

Diogo Lino Pimentel and the Gulbenkian Journey in Cardinal Lercaro's Bologna

Diogo Lino Pimentel, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Glauco Gesleri, Chiesa e Quartiere, Architectural Journey

/Abstract

Since its foundation, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon has been instrumental in the revitalisation of the Portuguese cultural scene, primarily through the provision of scholarships for architects and artists to pursue their studies in foreign countries. The article is grounded in research conducted in the Gulbenkian Foundation archives, drawing upon the experiences of several architects who elected to benefit from the scholarship by pursuing studies in Italy, focusing on aspects of Italian architectural culture that could not be fully developed in Portugal due to its dictatorial regime. Among them was Diogo Lino Pimentel (1934-2019), who applied for a scholarship to study in Bologna under Cardinal Giacomo Lercaro, at the "Centre for Study and Information on Sacred Architecture". It was at this institution that the bond between Bologna and Lisbon was strengthened, and that a friendship was established between Pimentel himself and the architects Glauco and Giuliano Gesleri. The archival research was conducted in two distinct areas: firstly, the reading and analysis of the official documents that Pimentel delivered to the Foundation, the so-called "Relatorios"; and secondly, research carried out in private archives, from which a parallel narrative emerged through personal accounts. This text aims to recount some crucial moments in this journey, which will also allow us to examine two political and social situations, those of Bologna and Lisbon, at a specific and crucial moment in time: the 1960s.

/Author

Raffaella Maddaluno
CIAUD, Research Centre for Architecture, Urbanism and Design
Lisbon School of Architecture, Universidade de Lisboa
ORCID 0000 - 0002 -4365 - 0375
rmaddaluno@fa.ulisboa.pt

Raffaella Maddaluno, is a Assistant Professor of Architectural History at the Department of History and Theory of Architecture of Lisbon School of Architecture. Ph.D. in Architecture and Construction (2007) from the Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata. Master Second-level short specialisation degrees "Conservation, management and enhancement of industrial heritage" (2013). Università degli Studi di Padova, and degree in Architecture (2000) from the Politecnico di Bari Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Ingegneria Civile e dell'Architettura. She was post-doctoral fellow at Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon with research about "Fernando Távora e the Gulbenkian Journey – 1960". He is vice president of the Association of Italian Researchers in Portugal – Hipácia. He has organised many international conferences including *In the Margins: Italy Portugal* (Lisbon, 2025) and *Architecture: War and Peace* (Lisbon, 2023). She is the author of numerous texts dealing with relations in architecture between Italy and Portugal in the 20th century, including Esposito, A. Leoni G., Maddaluno R. (2022) *FERNANDO TÁVORA. diario di bordo*. Letteraventidue, Siracusa. And *A Travel in Fernando Távora's Travels* (With Álvaro Siza, Alexandre Alves Costa, Fernando Barroso, Sérgio Fernandez, Alcino Soutinho, Manuel Mendes, José António Bandeirinha, Jorge Figueira, Francisco Barata, Eduardo Souto de Moura, 2013-2022, published in *Histories of Postwar architecture*, 5 (11), 2022.



The Internationalisation Role of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon

Since its establishment in 1957, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon has contributed significantly to the development of the Portuguese cultural landscape. From 1957 to 2018, the Foundation's Fine Arts Department began organizing competitions for trips abroad for professionals in the fields of architecture, art and culture, 82 of which were for further studies in Italy. The educational program included a wide range of courses ranging from architecture to sculpture, from glass decoration to advanced courses at Rai studios, from theatre internships to archival research, from design courses to archaeology, as well as study trips organised by fine arts schools.¹

This contribution is based on research conducted in the archives of the Gulbenkian Foundation, aimed at examining the experiences of several architects who chose to take advantage of a scholarship to further their studies in aspects of Italian architectural culture at a time when Portugal was under the yoke of a dictatorial regime.²

The archival research was conducted along two parallel lines: on the one hand, the official documents submitted by the scholarship holders to the Foundation, known as "Relatorios", were read and analysed; on the other hand, research was conducted in the scholarship holders' private archives, which revealed a parallel account of their personal narratives. The analysis reveals a portrait of Italy as a model, interpreted and appreciated for its beauty, although sometimes not fully understood due to its complexity. The reading of the Gulbenkian Foundation's archive processes and private archives has revealed a much more complex story than that presented by the narrative of Portuguese architecture, which is sometimes limited to the declamation of a school that has, in most cases, consecrated the well-known triad: Fernando Távora, Alvaro Siza, and Eduardo Souto de Moura. While recognising their value and the undisputed role they played

¹ The archive also provides access to information about several trips to Italy organised by the Fine Arts Schools of Porto and Lisbon for their students. A group of professors and assistants from Porto, including Fernando Távora, Alvaro Siza, Duarte Castel Branco and Octávio Lixa Filgueiras, requested funding for a study trip in 1966. The main destination was to visit the 33rd Venice Biennale, but also the architecture faculties of Venice and Milan, as they defined it as "a small aesthetic mission of holidays in the field of education," 18–27 August 1966.

Also in 1966, in April, taking advantage of the Easter holidays, a group of students from the Painting and Sculpture courses at the Porto School of Fine Arts requested funding for a study trip to Italy accompanied by Professors Luis Luciano Demée and José Joaquim Rodrigues.

In 1964, a group of 17 students from the three courses at the Porto School of Fine Arts requested funding for a trip to Italy, through the Italian academic organisation Civis. The request was followed by a commitment to produce a travel report and a "major documentary and artistic exhibition" to be organised at the Porto School, with the possibility of repeating it in Lisbon. The planned period was from 17 March to 5 April 1964.

From a letter from Carlos Ramos to the foundation, we learn that Fernando Távora, Júlio Resende and Jorge Henrique Pais da Silva will accompany the students, among whom we recognise a young Alexandre Alves Costa. The programme is very rich and brings together a series of ancient, modern and contemporary buildings.

The Lisbon School of Fine Arts also made several requests for funding for a study trip to Italy, one in March 1965 for 30 students and professors, to take place between 10 and 25 April. They also had the support of the Italian Cultural Institute in Lisbon. They limited this trip to two cities: Rome and Florence, considering that the number of buildings was so high that it was not possible to include other stops on the trip. The request was made on behalf of the director, Paulino Montez.

Another request for funding was made by the Lisbon School of Fine Arts in February 1968, to take place during the Easter holidays. This request was repeated in 1970 for Rome and Florence, with the IIC once again involved in the organisation.

² This text is part of a larger research project entitled "Documen-tália: The Role of Italian Architectural Culture in the Process of Cosmopolitanism and Internationalization of Portugal in the 20th and 21st Centuries," <https://www.documen-talia.com/>. Accessed 30 March, 2026.

in the construction of an architectural style associated with Portugal, reading these experiences has made it possible to recognise how important it was for a generation of architects to learn how to practise architecture while remaining rooted in Portuguese culture, but understanding its deeper reasons 'lá fora', as the Portuguese say.³

The criteria used to select the scholarship recipients to be included in the research were determined by the authorisation to access the data on the award process, the quantity of documents in the archive capable of providing a comprehensive account of the travel experience, and the fundamental role played by the protagonists in the cultural context in which their journey took place. Based on this data, we sought to reflect on two themes: what topics are studied in Italy and how this study is recounted. Analysing the motivations behind the decision to come and study allowed us to understand what factors may have motivated the protagonists' interest, which institutions or schools expressed a desire to welcome them, who financed their stay in Italy, and with which institutions they had collaborative relationships. This approach has made it possible to understand the reasons behind Gulbenkian's selection of the travel themes to be funded, as well as the interpretation of the cultural and political context underlying this choice.

Then, in a second, more interpretative part, we sought to understand how the fellows responded to the institutional requirement to submit a final report, and the different narrative registers they used to fulfil this task. This formal and institutional form of communication was then compared with a more personal and intimate narrative dimension that spoke not only of the professional enrichment that the experience brought, but above all human enrichment. This interpretation was possible by reading some private correspondence relating to the fellows.

³ Access to the scholarship files is subject to restrictions, as the authorisation of the person concerned or an heir is required. Therefore, the in-depth analysis of the scholarships focused on a selected sample of cases. It should be noted that not all scholarship award processes provided an adequate number of documents to reconstruct the narrative. However, it is worth taking a general look at the areas of architectural specialisation in Italy to which the scholarship holders aspired. José Pinto Machado applied for a nine-month scholarship in Italy and three months in Belgium to visit the sites and institutions of the agrarian reform and to take a specialisation course in urban planning at the Politecnico di Milano (1957; 1962). Diogo Lino Pimentel, to whom this text is dedicated, went to Bologna for a six-month internship at the "Centre for Study and Information on Sacred Architecture" in 1957. Francisco Manuel Góis Fernandes Figueira requested funding for a trip to Italy (1968) and travelled to Milan and Bologna. Gil Francisco Ferreira Martins applied for a nine-month scholarship (1969–1970), which was extended for another eight months, before returning in 1971 to attend a specialisation course in urban planning at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Rome and at the Institute of Urban Planning. Alcino Peixoto Castro Soutinho applied for a six-month scholarship first in 1959 (rejected) and then in 1960 until 1961, for "General studies in architecture and museum organisation in Milan, Turin and Florence," which then extended to Venice, Rome and Palermo. Duarte de Castro Ataíde Castel Branco applied for a nine-month scholarship for general research activities and specifically to attend a course in Technical Urban Planning in Milan. Manuela Taveira dos Santos Bruxelas went, among other destinations, to Naples for "Studies on the rationalisation and equipment of kitchen space in a home" from 1968 to 1970. Emilia Gomes Celestino da Costa attended a course at the "Scuola Politecnica di Design" from 1972 to 1974. Maria Madalena Alvares Cabral de Figueiredo attended a nine-month course in Industrial Design at the "School of Design" in Novara (1973), as did Maria Margarida Pessanha Viegas in 1970 and Maria das Dores Bacelar d'Ornellas Cabral, also in 1970.

After 1974, the Foundation continued to fund scholarships. In the field of artistic studies (architecture, urban planning, museology, design, conservation and restoration, painting, archaeology, art history, visual arts, curatorship), there were 49 scholarship holders up to 2018, 21 of whom were in architecture and design. Of these, we were only able to access the process of the scholarship awarded to architect Francisco José Barata Fernandes in 1984, a ten-month scholarship on the theme of "Urban development policy and the restoration of historic centres" at the faculties of architecture in Milan, under the supervision of Professors Daniele Vitale and Maurizio Boriani, and in Rome at the Institute of Territorial Planning with Professor Paola Falini, at the International Centre for Study, Research and Documentation on Housing "Oikos" in Bologna, under the supervision of architect Giorgio Trebbi.

The cultural context in which the fellows' choices are situated is limited chronologically by the date of the Gulbenkian's foundation and the start of the Fine Arts scholarship service in 1957, and then 1974, considering that the latter unequivocally marks a moment of substantial change in Portuguese society due to the overthrow of the Salazar regime. These are two important decades for Portugal, which starts from a desire to rebuild its identity in the European and Atlantic political landscape after the Second World War, in which, we recall, it does not actively participate but plays a strategic supporting role. It was an attempt to build a new society, albeit under a dictatorial regime that oriented its choices, on the one hand, towards an autarchic desire to rediscover and preserve its traditional roots and, on the other, towards fear of not participating in the reconstruction of the international political scene.

Italy, for its part, represented a vision of a realised future. Reconstruction had effectively taken place after the Second World War, industrial and economic prosperity was underway, and architecture in all its possible manifestations (practical design, theoretical reflection, and academic pedagogical structure) was a model to strive for and learn from. Considering all these starting points, the scholar on whom we have chosen to focus on this text is Diogo Lino Pimentel (1934–2019)⁴, who travelled to Bologna in 1959 to study under Cardinal Lercaro.

Diogo Lino Pimentel: towards the Construction of a Religious Architecture

During the 1950s, with a slow but progressive evolution, the social question in Portugal also became a political question, and the demands made on the regime began to take on different forms. The culminating example of this was the political moment corresponding to the 1958 presidential elections, whose election campaign between Américo Thomaz, the government candidate, and Humberto Delgado, of the opposition, was a moment in which, as Ferreira says, public and organised opposition to the Estado Novo gradually ceased to be a distinctive political feature of the Communist Party.⁵ According to Nuno Teotónio Pereira, the elections were also an opportunity to bring to the fore some of the concerns of a Christian conscience that had been silenced for a long time.⁶

4 Diogo Lino Pimentel was born in Lisbon in 1934 and graduated in architecture from the Lisbon School of Fine Arts in 1960. Upon his return to Portugal in 1960 from his experience in Bologna, he was invited to join the SNIP (Secretariat of New Churches of the Patriarchate of Lisbon), of which he was director from 1960. In 1966, he recounted his experience in the Olivais Seminary magazine, *Novellae Olivarum*, where he also wrote one of the last articles on art and architecture presented there. In 1966, together with Sebastião Formosinho Sanchez, he founded the Canon studio, which was responsible for the design of several churches. The team also produced the proposals that came second in the preliminary design competition for the Sé de Bragança (1964), third in the competition for the Torre do Tombo (1982) and second for the renovation of the Palácio da Ajuda (1989). From 1976 to 2010, he also worked as a consultant to the Municipality of Sintra and as a member of the IPPAR Advisory Board. He began his collaboration with the Movement for the Renewal of Religious Art (MRAR) as student member No. 210. However, his interest in the Movement was such that, on 9 November 1956, he was admitted as the 15th full member, despite the founding members still having many reservations about expanding the core group of the MRAR.

5 Nuno Estevão Figueiredo Ferreira, "O tempo e o modo: revista de pensamento e acção (1963–1967): repercussões eclesiológicas de uma cultura de diálogo," *Lusitânia Sacra*, 2nd ser., no. 6 (1994): 168.

6 Iva Delgado, Carlos Pacheco, and Telmo Faria, *O arranque da dissidência católica, Humberto Delgado: as eleições de 1958* (Lisbon: Veja, 1998), 30.

A group of 28 Catholics, including Teotónio Pereira, Nuno Portas, José Escada, João Bénard da Costa, Pedro Tamen, António Alçada Baptista, Francisco Lino Neto, among others, wrote a letter of disappointment to the official newspaper of the Church, *Novidades*, which openly sided with the government candidate. This letter was followed by another, this time from the Bishop of Porto, Don António Ferreira Gomes, addressed directly to Salazar on 13 July, a sort of reminder for a future meeting between the two, in which he informed him of the irreconcilable contradictions between his own thoughts and those of Salazar. Salazar's reaction was not long in coming and, on his return from a trip to Rome on 18 October 1958, the PIDE did not allow him to enter Portugal, thus beginning a forced exile that lasted until 1969. However, the letter, once made public, took on social dimensions that were no longer controllable. A new, more doctrinal document was drafted by a group of 43 Catholics and entitled 'Relations between the Church and the State and the freedom of Catholics'. The authors of the letter gave an account of the repressive methods used by the government, which the Christian spirit had to repudiate.⁷

Nuno Teotónio Pereira, João de Almeida, António Freitas Leal, João Correia Rebelo, José Maya Santos, Henrique Albino and João Braula Reis began to meet regularly to promote the values of sacred art in Portugal.⁸ One of the results of these meetings was the organisation of an exhibition, which aimed to reflect on the historical process of sacred architecture that had led it to follow a scenographic rather than a plastic, functional, constructive path, as modernity demanded. The exhibition opened on 16 April 1953 for a month, with great success among politicians, clergy and architects. It was conceived as a travelling exhibition and was inaugurated in Porto on 13 June of the same year, choosing one of the spaces of the School of Fine Arts (ESBAP) as its venue.⁹ Once again, the reviews were positive, especially those by Carlos Ramos and Maria José de Mendonça¹⁰, who emphasised the museological dimension of the event and the attention paid to innovation in education.

The birth of the MRAR (Movimento Rinnovamento Arte Religiosa, Religious Art Renewal Movement) was the natural consequence of this group's meetings, which sought to give continuity to a series of artistic ideas and values, of which

7 The text was signed by, among others, N. Teotónio Pereira, José Escada and J. Bráulia Reis, together with António Alçada, Francisco Sousa Tavares, Sophia de Mello Breyner, Gonçalo Ribeiro Telles and Octávio Lixa Filgueiras. The letter was published in full in the official newspaper of the Communist Party, *Avante*, with a laudatory introduction. António Costa Pinto, *O fim do império português* (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2001), 63.

8 MRAR, "Oito anos da vida do movimento," *MRAR – Boletim*, 2nd ser., no. 4 (September 1961): 1.

9 The exhibition continued its journey to Braga (20 November 1954), Coimbra (4 December 1954), Funchal on the island of Madeira (3 January 1955), the city of Lourenço Marques, now Maputo, in Mozambique (14 March 1955), and Beira, also in Mozambique (September 1955).

10 She graduated in Historical and Philosophical Sciences from the Faculty of Arts in Lisbon and became a curator at the National Museums in 1933. In 1939, she joined the Municipal Museum of Lisbon, where she remained until 1944, when she moved to the National Museum of Ancient Art. She was one of the founding members of the MRAR. She was responsible for directing and organising the 3rd Exhibition of Modern Sacred Art, promoted by the *Liga Independente Católica Feminina* and the *União Noelista Portuguesa* (The Independent Catholic Women's League and the Portuguese Neolist Union), which was held in 1949 at the Palácio Foz in Lisbon. She was responsible for the creation of the textile workshop at the José de Figueiredo Institute, which began operating in 1956. At the same time, in 1956, she began working on the inventory of the Calouste Gulbenkian collection, playing a very important role in the planning of this pioneering institution in the field of museum programming, collaborating with George Henri Rivière on the construction of the headquarters and museum.

the exhibition was one manifestation. In its initial constitution, the MRAR was composed of seven young architects and architecture students, Nuno Teotónio Pereira, João de Almeida, António Freitas Leal, Henrique Albino, João Correia Rebelo, José Maya Santos and João Braula Reis, plus five new members who had not participated in the organisation of the exhibition, António Lino, Madalena Cabral and Maria José de Mendonça. The MRAR launched a series of initiatives and events focusing on aesthetic and critical training, exhibitions, articles, debates, competitions, courses and conferences, which lasted for 15 years. As João da Cunha writes in the conclusion of his thesis, although the MRAR's architectural proposal did not last, ending in 1964, its approach, characterised by the promotion of debate, training, project criticism and the exchange of information between peers, remains a possible model for those responsible for the creation and management of religious art and architecture.¹¹

The Gulbenkian Scholarship: Bologna 1959

Diogo Pimentel played a pivotal role in the MRAR and in the internationalisation of Portuguese religious architectural culture. Even before being awarded the Gulbenkian scholarship, Pimentel's name was already well known in circles linked to sacred architecture.¹² Below, we will attempt to reconstruct the process that led to the awarding of the scholarship by the Gulbenkian Foundation. This reconstruction was made possible thanks to documents made available in the private archive in Sintra, in the Casa dos Ciprestes, by his son Martinho Pimentel, and from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation archive.¹³

On 2 January 1960, Auxiliary Bishop Gilberto Baroni, on behalf of Cardinal Lercaro, sent an official invitation to architect Pimentel to join the commission established by the cardinal himself, "for the urban study and parish resizing of the suburbs of Bologna", and to attend the official meeting to be held

on 7 January.¹⁴ This can be considered recognition of Pimentel's work during his months in Bologna, where he collaborated with the leading figures of this phase in the history of ecclesiastical architecture. We can trace the beginning of this relationship to a letter that Pimentel wrote in French to Cardinal Lercaro on 2 July 1959, asking for the opportunity to do an internship at the Centre for Studies and Information on Sacred Architecture in Bologna, an experience, he said, that particularly interested him as a member of the MRAR. This experience, he wrote, would enrich his professional and Christian formation. He also sent a similar request, dated 6 July, to the Centre for Studies and Information on Sacred Architecture, addressed to the architect Giorgio Trebbi. On 6 August, Pimentel informed Gulbenkian that he had received the letter of acceptance (3 August 1959) from the Study Centre, which he attached, and that he intended to undertake an atelier experience, parallel to that at the Study Centre, probably with Giorgio Trebbi himself, who had responded enthusiastically.¹⁵

The Study Centre was the culmination of a process that began with Cardinal Lercaro's establishment of the Diocesan Office for New Churches on 1 August 1955, which was a branch of the previous Office for the Study of Pastoral Problems in the City and Suburbs. The management was entrusted to Don Aleardo Mazzoli, and accountant Vittorio Albertazzi, architect Giorgio Trebbi and engineers Francesco Gualandi and Piero Bolognesi were appointed as consultants. Already in November 1955, the Office was divided into three sections: the Technical-Organisational section led by Giorgio Trebbi; the Propaganda section; and the Administrative section.¹⁶

Numerous architects worked with Trebbi, initially on a pro bono basis, first in the UTOA, then in the Technical Section of the New Churches Office and later in the Study Centre for Sacred Art. Architect Glauco Gresleri, who graduated in Florence in 1956, stood out for the fruitful partnership that would begin.

11 João Alves da Cunha, "O MRAR e os anos de ouro da arquitetura religiosa em Portugal no século XX: a ação do movimento de renovação da arte religiosa nas décadas de 1950 e 1960" (PhD diss., Faculdade de Arquitetura - Universidade de Lisboa, 2014), 433.

12 Diogo Pimentel appeared in April 1957 at the 3rd MRAR meeting, held in Porto, at the Sta. Filomena house (26–28 April), where he gave a lecture entitled "Christian Vision of Sacred Art," and Luiz Cunha reported on the "International Panorama of Modern Religious Architecture." Diogo Pimentel's involvement was recognised from the outset, as evidenced by the fact that, in January 1957, he was invited to replace João C. Rebelo as treasurer. Rebelo was the treasurer of the Council. The following are all after Pimentel's internship in Bologna.

13 If we wanted to summarise the moments in which the cultural relationship with Italy was built within the Church, we would highlight the moments in which the protagonists of this construction probably came into contact. The First National Exhibition of Sacred Architecture (1945–1955), held in Bologna from 23 to 25 September 1955, in which António Lino participated. The International Liturgy Congress, Italy, Assisi, from 18 to 22 September 1956, followed by the Meeting of the International Secretariat of Catholic Artists (SIAC) held in Venice, also in September, attended by José Maya Santos. The latter gave a lecture entitled "Arquitetura religiosa italiana" (Italian religious architecture) at the National Museum of Ancient Art in Lisbon on 30 November of the same year. And in May 1957, the Meeting of the International Secretariat of Catholic Artists (SIAC) was held in Rome, attended by Father Manuel M. Atanásio. We know that Cardinal Lercaro visited Lisbon and gave a lecture on 10 October 1960 at the Higher Technical Institute, entitled "Problems relating to the construction of new churches," which was attended by A. Freitas Leal and Diogo L. Pimentel. Despite the importance of this event, in reality this year corresponds to a period of relative silence for the Movement in terms of its activities. The summary presented is the result of research carried out by João Luis Marques which emerged from reading the MRAR bulletins (1st ser. 1957–1958, 2nd ser. 1961–1966, 3rd ser. 1967–1968) and the doctoral thesis in Architecture–Theory and History: João Alves da Cunha, "O MRAR e os anos de ouro da arquitetura religiosa em Portugal no século XX, a ação do movimento de renovação da arte religiosa nas décadas de 1950 e 1960" (PhD diss., FAULT, Lisbon, 2013).

14 The commission proposal saw Cardinal Lercaro as President, Monsignor Faenza assigned to the diocesan administrative office, Don Toldo for the Centre for Socio-Religious Research, architect Trebbi for the Ministerial Commission appointed to approve the Landscape Plan, architects Glauco Gresleri and Lullini for the New Churches Office, architect Balli for the implementation plan of the Landscape Plan of which he was the author, architect Bergonzoni as author of the landscape plan and for the connection with the schools planned by the Municipality in new centres, and architect Pimentel sent by the Diocese of Lisbon to work for six months at the New Churches Office in Bologna. There is another document dated 15 March 1960, which clarifies the agenda of a second meeting, to be held on 16 March 1960, and the composition of the commission. The agenda for the meeting was to be the "parish resizing of the Bologna hills," which would be discussed: introduction to the Landscape Plan and the Hillside Master Plan (architects Giorgio Trebbi and Vittorio Balli); current situation and results of the survey (architect Glauco Gresleri); Size of a sample parish (Ravone-Casaglia) (Architect Luciano Lullini).

15 (Pimentel translates the document into Portuguese so that it can be sent to the Foundation): "In the personal interest of His Eminence Cardinal Lercaro, I would like to inform you that his wish to spend six months in Bologna, starting in October or November, on a scholarship, can be fulfilled. We will all be delighted to welcome you and share with you our experiences in our work. Your arrival will coincide with the start of the study of the parish resizing plan for the "Bolognese hills," so if you wish, you can join the group that will be working on this project."

16 The Propaganda section plays an important role, as it is responsible for finding appropriate ways to raise awareness of the issue of new churches and channelling financial aid from the Office. There are various initiatives, including the creation and screening in parishes of a documentary entitled *Dove Dio cerca casa* (Where God Seeks a Home) by director Renzo Renzi. Several exhibitions were organised in collaboration with the Technical Section to report on the work of the New Churches Office, such as the one in 1957, which was inaugurated in the premises of the Dominican Studio. In 1959, an exhibition was set up on the steps of San Petronio, providing a documentary summary of the problem of new churches in the main cities of Europe. In 1960, again on the steps of San Petronio, an exhibition was set up consisting of 45 illuminated steles, each indicating a new church that had been built. In 1965, during the Christmas festivities, an exhibition of photographs on the situation of churches in the suburbs of Bologna was set up in the Basilica of San Petronio. See Claudia Manenti, *La campagna Nuove Chiese del cardinale Lercaro* (Bologna: Edizioni Minerva, 2023), 65–67.

Continuing with the reading of the Gulbenkian archive documents, on 25 August, Diogo Pimentel sent a letter to Trebbi, outlining the topics he would like to explore in depth during his six months in Bologna, summarised as follows: issues concerning sacred architecture, urban planning and religious sociology and their interrelationships; issues concerning the study and construction of temporary churches; issues concerning the restoration, reconstruction or adaptation of ancient buildings to the new requirements of worship, pastoral care and liturgy; issues concerning modern sacred architecture.

On 17 September, Maria José de Mendonça announced the awarding of the scholarship, attaching the Regulations, which set out the obligations of the scholarship holder, and specifying that the Fine Arts Service was very interested in understanding the functioning of the Centre for Study and Information on Sacred Architecture, specifically asking him to deepen this topic in his final reports. This interest stemmed from the fact that Maria José de Mendonça was one of the founding members of the MRAR. The departure was set for 3 December, with the car chosen as the means of transport. From the documents sent to Gulbenkian, we know that on 19 December 1959 he was in Bologna, already working at the Study Centre.

From Bologna, as the deadline for the first quarter report approached, he sent a letter to Gulbenkian on 24 February 1960, asking the Foundation for funding to carry out a photographic campaign on modern sacred architecture in Italy (he selected more than 100 photographs from the Study Centre). Above all, however, he asked for his grant to be extended by a few months so that he could continue the work he had been involved in at the Study Centre (23 March 1960). He registered this request in a letter dated 24 March, in which he asked to be allowed to use the last three weeks of his grant in Milan to visit a study centre like the one in Bologna. This concession was officially communicated in a letter dated 12 May 1960, which also announced that Dr Maria José de Mendonça would have to leave her post for health reasons and that she would be replaced by Dr Artur Nobre de Gusmão.¹⁷ Pimentel replied to express his gratitude, but also to inform them that at that time, in addition to working at the Study Centre and collaborating on a church project with architect Glauco Gresleri, he was also working with architect Giorgio Trebbi on the design of a parish church dedicated to St. Pius X in Bologna. He writes: "In this way, I had the opportunity not only to explore the sociological and urban planning issues concerning sacred architecture, but also those that arise when designing a Catholic church." (12 May 1960)¹⁸

17 Artur Nobre de Gusmão (1922–1999). Full professor, historian and art critic, he graduated in Historical and Philosophical Sciences from the Faculty of Arts of the University of Lisbon in 1946. In the same year, he began teaching as an assistant professor. Between 1954 and 1958, he taught General Art History and Archaeology at the School of Fine Arts in Porto. In 1956, he defended his doctoral thesis, "The Expansion of Burgundian Architecture and Cistercian Monasteries in Portugal." In 1958, he returned to Lisbon to teach at the Lisbon School of Fine Arts (ESBAL). After the Revolution of 25 April 1974, he was appointed interim director of ESBAL because he was the senior professor at the time.

18 A private document without an archive reference number, held in the Pimentel family's private archive at the Casa dos Ciprestes in Sintra, Portugal. All the translations in English were done by the author.

Writing to Communicate: the Two Reports

The first report that Pimentel sent to the Foundation refers to the first quarter of his scholarship (from 3 December 1959 to 3 March 1960). The cover features a cut-out image of the map of Bologna with churches, either under construction or already built, marked on it. The report is structured into chapters, the first of which – at Mendonça's explicit request – describes the establishment and functioning of the Study and Information Centre for Sacred Art. It outlines its areas of interests and structure. It explains that in order to bridge the gap between artists and the Church and to try to find a suitable language for newly built churches, a conference will be organised, the result of which will be the creation of the Study Centre, whose activities will include the publication of a magazine called *Chiesa e quartiere*. He also mentions the announcement of a competition for the design of a church, S. Vincenzo dei Paoli, in Bologna, in which about 40 designers are participating. He reports on the Study Centre's ability to forge relationships that went beyond the borders of the city of Bologna, such as the links it had with the diocese of Milan, the Pontifical Commission for Sacred Art, and the Société S. Luc in Switzerland, the magazine *Art Sacré*. He also reports on the collaboration with the technical section of the New Churches Office.¹⁹

Pimentel notes that the second task of the New Churches Office was to identify land for future churches and to provide temporary solutions that could be implemented to foster the development of local communities. In fact, the technical section set to work on a "minimal church" project, to be built with prefabricated elements, without betraying the Office's desire to design a church with a "contemporary character". Trebbi writes: "We tried to create very simple, economical, essential prefabricated churches. Simple churches, but not poor churches. Because there may be poverty in the use of materials, but not poverty in their physical and formal features."²⁰

What Pimentel describes in his report is, in fact, a planning activity that began as early as 1957, as Claudia Manenti points out, with the drafting of the first Parish Resizing Plan for the suburbs of Bologna, which later took the name "Plan-programme for the city of Bologna". In this plan, the city of Bologna was

19 From 23 to 25 September 1955, a National Congress of Sacred Architecture was held alongside a large exhibition, organized in collaboration with Giorgio Trebbi and structured into three sections: architecture, vestments, and goldsmithing. Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, Richard Neutra, Eero Saarinen, and Otto Bartning participated in the congress. From Portugal, Joaquim Correia and António Duarte participated as congressmen and assistants, along with painter António Lino, a member of the MRAR, who was responsible for translating Cardinal Lercaro's opening speech. The exhibition had a modular structure, was 80 metres long, and illustrated the results of the work of the architects who collaborated with the New Churches Office. The Plan for New Churches in Paris was also presented in Via Zamboni, together with those of the dioceses of Milan, Rome, and Munich. The National Congress of Sacred Architecture will result in the foundation of the "Centre for Studies and Information on Sacred Architecture," integrated within the "Diocesan Office for New Churches." The report of the Congress, with the full publication of the communications, conclusions and architecture presented in the exhibition, will be published in the book *Ten Years of Sacred Architecture in Italy* (1956).

20 Glauco Gresleri designed a temporary church with load-bearing walls made of interlocking concrete blocks, wooden ribs as roofing and cladding in Eternit, and windows in transparent plastic sheets. The lines are simple and the materials are displayed in their true form. The liturgical layout reflects Lercaro's experiments, even though the altar has not yet been placed at the centre of the assembly. However, the altar is not placed against the wall. At the beginning of the third New Churches Campaign in 1957, four prefabricated churches were built based on Gresleri's design and adapted on a case-by-case basis to meet the specific needs of each situation: St. Pius X, St. Vincent de Paul, Our Lady of Labour, and St. Joseph Cottolengo. Giorgio Trebbi, "Esperienze di architettura sacra a Bologna," *Chiesa e quartiere*, no. 4 (1957): 47.

divided into parish areas, with the identification of the most suitable areas for the construction of future churches.²¹

A commission was set up within the New Churches Office with the task of drawing up maps and analysing statistical data useful for the parish resizing of the area, which led to the drafting of the Parish Resizing Plan for the hills of Bologna. Diogo Lino Pimentel was involved in the drafting of this plan, as described in the second chapter dedicated to his internship.

A similar operation can be found in Lisbon around the same period. In his inauguration speech on 2 October 1955, Cardinal Cerejeira highlighted the lack of churches in Lisbon, a city that was experiencing an ever-increasing influx of people migrating from the countryside to the city. The inauguration of the church preceded the collection of results from the first 'survey of Sunday attendance in the Patriarchate of Lisbon, which served to validate this scenario.

On the two Sundays of 13 and 20 November and on Sunday 4 December 1955, the Secretariado de Estudos Paroquiais carried out a first major survey in the churches and chapels of the Patriarchate of Lisbon. The survey is coordinated by engineer and priest Manuel Falcão. It was conducted by a sociology working group formed within the walls of the Olivais Seminary.²² The groups were inspired by new pedagogical practices that sought to apply new tools for interpreting reality through group dynamics, leaving aside the classic rules of study groups and associations.²³

The surveys were international in nature, although they did not reach the levels and complexity of those carried out in Marseille several years earlier. The preparatory work for the survey was remarkably rigorous and methodical. Initially, a geographical map of the patriarchate was drawn up, with the ecclesiastical and administrative boundaries superimposed, which did not always coincide. Over time, the administrative boundaries changed due to problems associated with politics and municipal administration, but the parish boundaries were not updated. In 1957, two years after the survey was carried out, the first decisive steps were taken towards the design of the "Project for the Parish Division of the City of Lisbon", which led to the publication, in 1959, of the decree for the "Parish Remodelling of the City of Lisbon".²⁴ As Marques says, this operation reflects an integrated policy that responds to two complementary axes: Urban Planning - Architecture; State - Church. Architecture, and above all the modernity of architectural language, is identified as a possible and polarising factor

²¹ Claudia Manenti, *La campagna Nuove Chiese del cardinale Lercaro* (Bologna: Edizioni Minerva, 2023), 79–80.

²² The group consisted of Manuel Falcão (mentor), António Carrilho Ribeiro, Fernando Micael Pereira, Mário Bacalhau from Aveiro, Júlio Tropa from Faro and António Aparício from Beja.

²³ Artur Lemos, "Anos 50: abertura e esperança," in *Por caminhos não andados: Seminário dos Olivais 1945–1968* (Mafra: Multinova, 2007), 47.

²⁴ With Law No. 621 of 23 June 1916, civil parishes were replaced by districts. This established the difference between civil territorial division (district) and ecclesiastical division (parish), a process already initiated by liberal politics in the 19th century. The establishment of new districts did not correspond to the creation of as many new parishes, a sign of decline and stagnant religious life in the most progressive areas, as Falcão states, which required a realignment between the religious and administrative divisions. Manuel Falcão, "Sondagem à assistência à missa dominical no Patriarcado de Lisboa," 1955, 71.

in attracting the faithful. The 'novelty' effect of the new churches could be used as a tool for evangelisation. Pimentel's experience at the Study Centre and the New Churches Office has led to a new awareness, as evidenced in his words: an understanding of the importance of designing sacred buildings in relation to sociological and urban planning issues.

The report opens with a call for urgent action: to revitalise Portugal's sacred architectural heritage, as, he argues, most of today's churches are not an adequate evolution of Romanesque or Gothic cathedrals or chapels. Criticism of contemporary sacred architecture, often expressed in a superficial way, he says, focuses on a common trend that can be summarised as a kind of nostalgia accompanied by a sense of disappointment. By "religiousness", he writes, he means a concept that encompasses not only the cultural sphere, but also the spiritual experience intrinsic to human existence, manifesting itself with greater intensity in certain historical contexts. In order to address this degree of exceptionality and transform sacred architecture into an expression of the community, it is essential to recognise the existence of a disease and understand the need for appropriate treatment.

Architecture is therefore defined as a discipline that concerns society as a whole. Its presence and influence are decisive in the urban context and, consequently, in human life. It is necessary, he says, to identify current issues relating to city management, with particular reference to urban growth driven by demographic expansion from rural areas. Pimentel defines the church as the vital and beating heart of the city, a symbolic place that expresses the culture, religiosity and living environment of a specific historical era. This aspect is not related to the concept of style, but rather to respect for a shared consensus within the community. He argues that architecture is not intrinsically valid but acquires value only insofar as it is able to interact with our existence and respond to stimuli or affirmations of values that define us.

The relationship with the surrounding agglomeration is the first fundamental step in starting the construction of a new church, he argues. This is a concept he learned in Bologna from the teachings of Lercaro himself. Urban planning, as a design discipline, is the means by which it is possible to promote and express the harmony of social relations that characterise the society of his time. In an urban context characterised by disorganisation and disintegration, in which the very concept of the city is rejected, the emergence of such relational harmony is impossible.

He goes on to emphasise the importance and benefits of applying sociological methodologies, which should not be limited to the mere quantification of social phenomena, but should integrate this analysis with critical reflection and

transform data into meaningful information.²⁵ This approach has made it possible to understand the complex dynamics underlying religious phenomena and to identify unexpected relationships between people, the community and the urban context, offering ideas for the formulation of strategies for intervention and enhancement of the role of religion in society.

Religious urban planning, he writes, is a discipline that aims to create a formal unity in the city, based on the spiritual and civil unity of the community. In certain circumstances, this formal appearance can seem bleak and uniform, serving as a symptom of a possible inauthentic spiritual unity or a pathological condition. Therefore, in such circumstances, he writes, urban planning cannot intervene unless a deeper and more complex problem is resolved. The concept expressed by Pimentel refers specifically to the city of Lisbon, where an attempt was made to align the city's administrative subdivision with the territory of the parishes. The Church was therefore entrusted with the task of integrating the new urban population, dealing with social, moral and religious disorientation, and thinking about a more personal Christian religion.²⁶

The second report, covering the quarter from 3 March 1960 to 3 June 1960, describes a type of work completely different from that of the previous quarter, as Pimentel himself pointed out. The religious urban planning project he was conducting was suspended because it was to be integrated into the urban development plan for the hilly area. However, the interruption allowed him to carry out his professional activity at the architecture studios, working on two church projects, one by Gresleri, a small rural church in Fiesole, near Florence. He reports that Gresleri took him to visit church construction sites, such as the project for the parish church of the Beata Vergine Immacolata, also located in Bologna. The experience, he says, helped to consolidate his awareness of the issues involved in the design and construction of an ecclesiastical space. It also provided technical training which, according to his statements, contributed to his professional enrichment. He writes words of appreciation for the design methodology adopted by Gresleri and for having studied the various solutions adopted for temporary churches, whose value is considerable not only from an architectural but also from a pastoral point of view. He also had the opportunity to gain experience with architect Trebbi, director of the Technical Office for New Churches, highlighting the methodological differences with respect to the project for St. Pius X in Bologna and emphasising the diversity of approaches adopted by the two professionals.

25 This is clearly a reference to the sociological experiments carried out in Lisbon by Father Falcão. The Portuguese Church reacted to the challenge launched by Pope Pius XII in 1952, which led to increased interest in sociology, a discipline that the regime did not approve of. Despite his undisguised complicity with Salazar, Cardinal Cerejeira encouraged and supported the sociological training of many priests abroad, authorised the presence of Portuguese representatives at international meetings on religious sociology from 1956 onwards, and was the driving force behind the creation of the Secretariat for Religious Information (SIR) by the episcopate in January 1959.

Adelino Gomes, "Sociologia, problemas e práticas: A JUC, o jornal encontros e os primeiros inquéritos à juventude universitária," *A JUC*, no. 49 (2005): 101.

26 Manuel Falcão, "Sondagem à assistência à missa dominical no Patriarcado de Lisboa," 73.

Writing to Tell the Story: Letters from and to Lisbon

This official, documented account is accompanied by a more personal, parallel account of his experience of travelling and staying in the city of Bologna. A Bologna that appears in all its modernity to the eyes of a young Portuguese man.²⁷ Pimentel's stay in Bologna gave rise to a lasting friendship with the Gresleri family, in particular with Glauco, with whom he regularly exchanged letters containing accounts of his private and professional life and topics of common interest. These letters are often accompanied by Christmas cards, images of architecture, photographs of children and postcards of places visited. The story breaks off around the 1970s, but it is assumed that, after the revolution of 1974, other means of communication such as the telephone took over and that the friendship continued.²⁸

Every narrative form has its own rules, dimension and intensity of language. Communicating to inform measures, adapts and directs. Writing to tell a story opens up, liberates and ignores judgements. Communication moves on the basis of formality, while writing sees informality as the only way forward. This exchange of letters allows us to reflect, from a methodological point of view, on the relationship with writing and on the ability to construct, through it, a physical and mental space in which to put one's inner self back in order. Those who choose to write, in this case engaging in a long-distance exchange, also choose, as Scrivano says, how to use their time, how to spend time that could have been used differently. Therefore, in every type of writing, someone needs to decide to sit down and use their hands, their eyes, their consciousness, their imagination, and their body.²⁹

Pimentel's openness towards Glauco Gresleri is fully evident in words that reveal an attitude of friendship, support and collaboration. His gestures show a form of respect and recognition of Glauco Gresleri as a fixed point and guide, a final goal to which Pimentel aspires and a model from which to draw on for

27 This story came to light when it became possible to access Pimentel's private archive, managed by his son Martinho Pimentel. The Casa dos Ciprestes, where the Pimentel archive is kept, is a project by architect Raul Lino, Diogo Pimentel's grandfather.

28 The two private archives, that of Diogo Lino Pimentel in Sintra and that of Glauco Gresleri in Bologna, contain the following handwritten (Pimentel writes by hand) and typewritten (Gresleri prefers this form of correspondence) letters: the letters dated 3 June 1961; 14–22 November 1962; 18 February 1962; 20 January 1964; 23 May 1964; 8 July 1964; 27 November 1964.

From Glauco Gresleri: 14 September 1960; 7 December 1960; 8 March 1961; 8 April 1961; 27 April 1961; 27 May 1961; 8 August 1961; 7 November 1961; 29 October 1962; 2 June 1964; 25 July 1964; 25 May 1965; 15 December 1965; 21 May 1966; 19 August 1968; 3 January 1969.

Giuliano Gresleri also wrote two letters: on 4 October 1960 and 8 September 1960. We have a letter from Giorgio Trebbi dated 27 September 1966.

Unless otherwise stated, the letters cited in Glauco Gresleri's text come from the private archive of Diogo Pimentel, which is located in Sintra (Portugal) at the Casa dos Ciprestes and is managed by his son Martinho Pimentel.

The letters do not have an archival reference number. Diogo Pimentel's letters, on the other hand, come from the archive of the architect Glauco Gresleri and are also not provided with an archive reference number. All will be identified exclusively by the date to which the letter refers. This text forms part of the promotional and educational activities of the association Glauco Gresleri e i Maestri dell'Architettura A.P.S., directed by Lorenzo Gresleri.

29 Fabrizio Scrivano, *Diario e narrazione* (Macerata: Quolibet, 2014), 42.

future experiences in Lisbon.³⁰In this case, the letters serve the same function as a diary would, but with the only difference being that, however strong and confidential the bond of friendship between Pimentel and Gresleri may be, the writer always maintains a minimum of vigilance over every confession.³¹The letters are the membrane that regulates the passage and transmission between the inside and the outside, between the self-reflected image and the public image, and the mode of transmission of experience is important because it is through this that the image of the person is reconstructed.

This is why Pimentel's letters have a clear, repetitive structure, as if to guarantee not only the transmissibility of the facts recounted, but also the authenticity and reliability of the narrator. In fact, he adopts a meticulous approach to writing, structuring information systematically and using diagrams and drawings to illustrate his reflections graphically. The letters seem to follow a pattern that has its roots in the need to inform the recipient about shared issues.

Letters, like diaries, are a way of recording the growth and development of personality in relation to the world. Writing allows us to constantly redirect our thoughts and judgements about the world, because, as Scrivano continues, a story is never just a recount of a fact but a representation of the awareness of that fact. In Pimentel's letters, time is broken down, both horizontally, i.e. the periodisation of events broken down into time blocks in relation to which it is possible to identify a *before* and *after*. However, we find a decomposition that Portelli defines as vertical, which we could borrow in our case in two modes of relationship with events: the collective mode (the activities of groups such as the MRAR, the Study Centre, whose actions transcend those of the community in general) and the personal mode (the individual and family sphere - work, marriages, births, etc.).

The words we find in every letter under the heading "CH and Q" fall into the collective mode. As in the letter of 18 February 1962, where he expresses his deep

30 On his return from Bologna in 1961, he joined the SNIP group with Father João de Almeida and João Trindade, under the direction of Father Manuel Falcão. Both of them can be found in the meetings of the clandestine group C43. The "C43" group, created in 1965, secretly brought together priests and lay people who held leadership positions in various ecclesial organisations until 1968. The group was formed, according to Lopes, to find solutions to the problems that the Catholic organisations in which they worked were facing at the time, and their relationship with the religious authorities and society was discussed with the openness appropriate to the circumstances. Joana Lopes, *Entre as brumas da memória: Os católicos portugueses e a ditadura* (Porto: Ámbar, 2007), 129–31. In 1962, Diogo Lino Pimentel was responsible for the slides on contemporary sacred architecture for the exhibition "Sacred Art (architecture, painting, sculpture, goldsmithing and vestments)" held at the Faculty of Medicine in February, organised by MRAR/JUC-ESBAL. On 22 January 1963, at the 7th general assembly of the MRAR, Diogo Lino Pimentel was appointed secretary, Sebastião Formosinho Sanchez as president, and Erich Corsépius as accountant. The president of the General Assembly was Nuno Teotónio Pereira. He held this position until 1965, when the next elections were held. In 1965, at the International Congress held in Assisi on 22–24 April, Diogo Lino Pimentel participated with Father João de Almeida with a conference entitled "Conditions for the integration of buildings into the urban social space" and, again with João de Almeida, another communication entitled "Programme for the construction of new churches." The themes had changed, with urban space and social importance seeming to be the result of the Bologna experience. On 26 October 1966, at the Extraordinary Assembly of the MRAR, we find Diogo Lino Pimentel as secretary, together with Nuno Portas as president and Maria do Carmo Matos as accountant. On 6 August 1969, we have the letter of "freezing" of the MRAR, signed by Nuno Portas, Diogo Lino Pimentel, Maria do Carmo Matos, and Father Avelino Rodrigues. He was considered one of the most important voices of the Movement, so much so that he was interviewed in 1961 by the daily newspaper *Novidades* in a series dedicated to the theme "Towards Sacred Art." On 22 January 1963, he was elected secretary of the MRAR, a position he also held in the next and last council, elected on 26 October 1966. On 6 August 1969, he was among the signatories of the letter suspending the Movement.

31 Scrivano, *Diario e narrazione*, 24.

admiration for the Bologna group. It is at this point that he shows gratitude for having been described in an article as a "highly qualified technician" and says, always striving to do so in Italian, "I went to Bologna to learn, to see you at work and to benefit from your experience. [...] You are really too nice, but you should tell the truth, something like: He was a young, inexperienced Portuguese architect who came specially from Lisbon to see how parish downsizing is done".³²

And, still following the rhythm of a collective vertical time, he provides information on the new structure of the Secretariado das Novas Igrejas in Lisbon, which he will be part of upon his return from Bologna. He explains that, like the New Churches Office, it was divided into several sections, including management, headed by Father Manuel Falcão; Exhibitions and Propaganda, under the guidance of Almeida; Administration, entrusted to Trindade; the Technical Section, coordinated by him; and the Restoration Section, led by Father Almeida and the architect.³³

To emphasise the emotional and personal dimension, his letters always include a 'T' for Tiago, his son, where he recounts his progress and the joy his birth brought to the family. Above all, however, there is always a full awareness that architecture is part of life, but does not replace it, and this is evident when he writes to Glauco on 18 February 1962, after learning of the future birth of their son.³⁴

In this mode of communication, he can let himself go and show his reactions without the need for the filters of formality. In fact, we read an intense emotional reaction after learning news that Gresleri had written to him in a letter dated 29 October 1962, which referred to the situation of instability that prevailed in the New Churches Office.³⁵

In the letter, Glauco Gresleri announced a crisis in the magazine *Chiesa e Quartiere*, whose editorial staff now consisted of only three people, himself, Giorgio Trebbi and Giuliano, because, he wrote, "Lullini has become very detached and acts distracted, while Rubini works miracles for money". He then went on to write that the "New Churches Office is dead, or rather, it is in hospital". Continuing with personal news and birth announcements, he analysed the professional environment in Bologna, which was becoming increasingly 'difficult – the communists are gradually taking over all the positions of power – the

32 See footnote 28.

33 The novelty compared to the Bologna model is this last section, because it is dedicated to the design and management of restoration works, with particular attention to rural parishes that do not have the necessary resources to pay an architect, and which focuses on small projects.

34 "It is a thousand times more wonderful to wait for my son than to see a church built by us grow," and that is precisely why "I will be much more grateful to God for your son than for the inauguration of the B.V.I., and I was eagerly awaiting this news from the B.V.I.!" We have chosen to transcribe the excerpts from the letters as they were written, with Pimentel attempting to write in Italian.

35 "Glauco, is what you told me true? But how? Why? And then? And the cardinal is letting it happen? Can you just throw away what has taken seven years of honest, conscientious, effective, apostolic effort and work? But what does the cardinal think? Was the new director appointed by him? If I had the money, you would be in Bologna by now to do, I don't know what, at least to shout that you can't give up positions that have already borne fruit, that have served as an example to us and who knows how many others. Your work has been a decisive example and incentive for us. But more than anything else, it is your own church that will be prejudiced."

municipality is now in the hands of the “strong communists”, young people who have arrived in Rome technically and politically very strong, and have practically eradicated Dozza and his old guard. Their action throughout the region is to acquire large agricultural properties for communist cooperatives, adapt zoning plans to their advantage, build and sell with enormous ‘profits’. In ten years, the whole of Emilia will be theirs economically. And they are acting within the law!”³⁶

Pimentel’s words suggest that the Bologna model seems to be an example constantly used as a tool of comparison for any topic related to the Church and its pastoral and artistic-architectural activities.³⁷ He wonders whether there are viable solutions for saving the office, such as potential direct collaboration between the ‘Secretariado’ and the office itself. There is a clear determination to preserve this reference point, both for itself and for the entire community associated with the Secretariado Nuove Chiese.

This personal narrative of social events shows us that personal writing, diaries and letters can be mistakenly considered only expressions of the history of talking about oneself. It is the product of a commitment that does not concern only the individual. And it is not important whether the writer is aware of this or not; the most striking proof that every act of writing is part of a community and not of a single individual is its possibility of achieving.³⁸ These letters have no literary ambition; they do not seek to construct symbolic narratives. But the use of the first person, mistakenly considered an attribution to the self of the truth and responsibility of the narrative, should not be seen as a hedonistic placing of one’s self in space. The narration of the self has a much more complex and multifaceted nature and is related to the continuous reference to a changing everyday life. In life, it is normal to position the self in order to establish a relationship. As Scrivano continues, a relationship is established because it is right to talk about what one is convinced of or thinks, and because what one thinks and says can be substantiated by the example one represents.

Some methodological and behavioural doubts arise when talking about oneself is transferred to the public sphere, doubts that arise, for example, every time a historian reads accounts of the self in archives. Talking about oneself leaves traces, this is its purpose, and these traces can become elements of investigation, because someone reads them and interprets them. Finding these traces provides the opportunity to construct another narrative. Talking about oneself differs from another way of using the self, which is autobiography. In epistolary self-talk, one disregards and is not obliged to imply the narration of one’s own life, preferring the account of a single exceptional event to a structured narrative and chronological account of all events.

36 See footnote 28.

37 In fact, he writes, “In the early days, I used to say to our cardinal... in Bologna they do this and that... Cardinal Lercaro says or does this and that... the architects of Bologna have these and those powers... Even our salaries were compared to yours, the one that has now been taken away from you, which I consider unfair and deeply wrong (not to say dishonest!).”

38 Scrivano, *Diario e narrazione*, 18.

This consideration can be verified, for example, when, again in the letter quoted above, in the third point, Pimentel writes to Glauco Gresleri about the competition for the Church of the Sacred Heart in Lisbon. He refers to an autobiographical episode, because he too is participating in it, but he conveys a cultural sentiment that can be seen in his “the best won” and tells him that because the project is so good, a smear campaign is being waged against him: “(it’s always like this)”³⁹.

His account shows that human relations are the basis for a desire to build a collective dialogue in which architecture is a service and not a solipsistic, self-referential gesture. This can be seen, for example, when, in relation to the MRAR, he expresses satisfaction at having managed to organise monthly meetings, which were attended on average by around 30-40 people, including architects, painters, sculptors and other professionals, as well as priests interested in these issues. This collective discussion is a good thing, he says, because: “the authors have other professionals with whom to discuss their work; this exchange of opinions benefits the works presented; little by little, common criteria are defined; and above all, one learns to criticise and be criticised in an atmosphere of frank charity, one learns to dialogue with others fraternally with the sole aim of better serving the Church”.⁴⁰

Letters, as a narrative form, depict the daily evolution of life, recounting the moment in the heat of the moment, rendering events intact, not yet modified by memory or altered by reflection. This integrity and immediacy is also due to the reduction between the time of the action and the time of writing. Time passes, and the Italian language seems to elude him more and more. He writes this with regret in a letter dated 20 January 1964: “It is getting worse and worse. However, I have confidence in your ability to decipher it. This growing difficulty is the main reason why it takes me so long to write a short and poor letter.”⁴¹ He recounts his attempts to return to Bologna to visit the Gresleri family, but that’s not all: “You can believe that Belinda (his wife, ed.) and I are eager to return to you all and to Bologna. When will that be? We may be a little sentimental in this regard, but we have very good and very strong reasons to be so, don’t you agree?”⁴²

39 Sixty-six architects (individuals and groups) took part in the competition, of which only 14 reached the final selection. First place was awarded to Nuno Teotónio Pereira and Nuno Portas, while he came fifth with António Freitas Leal. He informs him of the result with great satisfaction, considering the complexity of the project, the limitations of the site and the scope of the programme. In the first Boletim of the MRAR, in 1957, eight typewritten pages in A4 format, the opening of the public competition for the future Church of the Sagrado Coração de Jesus, to be built in Lisbon, was announced. The idea had emerged at a meeting of the MRAR on 13 April 1955. In order to prepare architects interested in participating in the competition, it was decided to organise a Course in Sacred Architecture, which would be held in early 1958. Nuno Teotónio Pereira, “Pequeno curso de arquitetura sacra,” *MRAR – Boletim*, 1st ser., no. 3 (December 1957).

It was held at the Casa de São Mamede between 2 and 5 January 1958, sponsored by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and attended by around 200 people, including architects, painters, sculptors, priests, students from the Higher Schools of Fine Arts and art critics. News of the success of this body and a detailed description of its work can be found in the fourth bulletin published in April 1958 by Diogo L. Pimentel. Diogo Lino Pimentel, “Curso de arquitetura sacra,” *MRAR – Boletim*, 1st ser., no. 4 (April 1958): 3–5.

40 See footnote 28.

41 See footnote 28.

42 See footnote 28.

The End

In the correspondence between Pimentel and Glauco Gresleri, there comes a point when the decline of the Bologna experience and the cultural ferment that had developed around Lercaro is recounted. This narrative is told through two different styles of writing. On the one hand, we have Pimentel reporting the facts to the Gulbenkian Foundation, updating it on developments in a story revolving around the publication of a special issue dedicated to Portuguese religious architecture. On the other hand, we have the heartfelt account of Glauco Gresleri, who communicates the facts privately in letters to Pimentel, emotionally involved in the story and a protagonist of the events.

Lercaro's work transcended borders, and his activities were not unrelated to the Gulbenkian Foundation, which is why Pimentel was able to maintain a privileged relationship with them whenever issues related to Bologna and the cultural ferment surrounding the Cardinal arose. In a letter dated 13 December 1966, addressed to Dr Azeredo Perdigão, chairman of the board of directors of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Pimentel acts as spokesperson for a memorandum from the Movement for the Renewal of Religious Art (MRAR), in which a request for funding is made, and it is clear that the suggestion comes directly from Cardinal Lercaro. The memorandum accompanying the letter refers to the Centre for Studies and Information on Sacred Architecture as a model of reference. The document highlights the quality of the magazine, which Pimentel describes as probably the most interesting on these issues in the international arena, characterised by a "great openness of horizons, both in more specifically religious themes and in aspects of the study of society and contemporary art".⁴³ It also highlights the unsustainable disproportion between the strong interest of the Portuguese group headed by the MRAR, which was heterogeneous in terms of education and ideologies on religious issues, and their limited access to information and works from abroad. The request to the Foundation sought to establish a more solid basis for collaboration between MRAR, active in Portugal for thirteen years, and the Bologna Study Centre through its *Chiesa e Quartiere* organisation. The collaboration, as stated in the document, was to consist of:

(1) collecting material for a monographic issue of *Chiesa e Quartiere* on the most recent and representative achievements in the fields of urban planning, architecture and art with religious purposes;

(2) the establishment of a small Portuguese editorial team, which, "would reinforce the role of correspondent that, despite the total absence of resources, architect Diogo Lino Pimentel and Reverend Father João de Almeida, current members of the MRAR, have been performing for some years".⁴⁴

The document is signed by the Movement's leadership, including Nuno Portas alongside Pimentel. This request denotes, on the one hand, a real ferment

43 Archives of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon (ACGF) N.R. 14867 PT FCG:SBA - S001/04/02 - P033.

44 (ACGF) N.R. 14867 PT FCG:SBA - S001/04/02 - P033.

surrounding studies and reflections on sacred art and architecture and, on the other, underlines a need for sharing, denied by a Portuguese political situation that limited, if not prevented, any form of internationalisation. It was accompanied by a preliminary budget and a proposal for a monographic notebook for the magazine *Chiesa e Quartiere*.⁴⁵

The Gulbenkian Foundation responded with a letter dated 12 April 1967, emphasising in one passage that the request deserved every consideration, not only because it came from the MRAR, with which they had already had the opportunity to collaborate, but above all because it was supported by Cardinal Lercaro.⁴⁶ The request was therefore approved and publication was scheduled for October-December 1967. Diogo Pimentel will be the editor in charge and the person who will liaise with Bologna.⁴⁷

In the Gulbenkian archives, we find another document that helps us understand how this relationship between Lisbon and Bologna grew stronger and richer. The MRAR announced in a letter to its members (24 May 1968) that architect Glauco Gresleri, a member of the Centre for the Study of Sacred Architecture in Bologna, would give a lecture illustrated with slides on the most recent works of sacred architecture built in Bologna, including projects by Le Corbusier and Alvar Aalto.

Diogo Pimentel confirmed to the Foundation that Glauco Gresleri would arrive on 1 June and stay until 6 June, with the lecture scheduled for 5 June. However, in subsequent communication, Pimentel informs the Gulbenkian that Gresleri will not be able to come to Lisbon due to the serious illness of a family member and postpones the event to a date to be determined. However, he reassures the Foundation that this inconvenience will not affect the plans for the publication of the monographic issue. However, a document dated 14 May 1968, also addressed to the Foundation by Pimentel, reveals that the magazine *Chiesa e Quartiere* had been suspended by the ecclesiastical authorities of the diocese of Bologna following the publication of the monographic issue dedicated to Latin America. He also reports that this was the culmination of a long crisis that had worsened over the last year, due, according to Pimentel, to a system of censorship that had never been adopted before, on a magazine that was published under the protection of Cardinal Lercaro, who had meanwhile been asked to resign as Archbishop of Bologna. The magazine will be deprived of the diocese's funding, which is essential for its survival. All the material collected was supposed to be published by the Portuguese magazine *Arquitectura*. But in reality,

45 The structure included three articles corresponding to the three key issues of the liturgical debate and its relationship with the urban environment. The second referred to the architectural language of religious buildings and their furnishings. The third referred to the criteria for the restoration and adaptation of ancient churches to contemporary functional, pastoral and liturgical needs. A list of projects divided by architect was also attached.

46 He added, "The topic is of interest, and the publication that is planned, in such a prestigious magazine with such a large audience and circulation, offers the best opportunity for high-level dissemination of the most valuable achievements in contemporary religious art in our region."

47 He scheduled his first meeting to coincide with the SIAC conference in Bologna from 15 to 17 September, which Pimentel attended. In addition to participating in the congress, as he himself reports, he had the opportunity to meet the editors of the magazine, with whom he agreed on a deadline of 2 January 1968 for submitting material, and that the issue was scheduled for release in March 1968.

it will only be published in issue no. 26 of the Spanish magazine ARA – arte religiosa atual in 1970. Lercaro will be removed from the diocese, a decision that has given rise to considerable difficulties and instability that is beyond control and predictability.

In his letters to Diogo, Glauco Gresleri recounts the same events in a style that stands out for the author's subjective, emotional and politically engaged point of view, in stark contrast to the impartiality and formality typical of official correspondence. The letter of 19 August 1968, for example, is a direct and unfiltered account of the complex situation, characterised by an atmosphere of censorship, that prevailed within the magazine.

However, the most complex issue, says Glauco Gresleri, concerned the fact that Lercaro himself, previously a friend and confidant and aligned with his ideas, fearing that his work in the diocese might be subject to criticism or investigation, exercised particularly strict control over *Chiesa e Quartiere* in order to prevent his detractors and accusers from drawing inspiration from his own voice. Try to give a brief summary of the accusations made against Lercaro: at the pastoral level, it is observed that his actions caused disorientation among the community of the faithful, distancing them from religious practice. At the political level, his opposition to war and hunger provoked negative reactions from the ruling elites. At the civic level, his attempt to engage in dialogue with communist forces compromised the unity of the Catholic community in Bologna. At the administrative level, the actions of the new churches led the diocese to the brink of bankruptcy. The outgoing archbishop was replaced by a new archbishop, described as a shy and insecure individual. His conduct is characterised by a lack of decision-making and an attempt to cover up initiatives, as well as a tendency to plan in such a way as to minimise expenditure and maximise savings. The main problem persists, however, and is not economic but political in nature. The latest issue of the publication was therefore censored, an action taken by Lercaro. The issue, already packaged and ready for distribution, was blocked because of the content of Pedretti's article on the investigation into the parishes of Bologna. This action finds its only justification, he writes, in the work of an individual overwhelmed by fear, who interpreted the published data as an imminent threat. This episode marked the beginning of preventive censorship.

He continues with a reflection on the potential market segment in which the magazine could fit, stating that their proposal focuses on covering a specific sector, namely that relating to the interaction between people, communities and urban and architectural space, an area that currently remains uncovered in the publishing landscape. For example, the liturgical and sacred component is covered in depth by the magazine *Ars Sacre*, while the urban planning component is covered by *Urbanistica*, and so on. Therefore, it is essential that *Chiesa e Quartiere* continues along the path it has outlined, even though such positions may be interpreted as revolutionary and pro-communist. And then the idea occurs to him:

Let's form a small committee without so many "scapegoats", a kind of war committee [...] And then *Chiesa e Quartiere* will become ours, belonging to a few, without financial aid and, let's face it, without that official air of being the Diocese's darling, which for many reasons was fine.⁴⁸

But then he bitterly and lucidly says:

You see, dear Diogo, what a mess we're in. In the latter case, for example, we could find a small publishing house that would support us [...] But published by a small group of desperate people, what would it be more than *Chiesa e Quartiere*. For example, the issue on Portugal could still come out with the special help of Gulbenkian, or else the Foundation would most likely say, Ah, no, if the Holy Church is no longer involved, we don't want to know about it?⁴⁹

Finally, in a letter dated 3 January 1969, Glauco Gresleri informs Pimentel that he and Trebbi are resigning from the New Churches Office and that *Chiesa e Quartiere* magazine is closing down. It is a letter full of bitterness, taking stock of a time when much work was done but little was achieved due, he says, to the resistance of the curial sub-government and the diocese to the liturgical and architectural renewal movement supported by Lercaro. There were few exceptions of success (B.VI, S.PIÒ X, S. Eugenio, the crypt of St. Peter's). So if at the top there was the Cardinal who thought in a certain way, and we were the potential technical instruments for this work of renewal, the "base" operated with indifference, detachment, agnosticism, and too often, with contrary and reactionary intentions. The entire history of the New Churches Office, especially after your departure, was nothing but a succession of ups and downs, that is, of returns to power of Lercaro's word and our instruments, and of the subsequent abuses of power by the Curia's reaction.

He goes on to describe the arrival of the new bishop, Poma, which took place at a time when the diocese of Bologna was experiencing an atmosphere particularly imbued with the spirit of the Council, thanks above all to the significant presence of Dossetti in the role of Provicar. According to Gresleri, initially, work of considerable post-conciliar quality had been carried out, establishing six commissions for the implementation of the council at the diocesan level, and numerous studies had been conducted on various current issues. The results of these studies were translated into extensive documentation, which provided an opportunity to reach decisions and conclusions of great importance, including the distribution of clergy in the diocese, the distribution of probends and revenues, the clergy, catechesis and dynamic pastoral care, as well as the modification of the code of canon law. This work promoted dialogue between lay people and priests, under the supervision of Dossetti.

However, Gresleri continues, with the arrival of the new cardinal, there was a significant change, with increasing attention to the financial aspects of the

48 See footnote 28.

49 See footnote 28.

diocese and less inclination towards discussion and dialogue. Lercaro was forced to retire, providing a public version that did not correspond to reality, as reported by L'Osservatore Romano, citing health problems as justification. The Pontiff, in a state of weakness, undertook an initiative to rehabilitate Lercaro, sending him on a trip to America.

However, he accompanied him himself, relegating Lercaro to a corner and forbidding him any interaction with others. Poma abolished the monthly Congress, the body through which important decisions regarding new churches were made under Lercaro. The Office organised fortnightly meetings, which Poma did not always attend and to which not all technicians were admitted. He reported that many meetings were restricted exclusively to priests. Poma also re-established the Diocesan Administrative Council as the decision-making body for all matters relating to the financial management of the new churches. According to Glesleri, the Diocese has taken a step backwards fifty years. The most complex administrative procedures, relating to projects by Aalto, Kenzo Tange and S. Vincenzo de Paoli, are deliberately delayed, while the less problematic ones, such as those relating to Bettazzi, benefit from faster funding.

The magazine *Chiesa e Quartiere* has also undergone a transformation following the death of Lercaro, who guaranteed its survival. All documentation would have to be screened by a preventive censor. Censorship says that "it should protect three levels:

the orthodoxy of the content, compliance with the programmes of the U.N.CH., and security against the danger of new impetuous surges by Lercaro, as happened in the penultimate issue where he himself had part of the already printed text removed for fear of possible speculation by his detractors [...] but we can no longer continue the magazine, even if censorship were not implemented. Because if the magazine is published in line with *our thinking* (architecture, pastoral care, freedom, culture, poverty, etc.), the misunderstanding may arise that this thinking is the same as that of the Diocese, under whose aegis the magazine is published, which is not true!⁵⁰

This shift towards a conclusion can also be seen on the other side, in Lisbon. It can be read in the report drafted by Pimentel on 23 June 1969, in collaboration with architect António Flores Ribeiro, head of the small projects office, and Mr Luís Gomes Ribeiro, where a tone of assessment and closure emerges. This text highlights that SNIP had become a highly bureaucratic body, forced to operate in isolation and without the necessary support, as well as without the necessary publicity for its activities, almost as if it had to act in secret. They also point out the difficulties of the administrative service, which often has to deal with complex issues relating to property, rights, accounting records and contracts, with consequences for professional activities. The number of employees fell by half in the period between the start of operations and the following eight years.

⁵⁰ See footnote 28.

In view of these and other relevant factors, the proposed solution is to wind up the SNIP or, alternatively, to reorganise it, which would require a different level of involvement on the part of the Presbytery Council, accompanied by a series of changes at both the procedural and internal organisational levels. A parallel and concomitant epilogue, therefore, as the two cultural phenomena, given the dimensions they had assumed, come to an end within ten years.

Individual Memory as a Collective Narrative

The history of the epistolary and official documents of Diogo Pimentel and Glauco Gresleri has allowed us to reflect on the role and importance of individual narrative from a methodological point of view. One may wonder, in fact, how it is possible to generalise broader pictures from individual documents and how the biographical, personal and subjective levels relate to the social and collective picture. Perhaps one of the causes of this misunderstanding is that we often use expressions such as "life stories" to define the subjective, biographical picture, giving greater weight and relevance to the word 'lives' rather than to the word "stories".

Portelli writes on this subject:

the facts may be concrete and verifiable, but what we have at hand is not the experience, the lived reality, but rather their narrative, a verbal construction in which the narrator gives narrative form to their own life. The authenticity and immediacy of experience will always elude us; on the other hand, we possess an object that at least bears a formal relationship with the experience itself. After all, the story of life is also part of life.⁵¹

The text has given us the opportunity to understand that formalising a person's story helps us to reflect on the history of a society. The symmetry or balance between these two positions, the individual and society or culture, leads to the relationship between words and truth. This does not mean that everything the narrator says is necessarily true: what matters for every autobiographer is the coherence of the story and the narrative construction of the self. It is also worth remembering that no life story can be summarised entirely within general social frameworks, because no person can be summarised entirely within general social frameworks.

The narration of both individual and collective stories always brings us back to the realm of memory. But here too, complex dynamics arise. Halbwachs legitimises expressions such as "group memory" and "collective memory" in their scientific use but always emphasises that the act of remembering and the process of memory are always attributable to the individual. Like any human activity, memory is social and can be shared. Collective memory is not a spontaneous expression of experience, but a mediated formalisation. There is not

⁵¹ Alessandro Portelli, *Storie orali: racconto, immaginazione, dialogo* (Rome: Donzelli editore, 2017), 241.

only an *official* and *ideological* memory on the one hand, and an *authentic* and pure memory on the other, but a multiplicity of memories, all mediated on an ideological, cultural and narrative level.

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