and integrated into a policy of isolation and economic autarky. The regime sought to use the port for propaganda purposes, presenting it as a symbol of national greatness and economic self-reliance. In this context, the attempt to involve Benito Mussolini's architect aimed to give the most significant area of the city centre an image of a "Fascism of Stone".²⁷

Within this comparative strategy linking Italian Fascism and the Portuguese Estado Novo – through political-ideological, cultural, and diplomatic ties – a shared understanding stands out: the decisive importance of propaganda.²⁸ This is, in fact, the true core of the entire episode. Italian architecture served as a model for Salazar precisely because, in the first half of the twentieth century,

27 Giovanni Adinolfi, "The Institutionalization of Propaganda in the Fascist Era: The Cases of Germany, Portugal, and Italy," *The European Legacy: Toward New Paradigms* 17, no. 5 (2012): 607–21.

28 Laura Maria Rocchi, "Presenza culturale italiana in Portogallo nei primi decenni del XX secolo," *Estudos Italianos em Portugal. Nova Série*, no. 2 (2007): 357–77; Mario Ivani, "Il Portogallo di Salazar e l'Italia Fascista: Una Comparazione," *Studi Storici* 46, no. 2 (2005): 347–406; Simone Salmi, *La "lezione di Salazar": Le relazioni tra il fascismo italiano e l'Estado Novo portoghese* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2012).

Fig. 8

Letter from Engineer Antão Almeida Garrett to Giovanni Muzio, accompanying the submission of two drawings with the proposal by the Urban Planning Study Office of the Municipality of Porto for the connection between Praça da Liberdade and the Luís I Bridge (Arquivo Municipal do Porto, PT-CMP-AM/PUB/CMPRT/DSUO-RUE-GEPGU/3535/06)

no other state invested politically in public architecture to the same extent as Fascist Italy.²⁹

We can therefore assume that Piacentini's involvement reflected more than a technical need to intervene in the centre of Porto and in the area around the Ponte D. Luís. The significant public investment required for this project, along with the mobilisation of labour, formed part of a broader political strategy – one that the Portuguese Estado Novo tried to emulate from contemporary urban policy developments in Italy.³⁰ Salazar was interested in these choices precisely because they demonstrated an ability to gather "fragments of ideologies" from different ideological currents and recombine them in pursuit of a specific goal: the affirmation of state policy and its propaganda. In this context, the plan was conceived as an instrument of political power, just as in Italy "building became a form of the city and urbanism a model for the territory."³¹

29 Paolo Nicoloso, *Mussolini architetto: Propaganda e paesaggio urbano nell'Italia fascista* (Turin: Einaudi, 2011), xiii.

30 Alessandro Gori, "Celebrate Nation, Commemorate History, Embody the Estado Novo: The Exhibition of the Portuguese World (1940)," *Cultural and Social History* 15, no. 5 (2018): 699–722.

31 Giorgio Ciucci, *Gli architetti e il fascismo: architettura e città 1922–1944* (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), 3–36.

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