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Histories of Postwar Architecture

n.16 2025
vol. VIII

In the Margins: Italy Portugal

edited by
Raffaella Maddaluno and Elisa Pegorin

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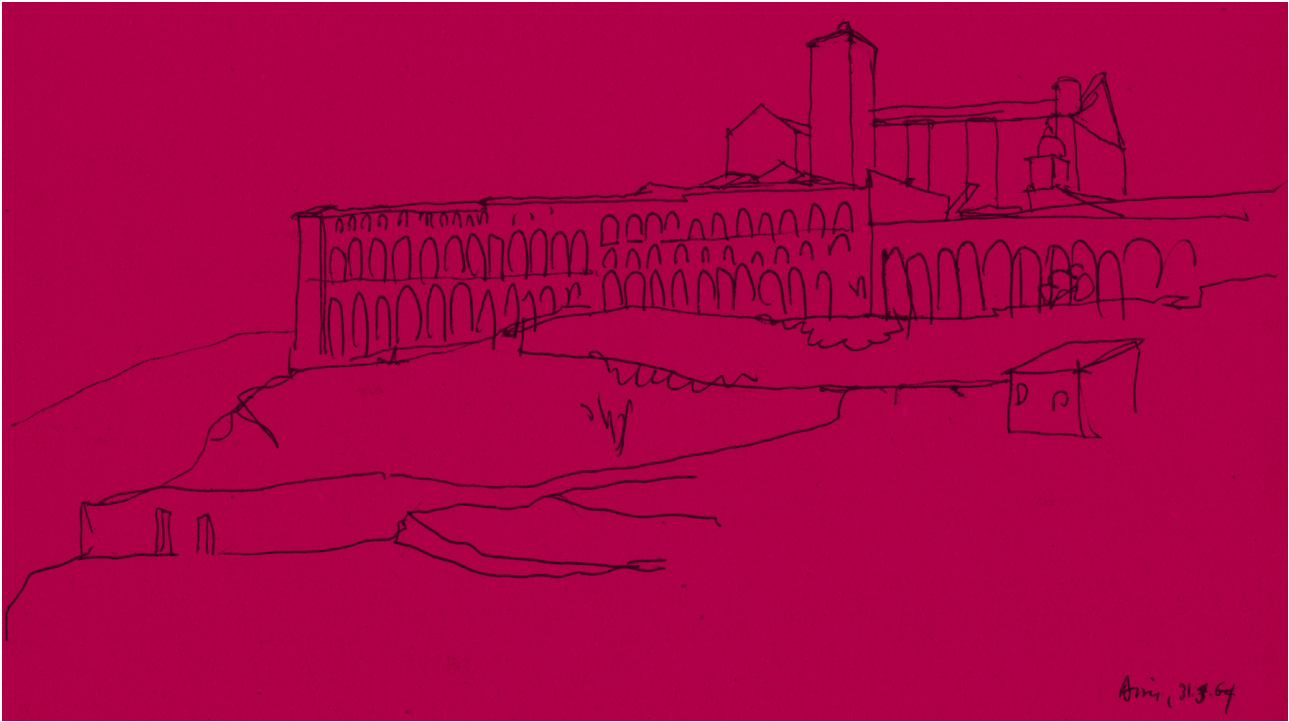


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vol. **VIII**

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Histories of Postwar Architecture

ISSN 2611-0075

<https://doi.org/10.60923/issn.2611-0075/v8-n16-2025>

"Histories of Post War Architecture" is a scientific journal recognized by ANVUR (Italian National Agency for Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes) for disciplinary area 10 (Antiquities, philology, literary studies, art history). Since 2018 it is rated "Classe A" Journal for disciplinary area 08 (Civil engineering and architecture). The Journal is indexed in the following databases and search engines: Scopus, ANCP, BASE, DOAJ, ERIH PLUS, Google Scholar, JournalTOCs, PLEIADI, ROAD, Worldcat.

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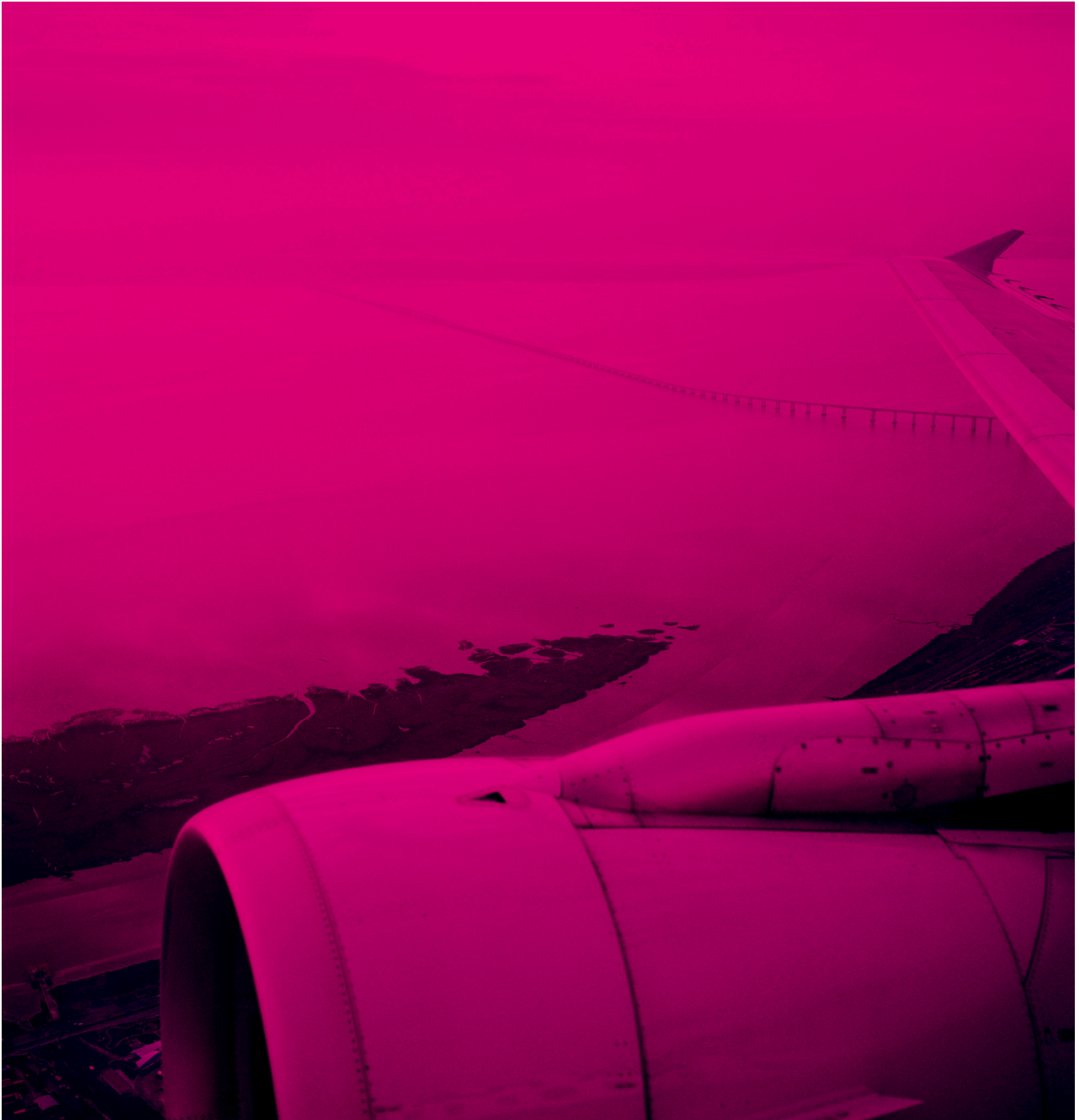
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Alexandre Alves Costa

Editorial

Is it Gardella you Want Me to Talk about?¹

I

Thank you, Paulo, for the airplane.²

I did not travel on it, even when you brilliantly illustrated my thoughts and reasons.

Your plane, in order to move, does not need to overcome the physical obstacles in front of it. It travels through the liquidity I feel in its metaphysical purity.

It doesn't transport me, it helps me. It takes me to Italy.

It moves me.

II

Warning

I like to share, impudently, my state of mind, jotting down notes that perhaps contain, to my shame, some autobiographical aspects.

At least I know, with Almada Negreiros, that since they are not scientific, they are not false either.

When it comes to Italy, my passion goes beyond lucidity, so I am grateful to them for helping me escape the mediocrity of political correctness.

But suddenly I caught a glimpse of La Capitana³ and realised that what distinguished her from Meloni was the colour, the modern tone and the fake smile.

Beware friends, for our city is in ruins, as are our wellbeing, our loves, joys and sorrows. Will we, will I, have the courage to continue, perhaps remembering the bitterness felt by our colleague Rutilio Ceccolini?⁴

It is true that today's political spectrum has, as its structural programmatic reference, the so-called social-political stability, a symbol of the necessary moderation and balance required of any politician.

Let me warn you that I am on the other side and that, at the moment, I strongly defend anti-fascist, creative and revolutionary instability.

1 Ignazio Gardella (Milan, 1905–99). He is a much-loved Italian colleague, responsible, with others, for renewing or overcoming the language of Modernism. The use of his name is metaphorical and in no way expresses an underestimation of his work.

2 Reference to a photo by Paulo Catrica (Lisbon, 1965) taken from the porthole of a plane in flight, which was used in the poster of the conference *À margem*.

3 Ines Donati, known as *La Capitana*, was a nationalist and fascist activist, among the rare women who took part in the March on Rome.

4 Author of the design for the monument to Ines Donati in San Severino Marche (1928).

Fig. 1

Picture by Paulo Catrica
(Série Terminal, 2007)

Cuando Calienta el Sol⁵

It is clear to me, and it won't be to others, that it is not interesting to establish some kind of structure of crossovers and negative or positive influences between Italian and Portuguese architecture. On the contrary, it is relatively easy to find these relationships and, I will say more, somewhat provocatively, it would even be possible to do so with the architecture of the island of Java.

It is interesting to feel that, when one wants to study, analyse or criticise a significant set of works, whether in an era, a landscape or a country, one looks for the political facts that can justify it, forgetting that memory, the always precarious circumstances, the infinite creativity of man, his enormous weaknesses and immense qualities, etc., are probably more relevant in the specific case of each work, at any given time.

But what are you asking me? To talk about Gardella, Aymonino, Libera, Távora, Alberti, Vitruvius, Diogo de Sagredo, Nuno Portas?

Perhaps of the master Diogo de Torralva, to whom King João III commissioned a temple in imitation of the one at Delphi, in order to transform Évora into a Roman City, and he, a good connoisseur of Antiquity, built an Aqueduct that was hidden, only to be discovered as an antiquity. After these operations, Évora seems even more rural and pastoral.

It does not seem possible that you want to remember Don Miguel da Silva, Bishop of Viseu and Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church, who died in Rome, the object of our young monarch's rancour.

Don Miguel invited the Italian architect Francesco da Cremona for various projects, including the Chapel/Lighthouse of St. Michael the Archangel in Porto, the first entirely Renaissance building in Portugal.

Perhaps you would like to remember our great humanist, Francisco de Holanda, who treated Michelangelo as an equal and who, in the report of the grant granted to him by the monarch, 'Da Fábrica que Falece à Cidade de Lisboa' (Of the works lacking in the city of Lisbon, editor's note) of 1571, illustrated with marvellous drawings, investigated what was in Rome and what was missing from our capital?

But do you want me to talk about Gardella?

No friend, we are not asking you for a reflection on architecture or architects. But rather on concepts, obviously starting with the works, but forget the works...

So, I will confidently leave the floor to the historians, let them enjoy themselves, because we base these erudite studies on our works or those of our

⁵ It refers to a popular Spanish language song released in 1961, and later interpreted by many singers, such as the American Connie Francis.

friends.

But in the end, what do I care about Italy?

I am interested in light, so clear and transparent that when we look at it we do not feel its external effects on the earth, but its very condition.

The present time is not bright, it is immersed in a layer of darkness from which it hopes to emerge to annihilate those who want to annihilate it.

Perhaps this is why our King João III honoured his bursaries in Italy, so extraordinarily rich in its diversity, even after Garibaldi.

Later, repentant, he set them on fire in an “autodafé” in Lisbon, tortured and condemned them by the Holy Inquisition.⁶

Certainly, the clarity of that sky has avoided the pain and the ashes that, scattered across the world, preserve our hope.

No, I did not want to talk about Gardella!

Many thanks

Alexandre Alves Costa

Lisbon, 10 April 2025

⁶ The Inquisition was established in Portugal under João III; the first auto-da-fé took place in 1540, in the presence of the king.

É de Gardella que querem que eu fale?¹

I

Obrigado Paulo, pelo avião.²

Não viajei nele, mesmo quando ilustrou genialmente o meu pensamento e as minhas razões.

O teu avião não necessita, para se mover, de vencer obstáculos físicos, abertos para ele. Percorre a liquidez que sinto na sua pureza metafísica.

Não me transporta, ajuda-me. Leva-me a Itália.

Comove-me.

II

Advertência

Gosto de partilhar, impudicamente, o meu estado de espírito, dando nota de apontamentos que talvez contenham, para minha vergonha, alguns aspetos autobiográficos.

Pelo menos sei, com Almada Negreiros, que não sendo científicos, também não são falsos.

Tratando-se de Itália, a minha paixão extravasa a lucidez e eu fico grato por me ajudarem a sair da mediania do politicamente correto.

Mas de repente entrei em contacto visual com La Capitana³ e apercebi-me que a sua distinção da Meloni era a cor, o tom moderno e o sorriso falso.

Cuidado amigos, porque é estuporada a nossa cidade, o nosso bem estar, os nossos amores, alegrias e tristezas. Teremos, terei, coragem para continuar, mesmo lembrando a amargura que sentiu o nosso colega Rutilio Ceccolini?⁴

E verdade que hoje o espectro político, tem como referência programática estrutural, a chamada estabilidade político/social, simbolizando a necessária moderação e equilíbrio que se pede a qualquer político.

Advirto-vos que estou do outro lado e que, neste momento, defendo convictamente a instabilidade antifascista, criativa e revolucionária.

1 Ignazio Gardella, Milão, 1905/1999. Trata-se um muito amado colega italiano, responsável, com outros, pela renovação ou superação da linguagem do Moderno. A utilização do seu nome é metafórica e nada tem de menos-prezo pela sua obra.

2 Referência à fotografia de Paulo Catrica (Lisboa, 1965) tirada vigia de um avião em voo, que foi utilizada no cartaz do congresso "À margem".

3 Ines Donati, conhecida como La Capitana, era uma ativista nacionalista e fascista, entre as raras mulheres que acompanhou Marcha de Roma.

4 Autor do projeto para o Monumento de Ines Donati em San Severino Marche, 1928.

Para mim é evidente, não será para outros, que não interessa estabelecer nenhuma estrutura de cruzamentos e de inter-influências negativas ou positivas entre a arquitetura italiana e a portuguesa. Aliás é relativamente fácil encontrar essas relações e, digo mais, um pouco provocatoriamente, até com a arquitetura da Ilha de Java seria possível.

É interessante como, quando se quer estudar, analisar ou criticar um conjunto significativo de obras, seja num tempo, numa paisagem ou num país, se procuram os fatos políticos que, eventualmente as justificam, esquecendo que a memória, as circunstâncias sempre precárias, a infinita criatividade do homem, as suas enormes fraquezas e imensas qualidades, etc. são, provavelmente, mais relevantes no caso a caso de cada obra, em cada momento.

Mas que me pedem? Que fale de Gardella, de Aymonino, de Libera, de Távora, de Alberti, de Vitruvio, de Diogo de Sagredo, de Nuno Portas?

Talvez do mestre Diogo de Torralva a quem D. João III encomendou um Templo a imitar o de Delfos, para transformar Évora numa Cidade Romana e ele, bom entendedor do Antigo,

construiu um Aqueduto que foi escondido, para ser descoberto, mais tarde, como antiguidade. Parece-nos, Évora, depois destas operações, ainda mais rural e pastoril.

Não me parece provável que queiram recordar D. Miguel da Silva, Bispo de Viseu e Cardeal da Igreja Católica Romana que morreu em Roma, objeto da animosidade do nosso jovem monarca.

D. Miguel convidou o arquiteto italiano Francesco da Cremona para vários projetos, entre os quais a Capela/Farol de São Miguel-o-Anjo, no Porto, primeiro edifício inteiramente renascentista em Portugal.

Talvez queiram lembrar o nosso grande humanista, Francisco de Holanda, que privou com Miguel Ângelo e que no relatório da bolsa que lhe tinha sido atribuída pelo monarca, "Da Fábrica que Falece à Cidade de Lisboa" de 1571, ilustrado com desenhos

maravilhosos, investigou o que havia em Roma e faltava à nossa Capital?

Mas querem que fale do Gardella?

Não amigo, não é sobre arquiteturas nem arquitetos que lhe pedimos uma reflexão. É sobre conceitos, evidentemente com origem em obra, mas esqueça a obra...

⁵ Refere-se a uma famosa canção em língua espanhola lançada em 1961, que mais tarde foi reinterpretada por muitos artistas, entre eles a americana Connie Francis.

Então deixo isso aos historiadores e eles que se divirtam, com confiança, porque nós apoiamos esses estudos eruditos sobre as nossas obras ou as dos nossos amigos.

Mas, afinal, o que me interessa em Itália?

Interessa-me a luz, tão clara e tão transparente que, quando a olhamos, não são os seus efeitos exteriores sobre a terra o que sentimos, mas a sua condição própria.

O tempo atual não é luminoso, submergido numa cota de escuridão donde espera sair para aniquilar os que o querem aniquilar.

Talvez por isso o nosso D. João III, tivesse ilustrado os seus bolseiros em Itália, tão extraordinariamente rica na sua diversidade, mesmo depois de Garibaldi.

Mais tarde, arrependido, pegou-lhes fogo num “auto da fé», em Lisboa, torturados e julgados pela Santa Inquisição.⁶

Claro que a limpidez daquele céu, evitou a dor e as cinzas, que espalhadas pelo mundo continuam a nossa esperança.

Não, não era de Gardella que eu queria falar!

Muito obrigado.

Alexandre Alves Costa

Lisboa, 10 de Abril de 2025

⁶ A Inquisição foi instituída em Portugal no reinado de D. João III, tendo o primeiro auto da fé, na presença do rei, ocorrido em 1540.

È di Gardella che volete che parli?¹

I

Grazie, Paulo, per l'aereo².

Non ci ho viaggiato, anche quando hai illustrato brillantemente i miei pensieri e le mie ragioni.

Il tuo aereo, per muoversi, non ha bisogno di superare gli ostacoli fisici che gli si aprono davanti. Percorre la liquidità che sento nella sua purezza metafisica.

Non mi trasporta, mi aiuta. Mi porta in Italia.

Mi commuove.

II

Avvertenza

Mi piace condividere, impudentemente, il mio stato d'animo, annotando appunti che forse contengono, con mia vergogna, qualche aspetto autobiografico.

Almeno so, con Almada Negreiros, che non essendo scientifici, non sono nemmeno falsi.

Quando si tratta dell'Italia, la mia passione va oltre la lucidità, per cui sono ad essi grato per aiutarmi a uscire dalla medietà del politicamente corretto.

Ma all'improvviso ho incrociato lo sguardo con La Capitana³ e ho capito che a distinguerla dalla Meloni erano il colore, il tono moderno e il sorriso finto.

Attenzione amici, perché la nostra città è sfasciata, così come il nostro benessere, i nostri amori, gioie e tristezze. Avremo, avrò, il coraggio di continuare, magari ricordando l'amarezza provata dal collega Rutilio Ceccolini⁴?

È vero che oggi lo spettro politico ha come riferimento programmatico strutturale la cosiddetta stabilità politico-sociale, simbolo della necessaria moderazione e dell'equilibrio che si richiede a qualsiasi politico.

Vi avverto che sto dall'altra parte e che, al momento, difendo convintamente l'instabilità antifascista, creativa e rivoluzionaria.

1 Ignazio Gardella, Milano 1905-99. Si tratta di un collega italiano molto amato, responsabile, con altri, del rinnovamento o superamento del linguaggio del Moderno. L'utilizzo del suo nome è metaforico e non esprime affatto una sottovalutazione della sua opera.

2 Riferimento alla foto di Paulo Catrica (Lisbona, 1965) scattata dall'oblò di un aereo in volo, che è stata utilizzata nel manifesto del convegno "À margem".

3 Ines Donati, detta La Capitana, era un'attivista nazionalista e fascista, tra le rare donne che presero parte alla marcia su Roma.

4 Autore del progetto per il monumento a Ines Donati a San Severino Marche, 1928.

Cuando Calienta el Sol⁵

È chiaro per me, e non lo sarà per altri, che non è interessante stabilire una qualche struttura di incroci e di influenze negative o positive tra l'architettura italiana e quella portoghese. Anzi, è relativamente facile trovare queste relazioni e, dirò di più, un po' provocatoriamente, sarebbe addirittura possibile farlo pure con l'architettura dell'isola di Giava.

È interessante notare come, quando si vuole studiare, analizzare o criticare un insieme significativo di opere, appartengano ad un'epoca, ad un paesaggio o ad un paese, si cerchino i fatti politici che possano giustificarla, dimenticando che la memoria, le circostanze sempre precarie, l'infinita creatività dell'uomo, le sue enormi debolezze e le sue immense qualità, ecc. sono probabilmente più rilevanti nel caso specifico di ogni opera, in ogni momento.

Ma cosa mi chiedete? Di parlare di Gardella, di Aymonino, di Libera, di Távora, di Alberti, di Vitruvio, di Diogo de Sagredo, di Nuno Portas?

Forse del maestro Diogo de Torralva, al quale il re João III commissionò un tempio a imitazione di quello di Delfi, per trasformare Évora in una Città Romana e lui, buon conoscitore dell'Antico, costruì un Acquedotto che venne nascosto, per poi essere scoperto come antichità. Dopo queste operazioni, Évora ci sembra ancora più rurale e pastorale.

Non mi sembra possibile che vogliate ricordare don Miguel da Silva, vescovo di Viseu e cardinale della Chiesa Cattolica Apostolica Romana, morto a Roma, oggetto dell'astio del nostro giovane monarca.

Don Miguel invitò l'architetto italiano Francesco da Cremona per vari progetti, tra cui la Cappella/Faro di San Michele Arcangelo a Porto, il primo edificio interamente rinascimentale del Portogallo.

Forse volete ricordare il nostro grande umanista, Francisco de Holanda, che trattava da pari Michelangelo e che, nella relazione della borsa concessagli dal monarca, "Da Fábrica que Falece à Cidade de Lisboa" (Delle opere che mancano alla città di Lisbona n.d.t.) del 1571, illustrata con meravigliosi disegni, indagò su ciò che c'era a Roma e mancava alla nostra capitale?

Ma volete che parli di Gardella?

No amico, non le chiediamo una riflessione sull'architettura o sugli architetti. Bensì sui concetti, ovviamente a partire dalle opere, ma dimentichi le opere...

Allora lascio fiducioso la parola agli storici, che si divertano loro, perché noi basiamo questi studi eruditi sulle nostre opere o su quelle dei nostri amici.

Ma alla fine, cosa mi interessa dell'Italia?

Mi interessa la luce, così chiara e trasparente che quando la guardiamo non

⁵ Si riferisce a una celebre canzone in lingua spagnola pubblicata nel 1961, che in seguito è stata reinterpretata da molti artisti, tra cui l'americana Connie Francis.

avvertiamo i suoi effetti esterni sulla terra, ma la sua stessa condizione.

Il tempo presente non è luminoso, è immerso in uno strato di tenebre da cui spera di emergere per annichilire chi vuole annichilirlo.

Forse per questo il nostro re João III avrà dato lustro ai suoi borsisti in Italia, così straordinariamente ricca nella sua diversità, anche dopo Garibaldi.

Più tardi, pentito, li ha dati alle fiamme in un autodafé a Lisbona, torturati e condannati dalla Santa Inquisizione.⁶

Certo, la limpidezza di quel cielo ha evitato il dolore e le ceneri che, sparse per il mondo, preservano la nostra speranza.

No, non volevo parlare di Gardella!

Molte grazie

Alexandre Alves Costa

Lisbona, 10 aprile 2025

⁶ L'Inquisizione venne istituita in Portogallo sotto João III, il primo autodafé, alla presenza del re, avvenne nel 1540.

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 critic.⁵ [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.



1

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)



2

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.

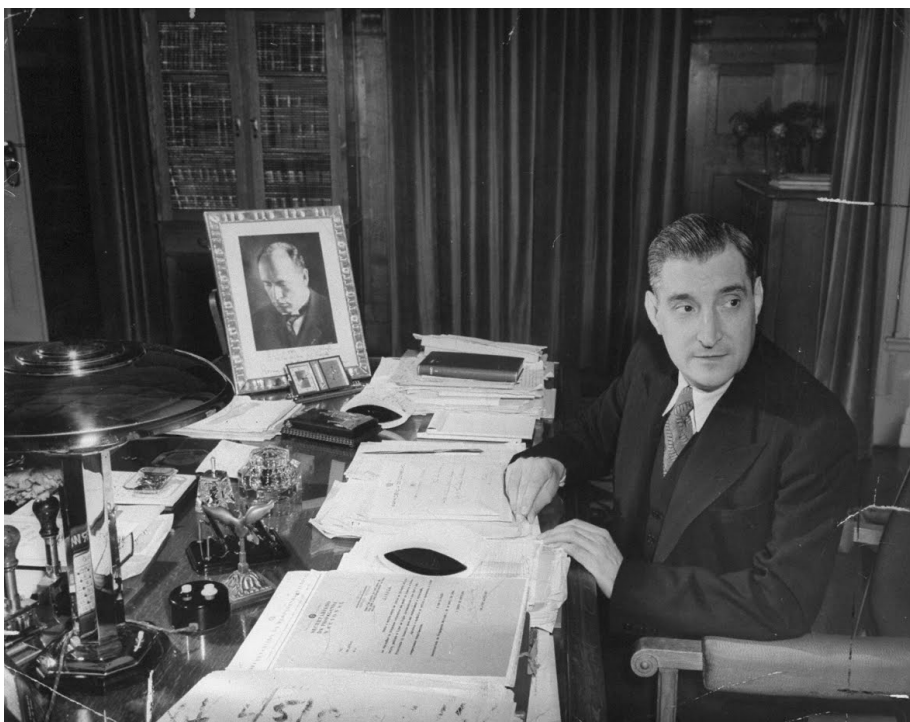
To understand these contradictions, we must recall what was said earlier. Piacentini saw himself as serving the city – a city that he wanted to be largely uniform, representative of a collective identity and subject to a form of state aesthetic control. He even theorised this idea, going so far as to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



3

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)



NUOVO SCHEMA VIARIO DEL CENTRO DI PORTO

E/CALE 1:2500



M. Piacentini

STUDIO TECNICO
 ARCHITETTO MARCELLO PIACENTINI
 ACCADEMICO D'ITALIA

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

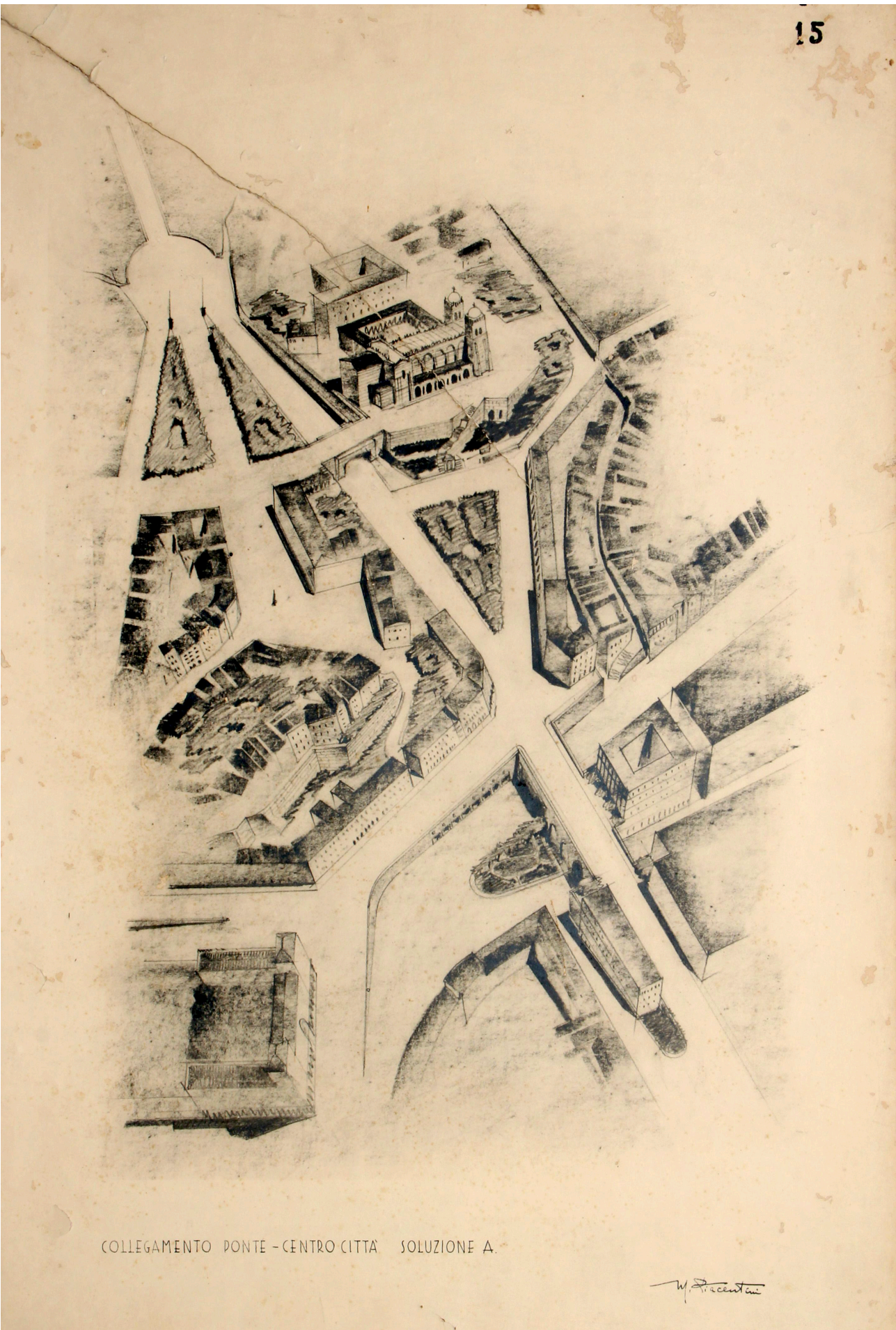
Marcello Piacentini, bridge-city-centre connection, solution A (Arquivo Municipal do Porto, PT-CMP-AM/PUB/CMPRT/DSUO-RUE-GEPGU/3538/D.CDT.A4.177)

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)

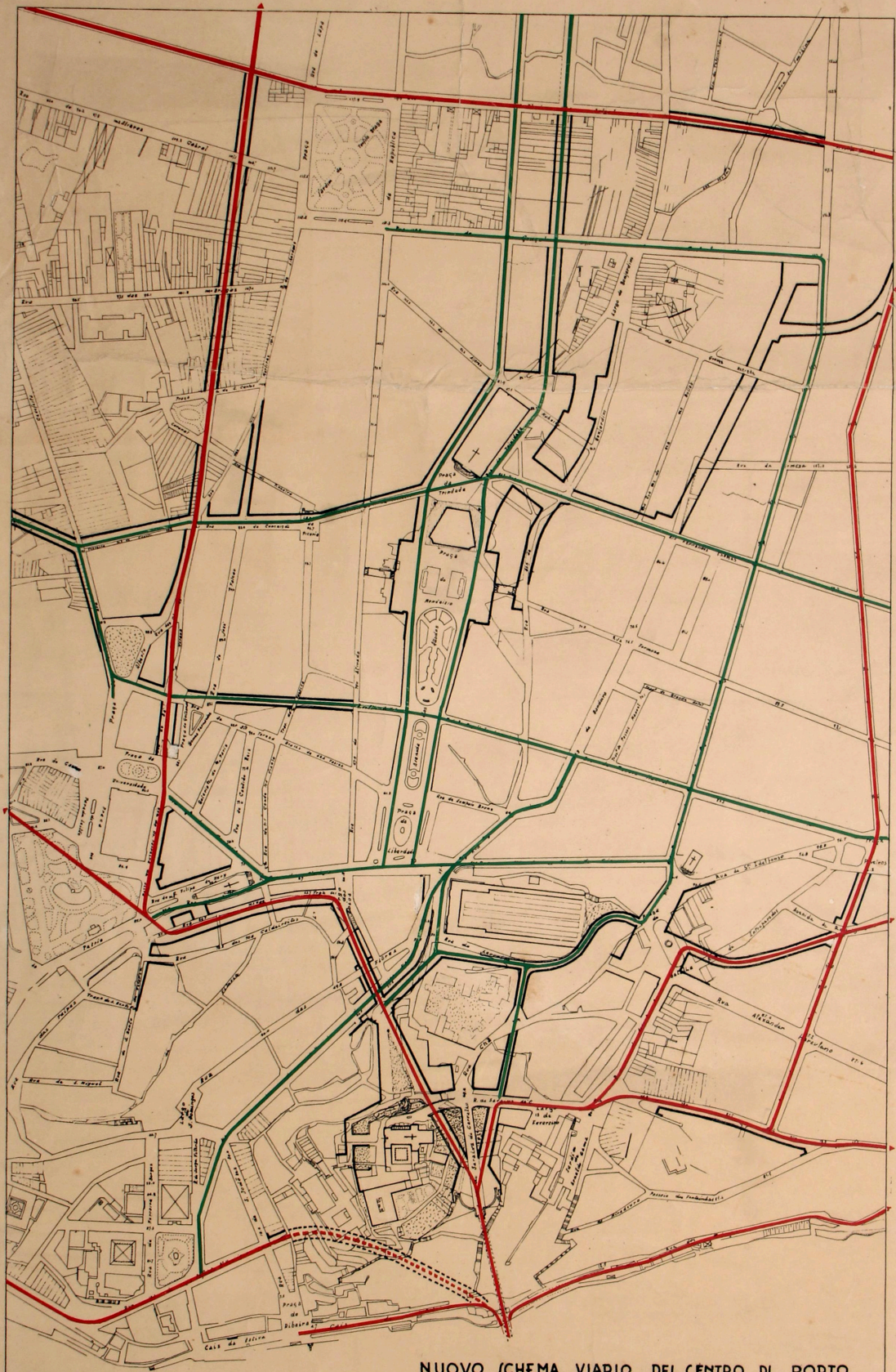


COLLEGAMENTO PONTE - CENTRO CITTA' SOLUZIONE A.

W. Piccinini



16



NUOVO SCHEMA VIARIO DEL CENTRO DI PORTO

— TRAFFICO d'ATTRAVERCIAMENTO AI QUARTIERI PERIFERICI
 — TRAFFICO DI PENETRAZIONE AL CENTRO

1/CALE 1:2500

STUDIO TECNICO
 ARCHITETTO MARCELLO PIACENTINI
 ACCADEMICO D'ITALIA



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.

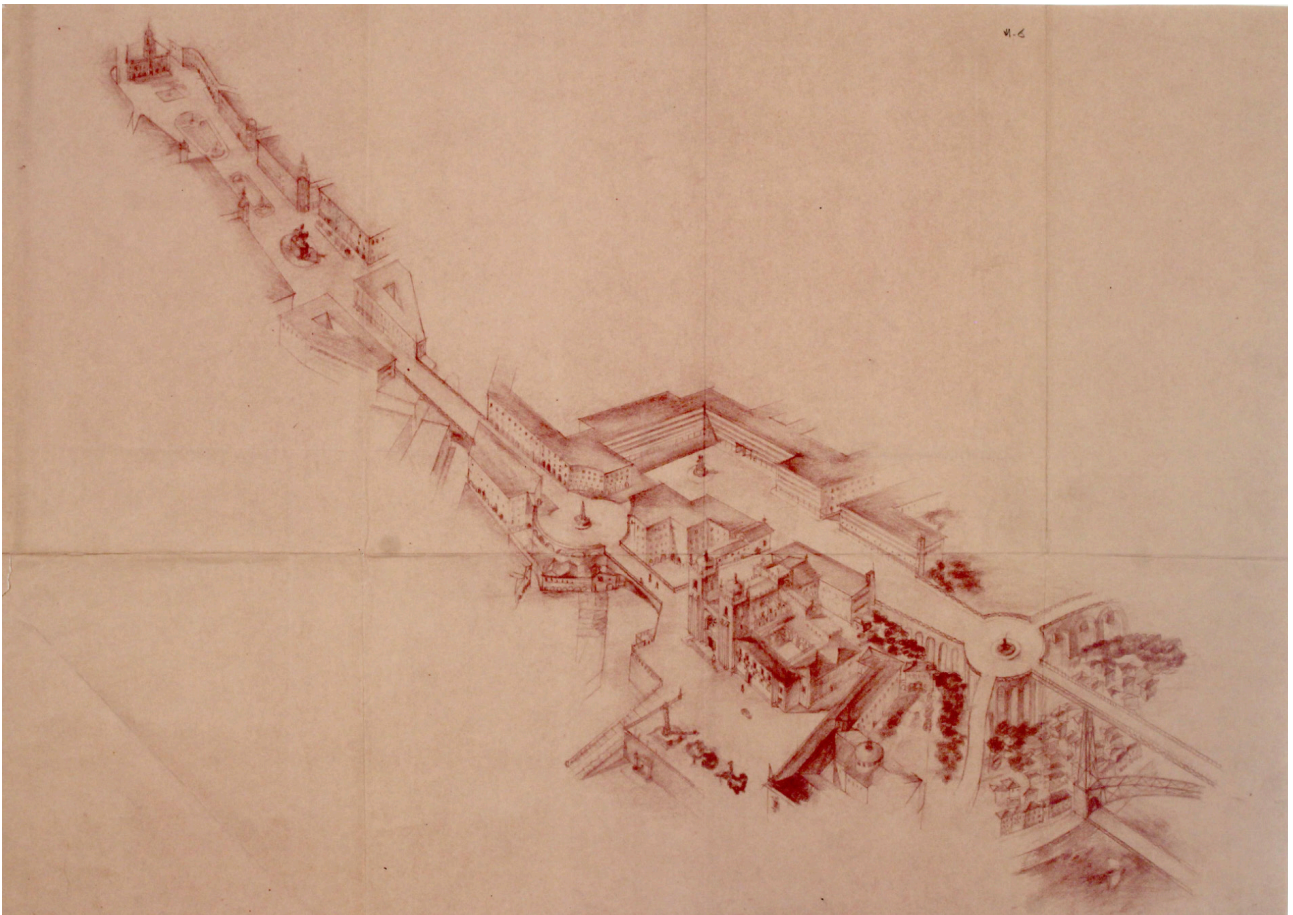
At the same time, this episode is fundamental for understanding the ideas and convictions that shaped Marcello Piacentini's concept of the city and, more broadly, the contemporary debate in Italy on urban design and on the role of the new figure of the "integral architect", as defined by Gustavo Giovannoni.²⁶

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).



8

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,

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)

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).

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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From Alfredo de Andrade to Álvaro Siza Intervention Works by Portuguese Architects in Preexisting Buildings in Italy

Architecture, Heritage, Conservation, Drawing, Reuse

/Abstract

Portuguese architectural culture is historically determined by its relations with Italy, which have intensified since the 16th century, both in education through the influence of treaties and study tours, and by the growing migration of Italian architects and artists working in Portugal and the colonies. However, there are fewer examples of Portuguese architects working in Italy, such as the exemplary cases of Alfredo de Andrade (1839–1915) and Álvaro Siza (1933–). With support on unpublished archival research and field work, this article proposes an analysis of intervention works in pre-existing buildings by Andrade and Siza in Italy, between the end of the 19th century and the 21st century. In both cases, drawing is the privileged instrument of research and design, along with a solid artistic and architectural culture that allows them to find sensible responses to the specificities of each context by respecting the historical layers and adding new elements within a delicate modernity in continuity with tradition.

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For centuries, architects have frequently migrated between Italy and Portugal. In particular, numerous generations of Italian architects have worked in Portugal since the sixteenth century. These include Francesco da Cremona (active in Portugal since 1525), Filippo Terzi (ca. 1520–1597), Niccolò Nasoni (1691–1773), Francesco Saverio Fabri (1761–?), Giovanni Carlo Galli Bibiena (1717–1760), Giuseppe Cinatti (1808–1867), Luigi Manini (1848–1936), and Nicola Bigaglia (ca. 1841–1908), among many others.¹ However, Portuguese architects working in Italy are scarcer, with some paradigmatic exceptions such as Alfredo de Andrade (Lisbon, 1939-Genoa, 1915), a central figure in Italian monuments restoration between the late 19th and early 20th century. Hence, Andrade developed more than three hundred restorations of Italian monuments in northern Italy and was defined by Álvaro Siza (Matosinhos, 1933-) as the “most important Portuguese architect outside Portugal.”² The latter, winner of the Pritzker Prize (1992) and a key figure in world architecture, has also developed several interventions on pre-existing buildings with particular focus on southern Italy, such as the Church of Salemi (with Roberto Collovà), the Madre Museum (with Studio DAZ-Dumontet Antonini Zaske) or the Naples Metro (with Eduardo Souto de Moura), among others.

As Álvaro Siza states:

The cultural relationship between our two countries [Portugal and Italy] is centuries old, including in terms of architecture [...]. There have been many Italian architects in Portugal and many Portuguese who have built cities on layers of Roman foundations, and to experience, among other long journeys, the inevitable trip to Rome. These and other shared entanglements are engraved in Portuguese territory.³

“The Art of Being Portuguese”⁴

Alfredo de Andrade and Álvaro Siza can be framed in the distinctive qualities that some writers and philosophers define as “being Portuguese,”⁵ namely the

1 For further details, see Francisco de Sousa Viterbo, *Dicionário histórico e documental dos arquitectos, engenheiros e construtores portugueses*, 3 vols. (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 1988); Teresa Ferreira, “Arquitectos italianos em Portugal: o século XIX e o caso de Alfredo d’Andrade e Sebastiano C. Locati,” *Estudos Italianos em Portugal*, no. 2 (2007): 229–44; Teresa Ferreira, “Ville e villini: casas de arquitectos italianos no Portugal de Oitocentos,” *Estudos Italianos em Portugal*, no. 12 (2017): 237–53.

2 “The first time I heard about him [Alfredo de Andrade] was by Jacques Gubler, an architectural history professor at the Polytechnic Institute of Lausanne [...] I confess both embarrassment and a great sense of satisfaction. Later, by chance passing a little known and low-profile antique bookshop in Porto, I saw in its window an unexpected Italian book on architecture: *Alfredo d’Andrade: tutela e restauro* (Turin, 1981). I spoke about this with some of my architect friends. At least among this circle, not one of them had heard of Andrade. While the emigration of one of the leading protagonists in European architectonic culture might be regrettable, we should also identify the opportunities that he was thus able to gain in participating in a debate then fundamental to the evolution of architecture at an irreversible turning point in the dominant eclecticism towards the anticipation of universal modernism... that would also impact on Portugal.” Álvaro Siza, *Preface to Il Portogallo di Alfredo de Andrade: città, architettura, patrimonio*, by Teresa Cunha Ferreira (Santarcangelo di Romagna: Maggioli, 2014), 17–19.

3 Álvaro Siza, “Lectio magistralis, laurea honoris causa all’Università Federico II di Napoli,” translated by Guido Giangregorio, in *Álvaro Siza in Italia: il Grand Tour 1976–2016*, ed. Roberto Cremascoli and Franco Moschini (Rome: Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, 2016), 209–11. All the translations into English were done by the authors.

4 *Teixeira de Pascoais* (pseud.), *Arte de ser português* (Porto: Renascença Portuguesa, 1915).

5 *Teixeira de Pascoais* (pseud.), *Arte de ser português*. Other authors explore this idea of a Portuguese ‘identity’, in particular Fernando Pessoa, José Mattoso.

great ability to adapt to other places, particularly their languages and culture, along with the curiosity or migrant nature which drives them to discover and travel worldwide.

This enormous capacity for adaptation is also one of the constants of the Portuguese soul. The Portuguese adapt to climates, professions, cultures, languages and people in a truly exceptional way. The Portuguese have always been polyglots. Our classics almost all wrote in more than one language, and even people with little education often learn and speak a foreign language. But the ability to adapt is general and could be illustrated with countless examples. It is curious, however, that Portuguese adapts to another cultural environment so well that it seems to have been assimilated; but it returns to Portugal and in a short time it is no longer distinguishable from the others.⁶

In the same direction, Fernando Távora states:

the Portuguese is a migrant, from the origin of his population where, after various invasions, Christians, Muslims and Jews are mixed, to his relationship with his country, from where he leaves to improve the conditions he finds there, and to where he returns, disgusted at having achieved nothing or satisfied with his victory abroad.⁷

Both Andrade and Siza express a reflects a strong bond with their homeland expressing what Eduardo Lourenço defines as the

culturalist exaltation of the image of Portugal [...] in function of the imperial reality and vocation that for five hundred years were part of our historical activity, and whose memory, more or less intermittent, but never completely erased, constituted during that period the core of the image of Portugal that inwardly defined us.⁸

Hence, as Fernando Pessoa observed: “Whom who is Portuguese can live the narrowness of a single personality, a single nation, a single faith?”⁹; “The Portuguese people is, essentially, cosmopolitan. A true Portuguese has never truly been Portuguese: he has always been everything.”¹⁰

The analysis of the works of Andrade and Siza in Italy underlines their role as a valuable “link” in the relations between these two countries, while it highlights the broader theme of cultural relations between Italy and Portugal, which was a relevant factor cutting across Portuguese architectural history.

6 Jorge Dias, *Os elementos fundamentais da cultura portuguesa* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 1950), 52–53.

7 Fernando Távora, “Emigração/Imigração: cultura arquitetónica portuguesa no mundo,” in *Portugal: arquitetura do século XX*, ed. Annette Becker, Ana Tostões, and Wilfred Wang (Munich and New York: Prestel, 1998), 143.

8 Eduardo Lourenço, *O labirinto da saudade*, 5th ed. (Lisbon: Gradiva, 2007), 42.

9 Fernando Pessoa, “Entrevista sobre arte e literatura portuguesas (1919–1921),” in *Fernando Pessoa: Obra poética e em prosa*, ed. António Quadros, vol. 3 (Porto: Lello e Irmãos, 1986), 703.

10 Fernando Pessoa, “Entrevista sobre arte e literatura portuguesas (1919–1921),” in *Fernando Pessoa: crítica, ensaios, artigos e entrevistas*, ed. Fernando Cabral Martins (Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim, 2000), 149.

Drawing as a Research Tool

Alfredo de Andrade and Álvaro Siza are also united by using drawing as the preferred instrument for research and communication. As “cosa mentale”, drawing becomes a “spoken language”, which was fundamental for both architects in their systematic application as a tool for observation, analysis and design – “*nulla dies sine lineae*”.¹¹

Referring to his close friend Andrade, Camillo Boito states:

One remarkable thing [...] is the way he draws. For him, drawing is not a graceful, conventional exercise: it is the simplest, quickest and most complete reproduction of an object. Everything serves him. He takes what he finds at hand. So much does it make him draw in a tiny album with the sharp point of a pencil or a letter sheet with the fine steel pencil, as it makes him draw with carpenter’s pencil, brush or embers over a massive sheet, over a wall or on the ground.¹²

In the same perspective, Álvaro Siza refers to drawing as the “desire for intelligence,”¹³ exploring it as an “essential tool to observe, understand and learn how to design.”¹⁴ Through his freehand sketches, Siza explores spatial dimensions, light and the relationship between architecture and context. The act of drawing, therefore, becomes a medium for continuous reflection, thereby facilitating the translation of intuitive concepts into construction.¹⁵ [Figg. 1, 2a-2b]

Interventions in Pre-existences by Alfredo de Andrade in Northern Italy

Alfredo de Andrade (1839-1915), “architect and painter”¹⁶, as he liked to refer to himself, was a leading figure in the late 19th and early 20th century in Italy, where he held significant public positions¹⁷ and left behind a substantial body of built works in the regions of Piedmont, Liguria and Valle d’Aosta. Having maintained a continuous relationship with Portugal from his childhood through to his death, Andrade left behind sources that enable us to broaden our understanding of his training and education, the study trips that he made, his network of

11 Motto on the cover of Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Histoire d’un dessinateur: comment on apprend à dessiner* (Paris: Hetzel, 1879).

12 Camillo Boito, “Gli ammaestramenti della prima esposizione italiana di architettura,” in *Questioni pratiche di belle arti: restauri, concorsi, legislazione, professione, insegnamento*, ed. Ulrico Hoepli (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1893), 390–93.

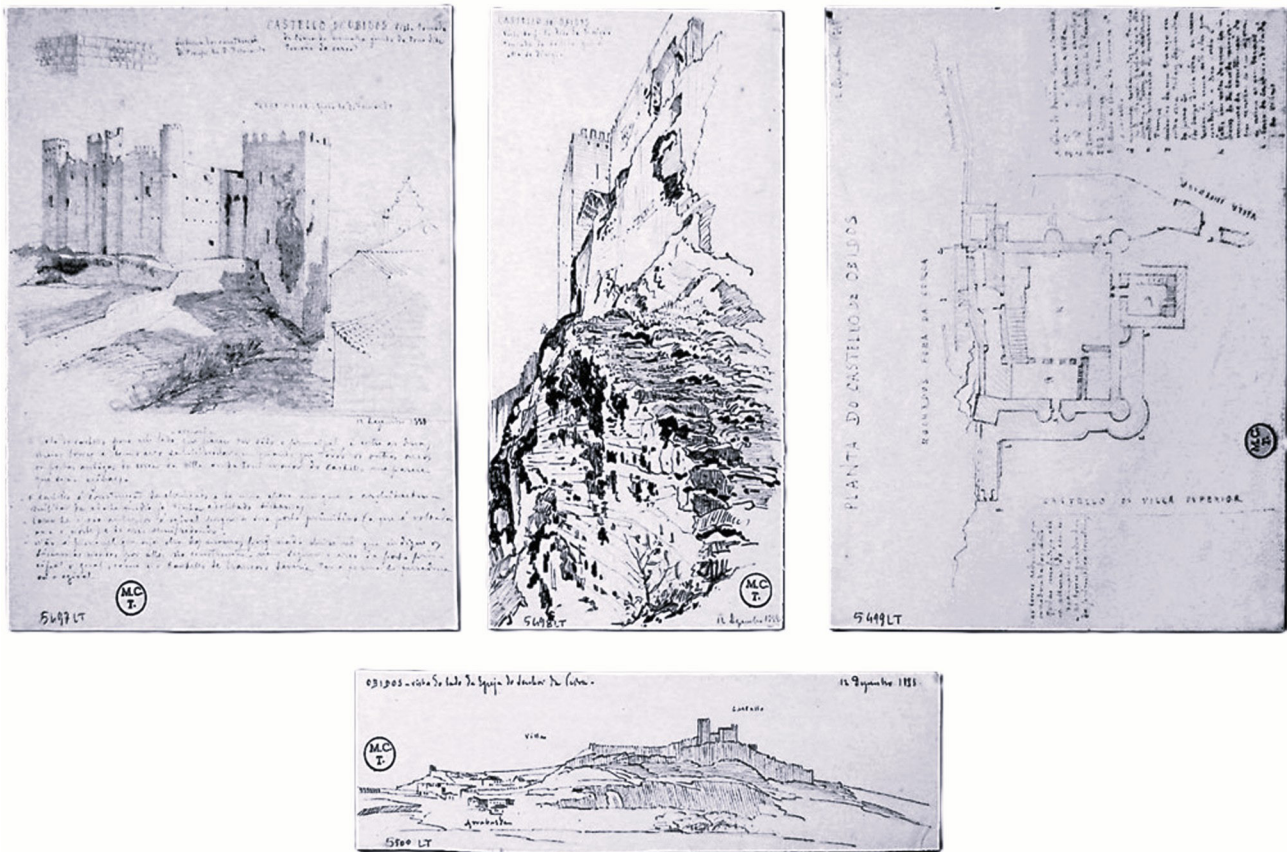
13 Álvaro Siza, “Construir uma casa,” in *Obras e projectos*, ed. Pedro de Llano and Carlos Castanheira (Santiago de Compostela: Centro Galego de Arte Contemporânea and Electa Espanha, 1995), 61.

14 Alexandre Alves Costa, *Introdução ao estudo da história da arquitectura portuguesa: outros textos sobre arquitectura portuguesa*, 2nd ed. (Porto: FAUP Publications, 2007), 51.

15 Among others, see Álvaro Siza, *Álvaro Siza: obra e projeto, desenhos* (Porto: Museu de Serralves, 1992).

16 Alfredo d’Andrade, presentation to King Vittorio Emanuele II, 1869, quoted in Marziano Bernardi and Vittorio Viale, *Alfredo d’Andrade: la vita, l’opera e l’arte* (Turin: Società Piemontese d’Archeologia e di Belle Arti, 1957), 26.

17 Among others, he held the posts of director of Delegazione per la conservazione dei monumenti del Piemonte e della Liguria (from 1886) and of Ufficio Regionale per la Conservazione dei Monumenti del Piemonte e della Liguria (from 1891, subsequently, from 1907, soprintendente). In 1885, Andrade was nominated to the Commissione per l’Insegnamento artistico-industriale and, in 1904, member of the Commissione Centrale per le Antichità e Belle Arti (and later sitting on the Consiglio Superiore per le Antichità e Belle Arti). For further details, see Maria Grazia Cerri, Danila Biancolini Fea, and Liliana Pittarello, eds., *Alfredo d’Andrade: tutela e restauro* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1981).



1

relationships, as well as his outputs across different fields – painting, teaching, restoration and architecture.

Alfredo de Andrade had deep admiration for E.-E. Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879) and was very close to Camillo Boito (1836–1914), which was both publicly affirmed and reflected in the enormous exchange of correspondence: “we are the Siamese twins of the High Council; it would take surgery to separate us.”¹⁸ The two architects were united in their search, both for a new architectural expression to overcome “eclecticism” and for the definition of a “modern” concept for restoration. With a “case by case” approach which cannot be generalised, Andrade developed relevant interventions in Italian monuments, such as the Porta Soprana in Genova (1882–1914) where he deployed a stylistic reconstruction supported on historical documents and liberated the building from the houses in the surroundings, the Torre del Pailleron in Aosta (1889-1892) where I applies more directly the theories of Camillo Boito,¹⁹ or his residence at the Pavone Castel (1885–1915) in Piedmont which will be further developed in this article [Fig. 3a-3b-3c].

18 Camillo Boito, letter to Alfredo d’Andrade, April 14, 1913, Private Archives of Andrade Family (APFA), Turin.

19 1. “Architectural monuments, when the necessity of laying hands on them is incontrovertibly demonstrated, should rather be consolidated than repaired, rather repaired than restored, avoiding in them with all study additions and renovations” [...] 2. the additions or renovations must be carried out with a different character from that of the monument, warning that, if possible, in the perspective appearance the new forms do not clash too much with its artistic appearance”. Camillo Boito, “Voto conclusivo della I sezione del IV Congresso degli ingegneri e architetti italiani” (Rome, 1883), 59–61.

Fig. 1

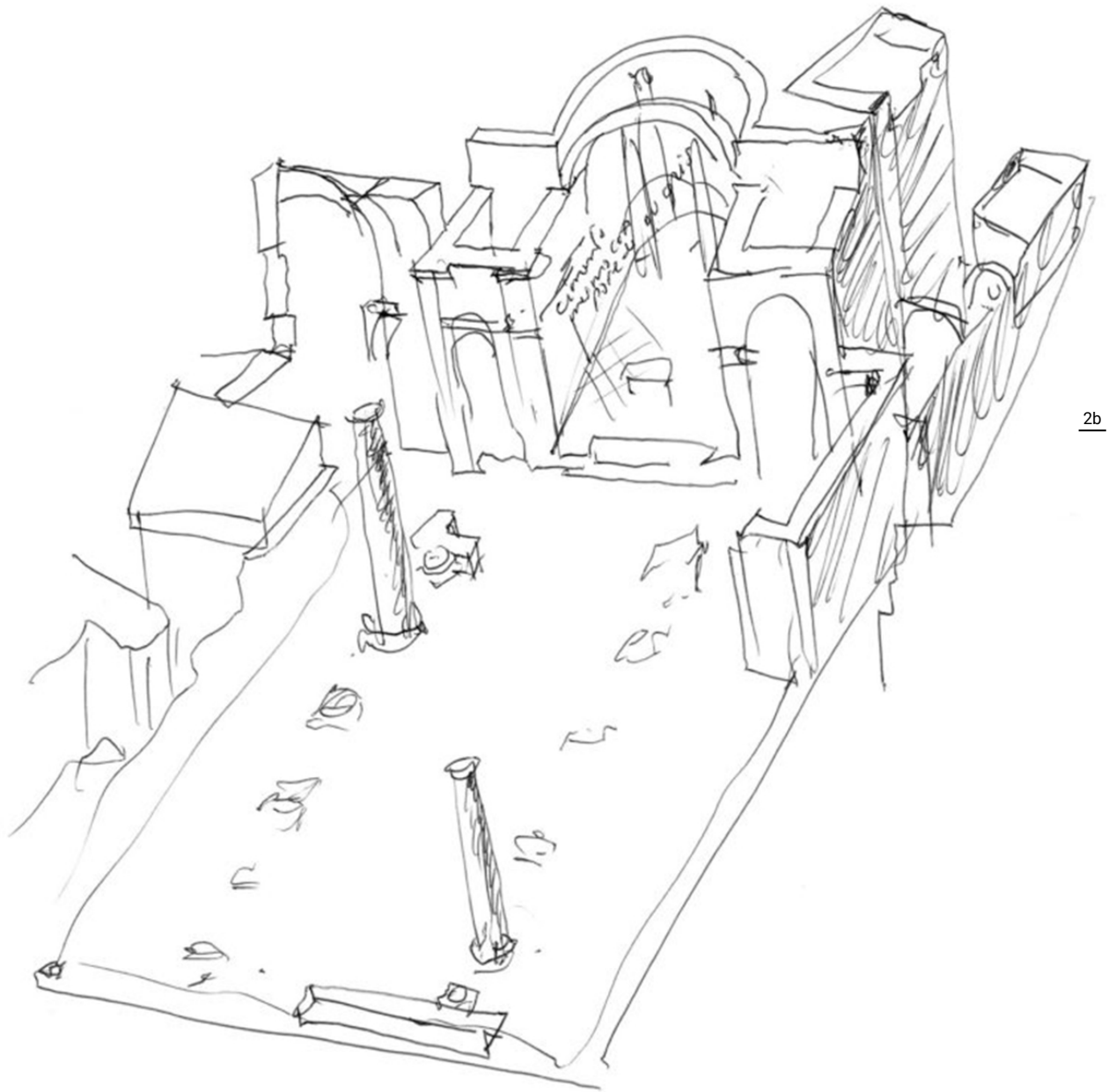
Alfredo de Andrade, Castelo de Óbidos, 1891 (Galleria d’Arte Moderna, Torino)

Fig. 2a-2b

Álvaro Siza, drawings of Machu Picchu (1995) and of the Reconstruction of Chiesa Madre in Salemi (1991)



Alise



2b

Figg. 3a-3b-3c

Alfredo de Andrade, Porta Soprana in Genoa (1882-1914), Torre del Palleron in Aosta (1889-1992), Pavone Castle in Piedmont (1885-1915), (photos by Teresa Cunha Ferreira, 2007)



3a



3b



3c

Pavone Castle (1885-1915).²⁰ Landscape and Pre-existence

The castle was founded in the 10th century and was modified and enlarged in the 11th, 15th and 16th centuries. It belonged to the bishops of Ivrea and is owned by Alfredo de Andrade. According to his son Ruy de Andrade, it was precisely its 'picturesque' character that convinced his parents to buy it:

The walls were of a rich, dull colour, extraordinarily suggestive. The richness and variety of the architectural, civilian, military and religious features that were on display represented a rich combination of architectural forms and motifs from different centuries.²¹

Located to the south-west of Ivrea, on the road between Turin and Aosta its character is further emphasised by its privileged position in the landscape, with a wide panorama over the neighbouring hills and the village in lower situation. According to his usual methodology, before 'touching' the building, Andrade studied it carefully, namely by consulting the few existing documentary sources, a necessary passage in the context of nineteenth-century philological culture. The scarcity of existing documentary sources was compensated by the direct study of the buildings, which has always been his preferred source: "But what the plans do not tell us, I learned from the building itself."²²

Andrade also carries out one of his favourite 'exercises', the schematic illustration of the main phases of the castle's historical-constructive evolution, which he calls 'Storia delle Costruzioni del Castello di Pavone'. His methodological rigour is also illustrated in a booklet entitled *Primi progetti*²³ which shows his process of approaching the building: the geometric survey of the existing building, a careful 'archaeological' reading of the constructions, the technical-constructive typologies, the decorative details and an indication of the state of conservation. The surveys (authentic *rilievi per il restauro*) are already accompanied by indications on conservation work to be carried out.

The attention to detail and to specific conservation problems does not, however, detract from the overall vision and 'image' of the castle. In a series of sketches with "hypotheses, preliminary plans" he represents exterior views of the "how the castle might look like once restored"²⁴, followed by plans of the existing building with the functional allocation of spaces [Fig. 4a-4b].

20 For further details, see Teresa Cunha Ferreira, "Alfredo de Andrade (1839–1915) em Portugal: cidade, património e arquitectura" (PhD diss., Politecnico di Milano, 2009); Lucília Verdelho da Costa, *Alfredo de Andrade (1839–1915): da pintura à invenção do património*, 2 vols. (Lisbon: Editorial Vega, 1997).

21 Ruy d'Andrade, *Il castello di Pavone* (Lisbon: Ruy D'Andrade, 1956).

22 Alfredo de Andrade, quoted in Daniela Biancolini Fea, "Il castello di Pavone," in Cerri et al., *Alfredo d'Andrade*, 311.

23 Alfredo de Andrade, "Primi progetti," booklet in Private Archives of the Andrade Family (APFA), Turin.

24 Alfredo de Andrade, in the Private Archives of the Andrade Family (APFA), Turin.

Fig. 4a-4b

Alfredo de Andrade, Pavone Castle. Left: Drawing of the Pavone Castle. Right: "Il Castello come potrebbe essere quando restaurato", 1885 (Private Archives of Andrade Family - APFA)

Fig. 5a-5b

Alfredo de Andrade, Pavone Castle, Left: East side, confrontation between the pre-existence, the project and the definitive construction. Right: Alfredo de Andrade, drawing on photograph, with representation of the additions to be made (in pencil) (Private Archives of Andrade Family - APFA)

Fig. 6

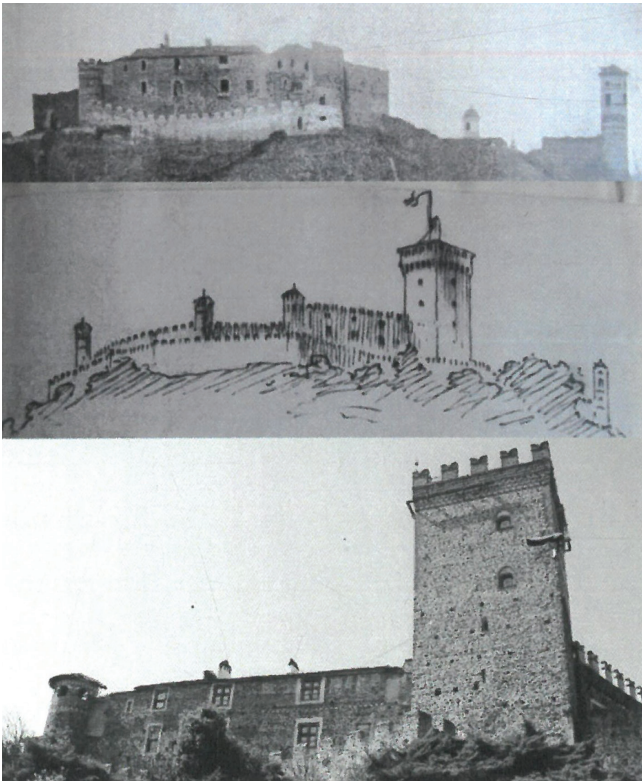
General Plan of Pavone Castle (G. Abrardi per la SBAAP)



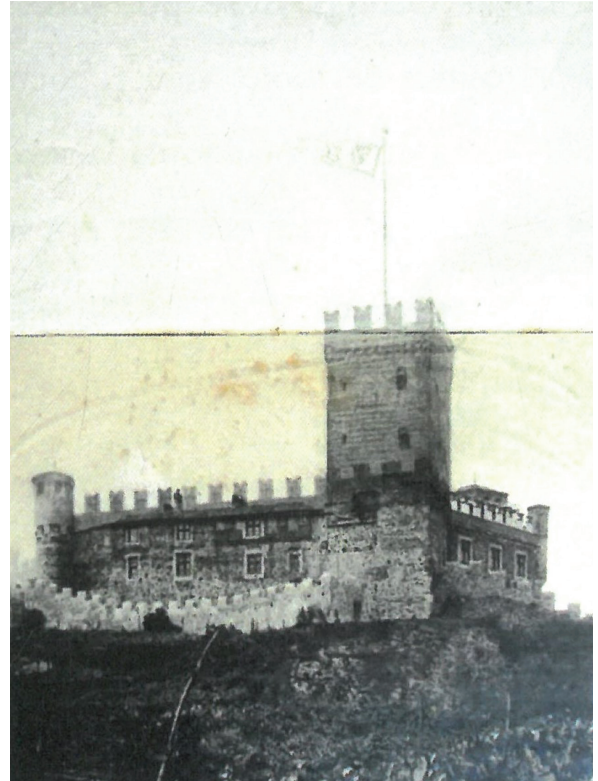
4a



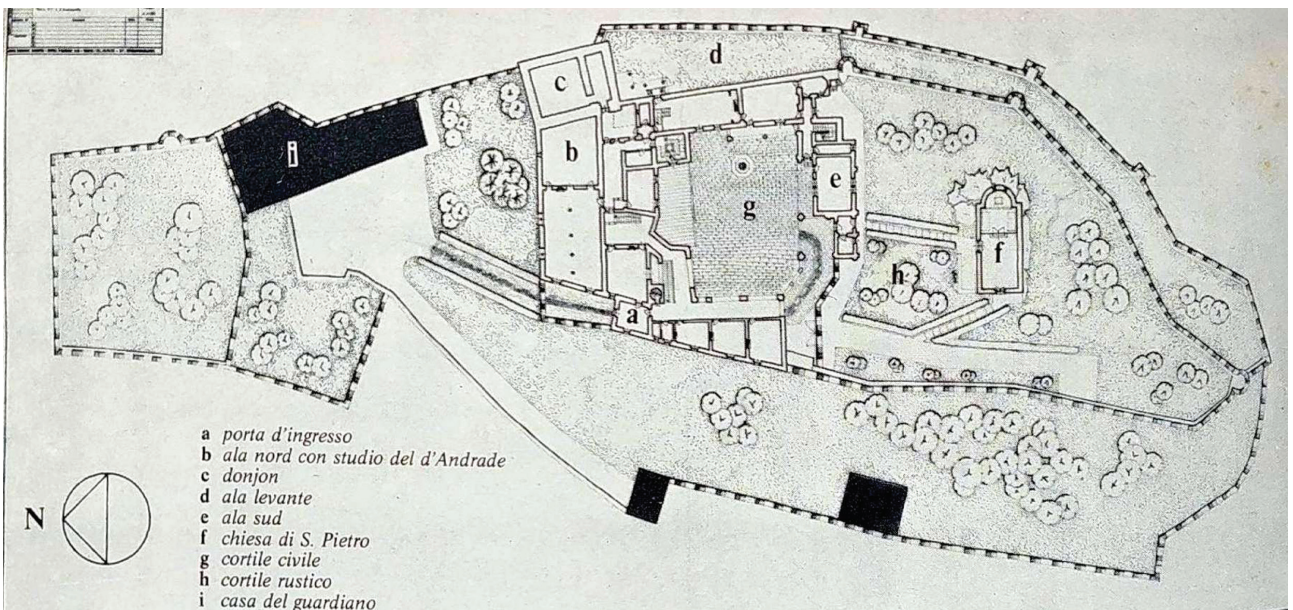
4b



5a



5b



- a porta d'ingresso
- b ala nord con studio del d'Andrade
- c donjon
- d ala levante
- e ala sud
- f chiesa di S. Pietro
- g cortile civile
- h cortile rustico
- i casa del guardiano

6

Design Strategy

The interventions by Alfredo de Andrade in Pavone Castel for his own residence consisted of a laboratory for distinct operations ranging from consolidation, conservation, replacement, reconstruction and ex-novo additions. Given the long duration of the building site spanning thirty years, it became a personal laboratory for experimenting with techniques and a catalogue of various elements collected during his lifetime.

The syncretism resulting from the complex constructive stratigraphy and volumetric articulation is harmonised by the principle of 'unity of style' which, added to its position on the rock mass, gives the whole a scenographic and picturesque character: "the new part is fused with the old in a rare harmony of shapes, lines and colours, as only my father, who first became an architect and archaeologist, was a valiant landscape painter, could achieve."²⁵

However, in Alfredo de Andrade's mind, the additions and new bodies should have a different expression. In these, the new masonry is distinguished by a different construction typology (mixed stone with horizontal brick runs, without plaster). This construction solution is adopted both in the reconstruction of the donjon tower and in the new additions (south wing and east wing). The latter are designed in stile (16th century Piedmontese) and meet the functional and comfort needs of domestic spaces [Figg. 5a, 5b].

Despite the new additions to meet use requirements [Fig. 6], Andrade was concerned about the preservation of the pre-existing elements – "not a single stone was left standing that could be preserved"²⁶ – respecting the 'archaeology of the buildings' - namely elevations, battlements, staircases, windows, pieces of plaster - allowing a (stratigraphic) reading of the different phases of the building's construction history [Figg. 7a, 7b]. In the interior, Alfredo de Andrade also took care to preserve, whenever possible, the old plaster – "scraped, scratched, lined with numerous writings"²⁷ – as a reminder of the previous generations that inhabited the castle.

This approach reflects a progressive philological attention to the building's stratification, the differentiation of the new additions but in harmony between the new and the old, as in his own words "the new harmonizes with the old without conflict."²⁸ Hence, the intervention in Pavone is an interesting example of Andrade's restoration methodology, in his careful analysis of the pre-existing building, the preservation of its different phases of construction, the study of analogous examples and the harmonious relation between old and new [Figg. 8a-8b].

25 D'Andrade, *Il castello di Pavone*.

26 Francesco Carandini, *Il castello di Pavone: per le nozze d'argento di Alfredo de Andrade e Costanza Brocchi, castellani di Pavone*, November 27, 1900 (Cremona, 1900), 12.

27 D'Andrade, *Il castello di Pavone*.

28 Alfredo d'Andrade, "Cenni biografici miei," Archivio di Stato di Torino (ASTo), Fondo d'Andrade, CP, B. 40, [1909?].



7a



7b

Interventions in Pre-existences by Álvaro Siza in Southern Italy

Although Siza’s professional activity is mainly rooted in Portugal, during his activity he has moved among several Italian cities, undertaking an articulated journey of knowledge and confrontation with the Italian architectural heritage, proposing projects and carrying out interventions. His presence in Italy, and particularly in Naples, is a very significant case study for understanding the adaptability and coherence of his poetics in complex and historically stratified urban contexts.

During those trips, guided by professor and old friend Francesco Venezia or other friends, I had the privilege of visiting Pompeii, Herculaneum and the Piscina Mirabilis, some of the city’s monuments and many places that Naples does not easily reveal.²⁹

His major Italian projects include: ‘the reconstruction’ of the Mother Church of Salemi and the redesign of Alicia Square (1982–1998), the urban planning proposals for the city of Caserta (1983), the project for Campo di Marte at Giudecca Island (1985), the urban planning studies for the Pendino district and for the municipality of Monteruscello in Naples (1986–1987), both unrealized, the project for the Town Hall of Caorle (1995), the study for the Pietà Rondanini at the Castello Sforzesco in Milan (1999), the Museum of Contemporary Art Donna Regina in Naples (2003–2006), the project for the ‘Municipio’ station of the Naples subway with the arrangement of the square of the same name (2003–2015), the project for the Residential Complex in Gallarate (2012–2020) [Fig. 9a-9b-9c].³⁰ In Naples, which is notoriously difficult for the inclusion of contemporary architecture because of its historical density, chaotic vitality, and multiple contradictions, he has completed two major projects: the design of the Donnaregina Museum of Contemporary Art (MADRE) and the subway station

Fig. 7a-7b

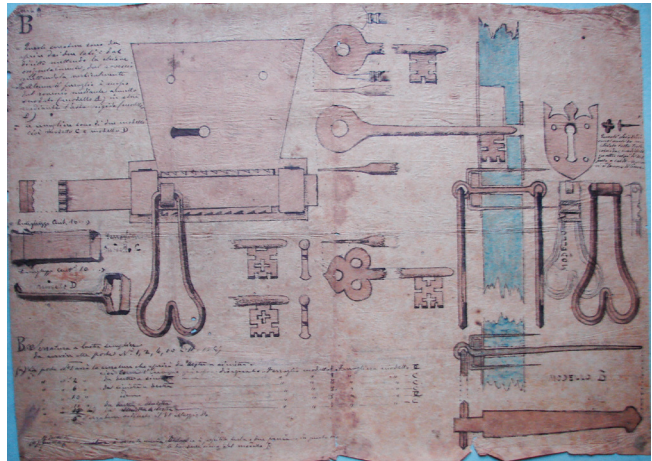
Alfredo de Andrade, Pavone Castle, in the donjon you can clearly see the battlements of the mimetic reconstruction (with the same type of masonry as the lower part) and the elevation addition, distinguished by a new construction typology, with stone masonry and horizontal brick runs. This typology is also evident in the elevation of the body on the right, where it is possible to read reminiscences of window arches from previous phases, (photos by Teresa Cunha Ferreira, 2007)

29 Siza, “Lectio magistralis,” 209–11.

30 Roberto Cremascoli and Francesco Moschini, eds., *Álvaro Siza in Italia: il Grand Tour 1976–2016* (Naples: Clean, 2016).



8a



8b

with the redevelopment of Piazza Municipio.³¹ His interventions do not impose as self-referential gestures but are configured as outcomes of a process of listening to and interpreting historical permanences and urban dynamics, aimed at defining new architectural forms that arise from the pre-existence and fit into the urban fabric in a measured way. Siza's architecture never seeks to overpower, but to dialogue: with the landscape, with the memory of places, with the daily life that flows in public spaces.³² One of his main design principles is measurement, understood not only in a proportional sense but also as sensitivity to the identity of the place. In Naples, a layered and complex city, this translates into particular attention to human scale, the relationship between solids and voids, natural light and matter. His projects reflect a sober language of essential geometries and materials dialoguing with climate, color and texture of the city.³³

The Donnaregina Museum of Contemporary Art (MADRE) Project in Naples (2003-2005)

The project to restore and re-functionalize Palazzo Donnaregina to create the Museum of Contemporary Art was Álvaro Siza's first architectural intervention in Naples.³⁴

I think like this many times when I go back to the hotel, coming out of the old, solid building that I will turn into a museum. A palace limited by narrow, massive constructions, so that you cannot totally perceive its shape. These are space-building structures full of intimacy and mystery, conquering light from the half-light, pierced by huge doors, doors that reveal courtyards covered with plants, dust and old stones.³⁵

31 Marella Santangelo, ed., *Álvaro Siza e Napoli: affinità di Gabriele Basilico e Mimmo Jodice* (Naples: Electa, 2004).

32 Pasquale Miano, "Álvaro Siza e la città di Napoli," in *012 Álvaro Siza Premio Argan 2022*, ed. Bruna Di Palma and Fabrizio Toppetti (Gubbio: Anca Documenti, 2023), 70–71.

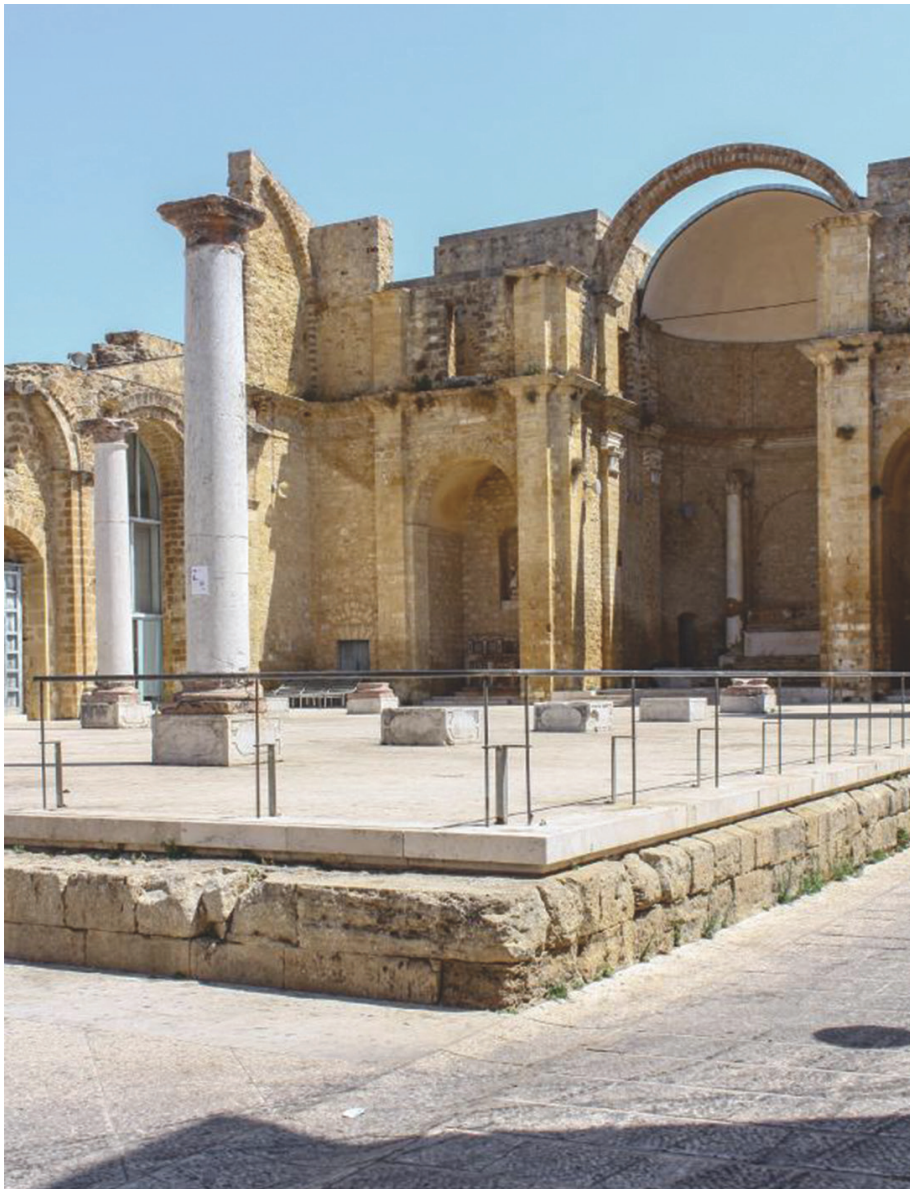
33 Valerio Ottavino, "Pensare costruendo: il cantiere come fase di concepimento dell'architettura tra auspici progettuali e incidenti di percorso" (PhD diss., Università di Roma "La Sapienza," 2021), 129–34.

34 The *Casabella's* attached insert on the works of Campania published the project: no. 737 (October 2005).

35 Siza, "Lectio magistralis," 209–11.

Figg. 8a-8b

Alfredo de Andrade, Pavone Castle, Drawings of studies and details (Private Archives of Andrade Family - APFA)



9a

Despite the apparent simplicity of the interventions, the project encountered relevant complexities, mainly due to the need to confront a stratified and articulated historical pre-existence. The intervention was based on a thorough analysis of the historical transformations and architectural specificities of the building, in order to understand its evolution over time, its spatial configuration, and its constructive complexity. This investigation was the prerequisite for assessing the building's capacity to accommodate new functions and meet contemporary museum needs, while safeguarding its historical, cultural and identity value.

The Historical and Architectural Pre-existence

Palazzo Donnaregina, in its present configuration is the result of the architectural stratifications that affected the ancient center of Naples, between the late 16th century and the 17th century, including the monastic insula of the Donnaregina convent. On the side of Via Settembrini, in particular, the building

Fig. 9a

Piazza Alicia and reconstruction Chiesa Madre in Salemi (Divisare, photo by Orazio Saluci, 2009)



9b

is located on the edge of the ancient Greek wall, the remains of which have emerged in the course of the work. The original nucleus, Palazzo Capano, of probable 17th-century date, included the building block on the south side, toward the Banco dei Pegni courtyard. In the mid-19th century, Palazzo Donnaregina was purchased by the Banco di Napoli and used as the headquarters of the Banco dei Pegni. Between 1845 and 1872 the building was enlarged with the addition of two wings and the arrangement of the front part on Via Settembrini, where the main entrance was placed with the creation of the *androne* and the two staircase blocks. In the twentieth century it underwent improper architectural transformations such as the creation of a raised atrium that occupied part of the upper courtyard and that of a reinforced concrete building volume on the side of the Church of Donnaregina that completely concealed, encompassing it inside, the ancient seventeenth-century facade of Palazzo Capano. Partitions and mezzanines were built that distorted the original typology, and the walls underwent the insertion of air conditioning systems without any respect for the structural and architectural integrity of the complex. After the 1980 earthquake,

Fig. 9b

Entrance to Donnaregina Museum of Contemporary Art (website Studio Dumontet, Napoli. <https://www.studiodumontet.it/portfolio/napoli-museo-madre/>. Accessed April 21, 2026).



9c

the building underwent structural reinforcements, only to be abandoned following the damage and static failures caused by the 2001 flood.

In 2003, the Campania Region bought the building, starting restoration work to create Museum of Contemporary Art on a project by Álvaro Siza assisted in the design and construction management by Studio DAZ Dumontet Antonini Zinke architetti associati in Naples [Fig. 10].³⁶

The Restoration and Functional Adaptation Project

In the project, special attention was paid to the study and understanding of the original structure of the building, the analysis of the historical and artistic stratifications of the subsoil, and archaeological findings. Visiting Naples and perceiving its vitality were essential moments in the development of the project

³⁶ "MADRE Museo di arte contemporanea Donna Regina," *Divisare*, 2010. <https://divisare.com/project-s/120366-Álvaro-siza-vieira-michele-nastasi-amedeo-benestante-madre>. Accessed April 21, 2026.

Fig. 9c

Project of Piazza Municipio
(photo by Laura De Riso, 2025)



10

that would consider the peculiarities of the city, its chaotic appearance, and the intense use of its public spaces.³⁷ Álvaro Siza, in his design, respected the complexity of the city, devoting himself to preserving the relationship of the Palace with the outside and with the living center of the city.³⁸

The numerous sketches he made reveal his intent to integrate with the urban fabric, to respect the building's historical layers, while introducing modern elements that do not impose themselves but blend with the existing environment [Fig. 11a-11b].

The restoration interventions were the result of a careful work of “subtraction,” with the demolition of the erroneous architectural alterations that followed over the years. Instead, the evolutionary history of the building, its volume and spatial structure, and the original materials were preserved as much as possible, while having to respond to the new museum requirements.³⁹

The clear internal organization, the succession of well-formed rooms from a large courtyard, and the diversified size of the rooms were considered excellent starting requirements for a project to adapt an existing space for exhibition purposes. No movable panels or prefabricated structures were used, but the rooms themselves generate a natural magnetism between the space and the artworks [Fig. 12].⁴⁰

37 Olga Scotto di Vettimo, *MADRE: Museo d'arte contemporanea Donnaregina, guida breve* (Naples: Fondazione Donnaregina per le arti contemporanee, 2017).

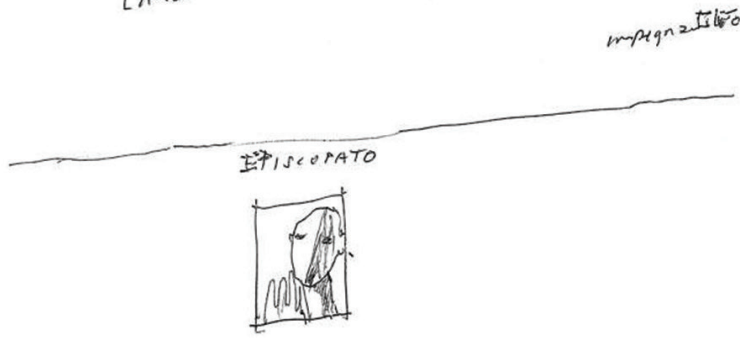
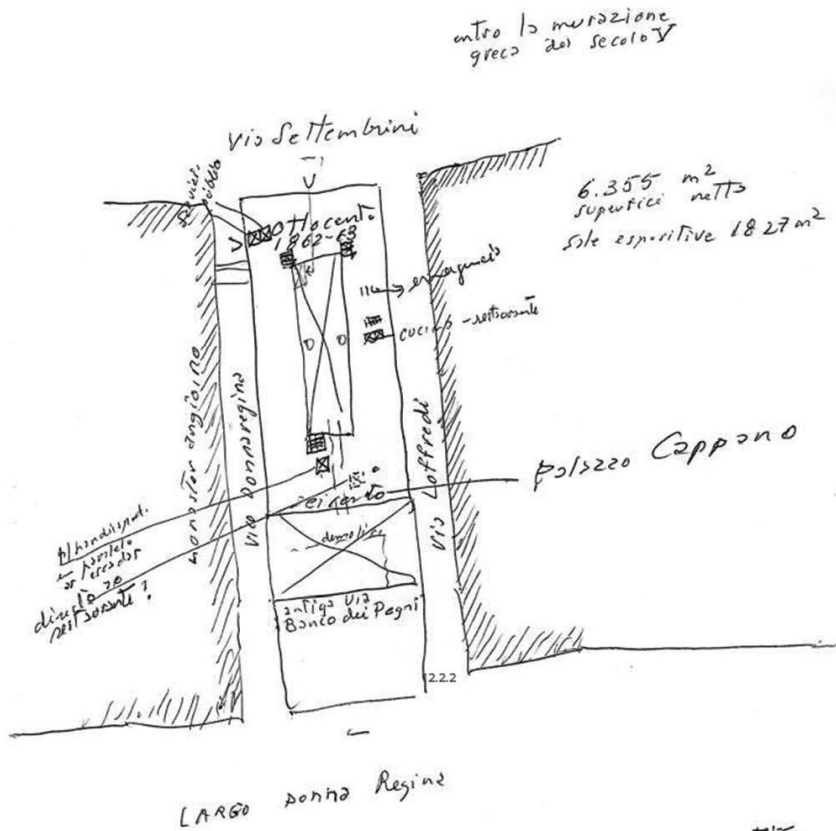
38 Annalisa Ferraro, “Il Madre – Museo d'arte contemporanea Donnaregina,” *Nuova Meta: Parole & immagini, Rivista di critica delle arti* 29, no. 37 (2014).

39 Paolo Giardiello, “Museo d'arte di Donna Regina a Napoli,” *DA. D'Architettura*, no. 28 (December 2005): 134–37.

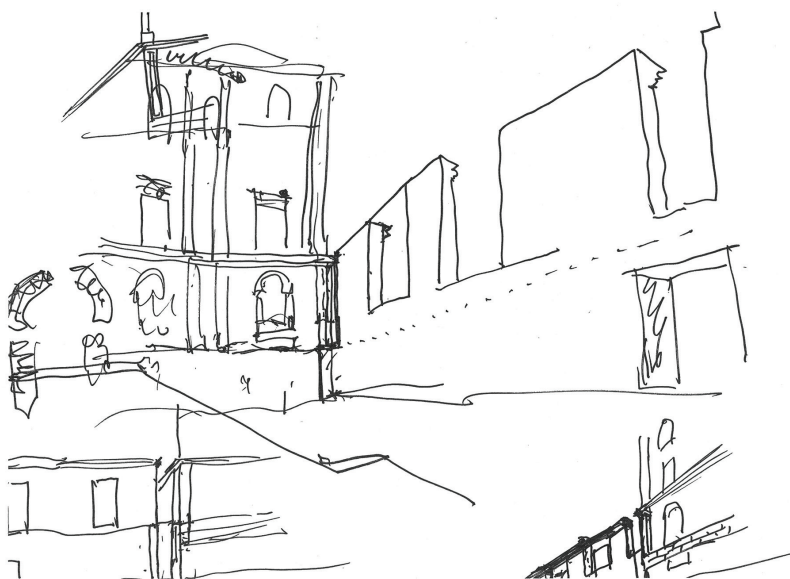
40 “Álvaro Siza e il restauro di Palazzo Donnaregina,” video interview, *MADRE – Museo d'arte contemporanea Donnaregina*, March 27, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqD4Yejlz6Q>. Accessed April 21, 2026.

Fig. 10

Alvaro Siza and the architects from Studio DAZ Dumontet Antonini Zasko architetti associate in Naples at the construction site (photo courtesy of DAZ Studio Archive, 2003-2005)



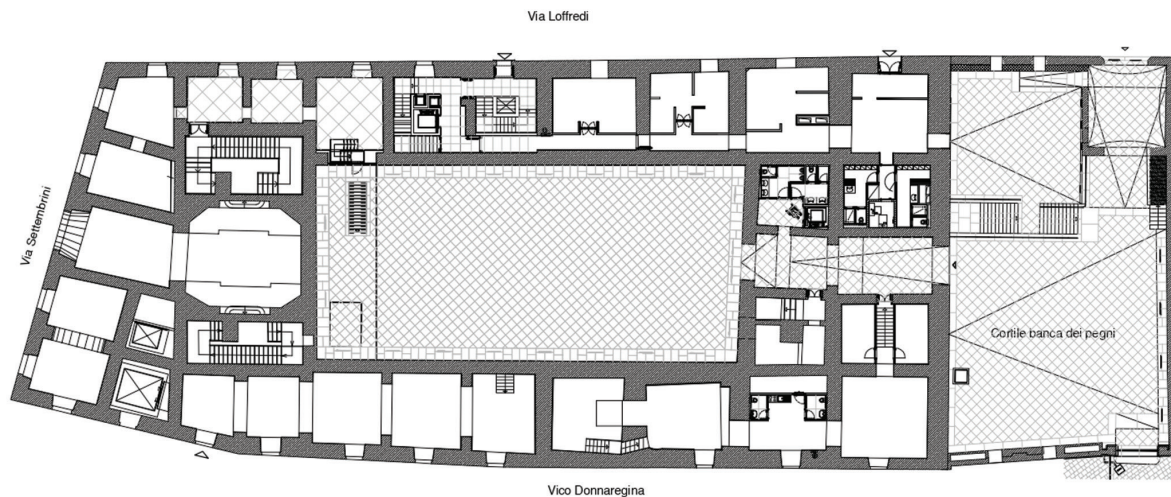
11a



11b

Figg. 11a-11b

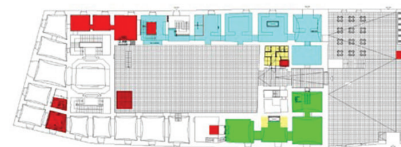
Project sketches made by Alvaro Siza depicting the study of historical stratifications and the crenelated boundary wall in the courtyard of Banco dei Pegni (website Studio Dumontet, Napoli. <https://www.studiodumontet.it/portfolio/napoli-museo-madre/>. Accessed April 21, 2026)



Pianta Piano ammezzato

Legenda Pianta funzioni

	Pubblico		Biblioteca		Commerciale		Doppia altezza
	Esposizione		Amministrazione		Locali tecnici		Ascensori
	Deposito / Magazzini		Bar - Ristorante		Servizi igienici		



The exhibition spaces, developed on three levels around the central courtyard are divided into a succession of neutral rooms of varying sizes, completely plastered in white and without skirting boards, creating a perspective axis [Fig. 13a-13b].⁴¹ The block facing Via Settembrini on the various levels houses the services: ticket office, library, bookstore and administration.

A cafeteria and restaurant are located in the first-floor wing overlooking Via Loffredi, at the end of the sequence of exhibition rooms and separated from them by a steel bridge across the open atrium [Fig. 14a-14b].⁴²

The large central courtyard overlooked by the exhibition rooms was created through the demolition of the elevated volume built in the early 1900s that occupied about half of its surface area [Fig. 15a-15b].

Underneath the courtyard, with access from the ground floor immediately after the entrance hall, the large multipurpose hall/auditorium was obtained by excavation works. Completely undecorated, painted white, like the other rooms in the building, it has a structure made of large steel beams. Below the structural part, a sheet of plasterboard is attached, which, with the curtain, hides the lighting system [Fig. 16a-16b].

On the side of the Donnaregina Church (courtyard known as the Banco dei Pegni), the concrete building volume was demolished in its entirety, leaving the open space from which there is an unprecedented view of the Donnaregina

Fig. 12

Plan of the mezzanine floor of the building, showing the distribution of rooms around the central courtyard, the service block on Via Settembrini and the Banco dei Pegni courtyard (Dossier/general report Alvaro Siza project archive, 2003-2005)

41 Elvira Di Meo, "Un vascello di luce bianca nella Napoli barocca," *OF ARCH*, no. 92 (October 2006): 109-21.

42 "MADRE Museo di arte contemporanea Donna Regina," *Divisare*.



13a



13b

Figg. 13a-13b
Photos of the interior exhibition
rooms (photos by Laura De
Riso, 2025)



14a



14b

Church. The boundary wall was redesigned with the crenellated motif to relate to the imposing ribs of the adjacent Church. The ancient facade of Palazzo Capano was also unveiled with the remains of the original piperno portal [Fig. 17a-17b].⁴³ Great care was taken in the study of lighting and thermal systems, taking care to conceal all equipment from view to leave only the artists' works visible. In the exhibition rooms, vents for ventilation and lights are built into a suspended ceiling detached from the walls. Similarly, electrical outlets, acoustics and fire protection system are integrated into the plasterboard lining of the perimeter walls [Fig. 18a-18b].⁴⁴

43 Di Meo, "Un vascello di luce bianca," 109–21.

44 Dumontet Antonini Zaske Architetti Associati, *MADRE Museo d'arte contemporanea di Napoli: progetto di restauro dell'edificio detto "Donnaregina," Dossier* (Naples: Studio DAZ, 2005).

Figg. 14a-14b

Top: photos of the steel jumper construction stages (photo courtesy of DAZ Studio Archive, 2003-2005). Down: photo of the current state (photo by Laura De Riso, 2025)



15a

Fig. 15a

Photo during the demolition of the concrete block made in the twentieth century in the central courtyard (photo courtesy of DAZ Studio Archive, 2003-2005)

Fig. 15b

Photo of the current state of the central courtyard (*Divisare*, photo by Michele Nastasi, Amedeo Benestante, 2010)



15b

Fig. 16a

Photo during the construction of the multipurpose hall below the central courtyard and interior photo of the multipurpose hall (photo courtesy of DAZ Studio Archive, 2003-2005)

Fig. 16b

Photo of the current state (photo by Laura De Riso, 2025)



16a



16b



17a



17b



18a



18b

The roof of the building consists of a non-accessible part with a roof garden made of white pebble carpet surrounded by mixed vegetation with the intention of hiding the large ducts and a part accessible through a new stone staircase from which one can enjoy the view of the ancient center of Naples with Vesuvius and the sea in the distance. Two concrete blocks, arranged on either side of the ancient clock serve to hide the air intakes. [Fig. 19]

In designing the Madre Museum in Naples, Álvaro Siza adopts an approach that is strongly rooted in respect for the city's urban context and the building's multiple layers. His interventions are guided by a desire for harmonious integration, rather than a desire for formal imposition. The result of three years of work, from 2003 to 2005, is a *progetto felice*⁴⁵ as Siza himself calls it, a work that restored compositional unity and formal elegance to the entire architectural organism.

Conclusions

Despite the almost one century spanning from their birth dates in Portugal, we may find several points of contact between Alfredo de Andrade and Álvaro Siza, such as the ability to adapt to different contexts and the use of drawing as a privileged tool. Also, they are the Portuguese architects with more built works in Italy and, among these, the majority are interventions in preexisting buildings.

The critical analysis of these works, with particular demonstrations though the intervention in the Pavone Castle in Piedmont and the MADRE Museum in Naples, allows us to extract some parallels between Andrade and Siza's approaches: the deep study of the existing before intervention (including direct surveys and observations through manual drawing); a circularity between past and present (operational history), where the study of the ancient fabric informs the design strategy; a strong sense of continuity with the character of buildings, the construction traditions and the introduction of a delicate modernity that can be seen in the details.

Moreover, both architects are united in their interventions by a "case-by-case" approach (including different operations from strict conservation to new additions, either with mimetic reconstruction or with the notoriety of new additions, the latter seeking always for harmony and continuity between new and old. Hence, "a new-old binary is not developed in a straightforward and simplistic form", embodying density and complexity to the interventions with respect to the historical layering of the building. This also endorses a pedagogical role towards the intervention in preexisting buildings where "each case is a non-generalizable circumstance" and is determined only by the "ethical compromise of a deep knowledge of the building to be transformed."⁴⁶

45 "Álvaro Siza e il restauro di Palazzo Donnaregina," video interview.

46 Alexandre Alves Costa, "O património entre a aposta arriscada e a confiança nascida da intimidade," *Jornal dos Arquitectos*, no. 213 (2003): 13.

Fig. 17a-17b

Left: photo of the crenellated wall built in the Pawnshop courtyard. Right: photo of the piperno portal of the original 17th century building after demolition operations (photo courtesy of DAZ Studio Archive, 2003-2005)

Fig. 18a-18b

Photos of construction details to hide the plant system (photos by Laura De Riso, 2025)



19

Also, these two architects contribute to the long history of migrations of architects between Italy and Portugal, being important links in the relations between the two countries. Hence, as Daniele Vitale states

architecture is also built through networks of analogies, through distant relationships that have always bound cities and buildings together. [...] cities arise not only from the singularity of places and the density of the land, but from intermingling and intertwining, from repetitions and recalls, from exchanges and echoes, from analogical relationships and imitative forms.⁴⁷

Fig. 19

Current state of the roof with the roof garden and the new access staircase (website Studio Dumontet, Napoli. <https://www.studiodumontet.it/portfolio/napoli-museo-madre/>. Accessed April 21, 2026)

47 Dario Vitale, "Il viaggio dell'architettura," in *Architetture portoghesi: tre scritti sul Portogallo del 1984, 1987, 1999, Quaderni del dottorato in composizione architettonica* (Milan: Politecnico di Milano, 2002), 10.

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The Katsura Imperial Villa in the Japan of Carlo Scarpa and Fernando Távora

Carlo Scarpa, Fernando Távora, Katsura Imperial Villa, Castelvecchio Museum, Pousada Mosteiro de Guimarães

/Abstract

Carlo Scarpa (1906-1978) and Fernando Távora (1923-2005) are key figures for understanding the architecture of Italy and Portugal in the second half of the twentieth century. The two architects are also linked by their shared interest in Japanese culture. Távora visited Japan in 1960; Scarpa in 1969, and again in 1978. They both visited the Katsura Imperial Villa. The drawings that Távora made at the time and the notes he took about the villa reveal a certain awe and fascination. Távora confirmed that all of the so-called Modern was there. The accounts of Scarpa's visit to the villa show an almost religious and, at all times, contagious enthusiasm, which was confirmed by his son, Tobia Scarpa (b. 1935). The paper aims to compare Japan's meanings and architecture in the works of Carlo Scarpa and Fernando Távora, based on their visits to Katsura Imperial Villa. It revisits the modernity of this seventeenth-century Japanese architectural masterpiece.

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Initial Considerations

Carlo Scarpa (1906-1978), from Venice, Italy, and Fernando Távora (1923-2005), from Porto, Portugal, remain key figures for understanding the architecture of Italy and Portugal in the second half of the twentieth century.

A previously felt need to re-examine the Modern Movement materialised in contrast with what was most dogmatic and universal concerning it. That need was to be based on new approaches to architecture, fuelled, among other things, by a more sensitive attention to the circumstances of each place and situation. Their shared obsession with drawing, their cultured and attentive interpretation of contexts, their work on the long history of architecture, and their desire to reconcile tradition with contemporaneity were ties that bound Scarpa and Távora. They also shared an interest in Japan and its culture. This interest manifested itself early on and was gradually fuelled by reading.

Traditional Japanese architecture appeared alongside Modern examples that incorporated traditional spatial values. Both men's interest in Japan was very much firm consolidated, accompanying and consolidating the diversity of their work as architects. Scarpa and Távora were able to visit Japan in the 1960s – Távora in May 1960; Scarpa in September 1969. Scarpa returned in 1978. The visit to the Katsura Imperial Villa, an imperial residence and its gardens built in the seventeenth century on the outskirts of Kyoto, greatly impacted both, which is confirmed by their reactions to the villa. They recognised Katsura's huge degree of modernity, which was all the more extraordinary given that it was built centuries before.

Fernando Távora and Carlo Scarpa's encounters with Katsura are the pretext to revisit the interest they both had in Japan and its architecture and verify the ways in which those encounters manifested themselves in their oeuvres.

The Modernity of Katsura Imperial Villa

The Katsura Imperial Villa [桂離宮], which comprises an imperial residence and gardens, owes its existence to the will of Prince Hachijō Toshihito (1579-1629), which was continued by his son, Prince Hachijō Toshitada (1619-1662). [Fig. 1] Toshihito was passionate about poetry, and a deep connoisseur of The Tale of Genji [源氏物語, Genji monogatari].¹ Perhaps Toshihito wanted to evoke the villa that had existed on the site, and which had apparently served as the basis for some of the events of the The Tale of Genji. The exact dates of the start and completion of the complex are unknown, although it is believed that its initial project dates back to 1615 and that the villa was already finished in 1663.²

1 The Tale of Genji is a tenth-century work by Murasaki Shikibu (ca. 978–ca. 1014), a Japanese court lady of the Heian period (794–1185). It is regarded as the first novel ever written. See Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*, trans. and ed. Royall Tyler (New York: Penguin Books, 2006).

2 Arata Isozaki, "The Diagonal Strategy: Katsura as Envisioned by 'Enshu's Taste,'" in *Katsura: Imperial Villa*, ed. Virginia Ponciroli (Milan: Electa Architecture, 2005), 9.

Its author is also unknown.³ The belief that it was Kobori Enshu (1579-1647), an architect and creator of Japanese gardens who was a recognised master of the tea ceremony, was fuelled by the fact that Prince Hachijō Yakahito (1703-1762), who owned Katsura, referred to some of the sections of the gardens as *Enshugonomi* [遠州ごのみ], which means in the Enshu's taste/style of Enshu.⁴ In the seventeenth century, the Western notion of authorship was foreign to the Japanese reality. Katsura was the result of the joint work of Toshihito and then Toshitada and the *daiku* [大工], the master builders or carpenters who worked on the project.

The Katsura Imperial Villa – its architecture and gardens – was built during a period of transformation in Japanese architecture, during which two distinct styles of residential architecture coexisted. On the one hand, there was the *shoin zukuri* [書院造] style, with medieval roots, which was adopted above all in samurai residences, and which appeared in the most formal and magnificent spaces. It was based on *kiwari* [木割], a system of proportions for the wooden bones of buildings that had been refined by the *daiku*. On the other hand, the *sukiya zukuri style* [数寄屋造り], used in the more common houses and soan tea pavilions, was more stripped down and was marked by the taste of the owners, thus assuming a freer adoption of *kiwari* and other construction precepts. Katsura has characteristics of both styles, in a complex and not always discernible coexistence. Beneath its apparent serene unity, especially to Western eyes, a play of distinct, if not contradictory values is revealed – aesthetic values, of course, but also political and social ones – which naturally offers itself up to multiple interpretations, which are not always clear cut either. “Indeed, Katsura is charged with contradictory, conflicting elements, which signal a number of messages at the same time. Such is Katsura’s ambiguity.”⁵

The reopening of Japan to the West, forced by the USA in 1853 and ending a period of more than two centuries of fruitful self-imposed isolationism, revealed to the world an architecture that had long been forgotten and which could only be reached through scarce images and always relative in rigour. Interest in Katsura wasn't immediate, and the villa was ignored in the first Western books on traditional Japanese architecture. It was the German Bruno Taut (1880-1938) who rescued Katsura from this oblivion. Taut visited Katsura for the first time on 4 May 1933, his birthday. He had recently arrived in Japan with his wife, Erica Wittich (1893-1975), fleeing the Nazi regime in Germany. In his diary, his notes reveal great astonishment – “Infinite and so rich in relationships that you are overwhelmed.”⁶ He returned to Katsura a year later. The impact was greater – “It does not leave you inebriated, but something more: you savour it deeply with the senses.”⁷ The drawings he made at the time, in which one discovers a desired

3 Isozaki, “The Diagonal Strategy,” 9.

4 Isozaki, “The Diagonal Strategy,” 9.

5 Isozaki, “The Diagonal Strategy,” 19.

6 Bruno Taut, “Reflections on Katsura,” in *Katsura: Imperial Villa*, ed. Virginia Ponciroli (Milan: Electa Architecture, 2005), 331.

7 Taut, “Reflections on Katsura,” 343.



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approximation to Japanese designs, confirm his interest in the relationship between architecture and gardens. Taut's great appreciation of Katsura was first expressed in the book *Nippon. Japan, seen through European eyes* [ニッポン—ヨーロッパ人の眼で見た, *Nippon. Yôroppa-jin no me de mita*], published in Tokyo in 1934, in Japanese.⁸ The fact that the pioneering affirmation of Katsura's value came from a foreigner caused some hurt among Japanese architects. Taut returned to Katsura in *Fundamentals of Japanese Architecture*,⁹ from 1936, and soon after, in *Houses and People of Japan*,¹⁰ from 1937, both published in Tokyo. The English text helped spread the villa and affirm its modernity. "What would you call this architecture in modern terms? I asked my friends. After some talk, we came to the conclusion that it was an architecture of function or one might call it an architecture of motive."¹¹ This confirmed a widespread and long-lasting interest in Katsura, at the same time as it was included in the group of reference works for Modern Architecture, making Katsura a major and universal moment in Japanese architecture.

Taut's initial contact with Katsura became central to his understanding of Japanese architecture. Through his books, this understanding helped determine the way Japan's architecture was valued. Taut praises Katsura's simplicity,

8 Isozaki, "The Diagonal Strategy," 19.

9 Bruno Taut, *Fundamentals of Japanese Architecture* (Tokyo: Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai, 1936).

10 Bruno Taut, *Houses and People of Japan* (Tokyo: Sanseido, 1937).

11 Taut, *Houses and People of Japan*, 291.

Fig. 1

Katsura Imperial Villa, Kyoto, Japan, seventeenth century. (Maria João Moreira Soares, 2016)

the absolute relationship between the architecture and the gardens, the way every detail is defined, in a balance between individuality and submission to the unity of the whole. In contrast, the ostentation he finds in the Tōshō-gū temple [東照宮] in Nikkō is met with disdain.

Carlo Scarpa and Fernando Távora, a note on travelling and reading

The Japanese writer and poet Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694) was a traveller. During his travels, Bashō wrote diaries, combining prose with poetry, which placed him in the time and space of a seventeenth-century Japan on its way to isolationism. In one of these diaries, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* [奥の細道, Oku no hosomichi], he wrote:

Months and days are the wayfarers of a hundred generations, the years too, going and coming, are wanderers. For those who drift life away on a boat, for those who meet age leading a horse by the mouth, each day is a journey, the journey itself home. Among Ancients, too, many died on a journey. And so, I too – for how many years – drawn by a cloud wisp wind, have been unable to stop thoughts of rambling.¹²

Carlo Scarpa died while travelling in Sendai, Japan, in 1978, the victim of a fall. He was trying to retrace Bashō's steps.¹³ Scarpa's first trip to Japan took place in 1969. Scarpa travelled with his son, Tobia Scarpa (b. 1935), at the invitation of Cesare Cassina (1909-1979), to visit the Tokyo Furniture Salon, which opened in August of that year.¹⁴ The Scarpas didn't travel until September. Nine years earlier, in May 1960, Fernando Távora had visited Japan. This was one of the most significant stages of a four-month trip that had taken him to the USA and Mexico, as well as Thailand, Pakistan, Egypt and Greece. Scarpa also visited Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries after his tour of Japan. Like Scarpa, Távora's trip to Japan was also prompted by an international event, the World Design Conference [WoDeCo], which opened in Tokyo in May 1960. Like Bashō, Távora recorded his trip in a *Diário de "Bordo"* [Logbook], writing and drawing.¹⁵ He thus left his memories of what was a particular moment in his life.

Scarpa waited until he was 63 years old to make his long-desired trip to Japan. His contact with Japanese culture had various origins, including the phenomenon of Japanism that reached Italy at the time, particularly Venice.¹⁶ It is likely that his admiration for Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959), who visited Japan for the first time in 1905, played a strong role in Scarpa's interest. Scarpa had long been collecting books on Japanese art and customs. *Taccuino giapponese*

12 Matsuo Bashō, *Bashō's Journey: The Literary Prose of Matsuo Bashō*, trans. David Landis Barnhill (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 49.

13 Silvia Catitti, "The Japanese Roots of Carlo Scarpa's Poetic Architecture," in *Italia e Giappone a confronto: cultura, psicologia, arti*, ed. Stefano U. Baldassarri (Florence: Angelo Pontecorboli, 2017), 54.

14 Mauro Pierconti, *Carlo Scarpa e il Giappone* (Milan: Mondadori, 2017), 28.

15 Fernando Távora, *Diário de "bordo"*, ed. Rita Marnoto (Porto: Associação Casa da Arquitectura, 2012).

16 Catitti, "The Japanese Roots," 34.

[Japanese notebook],¹⁷ written by Mario Gromo (1901-1960) in 1959, in which Scarpa had left abundant signs and annotations in his own hand, was decisive in preparing for the trip.¹⁸

Távora was 36 years old when he visited Japan. Thanks to his family background, characterised by his father's interest in the arts, he had a precocious and thorough knowledge of the country and its culture.¹⁹ Before the trip to Japan was even decided, Távora owned a book on Japanese art and several books on traditional Japanese architecture written by Japanese authors.²⁰ On the 1960 trip, Távora's initial focus was on the USA and the possibility of seeing the oeuvre of Frank Lloyd Wright. His visit to Taliesin East deeply moved him.²¹ The chance to visit Japan was a last minute decision, but it was one of the most important moments in the four months that Távora was away from Portugal. Távora and Scarpa acquired more books during their stays in Japan. Their interest in works on Japanese culture and architecture continued in subsequent years.

Scarpa's and Távora's encounters with Katsura Imperial Villa

Registering my father on a visit to Katsura would make a whole film today. [...] [i]t would be a symphony of exclamations and endless reminders: look at this, you see, how good. An endless story. I am grateful to him for buying a crate of rare books with a loan from me because they are now mine and bear his unmistakable scent.²²

Tobia Scarpa thus expresses his memories of his father's first encounter with the Katsura Imperial Villa. Katsura and the Ise Shrine [伊勢神宮], or Jingū [神宮], became fundamental references for Scarpa's work, constituting models that contained within them the codes of sophistication and constructive organisation of Japanese architecture.²³ Scarpa had enormous expectations of Katsura and its riches, aroused by careful reading, years before his 1969 trip, of Mario Gromo's book²⁴ and also Fosco Maraini's (1912-2004) book, *Ore giapponesi* [Japanese Hours],²⁵ published in 1956. Gromo and Maraini had Taut as a reference. Curiously, Scarpa didn't own any of Taut's books on Japan.²⁶ Despite these readings, Scarpa is confronted with the "fiume in piena," [river in full spate]

17 Mario Gromo, *Taccuino giapponese* (Turin: Paravia, 1959).

18 Pierconti, *Carlo Scarpa e il Giappone*, 29.

19 João Miguel Couto Duarte and Maria João Moreira Soares, "Fernando Távora's Japan through books: A fascination with tradition in search of innovation," in *Tradition and Innovation*, ed. Maria do Rosário Monteiro, Mário Ming Kong, and Maria João Pereira Neto (Leiden: CRC Press, 2021), 180.

20 Duarte and Soares, "Fernando Távora's Japan through books."

21 Távora, *Diário de "bordo"*, 235.

22 Tobia Scarpa, "Di qualche ricordo di un viaggio fatto con mio padre e maestro in Giappone," in *Carlo Scarpa e il Giappone*, ed. Mauro Pierconti (Milan: Mondadori Electa, 2017), 137. All the translations in English were done by the authors.

23 Pierconti, *Carlo Scarpa e il Giappone*, 53.

24 Gromo, *Taccuino giapponese*.

25 Fosco Maraini, *Ore giapponesi* (Bari: Leonardo da Vinci, 1956).

26 Catitti, "The Japanese Roots," 50.

as Mauro Pierconti writes,²⁷ which is the overwhelming experience of living Katsura, – one doesn't believe what one sees because of the excess of what is beyond one's gaze. In the unity that is Katsura, in its construction juxtaposed in time, which is characteristic of its elegance, so much appreciated by Scarpa, there is a humble luxury that reveals itself in a reciprocity between the whole and the detail. It's an astonishing modesty, an unrivalled festivity. It's something "capable of producing a wealth that we are willing to spend."²⁸ An endless story.

Távora visited Villa Katsura on 23 May. He had long been familiar with the site through books. The visit took place in a group, although Távora would have preferred to do it alone. The hour he spent in the complex proved to be too short and controlled. The notes he left in his diary are scarce, but they confirm the enormous satisfaction Katsura gave him.

As I expected, it's a jewel. There's nothing palatial about it to our European ideals. No major dimensions, no gold. It's a kind of bourgeois house, perhaps somewhere between an ordinary dwelling and a palace. But perhaps the great charm lies in the whole house-garden. It's not a house plus a garden – it's a whole.²⁹

Távora was particularly sensitive to the garden, as revealed by the only drawing he made during the visit, where he combines views of the entrance to the main pavilion and the *engawa* [縁側] that surrounds the middle pavilion with written notes on architectural materials and paths. The line is fine, as was his habit, trying to retain the delicacy of the relationship between the architecture and the gardens. There wasn't time for longer records. The desire to retain Katsura, which the drawing seeks to perpetuate, did not prevent a more rational reflection on the meaning and relevance of the work for contemporary times. "What a discovery Katsura might have been for modern architects (and Mondrian, of course, among others)!"³⁰ Távora confirms Katsura's Modern value, in a line of continuity with Taut. "Of course it's of immense interest to us, but the principles are those that have been injected into us for twenty or thirty years. All of the so-called Modern is there – Mies, Corbusianish, Wright (the latter less so, in formal terms)."³¹ Significantly, Távora bought the 1958 edition of *Houses and People of Japan* in Japan.³² He expressed his desire to return to Japan when he left but was unable to fulfil this wish.

"An endless story"

In a photograph taken on the eve of his death, Carlo Scarpa is shown touching, almost caressing, a rope that ties together two tubular elements of a spatial

27 Pierconti, *Carlo Scarpa e il Giappone*, 56.

28 Pierconti, *Carlo Scarpa e il Giappone*, 55.

29 Távora, *Diário de "bordo"*, 330.

30 Távora, *Diário de "bordo"*, 330.

31 Távora, *Diário de "bordo"*, 330.

32 Duarte and Soares, "Fernando Távora's Japan through books," 184.

structure: one vertical, made of metal; the other horizontal, made of bamboo. In their simplicity and complexity, these two elements and the knot that unites them evoke an articulation of Japanese space: successions of modules that multiply spatially in horizontally unravelled layers. Pierconti points out that the knot touched by Scarpa is both articulation and decoration,³³ adding that Katsura should be considered the place where the transfiguration of this simultaneity into a total work of art is most evident. This explains Scarpa's fascination with Katsura perhaps.

In 1977, a year before his final visit to Japan, the first monograph on Scarpa was published in the magazine *SD: Space Design*. In a conversation included in the monograph,³⁴ Harata Isozaki (1931-2022) and Tadashi Yokoyama (b. 1939) discuss Scarpa's affinity with the Dutch *de Stijl* movement,³⁵ in which Wright dominates. In this affinity, and in a certain liberation from Wright's yoke, Yokoyama mentions that Scarpa "appears to have discovered a different way of presence for walls as an entity vested with a 'fictional' feeling of some kind."³⁶ Isozaki goes on to say that "Scarpa primarily stages spatial stratification in the existing ambience by designing the floor covering, the wall, or the ceiling. Not only walls but differentiated horizontal and vertical surfaces form permeable spatial boundaries."³⁷ Yokoyama and Isozaki's observations suggest that Scarpa followed an architectural process based on a stratification of mobile layers. In the documentary *Il padiglione sull'acqua* [The pavilion on the water],³⁸ from 2023, Japanese philosopher Ryosuke Ohashi (b. 1944) wonders what is familiar about Scarpa's work and what makes it so Japanese. The answer lies beyond appearance. Ohashi finds the Buddhist concept *mujō* [無常] in Scarpa. *Mujō*, which means impermanence, or transience, relates to reality that is always changing, in transition.³⁹ In this impermanence, this ephemeral constancy, there are no definitive measurements, memories or defined borders. Everything disappears, everything dies, but because there is transience, everything acquires renewed meaning. Paradoxically, Isozaki says that Scarpa's work needs the concrete 'thing', because "[Scarpa] uses the reverse method of leading the connection of parts to form the whole."⁴⁰ In this method, what the eye sees and what the hand feels are fundamental. It's the hand whose finger touches the string while the eye observes it. In this touch, there is a layering of layers. Articulation is always necessary, acting as a hinge. Perhaps Scarpa's work lives in this paradox between impermanence and touch – just as Katsura presents himself. It was,

33 Pierconti, *Carlo Scarpa e il Giappone*, 54.

34 Arata Isozaki and Tadashi Yokoyama, "Dialogue: Speaking of Carlo Scarpa (Summary)," *SD: Space Design*, no. 153 (June 1977): 3–4.

35 Carlo Scarpa designed the Piet Mondrian exhibition at the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome in 1956.

36 Isozaki and Yokoyama, "Dialogue," 3.

37 Isozaki and Yokoyama, "Dialogue," 3.

38 *Il padiglione sull'acqua* [The Pavilion on the Water], documentary film, directed by Stefano Croci and Silvia Siberini (Bologna: Caucaso Factory, 2023).

39 Murielle Hladick, "Mujō – l'impermanence," in *Vocabulaire de la spatialité japonaise*, ed. Philippe Bonnin, Nishida Masatsugu, and Inaga Shigemi (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2014), 356–58.

40 Isozaki and Yokoyama, "Dialogue," 3.

after all, a hinge like this that Scarpa designed for Castelvecchio (1957-1964) in the passage that joins Reggia to Caserna. The passage opens up space for impermanence, while at the same time tying these two bodies together like a knot. Katsura's Japan also resides in Verona, Italy. [Fig. 2]

In an interview in 2001, Fernando Távora said:

I can hardly forget the deep relationship that exists between me and my work, a family relationship. [...]. And I always keep a photograph with me of my parents taken in the cloister of the Convent of Santa Marinha da Costa, in 1915, when I was not yet born. // Relationships, fatality.⁴¹

These reflections by Távora, made later on in his life, reveal a closeness to his work that reflects affection, which goes far beyond a circumstantial connection, to inscribe itself in a broad and lasting temporal dimension, where permanence relativises any transience. Architecture, being contemporary, as he always defended from an early age, participates in a continuum that precedes and succeeds it. Távora's relationship with Japan was one that was very much fuelled by fascination. The encounter with Japan confirmed this fascination, especially with the country's traditional architecture and most ancient customs. These were testimonies over a long period of time, fuelled by traditions and precepts, even if, from Távora's perspective, the acceleration of the 1960s seemed to be irreparably jeopardising them. Several of the drawings in the *Diário de 'Bordo'* made in Japan confirm Távora's preoccupation with the details of architecture, especially traditional interior spaces, an obsession with measuring everything to capture everything. He was interested in proportions, materials, proximity to the body and the simplicity of space. He was also interested in the relationship between space and the outside, particularly gardens. It's easy to imagine Távora touching the architecture – the wooden structures, the *shōji* [障子], the almost always rough stones – responding to the call of what he saw.

Katsura was certainly one of the architectural works that Távora most appreciated during his visit to Japan. The combination of architecture and gardens, remarkable as it was, revealed a huge and questioning modernity. Katsura is not immediately and explicitly reflected in Távora's work, but it is possible to find its subtle presence in the new wing of rooms at the Pousada Mosteiro de Guimarães (1972-1989), an intervention full of affection rather than familiarity. Távora always referred to the Minho origins of the new body of the pousada⁴². However, Katsura is present in the abstraction of the wooden planes that enclose the rooms, in the concealment of details, in the way it approaches a large piece of furniture, in the merger of the transition between the interior spaces and the garden. Katsura is present, above all, in the serene incorporation of the new wing into a continuum of time, which tends towards a history that could be infinite. It's a kind of fatality. [Fig. 3]

41 Fernando Távora, *Fernando Távora: as raízes e os frutos; palavra, desenho, obra, vol. 1.1*, ed. Manuel Mendes (Porto: Fundação Instituto José Marques da Silva, 2021), xxvi.

42 The Pousada Mosteiro de Guimarães is located in Minho, the northernmost region of Portugal.

Fig. 2

Carlo Scarpa, Oblique passage, Castelvecchio Museum, Verona, Italy, 1964 (Maria João Moreira Soares, 2014)

Fig. 3

Fernando Távora, new wing, Pousada Mosteiro de Guimarães, Guimarães, Portugal, 1972-1984 (Maria João Moreira Soares, 2022)



2



3

Final considerations

"So it is that Katsura is a text rich with ambiguity where architectural languages of spatially and temporally different sources are juxtaposed."⁴³

Beneath its seemingly serene existence, the Katsura Imperial Villa unfolds into an unexpected complexity in which multiple measurements of different thicknesses and meanings can be discerned. Starting with Bruno Taut, the Modern Movement recognised in Katsura the clarity of the spaces and their organisation, and the sincerity in the way this organisation was materialised, values that were clearly in line with modern ambitions.

Carlo Scarpa and Fernando Távora were aware of this modern appreciation, but their views are more nuanced, confirming the overlaps in Katsura. Távora is sensitive to the unity of the villa and its contemporaneity, discerning a continuum of time-based overlaps; Scarpa rejoices in the details and their relationship to the architectural work as a whole, revealing an empathy with the conceptual dimension of Japanese spatial organisation and the successive overlaps of space-time that it entails. This notion of superimposition is perhaps the most compelling echo of the Katsura Imperial Villa in the works of Scarpa and Távora – in Távora, that echo is present in the work with successive time-based layers; in Scarpa, the echo permeates an abstract space-time complex.

Acknowledgments

This work was funded by national funds through FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., within the project UID/04041/2025 - Arnaldo Araújo Research Centre.

43 Isozaki, "The Diagonal Strategy," 10.

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The Journey of SAAL in Italy. An Itinerant Exhibition (1977)

SAAL, Exhibition, Journey, Italy, Portugal

/Abstract

Following the outbreak of the Portuguese Revolution on April 25, 1974, and the subsequent creation of SAAL – a semi-state service supporting citizen-led housing initiatives – Italy showed a strong and growing interest in the Portuguese experience. This was first reflected in a series of articles published in major architectural journals, and in the release of *Politica e Progetto. Un'Esperienza di Base in Portogallo*, the first book dedicated to SAAL. That interest later materialized in the organization of a travelling exhibition across the main schools of architecture in Italy, under the direction of Emilio Battisti and Francesco Marconi, and featuring the participation of Álvaro Siza, Alexandre Alves Costa, and Nuno Portas. The exhibition emerged as a unique moment of cultural exchange, marking the first international presentation of SAAL and prompting the Portuguese architects to construct a narrative around their recent experience. From Turin to Palermo, the three architects travelled across the Italian peninsula, presenting the SAAL process to professors and students, and fostering a meaningful dialogue between the architectural cultures of the two countries. Reconstructing this experience offers the opportunity to identify the key figures who played a decisive role in the dissemination of SAAL in Italy, while investigating their relationships and contributions within a particularly active and dynamic cultural context.

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In 1974, an unexpected event occurred, capturing the interest and attention of the international community. This event was the Portuguese Revolution.

Also known as the *Revolução dos Cravos*, the Revolution broke out on the 25th of April, bringing a new sense of hope and romanticism throughout the country and across Europe. Alongside the political and cultural upheavals, the architectural community maintained a steady focus on Portugal and the innovative forms of dwelling, social, and cultural design that were being developed during that period. International groups of students, architects, and intellectuals travelled to Portugal to document the Revolution and the subsequent events, becoming part of and bearing witness to History. Italy also expressed a clear interest in the matter, with a series of publications on what was one of the most significant processes to emerge after the Revolution: the SAAL service.

The Emergence and Structure of SAAL

In the months following the Revolution, critical housing issues – accumulated over years of crisis – erupted with renewed urgency¹. SAAL (*Serviço de Apoio Ambulatório Local*) was promoted as a response to this pressing situation².

Promoted by Nuno Portas – at the time Secretary of State for Housing and Urbanism – SAAL imposed itself not merely as a project, but as a process placing greater emphasis on the method than on the “final product”, the house. Specifically, multidisciplinary teams of architects, engineers, psychologists, and urbanists – known as Brigadas Técnicas – formed the backbone of SAAL. These teams worked closely with local administrations, the State, and the local communities to mobilize the organizational capacities, as well as financial and human resources, of the population in order to actively shape their urban realities³.

Eventually, we may say that SAAL emerged as a process aimed at formalizing a practice through which housing solutions could be developed while also fostering a civic and political sense of community. Therefore, a certain degree of political consciousness and organizational capacity on the part of local communities

1 The origin of the housing problem in mid-twentieth-century Portugal is closely tied to the economic and administrative policies pursued by the authoritarian regime then in power. In line with a capitalist model of economy and society, the 1950s saw the promotion of foreign capital investment in the country, aimed at supporting a late industrialization process and fostering monopolistic economic operations controlled by narrow, elite social groups. These economic initiatives, beyond their social consequences, also affected urban development, which became marked by disorganized growth and a lack of basic services and infrastructure (Alexandre Alves Costa, “L’esperienza di Porto,” *Lotus International*, no. 18 (1978): 66–105). To this must be added the acceleration of the decolonization process in the territories controlled by Portugal in Africa and Asia, which followed the outbreak of the Portuguese Revolution in 1974. As a result, a massive exodus of Portuguese citizens residing in those territories occurred, and their return to the homeland triggered serious social challenges. See António Costa Pinto, *O fim do império português: a cena internacional, a guerra colonial e a descolonização, 1961–1975* (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2001).

2 SAAL was officially established on July 31, 1974, by a ministerial decree issued by the Ministério do Equipamento Social e do Ambiente and the Ministério da Administração Interna. See *Diário do Governo*, no. 182, August 6, 1974, Series SSC1.6: Hélder Tiago (June 1974–May 1975), Section SC1: Arquitectura/SAAL, José António Bandeirinha Collection, Centro de Documentação 25 de abril da Universidade de Coimbra (hereafter cited as CD25AUC).

3 See Francesco Marconi and Paula de Oliveira, *Politica e progetto: un’esperienza di base in Portogallo* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1977), 63–81.

was required, due to the principle that interventions had to be directly requested by the communities themselves⁴. Comissões de Moradores and Associações de Moradores – political and administrative forms of organization established by residents of degraded urban areas after the 25th of April⁵ – thus became key actors in the SAAL operations, enabling a proactive role for the population in the transformation of its own living conditions⁶.

Alongside these new forms of social participation, a new perspective on the architect role emerged. The architect was seen as a figure capable of interpreting the intentions and aspirations of the population throughout new skills and concepts, becoming a political and social key figure⁷.

The SAAL Exhibition Tour in Italy

The Portuguese Revolution and the emergence of SAAL captured the attention of the Italian architectural community, whose context at the time was marked by a series of circumstances closely resembling the Portuguese situation.

During the 1970s, Italy was affected by political conflicts, youth protests, and social demands – many of which were centered around the issue of housing. The country was experiencing political unrest and social tension, and within this context, the Portuguese Revolution was seen as an example to follow, offering new perspectives and possibilities⁸.

This interest was first expressed through a series of editorial publications, among which we may cite *Casabella*, *Controspazio*, *Città Classe e Lotus International*⁹. More significantly, a particular event stood out as a manifestation of this interest and curiosity: the organization of the very first exhibition on SAAL, which was hosted across eight different Italian faculties, accompanied by a cycle of seminars led by key figures of the SAAL service – Nuno Portas, Alexandre Alves Costa, and Álvaro Siza. According to the organizers, the exhibition and lectures were conceived as a valuable opportunity to promote the SAAL experience within the Italian architectural context, representing a dynamic occasion for discussion that could directly engage both the architectural scene and the student body. [Fig. 1]

4 See Marconi and de Oliveira, *Politica e progetto*, 52–54.

5 On May 1, 1974, the first sign of urban mobilization took place in Porto, with a demonstration by the residents of the bairro camarário of S. João de Deus. Their *Caderno Reivindicativo* was the first to be drafted. See José António Bandeirinha, *O processo SAAL e a arquitetura no 25 de abril de 1974* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 2007), 110.

6 See Bandeirinha, *O processo SAAL e a arquitetura no 25 de abril de 1974*, 88, 149–50.

7 See Marconi and de Oliveira, *Politica e progetto*, 46.

8 At the time, the Italian context was marked by the strong presence of extra-parliamentary groups—Lotta Continua, Potere Operaio, and the Movimento Studentesco—actively engaged in the political mobilization of the masses through real struggles for social demands. For this reason, particular affinities and overlaps with the Portuguese experience could be identified, making Italy an ideal recipient for its lessons.

9 Cristina Ramos states in her “A divulgação internacional da arquitetura portuguesa, 1976–1988” (PhD diss., Faculdade de Arquitetura da Universidade do Porto, 2016) that the year 1966 marks an important shift in the geographical origin of publications aimed at disseminating the Portuguese architectural experience, signaling a handover from French to Italian and Spanish domains.



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Through this work, we have sought to reconstruct the experience, bringing to light new elements and clarifying still uncertain aspects, offering suggestions and reflections that may provide a renewed perspective on the architectural scene of 1970s Italy and the subsequent international dissemination of the SAAL experience and Portuguese architecture.

Key Figures and Collaborative Networks

Firstly, the study reveals the key role played by several important figures of the time who were involved in organizing the exhibition. Especially, two architects stood out as the main promoters of the event: Emilio Battisti and Francesco Marconi.

Emilio Battisti was at the time a professor at the Politecnico di Milano, and the director of an editorial series focused on the themes of housing and the city – *Casa Città Territorio* – published by Feltrinelli. The interest for the theme of social housing inspired Battisti to travel to Portugal in 1975, where he became acquainted with the Portuguese Brigadas and met Álvaro Siza in person¹⁰. The experience of that journey led Battisti to recognize the political, social, and cultural affinities between Portugal and Italy, as well as the distinct differences

Fig. 1

Faculty of Architecture in Rome, Valle Giulia, April 1977 (CD25AUC, 119 Alves Costa collection)

¹⁰ Emilio Battisti, interview by author, Milan, January 12, 2023. All the interviews' transcripts was translated by the author.

that underscored the innovative character of SAAL. Battisti identified in SAAL a direct, pragmatic and effective translation of the same social demands that were also animating the Italian context, where these claims were often filtered through a more theoretical and ideological lens, and rarely translated into concrete architectural practice¹¹.

At the time, Battisti was in contact with Franco Purini, whom he had met during their professional collaboration at Vittorio Gregotti's studio. Meanwhile, Purini had established a connection with Francesco Marconi at the University of Architecture of Rome, where the former was working as a tutor and the latter was a student¹². Marconi is remembered as the first – and only – Italian architect directly involved in SAAL, having moved to Portugal and joined a Brigada Tecnica when the Revolution broke out. For this reason, in 1976, Purini encouraged him to “historicize” his experience within the Portuguese SAAL, first introducing him to the editorial board of *Casabella* (where Marconi published the article “Portogallo: Operação SAAL”¹³) and later to Battisti¹⁴, who at the time was directing the Feltrinelli series.

Conceiving an Idea: From Book to Exhibition

The encounter between Battisti and Marconi led to the publication of *Politica e Progetto: Un'Esperienza di Base in Portogallo*, a book released by Feltrinelli in 1977. Although the book has not yet been fully acknowledged by critics, *Politica e Progetto* stands out as a fundamental resource for shedding light on new aspects and details of the SAAL experience, as well as for understanding how SAAL was communicated abroad. Moreover, the book appears to have served as the main foundation upon which the exhibition was structured, synthesizing and collecting the materials produced by the Brigadas during their activities, and eventually becoming the exhibition's own catalogue. In fact, it was during the preparation of *Politica e Progetto* that Battisti and Marconi decided to translate the content of the book into a more engaging and dynamic form. Thus, they conceived the idea of the exhibition, aiming to bring the Portuguese experiment into the academic sphere¹⁵. [Fig. 2]

To further stimulate a vivid debate around the questions raised by SAAL, Battisti also invited the key figures of the process to participate in a series of seminars, offering their own experience and testimonies. Eventually, Nuno Portas, Alexandre Alves Costa, and Álvaro Siza were involved by Battisti¹⁶: the

11 This assumption is clearly expressed in a letter from Emilio Battisti to Francesco Marconi, November 24, 1975, Emilio Battisti Collection, Archivio del Moderno (hereafter cited as AdM).

12 Franco Purini, interview by author, Rome, August 4, 2023. In a particularly turbulent climate—marked by the crisis following the economic boom, the disillusionment of '68, and the Anni di Piombo—the Italian university environment was itself permeated by intense political and cultural ferment.

13 Francesco Marconi, “Portogallo: operação SAAL,” *Casabella*, no. 419 (1976): 2–21.

14 Francesco Marconi, interview by author, Coimbra, May 31, 2023.

15 Francesco Marconi, interview by author, Coimbra, May 31, 2023.

16 Letter from Emilio Battisti to Álvaro [Siza], November 1, 1975, Emilio Battisti Collection, AdM.



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former for his role as the founder of SAAL; Alves Costa as director of the most efficient and active branch of SAAL (the SAAL Norte); and the latter as the most representative Portuguese architect of the time. In fact, thanks to the efforts of Vittorio Gregotti – who had promoted Siza’s work in Italian architectural journals since the early 1970s¹⁷ – Siza was already well known in Italy, and likely throughout Europe¹⁸.

Organizing the Tour

While Battisti coordinated the initiative from Italy through direct contact with Portas, Alves Costa, and Siza, Marconi managed the organizational efforts from Portugal¹⁹. Thanks to his role, he managed relationships and communication among the various Portuguese actors and, with the support of Álvaro Siza²⁰, curated the materials produced by the different Brigadas featured in the exhibition, in order to present their work to the Italian public. Initially, only the Brigadas

17 In 1972, Vittorio Gregotti published his first article dedicated to the work of Álvaro Siza: Vittorio Gregotti, “Architetture recenti di Álvaro Siza,” *Controspazio*, no. 9 (1972): 22–24.

18 Alexandre Alves Costa, interview by author, Porto, April 11, 2023.

19 “Exposição Italia/SAAL” by Francesco Marconi, Subseries Exposição Italia/SAAL 1976, Series SSC1.16: Apetrechamento dos serviços, Section SC1: Arquitectura/SAAL, José António Bandeirinha Collection, CD25AUC.

20 Letter to Emilio Battisti (“Caro Emilio Battisti, Comprendi bem o teu italiano”), Emilio Battisti Collection, AdM.

Fig. 2

Faculty of Architecture, Libera Università Abruzzese “G. D’Annunzio”, Pescara, April 1977 (CD25AUC, 119 Alves Costa collection)

SAAL/NORTE porto, PORTUGAL
ANTAS



- A - ATIVIDADES DE ENQUADRAMENTO QUANTITATIVAS DA OBRA**
 1 - Participação das Antas no movimento dos moradores pelas ruas da cidade.
 2 - Assembleia dos moradores que antecede a ocupação da zona para este e futuro.
 3 - Atividade recreativa em as crianças da zona.
 4 - Interior das lojas - Rua da Fria.
 5 - Vista panorâmica da zona das Antas.
- 6 - Conjunto de "ilhas" (planta G.1).
 7 - "Ilhas".
- 8 - Imagem da zona da obra.
 9 - Carta de 1950. Zona habitacional da periferia da cidade.
 10 - Demarcação efetuada a partir de 1950. Início da recuperação da freguesia urbana (Alameda vitoriosa da) e consequente expulsão da população para aqui. G.1 - Localização de um sector de "ilhas".
- nos perifericos.
 11 - Projeto de recuperação urbana da zona previsto no Plano Director.
 12 - Situação em 1974. Demarcada (a postumo) a área de intervenção SAAL.
- 13 - Imagem de recuperação do sector referido.
 14 - Setor recuperado e estado actual em a recuperação em prevista.
- 1 - Habitação 2 - Sereador da zona 3 - Sereador
- 4 - RECONSTRUÇÃO DE PAVES
 5.1 - Alameda da Rua das Antas (esta principal da zona).
 5.2 - Alameda. Recuperação das freguesias a margem da rua.



Fig. 3
 One of the panels displayed during the exhibition, heliographic print, 1x2 m (Casa da Arquitectura, Pedro Ramalho collection, section Projectos de Arquitectura, series 0.24 SAAL: Antas)

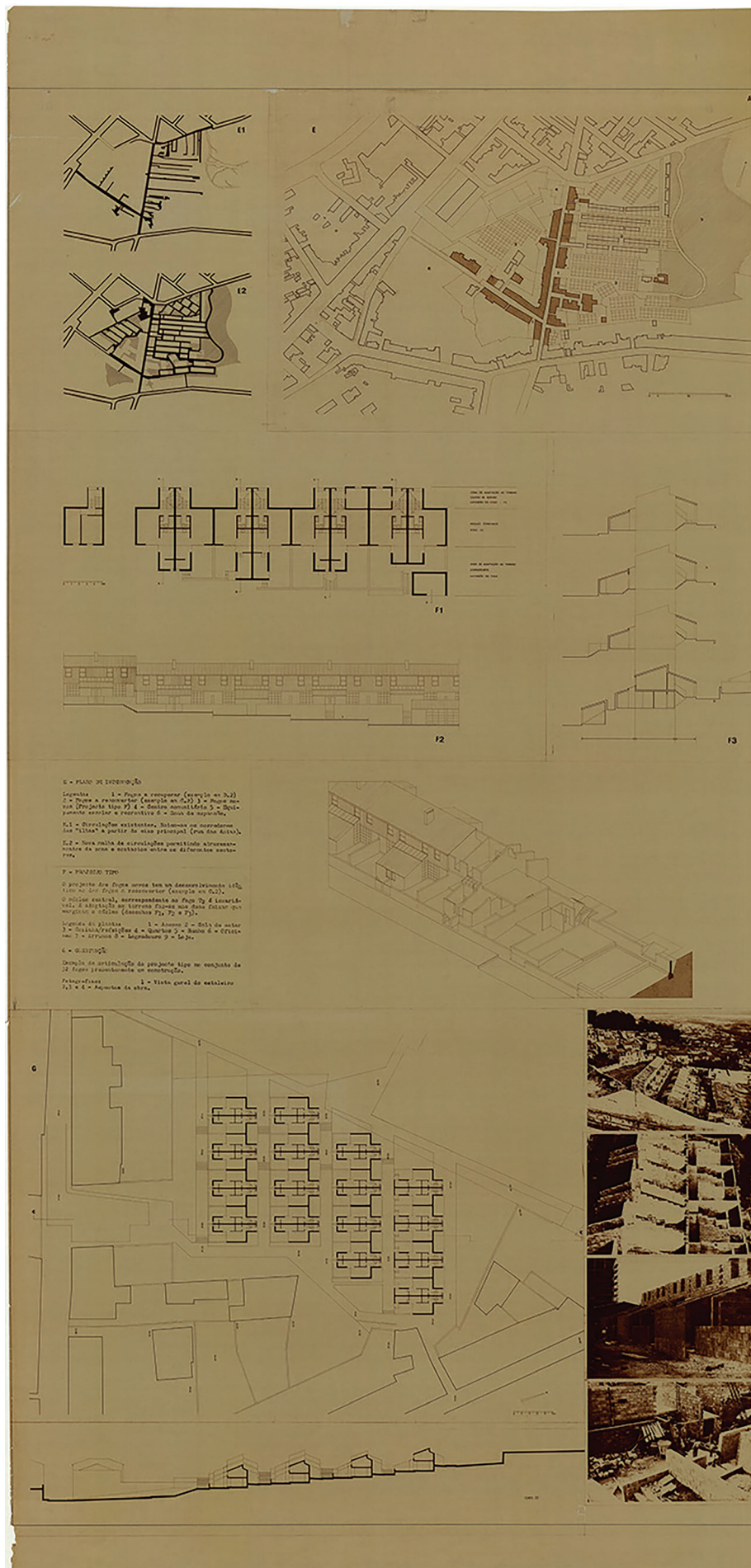


Fig. 4

One of the panels displayed during the exhibition, heliographic print, 1x2 m (Casa da Arquitectura, Pedro Ramalho collection, section Projectos de Arquitectura, series 0.24 SAAL: Antas)

of SAAL-Norte were invited to participate in the event. Eventually, however, the invitation was extended to any Brigada willing to take part²¹, reflecting a genuine curiosity and enthusiasm for the Italian exhibition²². Each Briagas was asked to produce its own material to represent its activities, including architectural drawings, schemes, photos, and a written text, with a focus on the early design phases (those most explicitly marked by political ideology)²³.

In total, a series of nearly thirty panels (1m by 2m) was produced, involving ten different SAAL interventions²⁴. The organization of such diverse materials proved to be particularly challenging, revealing one of the essential features of the SAAL process: its intrinsic heterogeneity. SAAL was, by nature, highly variable, differing from area to area, operation to operation, and Brigada to Brigada. It is important to underline that the panels created by the SAAL-Norte Brigadas proved to be the most expressive, coherent, and well-organized. This characteristic reflects the particular effectiveness of the SAAL-Norte teams in narrating their ideas, processes, and activities, thereby conveying a strong and unified identity. Given this evidence, it becomes clear why their materials and panels are the only ones that have been well preserved in the archives, and consequently the only ones presented in this study. [Fig. 3–4]

Simultaneously, Battisti contacted the representatives of all architecture faculties active at the time in Italy and invited them to take part in the event. The faculties of Torino, Milano, Venezia, Firenze, Pescara, Roma, Napoli, Reggio Calabria, and Palermo were initially contacted and informed about the logistical arrangements²⁵. Subsequently, the number was reduced to eight, and the final itinerary of the exhibition, and of Portas, Alves Costa, and Siza, was as follows: Torino, Milano, Venezia, Pescara, Roma, Cosenza, Reggio Calabria, and Palermo²⁶. Travelling by car along the peninsula [Fig. 5], the three architects conducted a two-week tour – from April 17 to 29, 1977 – ensuring that the exhibition opened at least one week before the seminars they held at each faculty²⁷.

Typically, the first part of the day was dedicated to lectures by Portas, Alves Costa, and Siza, while the afternoons were reserved for open debates with students²⁸. Each of the three architects presented a lecture focused on their specific

21 Letter from Pedro Ramalho to the secretary of M. Santos Coelho, June 11, 1976, Subseries Expediente, Series SSC1.22: SAAL/Norte, Section SC1: Arquitectura/SAAL, José António Bandeirinha Collection, CD25AUC.

22 This enthusiasm is clearly expressed in an official communication issued by the secretary of SAAL-Norte: Communication from M. Margarida Santos Coelho, June 28, 1976, Subseries 12: Exposição à Itália, Series SR2: Coordenadoria Correspondência, Subsection SSC2: Comissão Coordenadora, Section SC1: Arquitectura/SAAL, Alexandre Alves Costa Collection, CD25AUC.

23 "Proposta per una mostra sull'intervento SAAL da divulgare nelle facoltà italiane," November 1, 1975, Emilio Battisti Collection, AdM; "Exposição Italia/SAAL" by Francesco Marconi, Subseries Exposição Italia/SAAL 1976, Series SSC1.16: Apetrechamento dos serviços, Section SC1: Arquitectura/SAAL, José António Bandeirinha Collection, CD25AUC.

24 Letter from Emilio Battisti to Piero Derossi, April 26, 1976, Emilio Battisti Collection, AdM.

25 Letter from Emilio Battisti to Alexandre [Alves Costa], January 7, 1977, and letter from Emilio Battisti to Francesco [Marconi], March 10, 1976, Emilio Battisti Collection, AdM.

26 According to the list sent to the Bonomi Pagani Travel Agency on March 9, 1977: Letter to Bonomi Pagani Travel Agency, March 9, 1977, Emilio Battisti Collection, AdM.

27 AdM, Emilio Battisti collection, [Prof. Cesare Roda, Milano, 5/3/1977].

28 Letter to "Cari amici," April 5, 1977, Emilio Battisti Collection, AdM.



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area of involvement in the SAAL operations: Portas spoke about SAAL and its general features; Alves Costa focused on the SAAL-Norte; and Siza offered a presentation more closely related to his design process²⁹. [Fig. 6]

Impact and Legacy

The event was warmly welcomed by all the faculties – particularly by the professors – and a genuine interest enthusiasm were expressed toward the SAAL experience. Nevertheless, the exhibition offered the first opportunity for Portuguese architecture to go abroad and disseminate its ideas. For the first time, Portuguese architects were compelled to construct a narrative around the events that had shaped their recent history, prompting deep reflection and a renewed sense of awareness about what had taken place. Moreover, the event provided an ideal setting for the formation of a long-lasting network of professional and personal connections between the two countries. In fact, following this experience, the international dissemination of SAAL – and of the Portuguese architecture – grew significantly, along with the increasing presence of Álvaro Siza in Italy³⁰.

²⁹ Alves Costa, interview by author, Porto, April 11, 2023; and Álvaro Siza, interview by author, Porto, June 2, 2023.

³⁰ The presence of Álvaro Siza in Italy has been thoroughly reconstructed in Roberto Cremascoli and Francesco Moschini, *Álvaro Siza in Italia: il Grand Tour 1976–2016* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, 2016).

Fig. 5

Siza and Portas on the Via Appia, between Rome and Sabaudia, April 1977 (CD25AUC, 119 Alves Costa collection)



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Among the most notable instances of encounter and collaboration, we may recall the participation of Siza in the 1976 Biennale di Venezia, invited by Gregotti, who was also curated the event. Although this Biennale took place a year before the SAAL exhibition, it was entirely part of the same context of internationalization and growing interest in the works of Siza. Another key milestone in this trajectory was the 1979 first international retrospective dedicated to Siza's work – *Álvaro Siza architetto 1954–1979* – organized at the PAC in Milan by Gregotti and Italo Rota.

It is also impossible not to mention the many professional and design collaborations that followed, in which Siza took part in Italy from the late 1970's to the present day. One of these was the Belice '80 "laboratory" in Sicily, in which Siza participated thanks to Pierluigi Nicolin, whom he had met in Palermo during the exhibition tour of 1977.³¹ This design experience did not end with Belice '80, but continued throughout Italy, with the project for *Campo di Marte* on Giudecca Island in 1985; his residential projects in the Veneto countryside during the 1990s; and public commissions in Naples in the early 2000s, to name just a few.

Within a layered, complex, and at times winding trajectory – where every moment, every phase represents a meaningful step, full of potential – the SAAL travelling exhibition must be credited as the first to have truly recognized these

Fig. 6

Nicolin and Siza during a seminar on SAAL, Faculty of Architecture, University of Palermo, April 1977 (CD25AUC, 119 Alves Costa collection)

31 Pierluigi Nicolin, interview by author, Milan, December 4, 2023.

possibilities and this richness. It played a fundamental role in the dissemination of the SAAL experience, as well as in the internationalization of Portuguese architecture. We may conclude that this exhibition contributed, in an unprecedented way, to the development of further experiences that enriched the collaboration and deepened the relationship between Portuguese and Italian architecture.

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Soutinho, the Italophile Architect

Alcino Soutinho, School of Porto, Portuguese Architectural Culture, Tradition and Modernity, Ethics of Design

/Abstract

The text examines the figure and work of Alcino Soutinho within the context of Portuguese architectural culture in the second half of the twentieth century, focusing on his position within the so-called “School of Porto” and on his long-standing engagement with Italian architectural thought. Particular attention is given to the formative impact of his extended study trip to Italy in 1961, which established a durable framework of references and critical tools rather than a superficial adoption of stylistic models. The author traces the cultural and disciplinary influences that shaped Soutinho’s autonomous and coherent approach to design, characterised by a deliberate distance from the construction of a personal language and from the communicative and mediatic imperatives of contemporary architecture. Soutinho’s work is interpreted not as eclectic or linguistically pluralistic, but as the outcome of a rigorous design practice grounded in constructive logic, typological clarity, a strong sense of belonging to the ground, careful control of space and light, and an ethical attention to use, durability and maintenance. Through the discussion of key projects – including interventions within historical contexts, civic buildings and large-scale territorial works – the text highlights a poetic stance that privileges the collective, material and often implicit dimensions of architectural knowledge, relegating language to a subsidiary role within a complex and balanced process. In this perspective, Soutinho’s contribution emerges as fundamental in preserving the plurality and critical depth of Porto’s architectural culture, countering the risk of stylistic academism and offering a lesson in restraint, continuity and responsibility that remains highly relevant to contemporary debates on architectural identity and practice in Europe.

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To entrust my testimony on Alcino Soutinho to the written word, I preferred to publish one of the various texts I had written over the years, the result of reflections on his work, which I had drawn on extensively to prepare my speech in the courtroom. The most articulate and complete had been written for a small monograph - the first on his work - that Giancarlo Mainini¹ wanted to dedicate to him in 2005. It seemed to me to be richer and better written than the one read in Lisbon. The use of the present tense indicates that at the time his activity was in full swing and some of the projects described had recently been completed.

In November 2013, Alcino Soutinho passed away, so I will limit myself in these lines to adding a few notes of updating or confirmation, prompted above all by the general theme of the conference: the relationship between Portuguese and Italian architectural cultures, which has grown and become increasingly close over the years, in which Alcino Soutinho played a recognised role in the two-way transmission of thought and design. In fact, if Alberto Sartoris jokingly and affectionately called him an 'Italophile', it is a sign that he had noticed his evident fondness for our country and its architecture.

Soutinho's passion for our country began and took root with the Gulbenkian trip in 1961, which lasted eight months and took him to the main Italian cities, where he devoted himself in particular, but not exclusively, to museum architecture, as an in-depth study of the theme dealt with in his final year project (CODA, *Museu das artes e tradições populares*, 1959). This experience of learning and cross-fertilisation has not yet been the subject of a specific study, and what little we know has been gleaned from his impromptu accounts or interviews. I believe that at a time when original research and studies are multiplying, exploring the events of late 20th-century architecture, a study on this topic is also desirable.

On that journey across the peninsula, Soutinho certainly visited the numerous museums that had been built in Italy over the previous decade as part of the effort to rebuild cities damaged by bombing: in Milan, the Castello Sforzesco museum by BBPR (1954–1956) and the PAC by Gardella (1947–1954); in Genoa, the Bianco (1946–1950) and Rosso (1953–1961) buildings and the San Lorenzo treasure (1952–1956) by Albini, and in Palermo, the Abatellis building (1953–1954) by Scarpa. Castelvecchio is still a construction site and he will visit it on subsequent trips.

Recalling that experience, at the urging of this or that interlocutor, Soutinho mentioned the buildings that had struck and influenced him, especially those in Milan: Gardella's apartment buildings in Milan (1947–1955) and the Borsalino houses in Alessandria (1947–1952) and the house in Zattere (1958–1962), still

¹ The Italian edition of the present essay is included in the volume: Giancarlo Mainini, *Alcino Soutinho. Opere recenti*, Officina, Rome 2005. The volume benefited from the contributions of two historians who collaborated with Soutinho: Armando Minopoli and Luca Dubini. Giancarlo was also a mentor and friend of mine, who had a profound influence on me. He is discussed and studied less than he should be. The photographs taken from the Soutinho Studio Archive and all the drawings included in this contribution are published with the permission of the Soutinho family and of the Fundação Marques da Silva (FIMS) which holds the Alcino Soutinho archive.



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unfinished and already less popular than the others. During those months, he obviously took part (and perceived it as a decisive issue) in the all-Milanese dispute between Ponti and Nervi's Pirelli skyscraper (1956–1960) and BBPR's controversial Velasca tower (1955–1961). He recounts how his Brazilian friend, on foggy days, which were frequent in Milan at the time, dared to say 'What a beautiful day! You can't see the Velasca Tower'.

Thinking back now on one of the most active Italian architects of that period, I don't remember him ever mentioning Luigi Moretti when we talked about his trip or in the interviews I happened to read or hear. Perhaps it was simply an oversight. It would be necessary to study his notes and travel reports, since Moretti's most famous buildings certainly did not go unnoticed: the building on Corso Italia (1949–1955) in Milan, the Girasole building (1947–1950) and the Olympic Village (1958–1959 with Libera and others) in Rome.

The debate in Italy and Europe during those years was influenced by Rogers' theory of historical pre-existences, and he was certainly inspired by the reflections and suggestions offered by the combination of history and modernity, by the attention that the architecture before his eyes attributed to history. About ten years after that trip, Soutinho found himself working in a historical setting at the Pousada de Vilanova da Cerveira (1971–1982, Europa Nostra Award 1982) [Fig. 1], and then at the Convent of São Gonçalo in Amarante (1977–1987) [Figg. 2a-2b]. I had the great fortune to be able to follow the final stages of the museum part of the latter, dedicated to Amadeu Souza Cardoso, during my apprenticeship in his studio (1986–1987), accompanying Soutinho on his more or less weekly visits to the construction site and attending meetings in the studio.

During that period and throughout the latter part of the 20th century, the question of language was at the centre of the debate on architecture. The crisis of

Fig. 1

The dining room at Pousada D.Dinis in Vilanova da Cerveira (1973) (photo by the author)



2a



2b

modernity as an act of faith – which crumbled with the drama of the Second World War – in undefined progress, in those years transformed, in architecture, into a critique of the modern that drew on the contributions of history and tradition, often remaining on the surface of issues and limiting itself to language and the adoption of easy stylistic elements without delving into the depth of the project. Continuist theoretical positions (Habermas, for example, defines modernity as an interrupted project, not a defunct one²) are viewed with suspicion.

The 1980s saw Siza’s consecration, even in Portugal, as a leading figure in architecture, within what everyone now called the Porto School, giving rise to a highly controversial issue in those years, which has now been laid to rest.

The international press, with its need to convey the Portuguese phenomenon by identifying a triad of heroes, Siza first and foremost, followed by Távora and Souto Moura, overlooked the figures of that group who were wrongly considered minor. But today we discover that this was a convenient but now anachronistic interpretation of the phenomenon. The evolution of Portuguese architecture in recent decades shows an incredibly fertile ground in which individuals of extraordinary value and interest have flourished and been of primary importance for four consecutive generations. Each with its own specificity. Thus, the metaphorical image that best represents Portuguese architecture today is not that of a pyramid (as seen in international magazines a few years ago) but that of a mountain range with peaks of different heights, each appreciable individually and as part of a whole.

During those years, the training of young architects from Porto – their design pedagogy – was not immune to the strong influence exerted by the international renown of a figure of great importance such as Álvaro Siza and the charm of his architecture. This influence concerned methodology (compulsive drawing

2 J. Habermas, “Modern, Post-Modern and Neoconservatism”, *Alfabeta* no. 22, 1981, pp. 15-17.

Figg. 2a-2b

São Gonçalo Convent at Amarante, the new wing of the small library (photo by the author)

in which perspective sequences are distorted to investigate even what is not directly visible, 'cinematic' spatial sequences, complex and unstable geometries, etc.) as well as a highly personal language. Both these aspects revealed an excessive imitative attitude and the risk that the newly established Faculty of Architecture could turn into a sort of Siza academy (albeit an anti-academic one), which frightened Siza himself.

A decade after the Carnation Revolution and SAAL, the eyes of Europe were once again focused on Portugal (mainly Porto), driven by the growing fame of Siza and his projects. As a result, students in Porto risked becoming too focused on their own world, too navel-gazing. This circumstance led Távora and the other teachers to make an effort to de-provincialise the School, investing resources to open it up to the outside world (series of lectures *Discursos sobre a arquitetura*, Porto 1991), to show young architects, from the mouths of the main protagonists themselves, the events of international architecture and the different ways of conceiving the reasons and forms of design.

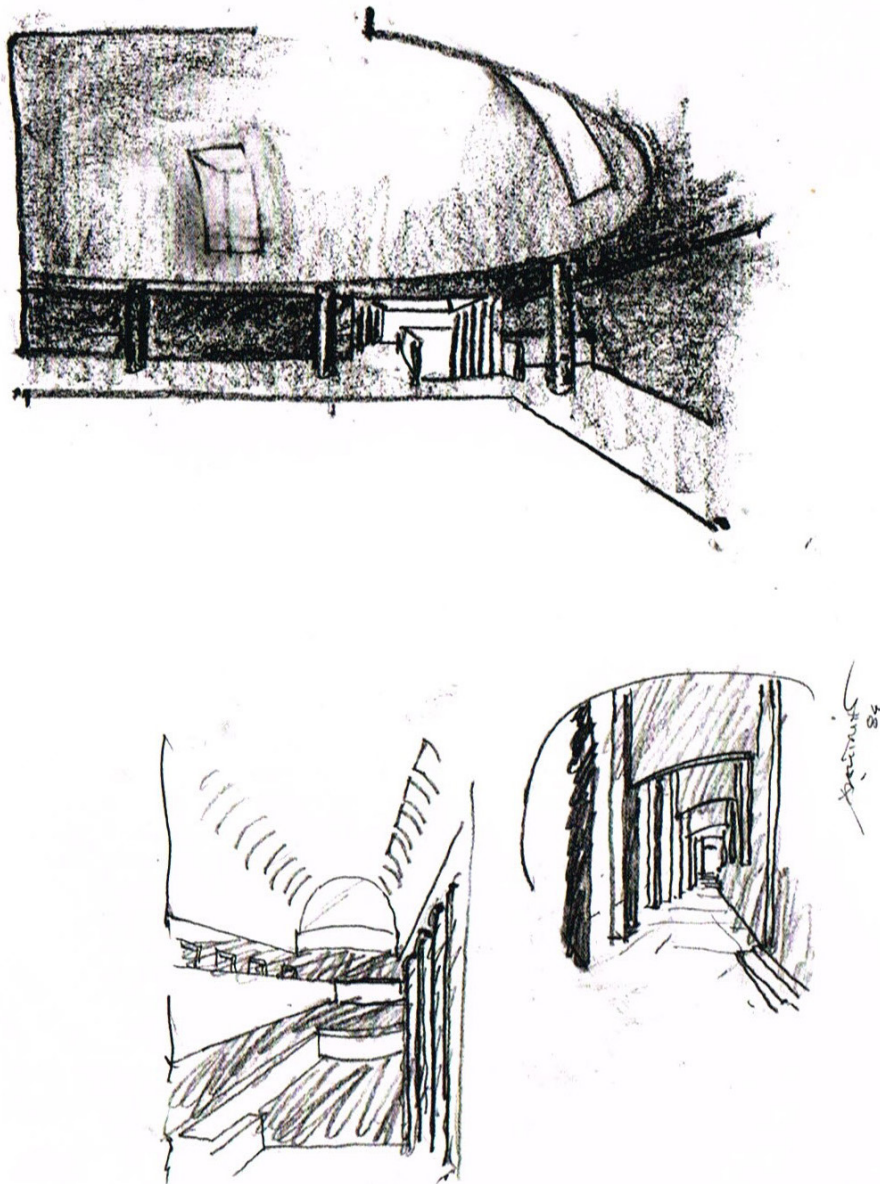


Fig. 3

Matosinhos Town Hall:
sketches of the Great Hall, the
entrance hall and the portico.

Soutinho's architecture entered the scene unexpectedly during those years with a series of projects with a disorienting expressive charge. Mainly two works, both completed in 1987: the Matosinhos Town Hall [Fig. 3] and the Pinto de Sousa house in Ofir [Fig. 4]. Rigorous geometry, modular construction of the plan and elevations, identification of a façade, typological references to the civil basilica and the impluvium of Roman architecture, independence of the façade (as in Renaissance and Baroque churches), 'telluric' visual weight of the masses.

The elevation of the building becomes the place where the relationship between two distinct compositional logics coagulates, that of the adaptive interior space commensurate with different uses and that of the public exterior space that does not allow for breaks, only slight disarticulations.

The same design themes are repeated in several other projects, such as the houses in Albergaria and Barredo and the Pina Vaz house, the renovation of the old Misericórdia hospital in Viana (not built), and the BPI headquarters on



Boavista, where the corner solution is accentuated in an almost classical manner.

It is this production that betrays the expectations of a broad audience accustomed to clichés and often leads them to identify him in internal debates as a discordant element of the Porto School, sometimes implicitly attributing him the role of a secondary figure. Such assessments may have caused him some bitterness, but they never affected his measured irony and sense of humour, the hallmarks of his elegance and good nature.

In fact, his architecture is anomalous compared to the dominant trend in the city, thanks to the fact that he brings his own cultural references, which are probably not shared by others, into his design experience. This position has

Fig. 4

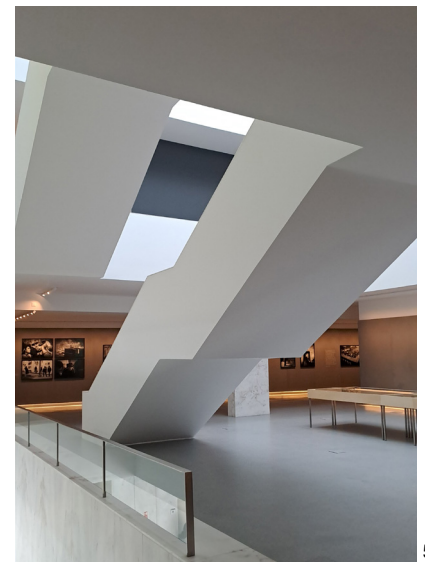
Pinto de Sousa house (photo from the Soutinho Studio archive)



5a



5b



5c

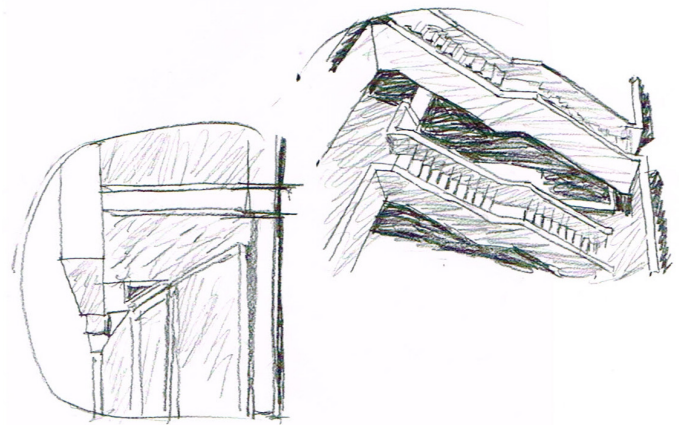
sometimes led to interpretations of his work as being marked by a certain eclecticism, a consideration that I have never understood and have always interpreted as a veiled, albeit benevolent, accusation. Perhaps this is just my misinterpretation or prejudice about the term 'eclecticism', induced by the fact that I am still tied to the critical and certainly not laudatory interpretation that, during my formative years, the Milanese debate attributed to late 19th-century historicist eclecticism.

In some cases, there has been talk of nods to post-modernism.

I believe rather that Soutinho has always given language a relative importance within the project, in an era that instead attributed absolute importance to language.

Responding with design to the stimuli coming from the cultural phenomenologies in which we are constantly immersed seems to me to be the result of a way of being in the world with open eyes and an alert mind, capturing its stimuli and thoughts. Memory – knowing how to recognise – always plays a fundamental role in the formation of design. To me, this does not seem so far removed from the design approach employed by Álvaro Siza when he designed in Berlin and The Hague in those same years.

Even in the projects of the following years, in which Soutinho returned to the use of white plaster on the exterior [Fig. 5a-5b-5c-5d], the volumes are composed of independent planes and touch the ground precisely, defying gravity with obvious overhangs without disguising it with subterfuge. Even in this period, at the turn of the century, Soutinho strongly reaffirmed the classical idea of architecture's belonging to the earth. Once again, language manifests itself naturally as one component among others in the project, part of a complex process that



5d

Fig. 5a-5b-5c

Museum of Neorealism in Vilafranca de Xira (2002), views of the entrance and interior (photo by the author)

Fig. 5d

Museum of Neorealism in Vilafranca de Xira (2002), sketch of the entrance and two staircases in the central void



6b



6a

is influenced by the phenomenologies that surround it (physically and conceptually).

But it is two projects on a territorial scale, of architecture as modelling of the soil and landscape - the water treatment plant in Vila Nova de Gaia [Fig. 6a-6b-6c-6d-6e] and the FC Porto training centre in Crestuma [Fig. 7] - that still fascinate me the most today, because of the author's ability not to be authorial, to lend his skills to two works of social service, entering into harmony with a complex and unusual programme, dominated by unusual functional specificities. Both share another peculiarity: they are not on display. They are accessible mainly to internal staff and are revealed to the public from a distance and discreetly through a few signs, elementary geometries that mark the landscape.

They are located a short distance from each other, at the eastern end of the municipality of Vila Nova de Gaia, although they belong to two distinct landscapes. The power station stands on the banks of the Douro, and rather than attempting to camouflage the large machinery and warehouses with natural elements, Soutinho embraces their mechanical language and tames it by placing a large visual shield over the geometric embankment in a long curve that traces the bend of the river. The sports centre, practically invisible from the surrounding area, occupies a plateau above the Douro, managing the differences in height with terraces and embankments between which low, long buildings similar to substructures are nestled.



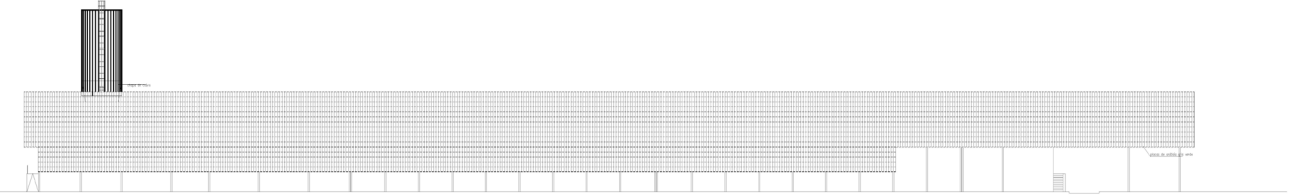
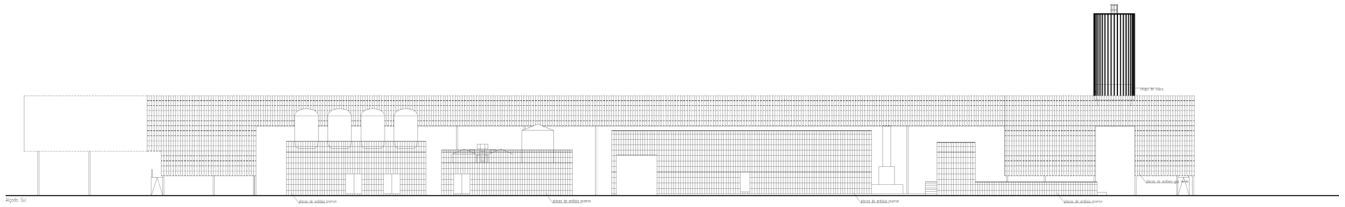
7

Fig. 6a-6b

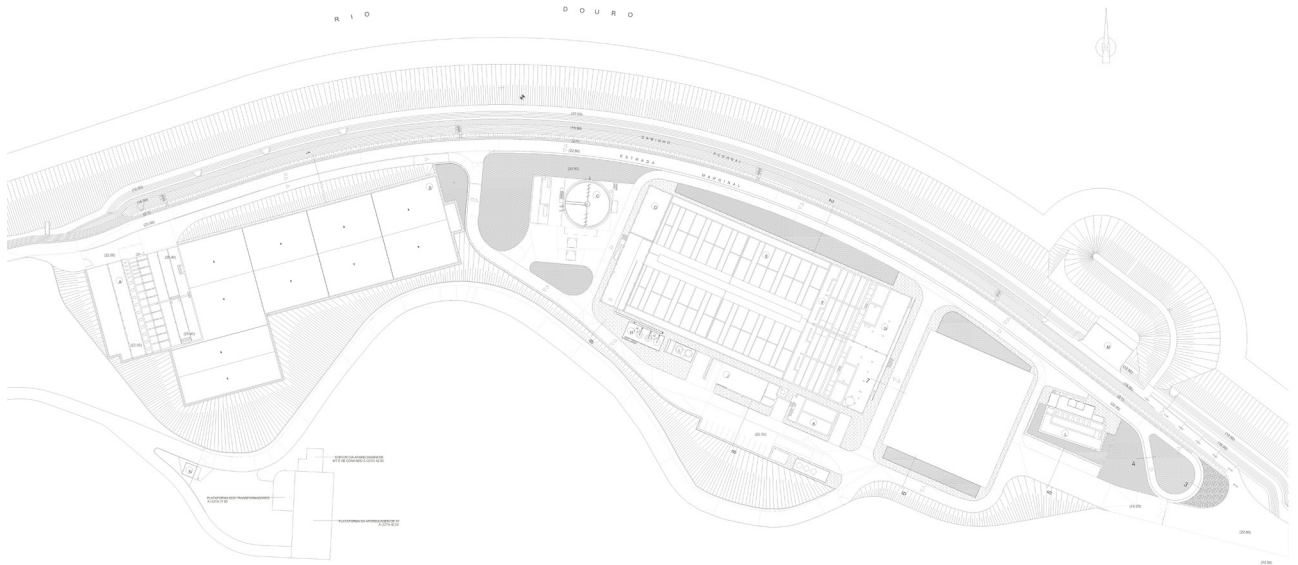
Drinking water treatment plant in Vila Nova de Gaia (2000) (photo from the Soutinho Studio archive)

Fig. 7

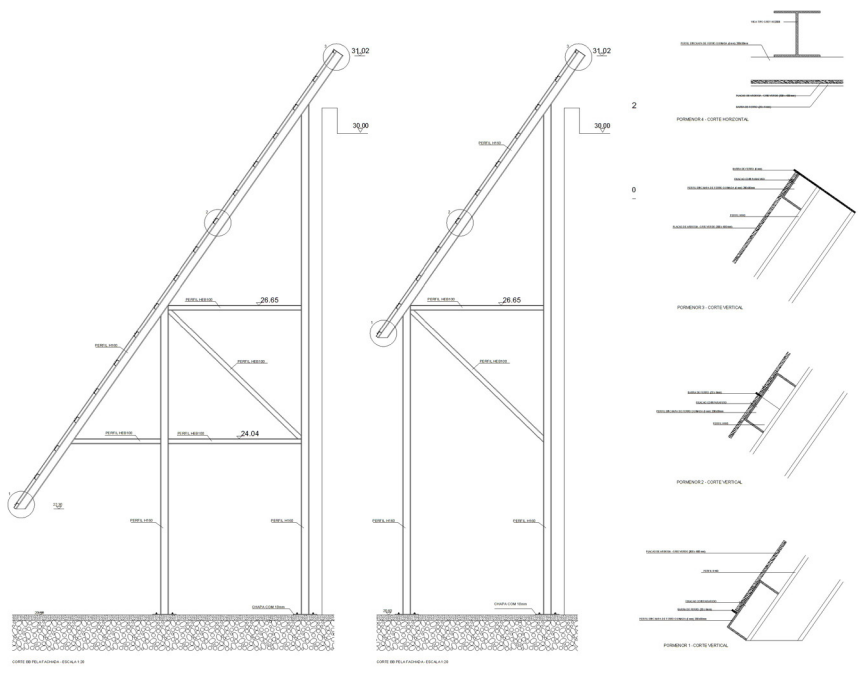
FC Porto's training and sports development centre in Crestuma (Vila Nova de Gaia) (2000) (Photo by Giovanni Leoni)



6c



6d



6e

Figg. 6c-6d-6e
 Drinking water treatment plant
 in Lever (Vila Nova de Gaia)
 (2000), general site plan of the
 facility and drawings of the
 steel and stone wall enclosing
 the building

Alcino Soutinho. Architecture, Identity and Collective Knowledge

Until recently, the term 'Porto School' was used in international architectural debates to summarise certain experiences in Portuguese architecture, but it is now used more sparingly and circumstantially. This term was often used in an attempt to frame the work of a group of architects, whom we have come to know over the last two decades, within a unified context, emphasising their homogeneous characteristics at the expense of their individual peculiarities and thus delineating a compact cultural phenomenon. In those chronicles and critiques, Alcino Soutinho was often referred to as an anomalous and dissonant element of the group, and sometimes this adjective was loaded with ambiguous and controversial meanings, while at other times it consciously emphasised the richness of the individual positions that emerged from a panorama of distinct events, yet linked by a marked family resemblance that made them close and recognisable to the outside observer. Years ago, Álvaro Siza, his close friend since they were both architecture students and the first admirer of his work, lamented the lack of a systematic analysis of his work, which would certainly have helped to raise awareness of the man himself and spread his valuable lesson on how to work by building an autonomous and conscious line of research, with the courage to make minority choices and without the support of great public success, thus contributing to enriching the wealth and strength of that cultural enclave that revolved around the Faculty of Architecture in Porto, diversifying its themes and research, allowing it to avoid falling into the ranks of stylistic and mannerist academia. Even when it spilled over into the teaching of Design and Construction, the autonomy of Soutinho's research had a significant beneficial effect on the diversification of viewpoints and research objectives.

Alcino Soutinho's work is much more important in the history of Portuguese architecture than its limited dissemination beyond the country's borders would suggest. I believe that both supporters and detractors of his merits agree on this. Yet there is a reason for the limited dissemination of his work, which can perhaps be traced back to his endemic distance from everything that satisfies the media appeal of architecture, namely the personalisation of languages and the extreme conceptualisation of the work. These characteristics make him a difficult figure for the international public to understand.

From a comprehensive and articulate observation, one characteristic perhaps emerges more than any other: the conviction that a personalised stylistic signature is not necessary to build a strong identity for one's work over the years, one that emerges clearly in every project, in every node of a logical network built



8a



8b

day by day; the conviction that a personal and recognisable way of approaching a project can be formed naturally over time, without the burden of affectations and personalism, allowing oneself instead to be permeated by the suggestions that intellectual life offers us, bringing them back into the realm of one's own underlying logic. However, many of those who have commented on Alcino Soutinho's work in the past have often seen in it the characteristics of eclecticism or linguistic pluralism, while recognising an autonomous internal coherence within each of his projects.

In order not to fall into the trap of a reductive interpretation, which would not do full justice to the importance of his work, I believe that Soutinho's architecture should not be approached from the perspective of linguistic analysis. If we simply change our perspective and re-evaluate the role of language in architectural criticism, directing our analysis towards the other components of the project, it immediately becomes clear that his projects reveal a tight and coherent authorship, capable of rendering his work legible within a unified panorama, at least the more mature part of it, which began with the renovation of the convent of São Gonçalo in Amarante [Figg. 8a-8b] in the mid-1970s.

It is necessary to reposition the linguistic and figurative aspects in a proper relationship with the other aspects that make up the disciplinary knowledge of architecture, such as construction, urban relationships, expertise in the formation of spaces, in attributing qualities to them and in relating them to each other, as well as in establishing a meaningful relationship between interior spaces and open space. After all, a recurring feature of Porto's cultured architecture is that it has been able to maintain the linguistic concerns of composition in the right position as a secondary element among the many that contribute to the definition of the project. Consider the work of Távora, the programme he himself theorised with conviction from a very young age, to find a third, autonomous and authentic way in the linguistic controversy between modernism and traditionalist and localist expression. Consider Siza and his ability to escape the linguistic

Figg. 8a-8b

São Gonçalo Convent in Amarante, interior and exterior of the new wing separating the two cloisters (photo by the author)



9

quarrel over the use of history, opened up by postmodern theories, while sharing their critical assumptions about the 'narrative' of the modern. Finally, consider the evolution of Souto Moura's research towards an increasingly processual and 'anti-linguistic' architecture.

In his work, Alcino Soutinho seems to have focused on the collective and subterranean aspects of disciplinary knowledge at the expense of the subjective and expressive ones, ensuring that the latter were defined naturally as consequences of the former. Thus, in the principles that give rise to each of his projects, adherence to a shared research programme in which these aspects are measured according to objective criteria becomes paramount, in contrast to what happens with language, where personal expression, the ability to impress the public and to characterise production are what count.

Without ever adhering to a pre-established figurative programme, Soutinho conducted his research with the aim of maintaining a solid coherence in the underlying structure of his projects, allowing himself to be guided by different suggestions in the definition of the expressive aspects. Due to a sort of expressive modesty, not uncommon in Portuguese cultural history, individual expression is nullified in a plurality of figurations and in the experimentation of expressive modes, which, however, never take centre stage, presenting themselves in subdued tones and reduced to essential signs. The figuration in his work is, in fact, absolutely and deliberately dry, completely immune to possible concessions to marked accents. It is never the product of a linguistic problem and never represents itself; on the contrary, it is always the representation of a design, settlement, construction, housing and even decorative problem – or its solution. His architecture is made of substance: matter, light, colour, robustness, relationship with the ground. Although form is at the heart of all his design work, it is never extreme, never becomes a manifesto of itself; there is never any temptation to exaggerate it to make it more expressive, either in the work as a whole or in the details. Instead, there is always a clear desire to speak a plain,

Fig. 9

Office building and Derivatives Exchange on Avenida da Boavista in Porto (1994) (photo by the author)

composed and clear language that is, above all, accessible and understandable to everyone. [Fig. 9]

Alcino Soutinho offers us architecture made up of real events, whose research is expressed in a language free from ideological flaws, firmly rooted in the control of the factual elements of the project. His architecture stems from real issues, and the restlessness that underpins his poetics is generated by the attempt to provide concrete answers to the concrete questions posed by the project. The relationship with the physical location where the work will be built, with the materials and construction techniques it requires and that the objective conditions offer; the relationship with its own history and culture and with architectural history and culture; the response to the requirements of the proposed programme; the control of space and light inside and outside the building; to the point of touching on issues usually considered more venal, such as the control of economic resources. The harmonious synthesis of all these relationships is the subject of his poetics, which, however, is expressed in physical signs that can, indeed must, also be analysed in terms of language because, after all, they are generated and defined by obeying an expressive will. Soutinho is clearly aware of this when, in a speech he gave in 1986, at a time when architects in Portugal were still on the margins of the building process and cultured architecture even more so, he warns of the risks of identifying architectural design with the sum of neutral and technically objectifiable factors, criticising what he calls the 'technical interpretation' of construction. However, semantic concerns never take precedence, and architectural language never takes centre stage in a design process in which the playful, subjective and poetic elements possess the magic of measure, consisting of a hidden thread that supports the project itself and pervades it without overwhelming it.

His work is marked by a great sense of construction, by great pragmatism, with all the consequences that this implies. All design intentions (compositional, constructive, formal...) are filtered through a sort of 'common sense' of execution, linked to the availability of technology, materials, economies, cultures and the ability to skilfully balance them in the design work. Everything is conducted as if there were no desire to impress anyone; as if one always had to reckon with a balance of costs and benefits, not only in economic or construction terms but also, or above all, in figurative terms. This aspect reflects the strong ethical component of Porto's contemporary architecture. Ultimately, Soutinho argues, design is a challenge to make those for whom it is intended happy, without harming architecture. This means designing architecture with a fundamental focus on its ability to accommodate the acts of daily life, on people's ability to feel good in its presence, without seeking to convey strong emotions but only pleasant and controlled sensations. Above all, it means designing architecture that allows people to manage and maintain it easily and that therefore ensures its long-lasting and simple permanence. In this sense, we can say that we are faced with a strongly humanistic architecture, linked to the events of the world of life, linked to the actual reality of human affairs, the product of a design idea

that tends to fill the progressive loss of meaning that has been generated in so much contemporary architecture due to the disconnect between appearance and substance.

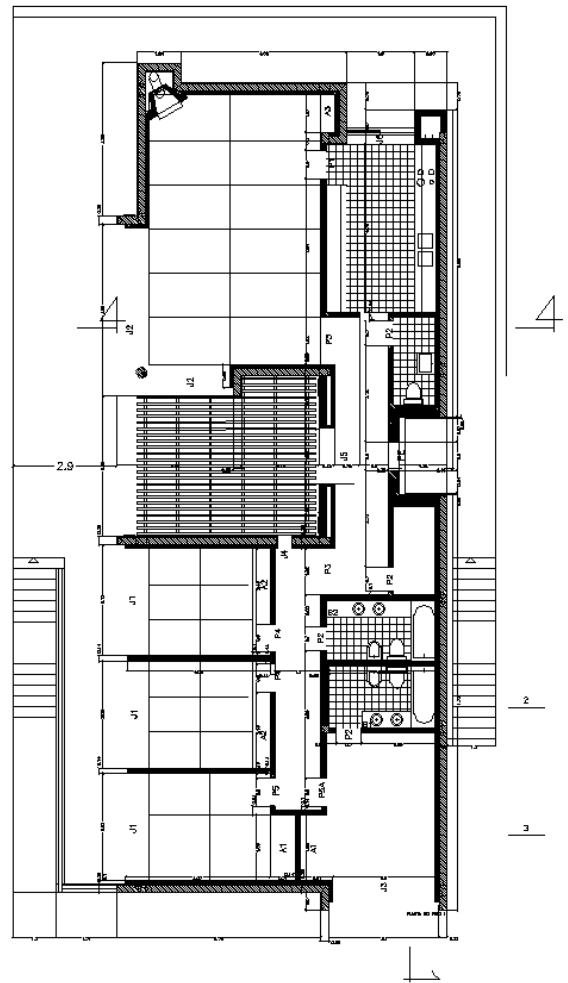
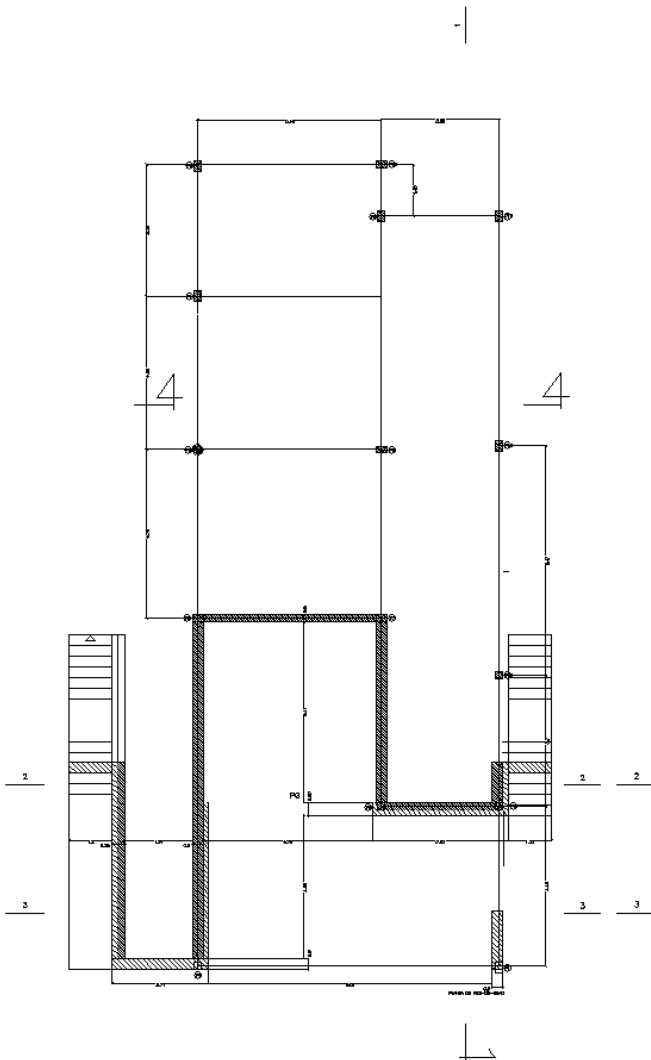
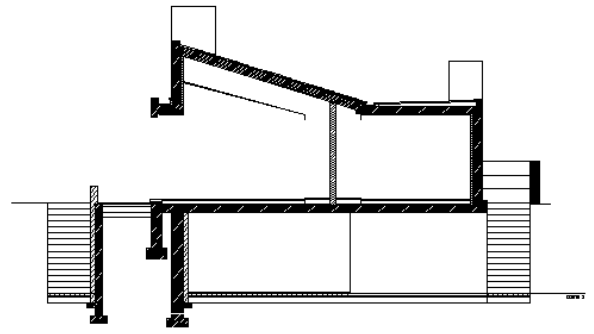
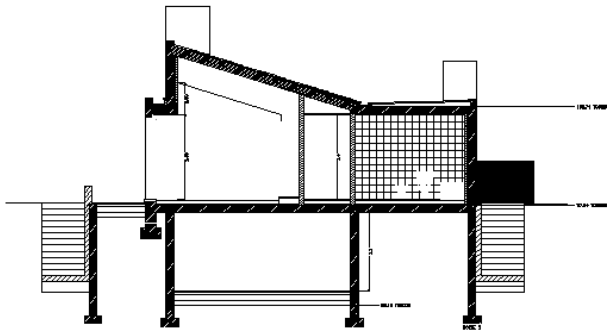
The result of a cultured and thoughtful professional practice that leads to genuine architectural research free from preconceived notions, but above all capable of remaining between the lines, renouncing sensational gestures, Soutinho's architecture suggests a rigorous way out, impervious to the clamour of surprising and loudly proclaimed architecture, a low-key way out to which we are unaccustomed today, immersed as we are in the noisy congestion of ostentatious languages and manifesto architecture. Rather than linguistic inventions, his poetics are based on typological innovations, on compositional themes that are continually experimented with in forms that are constantly updated and replaced, true figurative manifestations of personal design themes that constantly recur over the years and make the authorship of his works clearly recognisable.

The double *façade*, the elevation composed of two more or less independent parallel planes, is, for example, a device used in various forms in many of his projects from the 1980s, both realised and unrealised. The elevation of the building becomes the place where the relationship between two distinct compositional logics coagulates, that of the private and intimate interior space and that of the public exterior space. Soutinho himself, for example, speaks of this relationship when he describes the Pinto de Sousa house in the Ofir pine forest as 'aggressive on the outside - in colour and form; welcoming on the inside - in colour and space'. In some more recent projects, such as the Quinta das Sedas housing block or the Matosinhos Library, this device is simplified and condensed, continuing to mark precisely the boundary and otherness between open and closed space and gaining in synthesis and effectiveness. The double *façade* disappears, but the boundary between interior and exterior retains a certain thickness and complexity of functions, never reducing itself to a simple surface.



Fig. 10

São Gonçalo Convent in Amarante, view from the road upstream (photo by the author)





11b

Special attention is always paid to the roof of the building, its completion towards the sky, made up of pitches, volumes and skylights. The temptation to reserve the building the chance of a 'fifth façade', to be seen in reality - as in the museum in Amarante [Fig.10] located at the foot of a hill - or only to be intuited and perceived from below - as in the two houses in the Ofir pine forest - is combined with the need to guide sunlight into the interior spaces, to tame it and use it as a primary element of the design. Even the control of rainwater in the same two houses, starting from the functional need linked to the limited care and maintenance usually attributed to holiday homes, becomes a real design theme, with collection concentrated in a single point on the roof and the always-open channel that shapes the volumes and appears in the elevations with granite slabs on which the rainwater flows.

Rooting in the ground is another constant feature of his projects; the search for a stable image of the building, the denunciation of its telluric character, as Soutinho himself likes to repeat, of volume rising from the earth, is very evident in some of his works, even at the cost of emphasising it, as in the Vidal house in Albergaria and the Pinto de Sousa house. In more recent projects such as the Soares house in Porto, the Pina Vaz house in Ofir [Figg. 11a-11b], and the buildings for the cultural services of the municipality of Matosinhos, while reaffirming the intention never to visually contradict the force of gravity, the relationship with the ground has become more precise and subtle; the less repeated supports show the right weight of the construction, without however compromising the idea of an object firmly planted on the ground or, in Távora's words, well seated, imperturbable like the sphinxes. In the Matosinhos Library, the negation of the wall's connection to the ground that protects the emergency staircase, achieved through a static device, should be interpreted as the exception that serves to reinforce the rule.

Fig. 11a

Plan and sections of the Pina Vaz house in Ofir (1995-99)

Fig. 11b

View of the Pina Vaz house from the entrance (photo from the Soutinho Studio archive)

The classical idea of architecture belonging to the earth is strongly confirmed in his latest projects, including the Town Hall of Seregno, where, in keeping with the tradition of Lombard broletto, the building is detached from the ground, giving rise to a covered square, and has a direct connection with the basement where the council chamber is located. But the work in which this sense of the form emerging from the ground is most evident is certainly the F.C. Porto training centre [Figg. 12a-12b-12c], one of his best works, in which the architecture is defined with great naturalness in the folds of the landscape, shaping the slopes with excavations and substructures, with fillings and containments. In a composition made up of horizontal lines and pure geometric elements, the buildings are arranged to complement the modelling of the ground, contributing themselves to the artificial topography of the site, from which the suspended horizontal plane covering the public grandstand of the central field stands out clearly, yet without any emphasis.

The same naturalness, the same straightforward manner, not prone to personal exaggeration, reserved but without excessive shyness, can be seen in his interventions on existing buildings. In the renovation and completion of the convent of S. Gonçalo in Amarante for the accommodation of the Town Hall and the Sousa Cardoso Museum – perhaps his best-known work on the international circuit – as well as in the Pousada of Vilanova de Cerveira, which reuses an entire ancient urban centre surrounded by walls, Soutinho rejects the pure and simple formal detachment between old and new, rejecting the antithesis imposed by modernist ideology and instead proposing the use of history as material for the project, without prejudice and without a priori reverence, according to a criterion of intervention that is found repeatedly in similar interventions in the recent history of Porto architecture. In the Amarante project, one of the first restoration projects of monumental complexes in Portugal not managed by institutions equivalent to our Superintendence, the design starts from the analysis and understanding of the laws that generated the building and its transformations, taking them as the rules governing the new intervention, which is expressed without fear according to the canons of contemporary architecture, yet without flaunting a condition of otherness. The result is a completely harmonious integration between old and new in the combination of techniques and materials, in the identification of the nodes and paths that structure the building and its parts, and in the way the spaces are opened and closed to the outside. The route through the museum spaces passes very naturally from the new structure, built to separate two of the three cloisters,

Figg. 12a-12b-12c

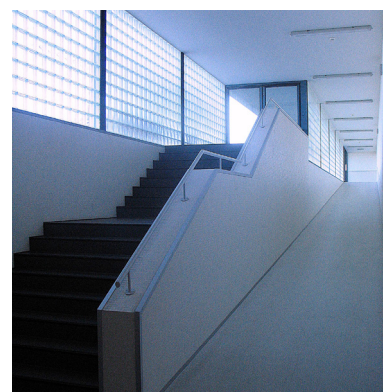
FC Porto's training and sports development centre in Crestuma (Vila Nova de Gaia) (2000)
(Photo by Giovanni Leoni)



12a



12b



12c

to the monumental rooms of the old buildings, in a complete fluidity of spaces, light, materials and finishes.

The features that distinguish his work like a common thread make him, in a way, the heir to a long professional tradition that has developed in Portugal over a long period of time, with ample signs of nobility and prestige, enriched by local connotations. A tradition of architectural know-how that approaches design by following the natural evolution of common sense, offering a cultured interpretation that is sometimes conservative, sometimes innovative, but always open to dialogue with the times and ways of human life.

The reasons for his way of working are rooted in a complex educational background. From 1954 to 1964, Soutinho underwent a long apprenticeship working alongside some of the most acclaimed modern Portuguese architects, such as João Andersen, Januário Goudinho, Arménio Losa and José Carlos Loureiro, not to mention his non-professional but friendly relationship with Viana de Lima during those years, several occasions of collaboration with Távora and his collaboration with Octávio Lixa Filgueiras, a figure of considerable theoretical importance. He undertook a year-long study trip to Italy in 1961, coming into contact with the architecture of Gardella, Albini, Rogers and Quaroni, which certainly left a lasting impression on him, so much so that Alberto Sartoris, during a trip to Portugal in 1981, described him as an 'Italophile architect'. This wealth of experience added something personal to certain traits common to the training of other architects of the same generation who grew up needing to find their way in the complex landscape of the crisis of modernity. It also adds something to the decisive experience of many Portuguese architects of his age, who lived through the years of extensive research into the popular architecture of their country, which ended in 1961 with the publication of part of the material collected.

We need to focus on the object of his research in so many different youthful acquaintances in order to fully understand the coherence of his architectural career in maturity. His attention was probably focused on understanding and appropriating, with an omnivorous attitude, certain solutions and specific devices, rather than absorbing an attitude and a lineage. His projects retain, from this apprenticeship, the ability to manifest themselves in a spontaneous way, free from constraints, so much so that they convey a strong sense of everyday life, appearing in a certain sense 'natural', masking the effort of the creative process. They appear to us as the result of work that proceeds with natural gradualness, without giving in to the desire to argue about forms, in a process that we can describe by quoting Távora's words from memory, according to which in the initial phase the architect commands the project, guides its choices, opens up and resolves doubts and possible paths; the lines of the design are then uncertain, broad, leaving possible interpretations open. At a certain point in its evolution, however, it is the project itself that imposes the reasons for its own definition, guiding the hand within internal rules and laws that are now dictated; thus, the design takes on rigour and precision, no longer showing room for interpretation, each mark appearing necessary and the final form unavoidable.

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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.

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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 Luís 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

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 Luís 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).

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.

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: Âmbar, 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 Glesleri 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.PIIO 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 Glesleri, 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, Glesleri 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.

Acknowledgements

This work is financed by national funds through FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., under the Strategic Project with the references UID/04008: Centro de Investigação em Arquitetura, Urbanismo e Design.

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The Otherness of Álvaro Siza: Vittorio Gregotti and the Sense of Place as Hypothesis for the Future

Álvaro Siza, Vittorio Gregotti, Otherness, Context, Critical Dialogue

/Abstract

This article investigates the profound and enduring intellectual relationship between two pivotal figures in European architectural culture, Vittorio Gregotti and Álvaro Siza, framed by the concept of Siza's "otherness." Gregotti was instrumental in introducing Siza to the international scene, starting with his 1972 article in *Controspazio*, establishing a critical matrix that interpreted Siza's work through its distance from prevailing ideological and dogmatic trends. The paper traces the origins of this elective affinity back to the Italian-Luso-Iberian architectural meetings (*Pequeños Congresos*) of the 1960s, highlighting how Siza's context-specific practice resonated with Gregotti's critical position, particularly his focus on "anthropo-geography". A central argument is the reciprocity between small and large scales, demonstrated by Siza's design process, which uses drawing not merely as representation, but as a slow, multi-scalar tool to reveal the latent potential of a place. Gregotti promoted this perspective through exhibitions (Venice Biennale 1976, Milan 1979) and through his editorship of *Casabella*, notably by publishing Siza's large-scale project for the Quinta da Malagueira in Évora, showcasing a concrete alternative to normative urbanism. Finally, the article explores Gregotti's interpretation of the ideas of "tradition" and "foundations". Siza's architecture is presented as embodying a "critical distance" from reality - a search for the "hypothesis of the future" rooted in the empirical conditions of the context, rather than in abstract theory or historical consensus. Ultimately, the otherness of Siza, defended by Gregotti, affirmed architecture as a "project of critical dialogue" - a model of social commitment rooted in the reality rather than utopia.

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Introduction. Mirroring

Much has been written about the close and profound bond between two of the most important figures in contemporary European architectural culture: Vittorio Gregotti (Novara 1927 - Milan 2020) and Álvaro Siza (Matosinhos 1933). Critics and historians unanimously credit Gregotti with first introducing the work of a young and virtually unknown Siza in 1972, within the pages of the Italian magazine *Controspazio*¹. On that occasion, the Portuguese architect's work was framed through a critical reading that would long be considered a sort of obligatory matrix for its circulation outside the Portuguese context. The article has been translated and republished numerous times, in some cases with different titles than the original. The first was in 1976, when *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* published the dossier: "PORTUGAL an II"², with the aim of outlining the state of the art of architecture in Portugal after the revolution of 25 April 1974. The pages dedicated to Siza's work open with a double article: "La passion de Álvaro Siza, selon Vittorio Gregotti et Oriol Bohigas". This comprised a comparison of two articles published respectively by Gregotti in *Controspazio* and by Bohigas in *Arquitectura Bis*³ (March 1976), united by a new editorial title that makes direct reference to the ending of Gregotti's text:

And also of his patient, profound passion for architecture, full of trepidation: he has certainly found an internal point of reference: now he verifies the qualities of the margins with his hands, even though he knows that everything that is essential lies beyond: to the right, to the left, above: outside.⁴

Among the many authors who have reflected on the relationship between the two architects, I refer directly here to Nuno Grande's article⁵, which credits Gregotti with having translated what could have been a simple and natural 'cultural proximity' into a genuine 'elective affinity'. As in a process of mirroring, this paper begins with parallel considerations to investigate why, throughout his publishing activity - considered an essential component of his commitment as an architect - Siza's work remained a constant reference point for Gregotti, even in the diverse outcomes of the Porto master's design research. This "alterity", precisely in its distance, defines the inescapable counterpoint for the affirmation of the idea of architecture as a "project of critical dialogue"⁶ with reality. A dialogue which, from time to time, re-established the terms of the relationship, without ever crystallizing into abstract theory, always operating in the tension between freedom and responsibility, between the possible and the necessary.

1 Vittorio Gregotti, "Architetture recenti di Álvaro Siza," *Controspazio*, no. 9 (1972): 22–24.

2 *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, no. 185 (May–June 1976): 2–81. It is important to note that Bernard Huet was the chief editor of the journal at the time.

3 Oriol Bohigas, "Álvaro Siza Vieira," *Arquitecturas Bis*, no. 12 (1976): 11–18.

4 Gregotti, "Architetture recenti," 24. All the translations in English were done by the author.

5 Nuno Grande, "Vittorio Gregotti e Álvaro Siza: afinidades electivas entre dois arquitectos contemporâneos," *Estudos Italianos em Portugal*, no. 12 (2017): 15–33.

6 Vittorio Gregotti, "L'altro," in *Álvaro Siza, Immaginare l'evidenza* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1998), 10.

The First Encounter. Italian-Luso-Iberian Consonances

Although the story has been recounted elsewhere, it is important to highlight specific circumstances surrounding the first encounter between Gregotti and Siza. The two met during the international meetings, known as the Pequeños Congresos⁷, conceived by Oriol Bohigas (1925-2021) inaugurated in Madrid in 1959 as the result of a desire for debate among architects from Barcelona and Madrid. The 8th Pequeno Congresso in Tarragona in 1967 expanded participation to the entire Iberian peninsula. Nuno Portas (1934-2025) - known for his editorial work in the Portuguese magazine *Arquitectura* since 1957 - was invited to participate and organize a Portuguese iteration of the meetings, held that December in Tomar. Beyond the meeting's importance in breaking Portugal's cultural isolation due to specific political conditions, it is crucial to note that:

In the field of built architecture and design, Álvaro Siza Vieira stands out as a revelation for Spanish architects⁸. Everyone was very impressed [...] by the visits to the Lordelo Cooperative in Porto and the Boa Nova Tea House and Leça Swimming Pools in Matosinhos⁹.

At the beginning of 1967, Portas published the article "Sobre la joven generación de arquitectos portugueses"¹⁰ in the Madrid magazine *Hogar y Arquitectura*, together with a long section dedicated to the work of Siza Vieira. Finally, in 1968, at the Vitória meeting (the 9th PC, entitled *Lenguaje y Tecnología*), Siza's architecture was exhibited in the context of a session named Exhibition and Discussion of Projects, accompanied by a lecture by Portas. In the same occasion Vittorio Gregotti and Peter Eisenmann were invited to lecture. Then in 1971, Gregotti had the opportunity to return to Portugal for a conference at the Faculty of Architecture in Lisbon, at the invitation of his friend Portas, and took the opportunity to meet Siza in Porto, visiting in person the works he had seen in the 1968 exhibition. This marked the beginning of a deep friendship and cultural and professional understanding that would accompany the entire careers of these two important figures in European architecture.

During those years, the architect from Novara had already developed an independent critical position, mainly through his work in architecture magazines. From 1953 - the year of the rebirth of *Casabella*, as *Casabella continuità*, under the direction of Ernesto Nathan Rogers (1909-1969) - he worked on the editorial staff, then becoming editor-in-chief from 1957 to 1962. Gregotti always made explicit reference to the teachings of Rogers, whose assistant he had been since 1953 at the Faculty of Architecture in Milan for the course on Stylistic

7 Nuno Correia, "A crítica arquitectónica, o debate social e a participação portuguesa nos 'Pequenos Congresos' - 1959-1968," *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, no. 91 (2010): 41-57.

8 Oriol Bohigas, "A Portugal també els arquitects fan la guerra pel seu compte," *Serra d'Or*, no. 101 (1968): 59-61.

9 Correia, "A crítica arquitectónica," 54.

10 Nuno Portas, "Sobre la joven generación de arquitectos portugueses," *Hogar y Arquitectura*, no. 68 (1967): 77-84.

Characters of Architecture. His 1963 departure from *Casabella* did not adopt the polemical tone of Giancarlo De Carlo's (1919-2005)¹¹, but rather represented the culmination of irreconcilable differences with the magazine's orientation. In a nutshell, the divergence concerned two major themes: the conception of the territorial dimension of architecture and the relationship with history.

From 1963 to 1967, with the series of monographic issues of *Edilizia Moderna* that he conceived – in particular with the double issue “La Forma del Territorio” (The Shape of the Territory)¹², no. 87-88 of 1966 - Gregotti prepared the ground on which to test the interpretation of the geographical theme in architecture, subverting the concept of scale and proposing an antagonistic reading with respect to the political and ideological one that animated the Italian debate on business centres and territorial infrastructure¹³. These issues, as is well known, find full expression in the book *Il territorio dell'architettura* (The Territory of Architecture)¹⁴, published in 1966, the same year as Aldo Rossi's *L'architettura della città* (The Architecture of the City)¹⁵, and in contrast to it. In this geography of Italian-Luso-Iberian consonances, it is important to remember that the fourth issue of the Barcelona magazine *Arquitecturas Bis* – founded in 1974 by Rosa Regàs, Oriol Bohigas and Enric Satué – is essentially a monographic issue dedicated to the opposition between Gregotti and Rossi, introduced by an important essay by Rafael Moneo (1937-) which narrates, in Plutarchic form, the parallel lives of the two eminent figures on the Italian scene, measuring the distance between them¹⁶.

The territory to which Gregotti refers is a geography laden with the signs of history, requiring architectural design to establish a form of interpretive reciprocity. This involves understanding how man transformed nature into culture, a process he defined as “anthropo-geography.” These are the reasons why Siza's work, in its otherness, is particularly functional to the construction of Gregotti's cultural project, which opposed the idea of defining a single theory of architecture based on urban analysis and the possibility of a consequential link that between analysis and design, which Rossi himself circumvented both in his writings and in his works¹⁷.

Gregotti's many writings on the double tension between the architectural scale and the geographical one and on the understanding of the profound meaning of place, in which history is re-encompassed, will focus on the

11 In 1957, Giancarlo De Carlo resigned from the editorial staff of *Casabella*, in open conflict with the positions of some of the “giovani delle colonne,” particularly Aldo Rossi (1931–97) and Guido Canella (1931–2009). For further discussion, see: Chiara Baglione, *Casabella 1928–2008* (Milan: Electa, 2008), 212–325.

12 “La forma del territorio,” *Edilizia Moderna*, no. 87–88 (1966).

13 Manfredo Tafuri, “Le avventure dell'oggetto: architetture di Vittorio Gregotti,” in *Vittorio Gregotti: Progetti e architetture* (Milan: Electa, 1982), 11.

14 Vittorio Gregotti, *Il territorio dell'architettura* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1966).

15 Aldo Rossi, *L'architettura della città* (Padua: Marsilio Editori, 1966).

16 Rafael Moneo, “Gregotti & Rossi,” *Arquitecturas Bis*, no. 4 (1974): 1–4. For further discussion, see Alejandro Valdivieso, “Rafael Moneo's Writings for *Arquitecturas Bis* (1974–1985): The Figure of the Architect: Gregotti & Rossi (1974),” *Revista Europea de Investigación en Arquitectura*, no. 7–8 (2017): 279–95.

17 See Massimo Scolari, “L'impegno tipologico,” *Casabella*, no. 509–10 (1985): 42–45.

works and projects of his Portuguese friend. Indeed, Siza's work would find ample space within the cultural project that he realized with the direction of *Casabella* (from issue 478, 1982 - where the project for the Quinta da Malagueira in Évora was published¹⁸ - to the last issue 630-631, 1996). Again in 2007, in a very short text published in *Casabella*, edited by Francesco Dal Co, introducing a dossier on young Portuguese architects, Gregotti took the opportunity to recall that:

One of the many things for which Álvaro Siza deserves credit is that he shifted the notion of the context beyond its more common and often obvious interpretations: those related to style, constructed based on a heritage of imagery specific to the place, or those reflecting the contemporary ideological conditions of architectural action. These are also part of the materials with which Siza works, but his poetic qualities are capable of concretely implementing their transfiguration that generates recognition of a deeper sense, over the long term, so long as to be projected as a hypothesis of the future.¹⁹

Setting an Interpretative Principle - The Necessary Distance

As already mentioned, it was thanks to Vittorio Gregotti that Álvaro Siza first appeared in Italian architecture magazines. In *Controspazio* n. 9 (1972), Gregotti proposed a selection of recent architectures by Siza, introducing them with a far-sighted essay, followed by an article by Nuno Portas: "Notes on the significance of Álvaro Siza's architecture in the Portuguese environment". The director of the magazine, Paolo Portoghesi, declares the objective of making the journal a meeting place for current architectural and theoretical research, even if different from each other, but united by the "perspective of constructing the dialectical premises for the formation of a *tendenza*"²⁰. In this context, the opening of Gregotti's presentation resounds provocatively: "Álvaro Siza y Vieira is an unfashionable architect: he has no theoretical apparatus, he has never tackled major themes of urban development [...] he has no technological or monumental veneration, he loves small things, subtle signs"²¹.

This is the perspective through which Siza enters the Italian scene, and it is significant that this is not the entry of an isolated personage: his figure is understood as a component of a plural identity, and the marginal condition from which he comes is interpreted as an opportunity to give substance to an authentic and autonomous research, unaffected by ideological superstructures and dogmatism, yet no less radical or operationally committed to the critical

18 See in particular: Álvaro Siza Vieira, "Malagueira Housing Project at Évora," with an introduction by Jean-Paul Rayon, *Casabella*, no. 478 (1982): 2-14; Pierre-Alain Croset and Antonio Angelillo, "Schools in Portugal by Álvaro Siza," *Casabella*, no. 579 (1991): 4-20; Manuel Mendes, "Portuguese Architecture: The Recent Generation," *Casabella*, no. 579 (1991): 42-59.

19 Vittorio Gregotti, "Portogallo, Europa," *Casabella*, no. 760 (2007): 63.

20 Paolo Portoghesi, *Controspazio*, no. 9 (1972): 1.

21 Gregotti, "Architetture recenti," 22.

interpretation of the existing condition. The specificity of the place, understood as history and as the physicality of the environment, is the supporting material of the project that through dialogue - and not mimesis - reveals its possibility of being inhabited in contemporary times. The architect's work is conceived as both a technical and artistic practice that engages with empirical conditions (what Gregotti defined as "context" ²² and Fernando Távora as "circumstance" ²³) as the vital and inescapable matter of their action. This way of understanding the design action has nothing provincial or dialectal about it; on the contrary, it is deeply rooted in the European culture and in the modern tradition and reopens the possibility of redefining the role of architecture from a universal perspective.

This interpretation was amplified after the *Revolução dos Cravos* of 1974 and in relation to the promotion of the experience of the SAAL program (remember the tournee of lectures in Italian schools - from Turin to Palermo - by Siza, Portas and Alves Costa in April 1977²⁴ and the issue of Lotus no. 18, 1978²⁵). But even after the revolutionary euphoria faded, the work of Portuguese architects, and of Siza in particular, continues to demonstrate that there exists a declination of the architect's social commitment, alternative to utopia, more concrete, rooted in the profession, re-establishing the connection between democracy, the city, and architecture. These, in summary, are the interpretative principles that will be widely shared by much of the international criticism, through the filter of that seminal article. It is worth examining Gregotti's concept of Siza's otherness, which emerges from these early remarks and is then reiterated several times on subsequent occasions, as a choice and, one might argue, an existential condition: "the clear certainty that what is essential is always slightly shifted from the chosen directions and possible explanations" ²⁶.

The essay that serves as an introduction to the successful volume *Immaginare l'evidenza* (Imagining the Evidence) - published in Italian in 1998, at a time of widespread international recognition of the Portuguese master's work, and subsequently translated into various languages - is entitled "L'altro" (The Other) ²⁷. Here, the Italian architect highlights above all the extraneity of his friend with respect to the hierarchies of values on which the architectural production processes of those years were based, but he does not miss the opportunity to reaffirm a deeper concept of otherness, as a critical distance from reality, which allows for a deep-rooted understanding of the context in which one operates:

Artistic practices frequently serve to represent institutional realities and are sometimes presented in the form of critical distance, rarely evoking

22 Vittorio Gregotti, "Realismo e contesto," in *L'architettura del realismo critico* (Bari: Laterza, 2004), 47–57.

23 Fernando Távora, *Da organização do espaço* (1962; Porto: FAUP Publicações, 1999).

24 See Roberto Cremascoli and Francesco Moschini, *Álvaro Siza in Italia: il Grand Tour 1976–2016* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, 2016); Susana Lobo, "Viaggio in Italia: O SAAL – Norte e os anos de chumbo," *Estudos Italianos em Portugal*, no. 9 (2014): 27–46.

25 Vittorio Gregotti, "Oporto. Note," and Alexander Alves Costa, "The SAAL Experience," *Lotus International*, no. 18 (1978): 64–103.

26 Gregotti, "Architetture recenti," 22.

27 Vittorio Gregotti, "The Other" (1998), in *Imagining the Evident*, by Álvaro Siza (Lisbon: Monade, 2022), 141–42.

that which is not in some way present, offering itself as an alternative possibility; not that of utopia or the future, but that of examining conflicts from the point of view of everyday actions, in the simple form they assume when they do not wish to resign themselves to the thickness of their human complexity. Because then it becomes possible to use experience again, without it being eclipsed by its representation²⁸.

These words express the desire to reaffirm the irreducibility of design, understood as a synthesis of disciplinary contributions, capable of interpreting real needs and conditions and rendering them in the “oblique” simplicity of the design: through the writing of the design, the parts, born of contextual reasons, are organised into sequences and paths which, “by discreet deviations”, lead to a necessary but not ostentatious diversity of spaces and forms.

In 2006, Marco Mulazzani structured a double interview with Gregotti and Siza for *Casabella* and, through his questions, explored the reasons for the affinity between the two friends, despite the strong differences in their architectural expression. In his answers, Gregotti addressed the theme of “alterity”:

As often happens, we are attracted by diversity. In my case not only in terms of method, but also in terms of its point of application. I was quite fascinated by the fact that Siza was capable of developing theories directly, by means of architectural form, without any deviation borrowed from the plastic or visual arts, as they are defined today. Siza is one of the very few architects who say things that can only be said through architecture²⁹.

Thus, once again, Siza’s work demonstrates the possibility of understanding the theoretical aspect as consubstantial with the architectural act, for which reason no deductive method can be asserted, but rather it is necessary that the “project of modification” respond to the conditions of the context it transforms and find, in its responses, its internal methodological coherence. In the pages following this double interview, Antonio Esposito’s translation of a touching article by Eduardo Souto de Moura is published, dedicated to his mentor Fernando Távora (1923-2005), who passed away the previous year. Souto de Moura writes: “Távora seemed to be interested in History, but what he loved was not History, it was the instant, the territory, the geography laden with history.”³⁰. The similarity with Gregotti’s horizons is strong, although not explicit. This brief consideration opens up a line of investigation into the affinities between Távora and Rogers’ thinking and the permanence of their teaching in the work of their respective students, Siza and Gregotti, which will be addressed in future researches.

28 Gregotti, “The Other,” 141–42.

29 Marco Mulazzani, “Álvaro Siza è un architetto fuori moda...”. Conversazione con Vittorio Gregotti,” and the parallel conversation published on the opposite page: “Modernismo senza dimenticare la storia’. Conversazione con Álvaro Siza,” *Casabella*, no. 744 (2006): 70–71 (English translation: 103); the two conversations conclude the presentation of a series of works by the new generation of architects from the Porto School.

30 Eduardo Souto de Moura, “Fernando Távora: ritratto dell’artista da giovane,” *Casabella*, no. 744 (2006): 75–76 (English translation: 106).

Reciprocity between Small and Large – Drawing as Foundation

The trajectory of Siza's work is defined by a sensitive reading of reality through the practice of drawing, which is capable of revealing a place's latent potential. This approach constitutes both a critique of urbanism - interpreted in its purely normative aspects - and a demonstration of a concrete alternative to the technocratic imposition of planning. The project affirms its theoretical condition: by reading circumstances, operational lines emerge that interpret the present for the future. But that future is defined by the invention and poetics of each author and cannot be predetermined a priori, since every piece of architecture is constituted "as a relationship with other built presences: of stone or of nature"³¹.

This point of view presupposes that the architect's gaze pays dynamic and multi-scale attention to the reality it modifies. Siza's "writing", carried out through drawing, clearly demonstrates this specificity of his way of working. It is a work of slow approximation, which achieves such closeness that it eliminates the distance between sign and site. One might say it translates into drawing the profound intertwining referred to by the master Távora, whereby "knowing and being come to overlap"³². It then recovers the overall view and finds a synthesis - albeit open, in the form of a question - between the autonomy of the detail and the unity of the whole.

Gregotti grasped this peculiar dynamic of Siza's poetics from the first two occasions he invited his Portuguese friend to exhibit his work in Italy: in 1976 in Venice and in 1979 in Milan, two crucial episodes that contributed to determining the beginning of Siza's international notoriety.

In 1976, as part of the Biennale chaired by Carlo Ripa di Meana, when Gregotti was Director of the Visual Arts and Architecture Sector, architecture and art addressed a common general theme: "Ambiente-Partecipazione-Strutture culturali" (Environment-Participation-Cultural Structures)³³. The art section was curated by Germano Celant, while the architecture section was curated by Gregotti himself, who conceived three exhibitions for three different venues in Venice. At the Magazzini del Sale, 27 international architects/architecture teams came together in the exhibition *Europa/America. Centro storico-suburbio* (31 July-10 October 1976)³⁴. The exhibition was organised by invitation, with Gregotti selecting the European authors and Peter Eisenman the American ones. A moment of collective discussion was the debate, "What

31 Vittorio Gregotti, *Architettura e postmetropoli* (Milan: Einaudi, 2011), 5.

32 Fernando Távora, "Sobre a posição do Arquitecto," in *Da organização do espaço* (1962; Porto: FAUP Publicações, 1999), 74.

33 The discipline of architecture was included in the Visual Arts Sector in 1975, under the direction of Vittorio Gregotti. The Architecture Sector only gained its autonomy from the visual arts in 1979. In fact, the first Architecture Biennale, curated by Paolo Portoghesi and titled "The Presence of the Past," took place in 1980. For a thorough analysis of the ideological tensions that crystallized around this radical change in the direction of the Venetian event, see, among others, Léa-Catherine Szacka, *Exhibiting the Postmodern: The 1980 Venice Architecture Biennale* (Venice: Marsilio, 2016).

34 *Europa/America: Architetture urbane, alternative suburbane*, ed. Franco Raggi (Venice: Edizioni La Biennale di Venezia, 1976). Franco Raggi is coordinator of the Visual Arts and Architecture Sector and plays a key role in the organization and staging of the "Europe-America" exhibition.

Modern Movement?“, held at the Lido, Palazzo del Cinema on 1–2 August. Siza was, of course, among the guests, and in this exhibition, the Portuguese architect and Aldo Rossi found themselves setting up their works in side-by-side spaces, following a simple alphabetical sequence³⁵ [Fig. 1]. It was on this occasion that Rossi presented for the first time, together with Eraldo Consolascio, Bruno Reichlin and Fabio Reinhart, the panel named *La Città Analoga*, which became internationally famous as a manifesto on the relationship between reality and imagination - or rather, on “the capacity of the imagination born from the concrete”³⁶.

On a series of 23 thin white panels, dynamically arranged in space to form a sequence of diagonals³⁷, Siza organises heterogeneous materials in space 9 of Hall II. Mainly sketches, but also drawings and photographs from his twenty years of professional activity: the group of single-family houses built in Caxinas, the Banco Borges Agency in Vila do Conde, the collective social housing in Porto as part of the SAAL operation (Bouça and São Victor)³⁸, together with drawings of other projects under study at the time, such as the layout of the coast road in Leça de Palmeira - through which he sought to integrate his best-known projects completed up to that point: the Boa Nova Tea House and the Municipal Swimming Pool [Fig. 2] - the office and commercial building that was intended to resolve the complex area of Avenida da Ponte, and the plans for the redevelopment of the central areas of the city of Porto (Barredo). He thus made his debut on the international scene through his own unique tool, not simply freehand drawing, but the almost filmic sequence of his progressive approach to the project, conveyed through the accumulation of quick sketches organized into large compositions. The short text accompanying the work in the catalogue explains:

I tried to select [...] material that could document [...] this process: continuous and patient research, the slow approximation of the design that corresponds to complex objectives and circumstances, which encompasses every job and all the work [...] The rapid sketches on display – a working tool like any other and not a romantic methodological proposal – rather than reflecting, help to create an awareness of the multiplicity of tensions involved in every hypothetical response to a concrete problem³⁹.

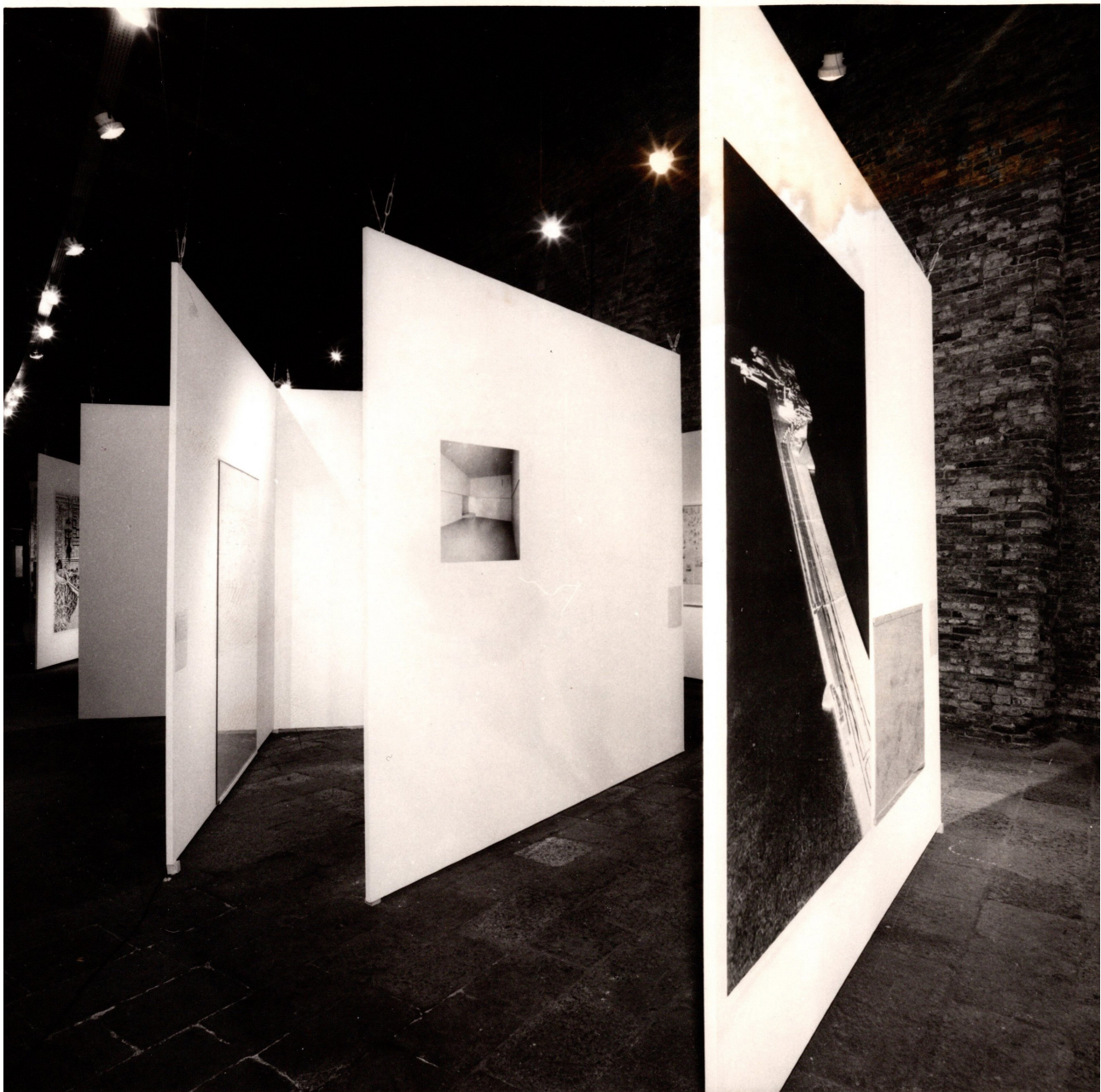
35 See Roberto Cremascoli and Francesco Moschini, *Álvaro Siza in Italia: il Grand Tour 1976–2016* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, 2016), 41–48; Roberto Cremascoli and Nuno Grande, eds., *Neighbourhood: Where Álvaro Meets Aldo* (Exhibition catalogue, Padiglione Portoghese, XV Biennale di Architettura di Venezia, 2016); Mounir Ayoub, “Siza et Rossi, rencontres vénitiennes,” *Tracés*, nos. 13–14 (2016): 16–18.

36 Aldo Rossi, “La città analoga,” *Lotus International*, no. 13 (1976): 6.

37 See Ana Caterina Neiva, “Exhibiting Portuguese Architecture: Twentieth-century Curatorial Strategies” (PhD diss., Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto, 2019), 230–39.

38 Following the Revolução dos Cravos of 25 April 1974, thanks to the willingness of a group of architects and students to engage in the struggle for the right to housing, in a logic of democratization of public space, the SAAL (Serviço Ambulatório de Apoio Local) Brigades were founded. The SAAL program, whose parabola would be halted in 1976, materializes collective reflections on the relationship between the housing problem and the construction of the city.

39 Álvaro Siza, “Contributo,” in *Europa/America: Architetture urbane, alternative suburbane*, ed. Franco Raggi (Venice: Edizioni La Biennale di Venezia, 1978), 57–61.



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1979 was an important year for Milan's Padiglione di Arte Contemporanea (Contemporary Art Pavilion). After a period of closing, its reopening marked a rethinking of the institution's role as a public space open to research and experimentation. The programming was entrusted to Zeno Birolli, Germano Celant and Vittorio Gregotti. The first architecture exhibition curated by Gregotti, in collaboration with Italo Rota, was a monographic exhibition dedicated to the work of Álvaro Siza (1 March-30 April)⁴⁰, which departed from the materials of the 1976 Biennale, enriched and updated with new projects, bringing together all of Siza's Portuguese experimentation on the eve of his international breakthrough.

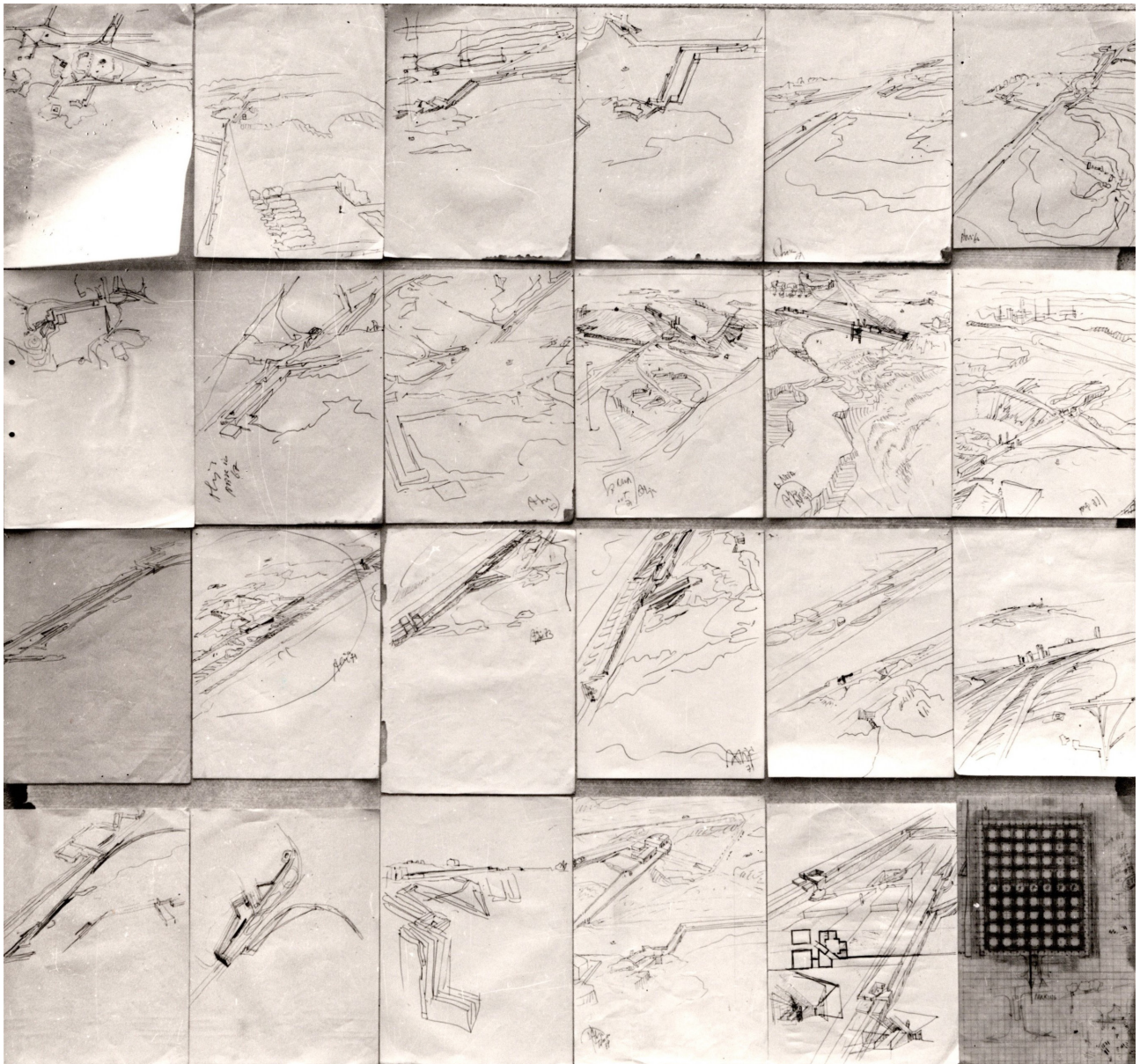
40 Over the subsequent three years, the exhibition "Álvaro Siza Architetto 1954-1979" was restaged in many other European venues: Venice, Berlin, Lausanne, Helsinki, and Jyväskylä. Catalogue: *Álvaro Siza Architetto 1954-1979* (Milan: Idea and Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, 1979). See also Cristina Emilia Ramos e Silva, "A divulgação internacional da arquitectura portuguesa 1976-1988" (PhD diss., Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto, 2016), Appendix to Chapter 2: Illustrative Documents.

Fig. 1

Europa/America. Centro storico-suburbio, 27 Architetti contemporanei. Architetti Europei, Biennale di Venezia 1976, Magazzini del sale alle Zattere, Hall II - Space 9.

Some panels from the section by Álvaro Siza; in the foreground, note the photograph of the model for the project for the Avedida Marginal (coast road) in Leça de Palmeira; in the last panel on the left, in the background, you can see the beginning of Space 8, set up by Aldo Rossi; note the left margin of the *Città Analoga*, conceived and presented on this occasion.

(Photo: ASAC. Courtesy of the Historical Archives of the Venice Biennale, ASAC)



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The setting, created according to Siza's direct instructions, is organised entirely in the space originally conceived by Ignazio Gardella as the "Galleria delle Sculture" (Sculpture Gallery), a continuous space, lowered by a few steps, with one side open towards the park, on which the five exhibition rooms are arranged perpendicularly. A long row of 18 panels, this time black and joined together to form a self-supporting V-shaped structure, forms the backbone that runs through the gallery space [Fig. 3]. The long line describing a wide curve leads to two ends: on one side, a base with the model for the Quinta da Malagueira neighbourhood in Évora, behind which a series of photographs are projected; on the other, two panels of photographs of works created at different times and a base with a composition of prototypes and design objects. On a separate island, in front of the large window, is the model of the social housing project in Bouça (Porto).

Fig. 2

Europa/America. Centro storico-suburbio, 27 Architetti contemporanei. Architetti Europei, Biennale di Venezia 1976. Álvaro Siza, composite of sketches for the Leça da Palmeira waterfront. The master plan integrates the Boa Nova Restaurant (1958-63) and the Swimming Pools (1961-66), representing a comprehensive design evolution spanning twenty years. The project's implementation was heavily influenced by the expansion of the Sacor refinery in 1965; consequently, the final intervention focused on preserving the coastal strip and its relationship with the urban fabric. (Photo: ASAC. Courtesy of the Historical Archives of the Venice Biennale, ASAC)

A dual narration, therefore, emerged on distinct levels. First and foremost, the one between design and project; Siza himself would later recall that: “in that context, I had considered placing final plans alongside preliminary sketches. A very long double panel would then have displayed the sketches on one side and the final plans on the other”⁴¹. Secondly, there is the scale of the architect’s work: alongside the single-family homes and bank agencies built in the early years of his career, there were plans for working-class neighbourhoods that addressed increasingly complex urban issues. Together with the architectural works are two lamps, a mirror, a door handle and other small pieces. It was Mario Botta (1943-) who later recalled Siza’s unusual choice with irony and wondered about the effect that the sight of those prototypes for everyday objects had had on the many members of Milan’s high society who had rushed to the exhibition opening: “I think that this is symbolic of the architecture of Álvaro Siza, sometimes so simple and essential that it may seem banal. I believe, though, that it is simple and essential like the miracle of poetry”⁴² [Fig. 4].

In the exhibition catalogue, which can be considered the first concise monograph on Siza’s work, Gregotti creates a sort of anachronistic montage: in the reprint of his 1972 article, he includes two sketches from the “study of the project for the expansion of the city of Évora (1977)”, anticipating what would find full expression in the first issue of his editorship of *Casabella* magazine (no. 478, 1982).

In 1982, in fact, the opportunity arose to fully exemplify these methodological matters dear to Gregotti through the publication of the first project in which Siza addressed the topographical and territorial scale to define a new part of a city. As if fulfilling a tacit appointment with history, Gregotti opened the editorial project, which would have among its central themes a reflection on urban design as a critical modification of the context, with Siza’s work for the Malagueira neighbourhood in Évora. Begun in 1977, the plan had at that point reached a stage where it could be fully described (with photographs of the completed parts and the foundations of the sectors under construction) and explained, both as a completed work and, at the same time, as an “opera aperta”⁴³. It is no coincidence that the pages following the thirteen dedicated to Siza’s project feature the first of Bernardo Secchi’s (1934-2014) many contributions on the theme of unity between “architecture and urbanism”⁴⁴. This marked either a completion of a cycle or the beginning of a new field of design - and thus, theoretical - experimentation.

Later on, Siza himself will reflect on the theme of the “plan” during the lectures he will give at the IUAV in Venice as a visiting professor in the academic

41 Siza, *Imagining the Evident* (Lisbon: Monade, 2022), 16.

42 Mario Botta, “Espelho Álvaro,” November 1980, published online on January 15, 2020., <https://drawing-matter.org/espelho-alvaro/>. Accessed February 2026.

43 I use this term to reference the intense intellectual relationship that was established between Vittorio Gregotti and Umberto Eco, starting in the first half of the 1960s. See Umberto Eco, *Opera aperta* (Milan: Bompiani, 1962).

44 Bernardo Secchi, “L’architettura del piano,” *Casabella*, no. 478 (1982): 16–17.



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year 1986-87. The contents of these lectures will be collected and published as "Tracce di lavoro" (Working notes) on the occasion of the exhibition at the Masieri Foundation in 1988⁴⁵. The outline on the theme of the "plan" opens as follows:

My experiences with planning have been very useful. Before embarking on them, I was afraid that certain methods I had used previously might not work, and this was an incentive to accept this commitment. Secondly, in hindsight, because I believe it can be very useful to try your hand at

45 *Álvaro Siza Vieira: Casinò di Salisburgo, case e negozi all'Aja*, ed. Carlo Magnani (Venice: Fondazione A. Masieri – Galleria di Architettura, anno II, mostra n. 6, March 19–April 30, 1988). For a more detailed analysis of the Masieri Foundation experience, see Claudia Cavallo, "Una Scuola di Venezia. Luciano Semerani e il linguaggio dell'architettura", in *Biblioteca Stoá. Scuole/Schools*, eds. Marianna Ascolese, Marco Moro, and Viviana Saitto (Naples: Thymos Books, 2026).

Fig. 3

Álvaro Siza Architetto 1954–1979, Galleria delle Sculture, Padiglione di Arte Contemporanea, Milan, 1979.

View of the 18-panel installation, which forms the backbone of the exhibition. The side facing the park, visible in the photograph, features the final project drawings. The opposite side, hidden from view, showcases the sketches illustrating the conceptual development of the designs.

(Photo: Nanda Lanfranco. Courtesy of the Courtesy of the Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan)



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these different project scales, as I think as that designing a small house becomes something entirely different after having had a large-scale experience [...] A plan must be as flexible in the way it develops as the actual development of the city is unstable, as programmes and various ideas for development are unstable over time... The plan must coexist with political decisions, with the complexity and unpredictability of these decisions⁴⁶.

Finally, it is Gregotti again who returns to the theme of the dynamic of the scale in the aforementioned conversation published in *Casabella* in 2006:

Giving form to vast territorial spaces means precisely listening to 'the small things and subtle signs' that form the stratification of the an-

Fig. 4

Álvaro Siza *Architetto 1954–1979*, Galleria delle Sculture, Padiglione di Arte Contemporanea, Milan, 1979.

In the left foreground, the exhibition features prototypes for design elements and everyday objects, such as a lamp and a mirror. These pieces complement the display, highlighting the multi-scalar approach inherent in Siza's design work. (Photo: Nanda Lanfranco. Courtesy of the Courtesy of the Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan)

46 Pier Antonio Val and Álvaro Siza Vieira, "Tracce di lavoro," in *Álvaro Siza Vieira: Casinò di Salisburgo, case e negozi all'Aja*, Quaderni della Fondazione Masieri, no. 6 (1988): 5.

thropo-geography of a territory. Constructing the ordering elements of large spaces starting with these things means avoiding the superimposition of abstract principles on a specific place, bringing out structural characteristics, things that have been there for a long time, giving them form by understanding the reasons behind the traces of their transformations and their meaning. To do this you must know how to see the small scale, amidst things. Large-scale design calls for lengthy exercise on details, which is re-absorbed in the form of the project. This is what Alvaro Siza has always done, and it doesn't matter if the scales were smaller. We can learn much more about the design of the territory from his pool of tides at Leça de Palmeira than from many urban designs: especially those that apply aesthetic systems drawn from supposed expressive urgencies of subjectivity.⁴⁷

The Obsession with History: Angels and Places

During his years as editor of *Casabella*, Gregotti repeatedly returned to the idea of exploring the physical resistance of a place - a concept that implicitly also refers to its historical density - thereby introducing a new design tension. In 1995, his editorial in issue no. 628 (which presented Siza's project for the reconstruction of the Chiado district in Lisbon, which also earned him the cover) was entitled "Foundations":

In the activity of the architect the foundation is, in the most evident way, the beginning, almost always concealed from sight for those who admire or use the architecture, the beginning upon which everything rests, and on which it remains. But that initial, secret surface of contact with the terrain, of support, of connection, which distributes forces and stresses, discharging them in the land, is also the result of a design. In a certain way the foundation is not the starting point but rather the product of a process of will, of a pursuit of compatibility and dialogue, it is a form of interrogation on the possibility of an existing state to welcome and sustain something new, to change⁴⁸.

In this geographical and topographical dialogue, Gregotti also reconciled his relationship with the past and, by extension, his interpretation of the concept of tradition, revealing continuity with the thinking of his mentor Rogers. As Chiara Baglione recalls: "Called upon to reconfigure the magazine almost twenty years after the latter's departure, Gregotti consciously draws on the editorial experience conducted under the guidance of his mentor and the theoretical content that characterised it"⁴⁹.

In Gregotti's vision, the act of modification stems from the recognition of the

47 Marco Mulazzani, "Álvaro Siza è un architetto fuori moda...". Conversazione con Vittorio Gregotti," *Casabella*, no. 744 (2006): 70 (English translation: 104).

48 Vittorio Gregotti, "Fondazioni," *Casabella*, no. 628 (1995): 2-3 (English translation: 68).

49 Chiara Baglione, *Casabella 1928-2008* (Milan: Electa, 2008), 510-611.

other, of empirical conditions understood as the raw material of the project, of cultural stratification taken as the end of dialogue, but in no way can there be a form of deductive reasoning that, starting from the reading of contextual conditions, leads to the design solution, nor is it admissible to appeal to forms of legitimation for design choices merely by virtue of knowledge of the context and its history. These are the reasons why, from the very first editorial, “The obsession with history,”⁵⁰ he urges us to accept the conflictual and indeterminate condition in which contemporary design operates. The article is an open polemic against “La presenza del passato” (The Presence of the Past), the Venice Architecture Biennale curated by Paolo Portoghesi in 1980. The text concludes with an invitation to revert “to the uncertainty of reality,” based on the idea that seeking consensus through a relationship with the past represents contemporary architecture’s weakness. In fact, when it comes to history, the act of questioning is more fruitful than the anxiety to extract from it a model “to oppose the ephemeral present”⁵¹. Gregotti appeals to the Angel of History, portrayed by Paul Klee and commented on by Walter Benjamin. The previous year, Massimo Cacciari had reflected on the same image in the essay accompanying the facsimile reproduction of the issues of the magazine *Das Andere* conceived by Adolf Loos:

The past is transformed into the vision and listening of a living, incessant questioning -the problem par excellence. It is in this relationship, which unfolds through the longest deviations, the slowest waits, that we are torn towards the future. What we call the future, in fact, takes place in this dialogue.⁵²

Therefore, what interests us as architects is, in dialectical terms, to identify the hypothesis of the future inscribed in the site - a hypothesis that is neither obvious nor static, and which can never be reduced to a rule. In this regard, in the text published in the *Quaderno della Fondazione Masieri di Venezia* in 1988, Gregotti writes:

I have always had the impression that Álvaro Siza’s architecture arose from archaeological foundations unknown to us but certainly known to him. These clues are invisible to those who have not devoted long and concentrated attention to the nature of the site through drawing. When they grow, precisely because they carry with them the feeling of growing on something, of linking and connecting, as well as establishing and forming, they seem to preserve all the tender uncertainty of a hypothetical discovery. It is a slow and intense construction, made up of discreet, if not secret, traces of an attempt to start again from the constitution of a few generative signs, apparently simple and explicit of an entire design system. For what characterises Siza’s work is precisely this sense of ar-

50 Vittorio Gregotti, “L’ossessione della storia,” *Casabella*, no. 478 (1982): 40 (English translation: 41).

51 Massimo Cacciari, *Adolf Loos e il suo angelo* (Milan: Electa, 1981), 10.

52 Massimo Cacciari explains how neither Karl Kraus nor Adolf Loos searched the past for an “eternal image” or a model to oppose the ephemeral present. See Cacciari, *Adolf Loos e il suo angelo*, 10.

chitecture as a tool for discovering reality for what it hides, at least as much as for what it shows. Siza's architecture reveals, shows even more than it interprets, unveils the truth of the context.⁵³

As is well known, Álvaro Siza has always rejected the idea of defining his architecture within the framework of a theory - and thereby the Porto School, of which he is considered one of the forefathers. In 1986, on the occasion of the publication of the first monograph of his work, *Professione Poetica*, he forced himself to crystallise his ideas into eight points, which are "taken almost at random", as if to express his discomfort at having to respond to the request to summarise his poetics in words. Two of the points deal with 'method' and 'tradition'. With regard to the former, Siza, citing the experience of the SAAL brigades, writes: "When that which is movement is adopted as a method, it degenerates into a comfortable alibi, an alienating moderator, loath to commit itself to re-formulating desire - ours, and that of others". Regarding the latter, Siza proposed his dynamic vision of the past, confirming continuity with Távora's thinking: "Tradition is a challenge to innovation. It is made up of subsequent inserts. I am a conservative and a traditionalist: that is I move among conflicts, compromises, hybrids and transformations".⁵⁴

Siza assumes the capacity - or perhaps the necessity - of remaining within conflicts as a permanent condition: a continually renewed aspiration that sustains projects and their fruitful investigative nature. Perhaps this is why his extraordinarily prolific production of sketches is populated by angels [Fig. 5], sometimes whole figures, flying over imagined architectures, as if to provide an overall view of the whole, sometimes mutilated, with broken limbs falling to the ground, perhaps heteronymous figures that multiply the architect's identity. Jean-Paul Rayon, who was tasked with writing the article and taking the photographs for the presentation of the Évora project in the first issue of Gregotti's *Casabella*, captured the message conveyed by these presences, deciding to conclude his article with a sketch of the "mutilated angel in full flight", whose "fragmented limbs rush back to their origins"⁵⁵. This tension between flight and rootedness embodies the Sizian "profound lightness" - if the oxymoron is permitted - which has resonated within Italian architectural culture thanks to Gregotti's mirroring operation over more than fifty years.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Manuel Montenegro for his invaluable assistance in consulting and contextualizing the sketches from the notebooks held at Drawing Matter, and for reconstructing the role of these drawings within Siza's design process. The identification and inclusion of the final image would not have been possible without the sharing of his research, which is currently forthcoming.

53 Vittorio Gregotti, "Per Álvaro Siza Vieira," in *Álvaro Siza Vieira: Casinò di Salisburgo, case e negozi all'Aja* (Venice: Galleria di Architettura, 1988), 15.

54 Álvaro Siza, "Premessa," in *Álvaro Siza, Professione poetica* (Milan: Electa, 1986), 8–9.

55 Jean-Paul Rayon, "Introduzione al metodo di Álvaro Siza," *Casabella*, no. 478 (1982): 15.

Fig. 5

Álvaro Siza, page 39 of Notebook 34; from April 1979. (Drawing Matter Collections, collection number DMC 2531.39)

An angel looks down upon a natural landscape featuring several constructions organized around two orthogonal axes. Inscribed below: "comércio urbano geometria (defesa das forças incontroláveis da natureza) guerra à angústia de viver. This is my city. Rio natureza irregularidade." [Translation by the author: urban commerce geometry (defense against the uncontrollable forces of nature) war against the anguish of living. This is my city. Rio nature irregularity].

This drawing is not the one accompanying the publication of the Évora project (published on page 15 of *Casabella* no. 478, 1982, and mentioned in this article—likely clipped and gifted to Vittorio Gregotti); rather, it belongs to a notebook from the same period containing sketches for Malagueira (Fonte da Porta de Alconchel, Sede da Cooperativa) and the Banco Borges & Irmão in Vila do Conde (second project). While the drawing likely does not refer specifically to the Évora project, the essence of this sketch and the accompanying words perfectly synthesize the complex dialogue between architecture and context around which this paper is articulated.



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Architecture as a Possible City. Affinities, Exchanges and Collaborations Between Álvaro Siza and Vittorio Gregotti

Vittorio Gregotti, Álvaro Siza, Lisbon, Malaga, Architecture and the City

/Abstract

The essay discusses the affinities, exchanges and collaborations between Álvaro Siza (b. 1933) and Vittorio Gregotti (1927–2020) from the late 1960s to the present. Although they belonged to different geographical and cultural contexts, Siza and Gregotti developed an intense friendship and collaboration over the decades, based on a similar interpretation of the architectural phenomenon centred on the problematic relationship with the place, the tension towards the construction of the city, and the emphasis devoted to the design method rather than the development of a personal style. The text discusses the ways in which they met, Gregotti's early reception of Siza's architecture, the cultural and design pressures that fostered their mutual understanding, and finally analyses a little-known project - the residential neighbourhood in the Teatinos area in Malaga (1992) – which, despite never being realised, was the first and only occasion in which Gregotti and Siza shared a professional commission on a significant scale and complexity.

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In the network of exchanges that progressively tightened the Italian and Portuguese design cultures during the course of the second half of the 20th century, the connection between Vittorio Gregotti (1927–2020) and Álvaro Siza (b. 1933) plays a prominent role, due to the longevity and depth of their relations, which extended from the cultural and editorial level to the more strictly professional one. As is well known, Gregotti – a figure with extensive connections, and over the time editor and director of various magazines – played a decisive role in the international acclaim of the Portuguese architect. Gregotti dealt with the Siza master's work on several occasions, writing about it in Italian and foreign magazines, starting from the in-depth analysis of his early works in the pages of *Controspazio* in 1972¹.

In 1976, he involved Siza in the events and debates at the Venice Biennale where he was director of the Visual Arts and Architecture sector, and in 1979, he curated his first international exhibition at the Padiglione Arte Contemporanea in Milan, with the collaboration of Italo Rota². Furthermore, in 1986, he favoured the publication of the first international monograph dedicated to Siza's work – *Poetic Profession* – which sealed his international fame³. On the other hand, Gregotti found in Siza, and more generally in Portuguese architectural culture, fertile ground for his theoretical and design proposals. It is no coincidence that it was in Portugal that Gregotti Associati built its most important work outside the Italian borders – the Belém Cultural Centre in Lisbon (1988–1993), in association with RISCO Manuel Salgado firm – of which Siza, despite his famous reluctance to give speeches and write articles, published an enthusiastic review⁴.

In the following pages we seek to clarify in which context, at the end of the 1960s, Gregotti and Siza met, and which other figures facilitated their contact. We then attempt to argue the theoretical and design premises of their lasting relationship, finally analysing a little-known project – the residential neighbourhood in the Teatinos area in Malaga (1992) – which, although never realised, for the first and only time saw Gregotti and Siza sharing a professional task of considerable scale and complexity: a clear sign of their cultural and design affinity.[Fig. 1]

The two met for the first time at the Pequeño Congreso organised in the Basque city of Vitória in 1968, having been invited respectively by Oriol Bohigas

1 Vittorio Gregotti, "Architetture recenti di Álvaro Siza," *Controspazio*, no. 9 (1972): 22–25. See also: Vittorio Gregotti, "La passion d'Álvaro Siza," *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, no. 185 (1976): 42; Vittorio Gregotti, "Porto," *Lotus International*, no. 18 (1978): 65.

2 Siza participated in the exhibition *Europa–America: centro storico–suburbio: 25 architetti contemporanei*, and in its closing debate "Quale movimento moderno?" See Franco Raggi, ed., *Europa–America: Architetture urbane, alternative suburbane* (Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, 1978). In addition, see Léa-Catherine Szacka, "La Biennale de Venise 1976: Le Mouvement moderne en discussion," *Marnes: Documents d'architecture*, no. 3 (2014): 171–233. About the Milanese exhibition, see the catalogue Vittorio Gregotti, ed., *Álvaro Siza architetto 1954–1979* (Milan: Idea, 1979).

3 Álvaro Siza, *Poetic Profession* (Milan: Electa, 1986). Gregotti had been a member of the editorial board of *Lotus International* until 1981, and was closely linked to its editor, Pierluigi Nicolini, who had first been his student and then his university assistant, also participating in the foundation of Gregotti Associati, see Lorenzo Ciccarelli, "Gregotti Associati, o dello studio professionale come struttura teorica," *Studi e ricerche di Storia dell'Architettura*, no. 14 (2023): 70–83.

4 Álvaro Siza, "Un altro italiano in Portogallo," *Domus*, no. 738 (1992): 25–26. It was published also in Spanish edition: Álvaro Siza, "Gregotti en el estuario: centro cultural de Belém," *Arquitectura Viva*, no. 27 (1992): 42–45.



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(1925–2021) and Nuno Portas (b. 1934)⁵. Thus, a first element to consider is the decisive mediation offered by some exponents of Spanish, and in particular Catalan, design culture. They established connections between the most sensitive Portuguese architects, at a time when the Salazar dictatorship was beginning to loosen, and some contemporary figures from the Milanese design culture around the *Casabella-Continuità* edited by Ernesto Nathan Rogers.

In 1952, Gregotti met Federico Correa at the CIAM summer school in Venice. Correa, who in addition to English also spoke excellent Italian, was the intermediary between Gregotti and the young Catalan modernist architects, in particular

5 Nuno Correia, "A crítica arquitectónica, o debate social e a participação portuguesa nos Pequenos Congressos 1959–1968," *Revista crítica de ciências sociais*, no. 91 (2010): 54–55. See also: Vittorio Gregotti, *Autobiografia del XX secolo* (Milan: Skira, 2005), 131–33.

Fig. 1

Álvaro Siza, Portrait of Vittorio Gregotti (1990). (CASVA – Centro di Alti Studi sulle Arti Visive, Milan, Vittorio Gregotti fonds)

Bohigas, who quickly became his privileged contact on the Iberian Peninsula⁶. In 1955, Gregotti travelled to Barcelona to strengthen these ties and visit their early works in person, as well as the masterpieces of Antoni Gaudí and Lluís Domènech y Montaner: a long-standing interest, confirmed in the publication of a monographic issue of *Zodiac* (1965) dedicated to Spain, but largely focused on Catalan design culture⁷.

In the meantime, in November 1959, at the impulse of Bohigas, the first of the Pequeños Congressos was held in Madrid, followed by other meetings in Barcelona and in various Iberian cities: a series of informal conferences between young architects belonging to the rationalist movement, with the aim of exchanging experiences, discussing projects and weaving networks of relations between the different local communities, while at the same time opening up the Iberian design culture to international exchanges in years when the country was suffering from political isolation⁸. The congresses regularly invited external guests – Georges Candilis at the congress in Tarragona in 1963, Giancarlo De Carlo in Segóvia in 1965, Nuno Portas in Tarragona in 1967, and Vittorio Gregotti and Peter Eisenman in Vitória in 1969 – who had the opportunity both to present their projects and to evaluate the works of young Iberian architects. If the invitation to Gregotti was extended by Bohigas, the involvement of the young and still unknown Siza was due to Portas, who had already been publishing and commenting on his early works for some years (in concert with Bohigas) in some Portuguese and Spanish magazines⁹.

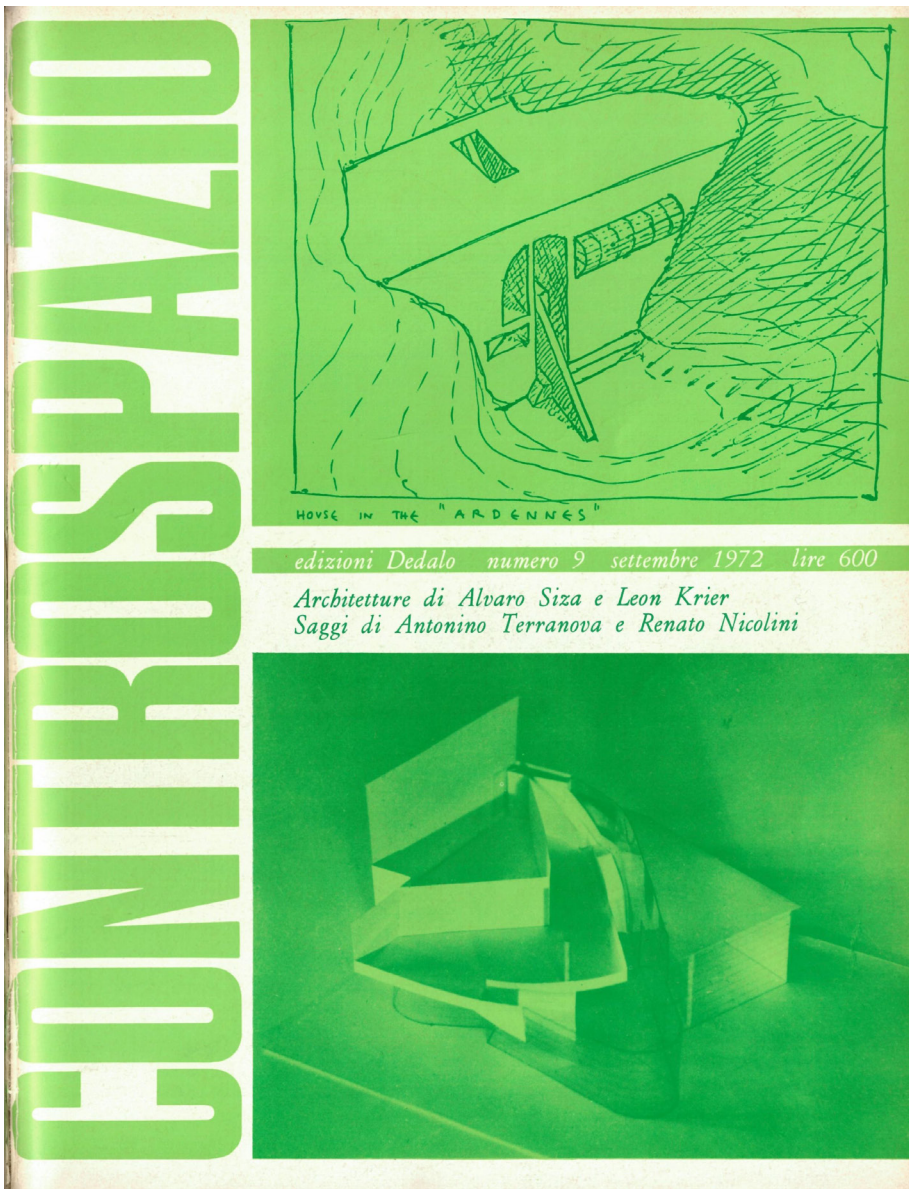
Siza's projects – in particular in Vitória he presented the Casa de Chà in Boa Nova (1963) and the Piscina das Marés in Leça da Palmeira (1966) – had to impress Gregotti so much that in 1971 he travelled to Porto to continue the dialogue with the young Portuguese architect, visit these and other works, and gather material for the publication of the article in *Controspazio* in which Siza was presented as "al mondo uno dei dieci o quindici architetti intorno ai

6 Oriol Bohigas, *Dit o fet: dietari de records II* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1992), 133–40. On the connections between Gregotti and Bohigas see Antonio Pizza and Lorenzo Ciccarelli, "Oriol Bohigas y Vittorio Gregotti: dos arquitectos comprometidos, en defensa de la ciudad pública," in *Redes transnacionales de la arquitectura española 1976–2006* (Barcelona: ETSAB, 2025), 8–9.

7 See Lorenzo Ciccarelli, "Les voyages de Vittorio Gregotti pour la construction d'une identité," in *Du voyage de formation au voyage professionnel de l'architecte, en France et en Europe (XVIIIe–XXe siècles)*, ed. Antonio Bruccleri, Marilena Kourniati, and Massimiliano Savorra (Rome: Campisano, 2025), 201–209. About the special issue of *Zodiac* and the exchanges between Gregotti and Catalunya see: Antonio Pizza, "Diálogos plurales entre Italia y España durante los años sesenta," in *Atravesando fronteras. Redes internacionales de la arquitectura española (1939–1975)*, ed. Antonio Pizza and Enrique Granell (Madrid: Ediciones Asimétricas, 2021), 189–92.

8 Correia, "A crítica arquitectónica." In addition, see Raúl Martínez Martínez, "Los pequeños congresos, 1959–1968: debates paralelos," in *La cultura arquitectónica en los años de la Transición*, ed. Carlos Sambricios (Sevilla: Editorial Universidad de Sevilla, 2023), 65–80.

9 Nuno Portas, "Sobre la joven generación de arquitectos portugueses," *Hogar y Arquitectura*, no. 68 (1967): 77–84; Oriol Bohigas, "A Portugal també els arquitects fan la guerra pel seu compte," *Serra d'Or*, no. 101 (1968): 59–61. On Siza's early works see: Giovanni Leoni, "Siza prima di Siza," *Casabella*, no. 896 (2019): 7–21.



2

quarant'anni in grado di fare con l'architettura affermazioni autentiche"¹⁰. [Fig. 2]

The opening of Gregotti's essay is striking, and implicitly underlines all the differences between the two. Siza is described as an architect who "non dispone di un apparato teorico, non ha mai affrontato grandi temi di sviluppo urbanistico, parla poco" – an inverse representation of what Gregotti in those years was and aspired to be: a public intellectual for whom the close connection between theory and project had outlined the choice of the territorial dimension of architecture as the most suitable for structural intervention in contemporary

¹⁰ "one of the ten or fifteen architects in their forties worldwide capable of making authentic statements through architecture". This and the following translations into English were done by HPA Editorial Team. Nuno Grande, "Vittorio Gregotti e Álvaro Siza: afinidades electivas entre dois arquitectos contemporâneos," *Estudos Italianos em Portugal*, no. 12 (2017): 18; Vittorio Gregotti, *Architetture*, 22. It was Siza himself who recalled Gregotti's visit to Porto, and the establishment of their decade-long friendship, in the lectio magistralis he gave on the occasion of the awarding of an honorary degree at the Milan Polytechnic in 2013, see Roberto Cremascoli and Francesco Moschini, *Álvaro Siza in Italia: il Grand Tour 1976–2016* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, 2016), 277.

Fig. 2

The issue of *Controspazio* no. 9 (1972) in which Vittorio Gregotti presented and discussed the first works of Álvaro Siza.

situation¹¹. Despite the fact that in Gregotti's opinion Siza was simply an architect interested only in the project, a visit to his "secche architetture"¹² revealed all its conceptual charge, and the slow labour concealed in apparently elementary forms. For Gregotti, Siza's works are in fact presented as "modificazione e potenziamento del contesto", in which a few, meditated signs on the one hand reinforce the "legami" and "adiacenze" with the site, and on the other tell of "i tentativi precedenti, le correzioni, gli errori in qualche modo presenti nell'assetto finale, costruito per accumulazione e depurazione di successive scoperte"¹³. In Gregotti's reading, Siza's work did not therefore appear to aim at a generic setting of the new constructions in the place in which they are located, but, on the contrary, seemed to emphasise the conflicts between the aims and geometries of the project and the unique characters and possibilities offered by the site¹⁴. Therefore, he recognised in Siza an architect focused on design method and not on style, not interested in developing a personal poetics, but rather committed to linking each individual building to the specific conditions of the site, to be surveyed and embedded in the project through a slow work of tentatives and overlapping of signs. There were conceptual assumptions and procedures to which Gregotti was akin, and which can perhaps be traced back to the theoretical parallels between their masters: the attention towards "preesistenze ambientali" professed by Ernesto Nathan Rogers and that towards the "circumstances" of the project repeatedly expressed by Fernando Távora¹⁵.

These early links with Portas and Siza made Gregotti aware of the Lusitanian political and cultural situation, to the extent that among the papers in his archive there are records of his participation in the Italian Committee in support of the Portuguese struggle against dictatorship¹⁶. When, following the illness and death of António de Oliveira Salazar (1889–1970) and the presidency of Marcello Caetano, the Estado Novo was dismissed in 1974 and the country opened up to democracy, Gregotti, together with Bernardo Secchi and Paolo Ceccarelli, was one of the first and most eminent foreign architects to be called upon to help tackle the serious housing shortage¹⁷. Portas, meanwhile appointed Secretário

11 "lacks a theoretical framework, has never addressed major issues of urban development, and rarely speaks". Lorenzo Ciccarelli, *Vittorio Gregotti: Architect of the Modern Project* (London: Routledge, 2025), 15–34. Later, Gregotti said how "as often happens, we are attracted by diversity... I was quite fascinated by the fact that Siza was capable of developing theories directly, by means of architectural form," in Vittorio Gregotti, "Álvaro Siza is an architect who's out of fashion..." *Casabella*, no. 744 (2006): 103.

12 "austere buildings".

13 The quotations in Italian appearing in this paragraph can be translated as follows, respectively: "modification and enhancement of the environment"; "connections"; "surroundings"; "the earlier attempts, the revisions, the errors that are somehow present in the final structure, built through the accumulation and refinement of successive discoveries"; Gregotti, "Architetture recenti di Álvaro Siza", 22.

14 On the relation between Siza and the "context" see also: Vittorio Gregotti, "Portugal, Europe," *Casabella*, no. 760 (2007): 110.

15 "existing environmental issues". Although necessary, a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between Rogers and Távora is beyond the scope of this paper. See: Antonio Esposito, "Fernando Távora e l'architettura portoghese del dopoguerra," in *Fernando Távora: opera completa*, eds. Antonio Esposito and Giovanni Leoni (Milan: Electa, 2005), 17–21. Concerning Távora's problematic connection to place, see also, in the same book: Leoni, "Oltre il 'moderno'", 64–71.

16 CASVA Centro di Alti Studi sulle Arti Visive (Milan), Vittorio Gregotti fonds, Correspondence, 1973, *Per il Portogallo*.

17 José António Bandeirinha, *O processo SAAL e a arquitectura no 25 de Abril de 1974* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 2007), 114. See also: Gregotti, *Autobiografia*, 139–41.

de Estado da Habitação e Urbanismo do Primeiro Governo Provisório, involved both Siza and Gregotti in the construction of housing “for the greatest number” of Portuguese citizens disadvantaged by the unfair housing programmes of the dictatorial period. In particular, Gregotti – already well-known in Portugal for his design of the ZEN housing district in Palermo (1969–1973), which was also widely published internationally – received a voluntary commission to design a social housing quarter for 12.000 inhabitants in the context of the Fundo de Fomento para a Habitação on the Setúbal peninsula, which remained on paper¹⁸. Portas suggested that Gregotti assigned the supervision of the work to one of his former architecture students at the School of Fine Arts in Lisbon, who was then involved in other social programmes in Setúbal, Manuel Salgado, who would work alongside Gregotti on many other Portuguese projects in the following decades¹⁹.

At the same time, Siza’s involvement in the experiment of the SAAL brigades – an acronym for Serviço Ambulatório de Apoio Local, a kind of cooperative and participatory design by the future inhabitants of social housing neighbourhoods – further reinforced his fame in Italy, where wide sectors of the design culture were at that time extremely sensitive to the connections between architecture, the city and political and social commitment. It was Gregotti again who favourably presented Siza’s projects in the context of the SAAL brigades in Bouça and São Victor, Porto (1974–1977), and then Quinta de Malagueira in Évora (1977–1997)²⁰. **[Fig. 3]** Projects that the Portuguese architect, together with Portas and Alexandro Alves Costa, was invited to present in the spring of 1977 in a series of Italian universities from the north to the south of the Peninsula – Turin, Milan, Venice, Florence, Pescara, Rome, Naples and Palermo – in a sort of Grand Tour that helped to strengthen his presence in Italy and foster new ties with local architects, at the origin of several projects that Siza would be called upon to carry out, especially in Campania and Sicily during the 1980s and 1990s²¹.

The project for the SAAL neighbourhood in Quinta de Malagueira, and the first photos of the residential complexes under construction, were widely published by Gregotti in March 1982, in the first issue of his editorship of *Casabella*²². **[Fig. 4]** Siza’s project, to which no less than 12 pages were dedicated, opened the issue in an evidently programmatic function, even preceding the new director’s editorial. It is no coincidence that Siza quickly became one of the main references of the cultural project carried out by Gregotti’s *Casabella*, in defence of the role of architecture in the transformation of the city and the territory, and against the autobiographical, authorial and stylistic drifts that he saw embedded in the

18 CASVA Centro di Alti Studi sulle Arti Visive (Milan), Vittorio Gregotti fonds, Photos, 1974 *Setúbal*. See also: Vittorio Gregotti, *Álvaro Siza è un architetto fuori moda*, 70.

19 Grande, “Vittorio Gregotti e Álvaro Siza,” 21.

20 Gregotti, “Porto,” 65. See also: Alves Costa, “The Oporto Experience,” *Lotus International*, no. 18 (1978): 66–103.

21 Cremascoli and Moschini, *Álvaro Siza in Italia*, 49–53.

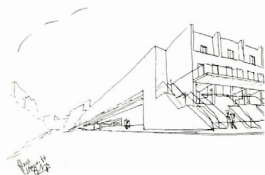
22 Álvaro Siza, “Il quartiere Malagueira a Évora,” *Casabella*, no. 478 (1982): 2–15.

Bouça

Associação degli abitanti
128 alloggi popolari in Rua da
Boavista

Alvaro Siza - architetto.

Il progetto di massima è stato realizzato per incarico del « Fondo de incentivazione della casa » (Fundo de Fomento da Habitação), nel 1973, per un terreno che confina con una zona residenziale degradata. Gli abitanti della zona, organizzati in associazioni di abitanti e integrati nel processo S.A.A.L., con l'appoggio di una brigata tecnica, hanno chiesto nel 1975 il terreno e il progetto. Dopo laboriose trattative e una volta raggiunti gli obiettivi dell'associazione, lo studio è stato adattato al relativo programma.

**Bouça**

Residents' Association
128 low-cost dwellings in Rua da
Boavista

Alvaro Siza - architect.

The outline plan was drawn up on behalf of "The House Promotion Fund" (Fundo de Fomento da Habitação) in 1973, for a site bordering on a degraded residential zone. The inhabitants of the zone, organized in a residents' association joined up with S.A.A.L., and helped by a technical assistance brigade, asked for the land and for the implementation of the plan in 1975.

After laborious discussions, the objectives of the association were agreed on and the outline plan was adapted to exact requirements.



19

postmodern phenomenon²³. Siza's projects and realisations were constantly observed and published by Gregotti: for example, in the opening issue of his editorship and in the closing one, as well as in the most important monographic issues, such as the one dedicated to architecture as "modification" of January-February 1984²⁴.

If the SAAL settlements were Siza's projects that drew the most attention from Italian design culture during the 1970s, by the end of the following decade the reconstruction plan for the Chiado area in Lisbon (1988–1998) received similar attention. A few months after the fire that destroyed four blocks between Baixa and Barrio Alto in central city, Siza presented the design intentions and

²³ See Marco Francesco Pippione, *La "Casabella" di Vittorio Gregotti: temi e confini di un progetto culturale* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2019).

²⁴ Álvaro Siza, "L'accumulazione degli indizi," *Casabella*, no. 498–99 (1984): 84–91, in addition, for example: Kenneth Frampton, "At the Still Point of the Turning World," *Casabella*, no. 514 (1985): 4–11; Pierre-Alain Croset and Antonio Angellillo, "Scuole in Portogallo di Álvaro Siza," *Casabella*, no. 579 (1991): 4–20.

Fig. 3

The Bouça SAAL neighbourhood in Porto (1974–1977) by Álvaro Siza presented in *Lotus International* no. 18 (1978)

Lavorando in mezzo agli antagonismi tra le istanze municipali, provinciali e nazionali del Portogallo, l'architetto Alvaro Siza sta realizzando a Évora, a 140 km da Lisbona, un importante quartiere di 1200 abitazioni

unifamiliari. Ricco di riferimenti sia alle *Siedlungen* razionaliste che alle abitazioni tradizionali portoghesi, il nuovo quartiere di Malagueira può attualmente esser letto nel suo rituale di fondazione.

Among the antagonisms that emerge where municipal, provincial and national demands meet, the Portuguese architect Alvaro Siza is working on an important residential district comprising 1200 one-family houses, at Évora, 140 kilometres from Lisbon. Rich in

references to the rationalist *Siedlungen* and traditional Portuguese housing, the new Malagueira district can at present be read in the ritual terms of its foundation.

Alvaro Siza Vieira

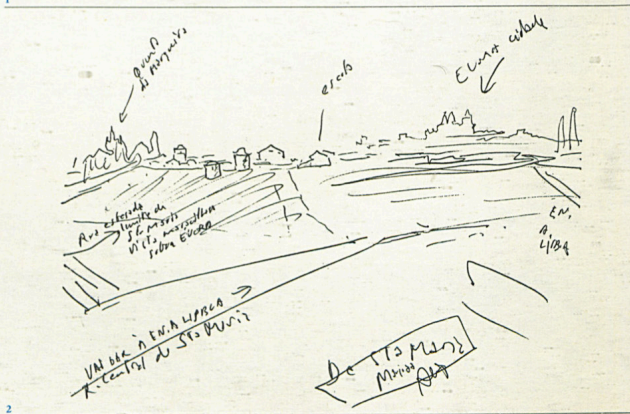
A 140 km da Lisbona, Évora, con 30.000 abitanti, è la città più importante dell'Alentejo, una pianura latifondista (querceti e sughereti, agricoltura, allevamento). Acropoli romana, vera città museo, rappresentativa delle principali manifestazioni architettoniche arabe ed italiane del XV e XVI secolo (corrispondenti alla ricchezza delle prime conquiste), di quelle austere autenticamente portoghesi del XVI secolo, del mantimento e del barocco tedesco del XVII sec. (dopo l'arrivo dell'oro dal Brasile e l'allontanamento dei Gesuiti da parte del Marchese di Pombal), dell'architettura francese ed inglese del XIX e del XX sec., nella buona e nella cattiva sorte.

Èvora è continentale, ha la stessa latitudine di Atene, il clima è assai soleggiato e la temperatura scende raramente sotto lo 0°. Architettura colta, patrizia e popolare si sovrappongono in un accostamento sempre molto curato.

Il futuro quartiere di Malagueira, un terreno di 27 ha di cui si è conservato il carattere bucolico, occupa una posizione centrale, in una recente estensione fuori le mura, ad ovest della città. Quartiere nuovo di villini borghesi, caseggiati collettivi cruciformi a 7 piani, degli anni '60, costruzioni abusive da una parte e dall'altra dell'asse Est-Ovest, qualche costruzione privata isolata ed un podere riattato lo circondano con maggiore o minore coerenza. Un complesso universitario è progettato a nord, dove esiste già una piscina.

Dal 25 aprile 1974 la situazione politica del Portogallo non ha smesso di essere incerta. Oggi, la spinta socialista, con la composizione organica del partito, con le alleanze congiunturali con la destra, si è rinvigorita, ha ripreso in mano il potere centralizzato e s'accompagna alle incerte responsabilità degli organi decisionali. Ad Évora, dove esiste una forte presenza comunista, gli antagonismi tra le istanze municipali, provinciali e nazionali si focalizzano sulla realizzazione del quartiere di Malagueira, divenuto una posta nel gioco politico. Il finanziamento degli investimenti sovvenzionati viene stornato, l'operazione subisce tutte le pressioni esercitate da Lisbona, capitale amministrativa, nel momento in cui si intraprende la lotta per l'indipendenza economica e culturale delle regioni.

Il quartiere Malagueira



4

recompositional strategies of his plan in *Lotus International*, preceded by an essay by Gonçalo Byrne linking the reconstruction project to the 18th-century plan of the Marquis of Pombal²⁵. In the following years Siza was interviewed, and published in other Italian magazines, while the progress of the Chiado reconstruction was closely monitored and discussed, not least by Gregotti's *Casabella*²⁶. [Fig. 5]

In the same years, while Siza was working on the reconstruction of Chiado, a few kilometres away, in the western suburbs of the city, Gregotti Associati, together with the RISCO – Manuel Salgado firm, won the international competition for the construction of the Belém Cultural Centre: an imposing complex for exhibition spaces, auditorium, library, hotel, restaurants, cafeterias and a

25 Gonçalo Byrne, "Lisbon: A Vulnerable City. The Chiado by Álvaro Siza," *Lotus International*, no. 64 (1989): 33–37; Álvaro Siza, "What It Is..." *Lotus International*, no. 64 (1989): 38–53.

26 For examples, see: "Progetto di recupero per l'area del Chiado, Lisbona, intervista di Álvaro Siza con Giacomo Borella," *Domus*, no. 714 (1990): 48–55; Antonio Angelillo, "Lisbona: proposta per il recupero del Chiado incendiato," *Casabella*, no. 558 (1989): 26–27; Antonio Angelillo, "Il recupero del Chiado: un piano d'autore," *Casabella*, no. 628 (1995): 18–33; Pierluigi Nicolini, "Osservazioni sull'intervento di Álvaro Siza al Chiado," *Lotus International*, no. 92 (1997): 7–27.

Fig. 4

The Quinta de Malagueira SAAL neighbourhood in Évora (1977–1997) by Álvaro Siza presented in *Casabella* no. 478 (1982), the first issue of Vittorio Gregotti's editorship

Lisbona: proposta per il recupero del Chiado incendiato

Argomenti

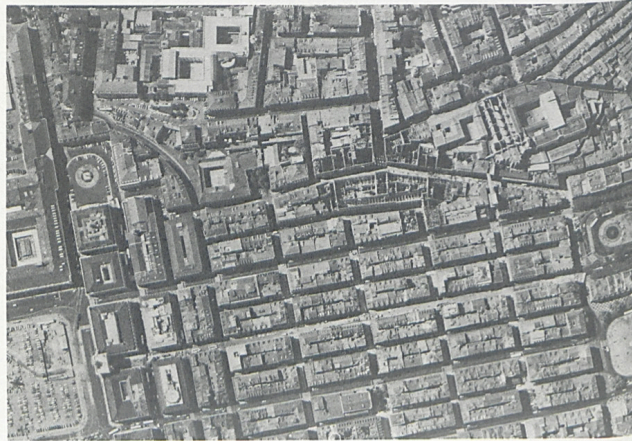
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A distanza di otto mesi dall'incendio che distrusse, totalmente o in parte, diciotto edifici del centro storico di Lisbona, è stata presentata la prima parte del piano di recupero della zona sinistrata del Chiado affidato lo scorso settembre ad Alvaro Siza.

Il piano, che prevede una sostanziale conservazione dell'assetto volumetrico preesistente, parte dalla volontà non tanto di preservare le caratteristiche stilistiche e tipologiche delle singole unità quanto il valore storico-ambientale complessivo del quartiere.

I principali interventi di trasformazione si riferiscono alla definizione del programma insediativo ed al sistema di accessibilità (che integra lo studio in corso della nuova linea metropolitana) nella prospettiva di un processo di rivitalizzazione urbana della Baixa Pombalina e dell'intero centro di Lisbona.

In seguito ad un'attenta valutazione delle tendenze strutturali e localizzative delle funzioni terziarie rilevate nel centro storico, Siza approda ad una proposta di sostanziale riequilibrio dell'assetto socio-economico dell'area che prevede la reintroduzione di funzioni miste commercio/uffici/residenze con la presenza di queste ultime nei termini del 30/40%. Inoltre il nuovo sistema dei percorsi pedonali, che sfruttano la

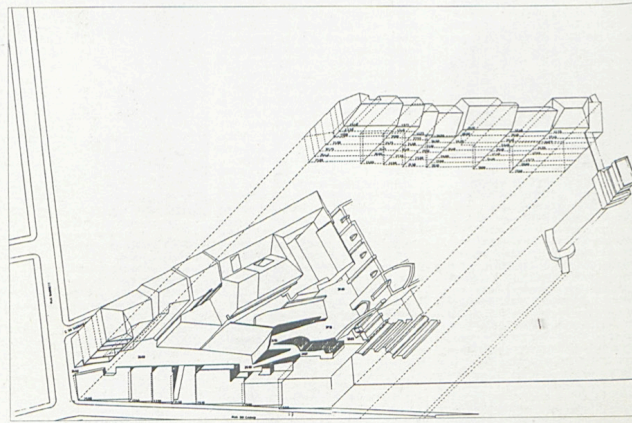


Alvaro Siza con Carlos Castanheira e Luis Mendes e con Antonio Angelillo e André Braga. Piano di recupero della zona sinistrata del Chiado a Lisbona; veduta zenitale della Baixa Pombalina, schizzo di studio e

assonometria del progetto di recupero degli isolati distrutti dall'incendio. Nella pagina a fianco planimetria generale dell'area con evidenziati gli isolati da recuperare e il tracciato della linea metropolitana.

Alvaro Siza with Carlos Castanheira and Luis Mendes and with Antonio Angelillo and André Braga. Restoration plan for the Chiado damaged zone at Lisbon; zenith view of Baixa Pombalina, sketch and

axonometric drawing of the projected restoration of the building-blocks burnt down. On the facing page, site plan showing the buildings to be restored, and the underground network.



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conference centre that was initially intended to house the offices and activities of the European Commission during the first six months of the Portuguese presidency in 1992²⁷. A cultural centre that, as mentioned, once completed, was presented and publicly praised by Siza himself²⁸.

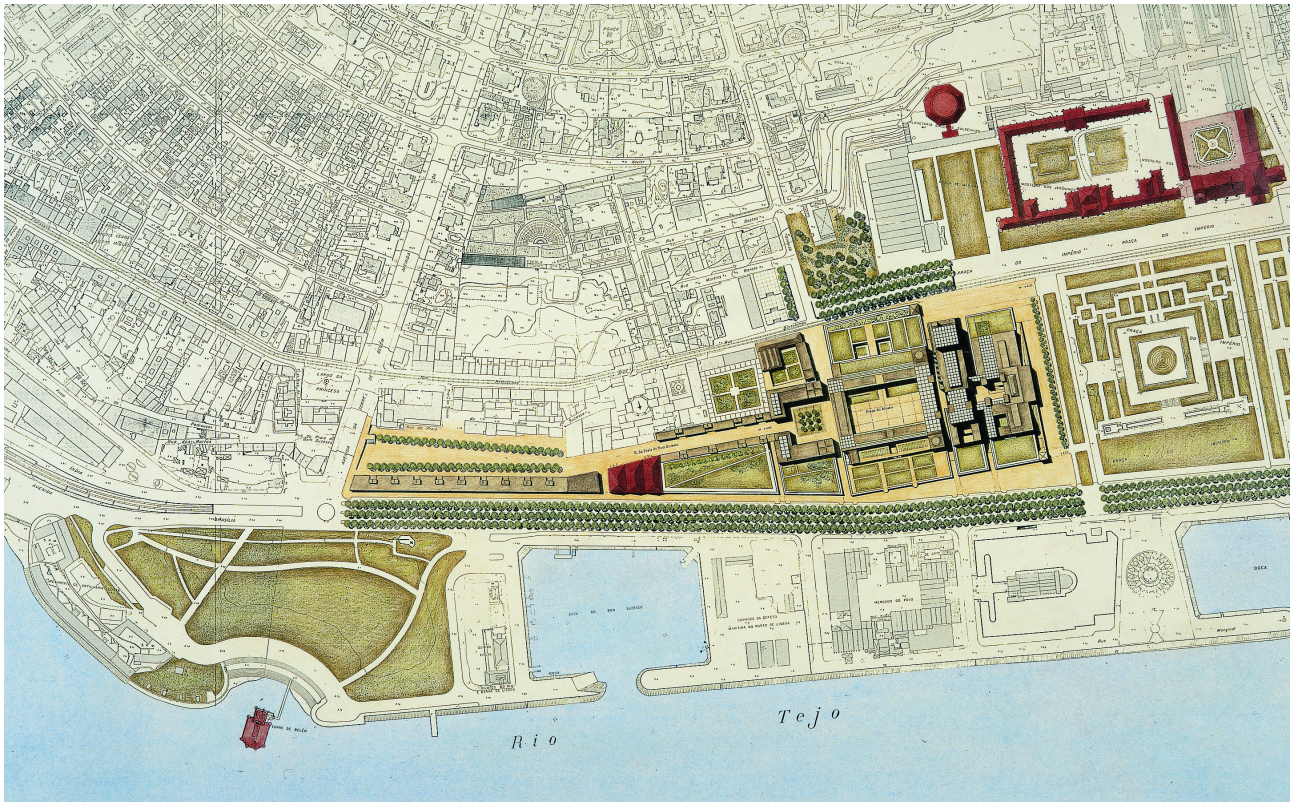
Despite the clear programmatic, dimensional and design strategy differences of the two projects, Siza's and Gregotti's interventions share a confidence in the means and disciplinary tools of architecture for the construction of the city, and the conviction that adherence to history, culture and the site's specific characteristics must take pre-eminence over the stylistic and formal research of the project: in other words, the conviction that the city – creating the city, or at least helping to design a part of it – is more important than architecture, and that every architectural project must first and foremost propose itself as a piece of a possible city.

27 See Pierluigi Nicolini, "Fabric and Monument," *Lotus International*, no. 61 (1989): 24–28; Vittorio Gregotti, "Centro culturale di Belém," *Domus*, no. 738 (1992): 27–37; Gregotti Associati and Manuel Salgado, *Centro culturale di Belém, Lisbona*, special issue of the magazine *Anfione e Zeto*, no. 10 (1994).

28 See footnote 4. Gregotti also devoted a monographic issue of the magazine *Rassegna* which he had directed since 1979, to the city of Lisbon and its urban history, in which Siza also wrote a page. See *Lisbon*, special issue of *Rassegna*, no. 59 (1994).

Fig. 5

The plan for the reconstruction of the Chiado area in Lisbon (1988–1998) by Álvaro Siza presented in *Casabella* no. 558 (1989)



6



7

In the Chiado, Siza refrains from disrupting the urban fabric, typologies and façade layouts of the Pombaline blocks, developing an open strategy which on the one hand strictly respects the public image of the neighbourhood to which the inhabitants were familiar – the façades, the height of the eaves, the design of the holes, the materials, the decorative elements are meticulously defined – while on the other hand only allowing a certain margin of freedom in the definition of the spaces inside the various buildings. In other words, the architect respects the shape of the historic city, and limits himself to leaving his mark, discreetly, in the definition of the internal parts of the blocks, and in the integration between buildings and public space: in the internal mobility of the lots, in the pedestrian paths that link different heights, in the provision of public transport lines and stops²⁹. Similarly, in the vacant area adjacent to the Praça do Imperio, Gregotti's intention was to create a building "in the form of a city", reinterpreting and reworking the dense integration of pathways, open spaces, covered spaces and buildings of different scales and functions of the overlooking Monastero dos Jerónimos: a strategy more evident in the first sketches and in the competition project than in the final complex, only partially realised³⁰. The rocky, walled form of the cultural centre, the visual alignment of the auditorium's scenic tower with the tower of Belém on one side, and the monastery's bell tower on the other, the articulation of "piazzes" (squares) of different sizes and heights, the tracing of transversal paths through the building mass like the alleys and lanes of a town centre, and the choice as a unitary covering of the same stone that characterises Lisbon's major monuments, are all choices that speak of Gregotti's aim to design not only a building, but a piece of the city as coherent and connected as possible to the urban grid of the district, and to the material and immaterial tradition of the Portuguese capital. [Figg. 6–7]

On the reciprocal admiration, and on the common design and cultural foundations that we have quickly traced, is also based the unique professional collaboration between Siza and Gregotti, which took place between 1992 and 1993 – while the former was working at Chiado, and the latter was completing the Belém cultural complex – for the design of a new neighbourhood in the suburban area of the Teatinos in Malaga.

The project was part of the context of both the 1992–1995 Plan Nacional de la Vivienda (which for Malaga foresaw the construction of at least 2,000 new dwellings per year) and of the city's Plan General approved a few years earlier³¹. In this double track, at the same time national and local, in the autumn of 1991 the Ayuntamiento de Malaga, through the Oficina del Plan General, promoted a first construction plan of 500 dwellings, in 5 autonomous units of 100 dwellings each, to be located in the peripheral belts of the city, involving national

29 From the Italian perspective, the Chiado reconstruction plan has been extensively illustrated and discussed, for example in the issue of *Lotus International*, no. 61 and 64 (1989), and no. 92 (1997).

30 Gregotti Associati RISCO, *Concurso para o projecto do Centro Cultural de Belém em Lisboa*, Caderno 2, 6–7, 1988 Lisbon CCB, Projects, Fondo Vittorio Gregotti, CASVA Centro di Alti Studi sulle Arti Visive (Milan).

31 Oficina del Ayuntamiento, *Plan general de Málaga*, 1992 Málaga, Projects, Fondo Vittorio Gregotti, CASVA Centro di Alti Studi sulle Arti Visive (Milan).

Fig. 6

Gregotti Associati and RISCO – Manuel Salgado, General plan for the international competition of the Belém Cultural Centre in Lisbon, between the Torre de Belém on the left and the Monastero dos Jerónimos on the right (1988). (CASVA – Centro di Alti Studi sulle Arti Visive, Milan, Vittorio Gregotti fonds)

Fig. 7

Gregotti Associati and RISCO – Manuel Salgado, Belém Cultural Centre in Lisbon (1988–1993). One of the urban roads that cross the cultural complex, connecting the rua Bartolomeo Dias to the sea. (CASVA – Centro di Alti Studi sulle Arti Visive, Milan, Vittorio Gregotti fonds)

and international architects for each of the lots: Gregotti Associati, Álvaro Siza, Lluís Domènech & Roser Amadó, José Seguí and Francisco Pol, through a programme that envisaged the delivery of the final designs by the end of 1992, and the construction of the buildings in the following two years³².

The programme, which envisaged the co-participation of public and private initiative, for both social and market-rate housing, was revised in the course of 1992, envisaging the urbanisation of only three plots in the Teatinos area, with changes also in the team of architects: Domènech and Amadó were entrusted with the southern portion of the area, José Seguí and Ramón Engel (who replaced Francisco Pol) with the northern portion towards the built-up area of Puerto de la Torre, and Siza and Gregotti – who involved Salgado, with whom he was building the Belém cultural centre, and was engaged in other Portuguese projects – with the central part of the area: the key part of the urbanisation that was to link the western suburb to the historic city, taking advantage of its proximity to the Ronda Oeste and the university district³³. It was for this area, of approximately 43 hectares, that the three architects realised their design proposal, which however remained on paper.

The intention of the Malaga municipal administration was not to create a simple residential district, but rather an “auténticas piezas urbanas que posibiliten y potencien la relación entre la ciudad y su periferia”³⁴. For the area assigned to Gregotti, Salgado and Siza, the request was to provide about 3.500 dwellings, divided between public housing with social rents and flats to be placed on the market, as well as spaces for commercial activities, sports facilities and a large urban park of about 250.000 square metres³⁵. On this basis it is not difficult to understand why Gregotti and Siza agreed to collaborate: as we have seen, they shared the principle that the architectural project was not a tool for pursuing a formal and stylistic research of a personal nature, but an element of construction of the city, linking the new urbanisation to an attentive reading of the local context. Hence the choice of pursuing an urbanisation by regular grids of blocks with a square or rectangular base, variously open or enclosed, which Gregotti was already experimenting with in the transformation of the Pirelli area in the Bicocca district of Milan (from 1985) and Siza in other large urban projects, such as the one for the Pendino district of Naples (1986–1987)³⁶.

Despite the close collaboration, from archival explorations it seems possible to propose the hypothesis that Gregotti Associati mainly drew up the urban layout of the new district, while Siza concentrated his attention on the typological layout and plan arrangement of the various housing typologies in the different

32 Letter by Francisco Pol to Vittorio Gregotti, Gregotti Associati RISCO, Fondo Vittorio Gregotti, CASVA, Milan.

33 Elena Castilla, “Las propuestas para Teatinos contradicen el plan vigente y crean barrios autónomos,” *Diario Sur*, September 24, 1992, 3.

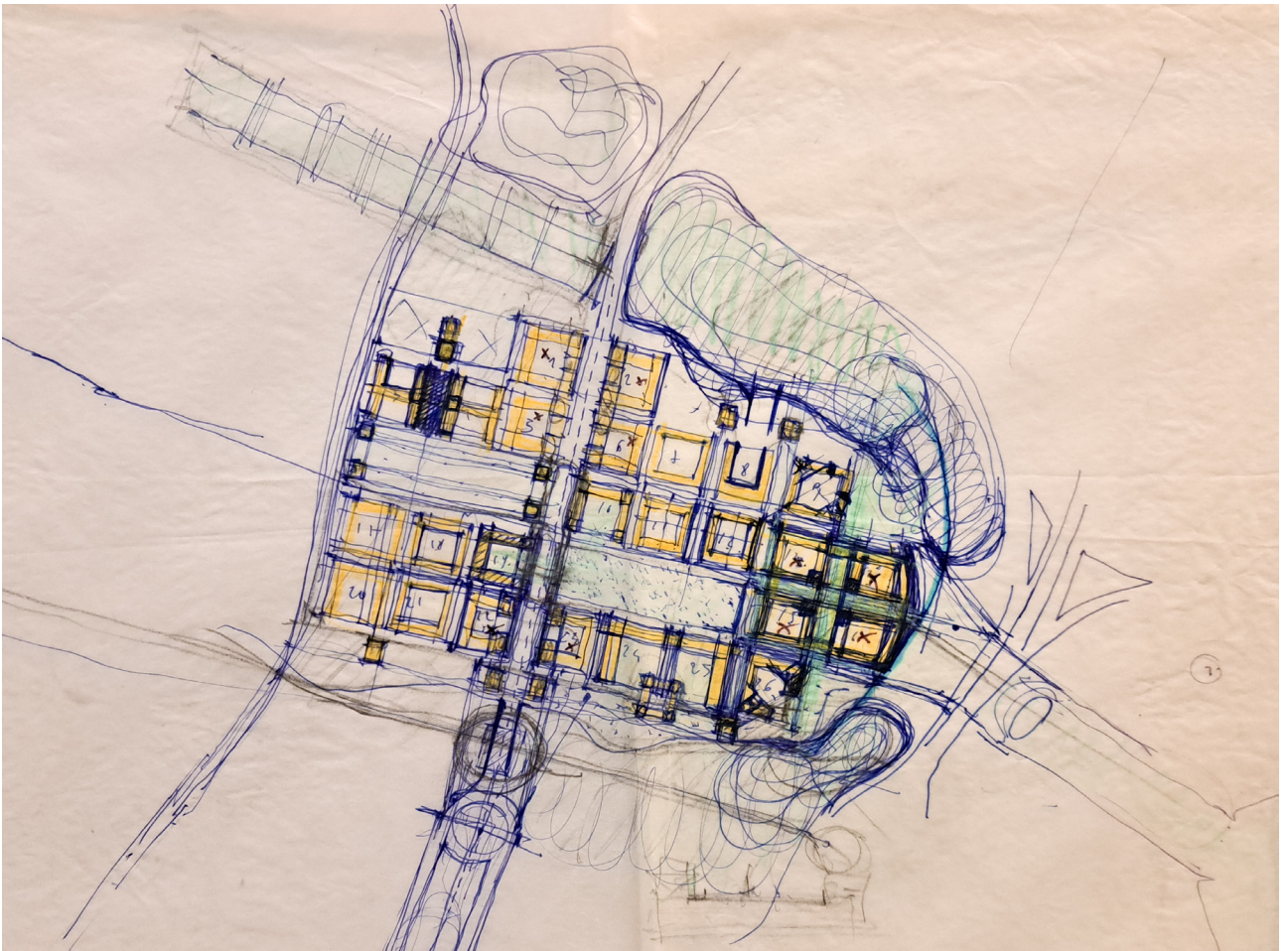
34 “authentic urban spaces that foster and strengthen the relationship between the city and its outskirts”; Oficina del Ayuntamiento, *Plan general de Málaga*, 10, 1992 Málaga, Projects, Fondo Vittorio Gregotti, CASVA Centro di Alti Studi sulle Arti Visive (Milan).

35 Oficina del Ayuntamiento, *Plan general de Málaga*, 10, 1992 Málaga, Projects, Fondo Vittorio Gregotti, CASVA Centro di Alti Studi sulle Arti Visive (Milan), Resumen características Teatinos centro.

36 See Manuel de Solà-Morales, “Another Modern Tradition,” *Lotus International*, no. 64 (1989): 20–21.

Figg. 8–9

Álvaro Siza, Gregotti Associati, RISCO – Manuel Salgado, Study of urban layout of the residential neighbourhood in the Teatinos area in Malaga (1992). (CASVA – Centro di Alti Studi sulle Arti Visive, Milan, Vittorio Gregotti fonds)



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residential buildings³⁷. [Fig. 8–9] From the earliest sketches, the neighbourhood was organised according to a chessboard of square blocks, arranged in five parallel rows and surrounded by the urban park that shields the new settlement from major traffic routes. The main access road, which cuts the district longitudinally in a north-south direction, is partially underground, allocating the area to parkland. In a median and orthogonal position, this axis is intersected by a strip destined for green areas and public facilities: a sports centre to the east and cultural and administrative poles to the west. The residential buildings are five storeys high on the north and four storeys high on the south, and although showing compact fronts on the main road axes, they have been designed with respect to a different opening and integration of green areas. The blocks facing

37 A large number of sketches and drawings of the urban layout of the neighbourhood are kept in the Gregotti Associati fonds, while only a few drawings concerning plan studies of the various buildings are preserved. On the contrary, in the monographs dedicated to Siza's work, of the Málaga project only the latter are published. See, for example: Kenneth Frampton, *Álvaro Siza: tutte le opere* (Milan: Electa, 1999), 458–59.

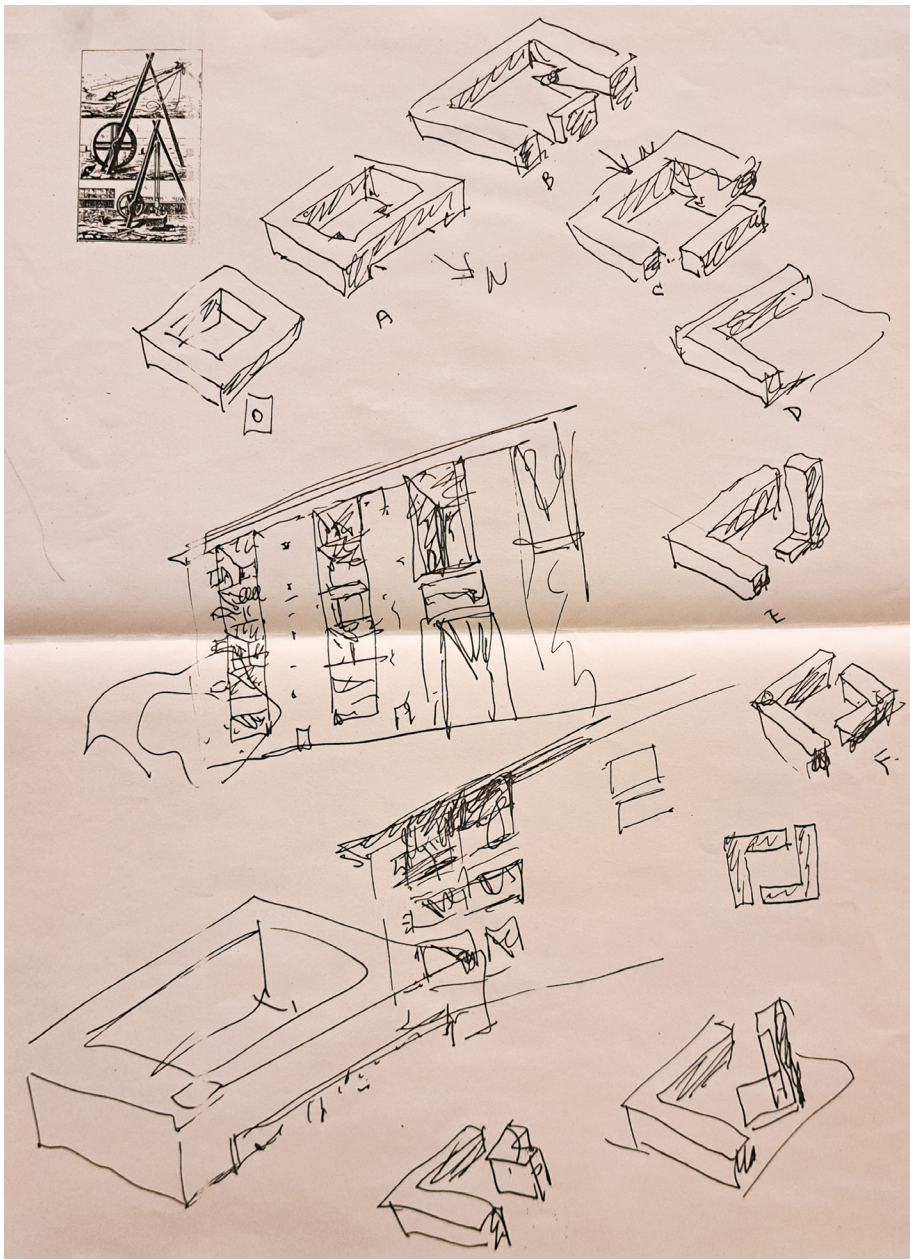


Fig. 10

Álvaro Siza, Gregotti Associati, RISCO – Manuel Salgado, Study of the volumetric and elevation possibilities of the blocks of the residential neighbourhood in the Teatinos area in Malaga (1992). (CASVA – Centro di Alti Studi sulle Arti Visive, Milan, Vittorio Gregotti fonds)

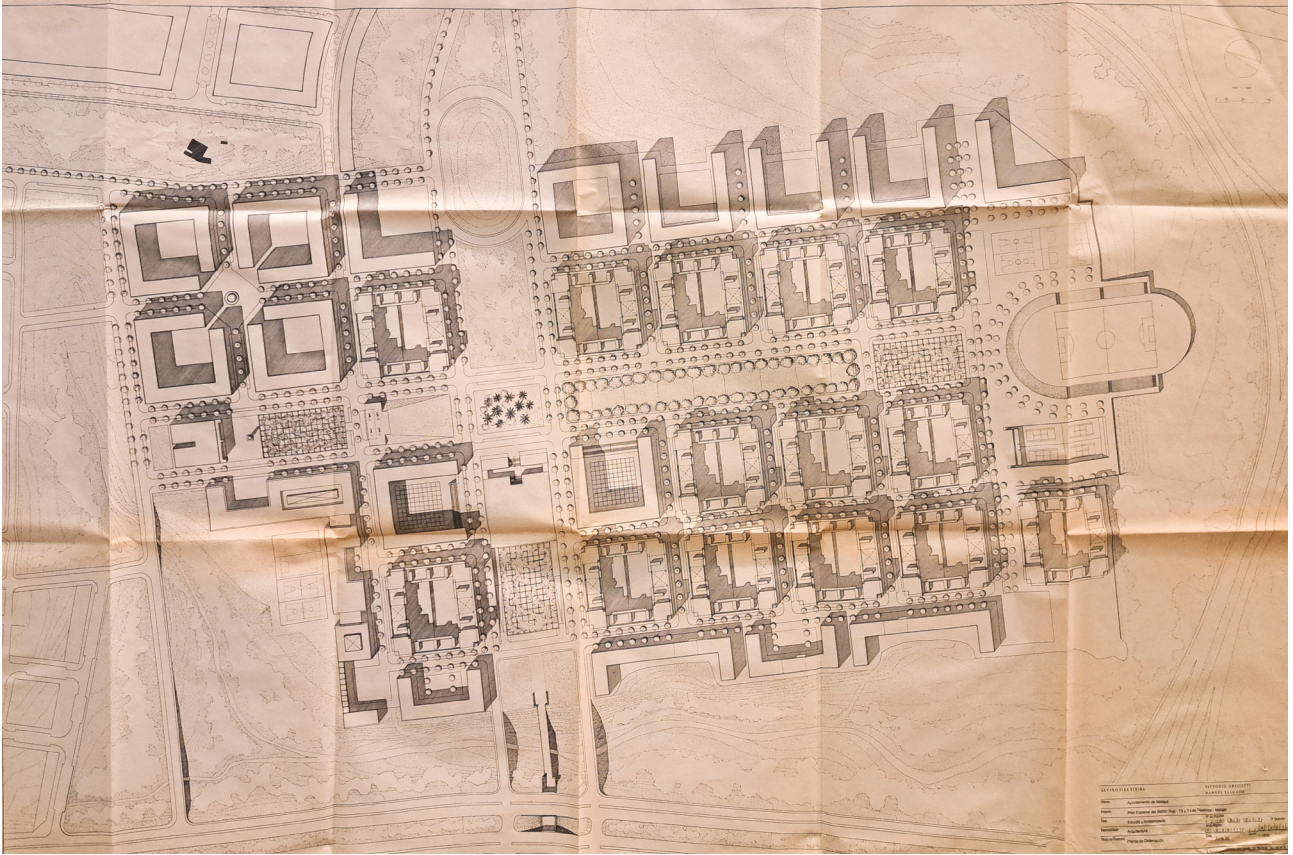
Fig. 11

Álvaro Siza, Gregotti Associati, RISCO – Manuel Salgado, General plan of the residential neighbourhood in the Teatinos area in Malaga (1992). (CASVA – Centro di Alti Studi sulle Arti Visive, Milan, Vittorio Gregotti fonds)

Fig. 12

Álvaro Siza, Gregotti Associati, RISCO – Manuel Salgado, General view of the residential neighbourhood in the Teatinos area in Malaga (1992). (CASVA – Centro di Alti Studi sulle Arti Visive, Milan, Vittorio Gregotti fonds)

PLAN ESPECIAL DEL SECTOR SUP - T3 Y T4 DE TEATINOS - MALAGA



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PLAN ESPECIAL DEL SECTOR SUP - T3 Y T4 DE TEATINOS - MALAGA



ALVARO SIZA VIEIRA	VITTORIO GREGOTTI MANUEL SALGADO
Client: Ayuntamiento de Málaga	
Plan: Plan Especial del Sector Sup- T3 y T4 de Teatinos - Málaga	
Use: Estudio y Anteproyecto	1º de Febrero
Specialty: Arquitectura	14 de Agosto 1972 18.11.72 1º de Septiembre
Scale: Perspectiva General - Vista de Sur-Este	1:1000 1:1000 1:1000
Date: Junio 82	

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the park show an open plan, while others are broken on one of the corners to create more generous intermediate squares. In the middle of the façades, portals open up pedestrian walkways that connect the residential units, creating crossing axes parallel and independent of the roads and connecting the gardens inside the blocks with the green areas at the centre of the neighbourhood. The blocks have common staircases at the four corners, and the different apartments are served by balconies. The external fronts are designed by series of balconies, which nevertheless ensure a uniform and coherent image to the different buildings. [Fig. 10]

Looking at the perspectives of the neighbourhood, in which calibrated exceptions in plan and elevation counterpoint the regular score of residential buildings, it comes to the mind the contemporary design experiments that Gregotti was conducting both at the Bicocca in Milan and in the Lützowstrasse neighbourhood in Berlin, but also what Siza had elaborated for the social housing at the Giudecca in Venice (1985–2005)³⁸. [Figg. 11–12] The long-lasting and fruitful relationship between Gregotti and Siza, and the collaboration on the Malaga project, are essentially based on the common sharing and acceptance of certain cornerstones of the European urban tradition, common to Lisbon and Milan, as well as to Berlin and Malaga: the alignment on the street as an ordering element of private lots; the architectural intervention as the completion of urban situations that are not clearly defined; the multiple relations between the public space of the city (streets and squares) and the semi-public or private space of the blocks (alleys and courtyards). A pre-eminence of the city's reasons over those of architecture, for which the design language must avoid uniqueness and spectacularism, producing "as little noise as possible" and pursuing "simplicity, order, formal clarity and linguistic rigour", which bound Gregotti and Siza well beyond the Malaga project, until the Milanese architect's death in March 2020³⁹.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Prof. Giovanni Leoni, whose comments and suggestions have enriched the arguments presented in these pages.

38 See Carlo Magnani, "Il concorso dello IACP di Venezia per Campo di Marte alla Giudecca," *Casabella*, no. 518 (1985): 4–21; Kenneth Frampton, "Building in a War Zone," *Casabella*, no. 525 (1986): 54–63.

39 Vittorio Gregotti, *Le scarpe di Van Gogh: modificazioni dell'architettura* (Turin: Einaudi, 1994), 46. The translation from Italian to English was done by the author. In addition, see: "Vittorio Gregotti, entrevistado por Nuno Grande e Roberto Cremascoli," in *CCB: Vinte e Cinco Anos*, ed. Nuno Grande (Lisbon, 2018), 161–67.

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Casabella Looks at Porto

The Magazine's Interest in a Critical Practice of Architecture

Casabella, Architecture in Porto, Vittorio Gregotti - Álvaro Siza, Italy - Portugal, Des-continuidade

/Abstract

The paper intends to analyse how the magazine *Casabella* interpreted the “phenomenon of a School in Porto” (understood as a field of frequent relations and not as a historicist identification) and to comprehend how themes and projects pertaining to that context were used to orient the cultural debate in Italy. Between Gregotti’s editorship, starting with Évora’s “manifesto”, and the last issue of Dal Co’s editorship dedicated to the designers of the new generation, twenty issues of the magazine published between 1982 and 2017 were selected and studied in order to organise a reflection on the narrative strategy that illustrated the evolution of the collective and simultaneously composite research of different generations of Porto architects. The paper aims to investigate how the Porto experience has oriented the Italian architectural debate of the last forty years by setting up a reasoning on some bridging themes that accumulate the two cultural contexts. Through the analysis of some published projects and the words of protagonists and scholars, arguments for a critical practice of architecture will be isolated and the presence of shared values among the various generations of architects will be verified, despite a great variety of languages and independent research paths that have defined links, discontinuities, common roots and personal autonomies.

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This article is based on the examination of twenty issues of *Casabella* – four from Gregotti's editorship and sixteen from Dal Co's [Fig. 1]. The aim is to analyse how the magazine interpreted the "phenomenon of a School in Porto" – understood as a network of ongoing relationships rather than a strictly historical definition – and to understand how themes and projects associated with that context were used to shape the cultural debate in Italy. Accordingly, this article does not seek to reaffirm the myth of a "School of Porto," but rather to outline, through a review of the texts and projects published, a framework of cultural interconnections and recurring themes that *Casabella* has brought to the attention of Italian architects over the past forty years, ultimately assessing their contemporary relevance.

Tools for a Critical Practice

A small square photograph appears on page 41 of *Casabella* 478 (1982) [Fig. 2]. This was the first issue of the magazine edited by Vittorio Gregotti, and the image portrays him, in the half-light of a lecture hall at the Politecnico di Milano, alongside Ernesto Nathan Rogers. Although the editorial on the facing page makes no explicit reference to Rogers – who had directed the magazine between 1954 and 1964 – the short text clearly reveals a programmatic intention to follow in his footsteps and to continue the cultural direction under which Gregotti himself had been trained.

Like Rogers, for whom "continuity meant historical consciousness",¹ Gregotti opened his editorship by drawing a parallel between "critical architectural consciousness" and "historical consciousness."² The latter – which for Rogers represented the "true essence of tradition," that is, the foundation for "free research" as long as it does not yield to formalism, mannerism, or dogma – was reinterpreted by Gregotti as an instrument with which to criticise both the stylistic ideologism of the early, idealistically misrepresented phase of the Modern Movement and the "Postmodern wave"³ of the early 1980s. In different yet parallel ways, both of these currents rejected contemporaneity and its principle of coherence with the historical moment in which it unfolds.⁴

Gregotti's proposed response to this "obsession with history," while still grounded in openness and debate,⁵ was a "return to the uncertainties of reality [...] because the integrity of architecture requires real relationships, [...] concrete utopias." Gregotti's attention to phenomenological reality – which for Enzo Paci meant denying the conclusion of tradition and enabling "a new horizon in

1 Ernesto Nathan Rogers, "Continuità," *Casabella Continuità*, no. 199 (December 1953–January 1954): 2. All the translations in English were done by the author.

2 Vittorio Gregotti, "L'ossessione della storia," *Casabella*, no. 478 (March 1982): 40.

3 Francisco Barata, "L'architettura colta di Fernando Távora," in *Fernando Távora: Opera completa*, ed. Giovanni Leoni and Antonio Esposito (Milan: Electa, 2005), 332–335.

4 Chiara Baglione defines Vittorio Gregotti's position on this subject in "I territori del progetto 1982–1996," in *Casabella 1928–2008* (Milan: Electa, 2008), 513.

5 "The answer? There is no answer other than to return to suffering the uncertainties of reality while maintaining a total lack of illusions about one's own era and yet unreservedly speaking out for it."



Fig. 1
Covers of the twenty issues of *Casabella* analyzed for writing the article.

Una rivista di architettura è oggi uno strumento alquanto inattuale. Non si riferisce più solamente all'esistenza di altri strumenti capaci di comunicare messaggi e di gestione più complessi ed articolati, né a quella parzialmente involontaria che accompagna il dover artistico, né a quella parzialmente volontaria che accompagna il dover civile, ma al potere di giustificazione disciplinare

L'opinione di Vittorio Gregotti L'ossessione della storia

Gli architetti, che ancora negli anni cinquanta si occupavano direttamente, anche se in modo dilettantistico, della loro tradizione (e la mia generazione ne è forse l'esempio più chiaro), hanno ceduto (e questo compito agli storici specialisti, così come ormai sono solo specialisti, salvo rare eccezioni), di occuparsi della propaganda e della stampa di architettura. Naturalmente ho osservato che mai come in questo periodo gli studi storici sull'architettura sono diventati fiorenti, mai come in questo periodo si sono formati importanti specialisti e vere scuole di storia della disciplina, tanto che negli ultimi tempi occuparsi di fatti contemporanei sembra considerato dagli storici quasi un genere minore.

Questi specialisti, distinguendosi in modo completo dagli architetti, hanno formato in certo senso una cultura separata ed una classe nuova di clienti per gli architetti stessi, una classe di clienti con caratteristiche del tutto speciale e con particolari esigenze per quanto riguarda la natura del prodotto di pubblicazione. Questa classe di clienti speciali è andata prosperando in un modo inatteso e negli ultimi anni ha assunto un notevole potere attraverso il quale, quasi sempre, un architetto deve passare, per possedere autorità, notorietà, successo, ecc. ecc.

Questo fenomeno introduce alla più vistosa ossessione che domina la progettazione architettonica di questi ultimi anni e si riflette ingrandita nello specchio deformante delle riviste di architettura: l'ossessione della storia. Essa è, in certo modo, simmetrica all'alta idea che perseguita da più di mezzo secolo la cultura contemporanea: l'ossessione del nuovo. La coscienza della complessità della storia, in quanto coscienza critica dell'architettura, è stata una difficile ed importante conquista proprio della mia generazione, ma essa si è andata man mano trasformando sino al suo totale inabituamento di significato.

Mai come in questi anni gli architetti (e parlo degli architetti che considero la loro attività come un'autentica professione liberale, e non come attività con responsabilità insieme creative ed intellettuali) sono stati così consistenti nella questione della storia. O meglio, sarebbe più giusto dire che mai come in questi anni l'ossessione della storia è diventata un fatto tanto evidente: la si potrebbe definire l'ombra della progettazione contemporanea. Naturalmente si potrebbe dire che basta riflettere solo un poco per scoprire la stessa ombra dell'architettura classica più accesa. Ma i dibattizioni polemiche dell'avanguardia classica più accesa, ma si opera contro, cioè di fronte alla storia: ossia fuori dalla sua ombra, nella luce della ragione e della dialettica, la storia, invece che dentro alla fascinazione della sua profondità.

Chi non ricorda quell'"angolo della storia" che corre in avanti immagine poetica e tragica disegnata da Klee e descritta da Benjamin nel suo celebre passo? Ad essa oggi si è sostituita un'immagine della storia assai più conciliante: la storia come grimaldello materno, come flusso continuo e quindi come ricollocazione della propria legittimazione, della conciliazione con il passato. Il problema del rapporto con il passato non è più quello del simbolo che permea la ricerca progettuale contemporanea, viene neutralizzato come pura nostalgia.

L'uso del materiale storico nella progettazione è divenuto sempre più frequente: e si è fatto da ideologico stilistico, evocativo,

di cui le riviste di architettura sono oggi ampiamente intente. Chi volesse attribuire tutto ciò ai modi di produzione delle riviste, o più semplicemente all'espandersi nel mondo della cultura di quei critici di mercato che dominano la società di massa contemporanea, direbbe solo una mezza verità.

dimostrativo di un rifiuto non del nuovo ma della contemporaneità. La stessa tradizione del "movimento moderno" è utilizzata spesso solo stitificamente e quindi neutralizzata in quanto presa di posizione ideale. All'idea di "metodo progettuale", figlia dell'esercizio fittuzioso intorno alla nozione di essenza, si oppone la composizione, l'imitazione, l'analogia, la citazione come principio.

L'incertezza del presente è così forte, le possibilità di identificazione sono così rare, l'essere autentico è così sepolto che, al primato del puro comportamento (l'adesione al comportamento di massa è diventa in diverse forme un'altra delle diffuse ideologie della progettazione) sembra opporsi solo l'autorità della storia, fissata nei suoi momenti più convenzionali, i soli che dovrebbero autorizzare l'accesso alla verità. Anche qui, chi volesse attribuire questo fenomeno alla sottoccupazione degli architetti e specie dei giovani architetti, per i quali il disegno è divenuto l'unico strumento espressivo possibile, direbbe una mezza verità.

Io credo che l'ossessione della storia di questi anni sia in certo modo la risposta alla perdita dell'integrità dell'architettura. Poiché l'integrità della architettura necessita di rapporti reali, alla caduta dei rapporti reali col mondo dei bisogni, della produzione, della crescita urbana, della significazione collettiva, della stessa tradizione del mettere discipline, corrisponde la proiezione di questi rapporti reali sul piano fantasmatico dell'ipotesi storica.

È evidente facilmente il sorriso di molti. Cosa significa "realità" nella società di oggi? È possibile una sua conoscenza e giudizio globale? È innanzi che no: i contraddittori segnali che ci provengono dalle stratificazioni complesse del corpo sociale non ce lo consentono. Eppure esiste una costata e disordinata marcia delle cose a cui ogni intellettuale non può sottrarsi, a cui deve rispondere, per interpretazioni sia pure parziali, dialettiche, evocando spesso proprio ciò che non esiste. Invece tra realtà e costruzione dell'architettura si è aperto un grande vuoto disponibile. Esso è oggi occupato in modo irregolare, dalle forze di rapina politica ed economica che ne hanno fatto terreno di oppressione e di incursione.

La risposta? Non c'è risposta se non quella di tornare a soffrire le incertezze della realtà, mantenendo "una totale mancanza di illusioni nei confronti della propria epoca e ciò nonostante pronunciandosi senza riserve per essa". Tornare a soffrire la realtà è una questione certamente teorica ed ideale assai complessa quando si voglia connotare la realtà, al di là dell'empirico tangibile, come "volontà e progetto, come "utopia concreta", "principio di speranza", per usare le belle espressioni di Ernst Bloch oggi tanto fuori moda da apparire ingenuo o interessate. Ma è anche uno sforzo positivo, un problema di scelta di strumenti e di metodi.

È una convinzione ormai solidificata da un trentennio, il trentennio dell'ossessione per la storia, che l'architettura non possa essere uno strumento per la trasformazione dei rapporti sociali; ma dico che è l'architettura ad avere bisogno, per prodursi, del materiale rappresentato dai rapporti sociali. Essa non può sopravvivere semplicemente respicciando i propri problemi, utilizzando in modo antropologico la propria tradizione, anche se si sente dentro quella tradizione l'architettura può trovare gli strumenti disciplinari per essere.



A fianco, Vittorio Gregotti con Ernesto N. Rogers al Politecnico di Milano. Sotto, progetto di James Stirling con Michael Wilford per l'estensione della Tate Gallery di Londra, 1981.

Neverdays an architectural magazine is an instrument unconnected with the times, it is referring here neither to the new existence of other means of mass communication which can be managed in simpler or more articulate ways nor to the deliberate bias which has accompanied the "action plan" of the classical avant-garde movement, but, rather, to the considerable influence of these magazines in fulfilling what is at stake in the field of architecture itself. The attribution of this factor simply to the production process of these magazines or to demands of mass market culture, would not be the whole truth.

The architects who, even if as "amateurs", used to be directly involved in the production of their magazines up to the 1950s (and here, perhaps, my generation provides the clearest example), have handed over this task to specialized historians. Now, with very few exceptions, it is only specialists who deal with architectural texts, who manage the magazines and see to their publication. It should also be noted that there has never been such a wealth of historical studies and architecture as in this period. Never have so many important specialists been treated at schools, concerning the history of architecture, so that historians' opinions have become the predominant ones in the contemporary field almost a minor concern.

This specialist class has formed a separate group from architects with a separate culture but simultaneously a new class of clients for the architect: a class of clients with highly peculiar features and special requirements as far as the nature of the publishing material is concerned. This class of special clients has been driving increasingly and beyond all expectations and in more parts, but general considerable power, which architects must virtually always acknowledge in order to have access to authority, notoriety, success and so on.

This phenomenon introduces the most conspicuous obsession dominating architectural design today: the obsession with history. This idea is somehow symmetrical to another idea which has been haunting contemporary culture for more than half a century: the obsession with novelty. The awareness of history's complexity, hence a certain awareness of architects, was one of my generation's more difficult and important achievements. However, its value has gradually shifted and eventually reached a point where its meaning has been almost spent. Now, as in those years, architects (and especially in a free liberal profession, i.e. in a creative and intellectual field) have been obliged by the question of history. Or, more correctly, never has the obsession with history been as apparent as in later years: it may be defined the shadow over contemporary design.

Of course, reflection would indicate that the shadow of history is also behind the political statements of the more idealized of the classical avant-garde movement. However, the main concern there was to history, namely beyond its shadow, in the light of its reasons and dialectic, rather than in the recalculation of its depth. Here could appear further the "angel of history" rearing forth while turning its eyes to the past, carried away by the wind of time, in the poetic and tragic image drawn by Klee and described by Benjamin in his famous passage? This image of history has now been replaced by a far more conciliatory one: history as the mother's womb, as a continuous flow, lower as the flow of replacement, of one's legitimation, of one's connection with spectators, characterizing contemporary research carried on in the field of design, it discarded as their nostalgia.

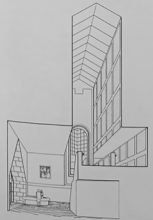
Historical material is increasingly being used in design: it has shifted from an ideological to a stylistic, evocative, demonstrative manner of a rejection of contemporary culture than of novelty. The history of architecture, as the tradition itself of the "Modern Movement" is often adopted only politically and, therefore, neutralized as an ideal standpoint. The idea of a "large museum" - reading from Hanser's development of the notion of "cases" - is opposed to composition, imitation, analogy or quotation as a principle.

The uncertainty of the present is marked, the opportunity for identification so few, the audience is hard to deeply the primary of pure collective behavior (before acceptance has become another widespread design ideology) seems to be challenged only by the authority of history, as crystallized in its more conventional moments, as the only one which should govern the access to truth. Here, too, any attempt to attribute this phenomenon to the underdevelopment of architects, especially of the younger ones, for whose training has become the only possible means of expression, would amount to a fallacy. I believe that this period's obsession with history is, perhaps, the extreme of that obsession which requires the existence of that relationship with the world of needs, production, urban growth, collective meaning, tradition itself and professional practice compared to their profession onto an imaginary plane of historical profession. I can only imagine the reader's smile. What does the "truth" of today's society mean exactly? Can it be based on or refer to as a whole? Of course not: the contradictions speak revealingly from the complexity of history present as doing so. Yet a complex, modified trend does exist, which

no individual can escape, in which he must respond through interpretation, never mind how partial and allusive, often contrary to that which does not exist. Indeed, a wide gap has formed between reality on the one hand and the construction of architecture on the other. This gap is precisely what is filled by the various projects engaged in political and economic planning, which have turned it into a ground for their ends and for expression.

So, what is the answer? There is no answer except recognizing the necessity of reality, maintaining "a total lack of faith in ideology". Here is where the "endless reality" is, undoubtedly, a very complex, theoretical and ideal matter, but it appears as soon as one goes beyond reality's empirical, tangible surface and delves in its terms by deliberate choice and project, as a "concrete utopia". A "principle of hope" in Ernest Bloch's beautiful expression (today such terms are a mark of failure as to appear either naive or self-negating). But it is also a constructive effort, a problem concerning the choice of tools and methods.

In the course of thirty years - during which the obsession with history emerged and developed - the belief has taken root that an architect cannot be a means for changing social relationships, but I maintain that an architect should that wish, for its very production, the material represented by social relations, architects cannot live by simply mirroring its own problem: copying its own tradition, even though the professional tools required for architecture as a discipline can be found only within that tradition.



Progetto di James Stirling con Michael Wilford per l'estensione della Tate Gallery di Londra, 1981.

which the past relives, becomes present, and opens again toward the future⁶ – became a hallmark of many articles published in *Casabella* until 1996. His cultural program promoted a critical project grounded in engagement with the concrete problems of society, sustaining the thesis of doubt, rejecting aprioristic consensus, and broadening the terms of debate as much as possible.

In light of these arguments, the choice of the debut project in Gregotti's first issue can be interpreted as a programmatic manifesto aimed both at fostering debate and at guiding scientific dissemination. Álvaro Siza's Malagueira Quarter in Évora,⁷ presented by Jean-Paul Rayon, encapsulated many of Gregotti's central concerns – issues that, through *Casabella*, would in subsequent years become messages and lessons for Italian architects seeking to understand the state of Portuguese architecture, and especially that of the city of Porto.

What themes did Gregotti wish to highlight through the presentation of Malagueira?

First and foremost, the capacity to interpret the territorial scale of the intervention, in which architecture composes and restores "meaning to the entire

6 Enzo Paci, "Fenomenologia e architettura contemporanea," in *Relazioni e significati*, vol. 3, Critica e dialettica (1966), 172–173.

7 As is well known, Vittorio Gregotti met Álvaro Siza in the mid-1960s. He subsequently dedicated an article to him in *Controspazio* in 1972 and curated the 1979 exhibition at the Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea in Milan on Siza's work with Italo Rota. Ana Tostões outlines a very clear picture of the relationship between the Italian and Portuguese contexts in her essay "A diáspora ou a arte de ser português," in "Da identidade da arquitetura portuguesa," *Camões Revista de Letras*, no. 22 (2013).

Fig. 2
Editorial "The Obsession of History" by Vittorio Gregotti from *Casabella* 478 of 1982. Top right is the image of Vittorio Gregotti alongside Ernesto Nathan Rogers.

physical environment.”⁸ Gregotti recognised in Siza’s project the ability to preserve the qualities of the landscape through form, enhancing its original character and establishing new relationships between man-made and natural elements. The photographs accompanying the article [Fig. 3] illustrate this quality, showing the architect’s ability to work “in relation to links, to adjacencies, to the sequence of events leading to that experience, to the memory of previous experiences.”⁹ Different scales are progressively introduced to facilitate continuity between the object and its sphere of reference.

Within this continuity between landscape and project, a second theme – that of place and its specificity – comes into play. In this project, place becomes an active agent, not through imitation or annulment, but through dialogue with the environment to be transformed: learning from it and proposing a new image of the complex web of relations that persist in every site. Malagueira thus thrives on modifications rooted in the conditions and transformative potential of the context itself.

A third central issue is the relationship with tradition. One may hypothesise that Gregotti found in Siza that dynamic cultural experience described by Rogers, whereby “the best way to bring history back to life is to graft it onto the trunk of existence and compose it with the propulsive energies of an inexhaustible flow, where mutations do not result from sudden, arbitrary, and ephemeral attitudes but are rooted in the continuous furrow of tradition,”¹⁰ where tradition signifies “both the validation of permanent emergencies and the energy of mutations.”¹¹ In his 1982 editorial, Gregotti accused his generation of architects of having ceded the task of engaging with tradition to specialists; in Siza, he rediscovered a natural capacity to deal with the architecture of the past – whether learned or anonymous – by internalising it “as structural material.”¹²

Two subsequent issues of *Casabella* – 500 and 630–631 – were crucial in clarifying the magazine’s editorial position on this subject. In the first, Kenneth Frampton introduced the concept of critical regionalism,¹³ while in the second, an entire issue was devoted to critical internationalism.¹⁴ Without entering into the historiographic debate that might classify Siza’s work within one or the other framework,¹⁵ it is useful to read these texts retrospectively to understand the communicative line pursued by *Casabella* under Gregotti’s direction. Both, in fact, speak of “Consciousness” and “Critical Practice” as counterpoints to a new internationalist cultural mindset – the product of a homogenising universal

8 Vittorio Gregotti, *Il territorio dell'architettura* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1966).

9 Vittorio Gregotti, “Architetture recenti di Álvaro Siza,” *Controspazio*, no. 9 (September 1972).

10 Ernesto Nathan Rogers, “Attualità di Adolf Loos,” *Casabella Continuità*, no. 233 (November 1959): 3.

11 Ernesto Nathan Rogers, *Esperienza dell'architettura* (Turin: Einaudi, 1958), 21.

12 Marco Mulazzani, “Álvaro Siza è un architetto fuori moda...: Conversazione con Vittorio Gregotti,” *Casabella*, no. 744 (May 2006): 70–74.

13 Kenneth Frampton, “Anti-tabula rasa: verso un regionalismo critico,” *Casabella*, no. 500 (March 1984): 22–25.

14 Vittorio Gregotti, “Nei nostri cieli privi di idee,” *Casabella*, no. 630 (January–February 1996): 2–11.

15 The essay by Nuno Grande, “Arquitetura portuguesa em fim de século,” in “Da identidade da arquitetura portuguesa,” *Camões Revista de Letras*, no. 22 (2013), performs an in-depth examination of this topic.

concrete social, civic, and cultural scenarios, through attitudes of understanding, identification, and total adhesion to the environment.

The final theme, first introduced through Malagueira and later central to *Casabella's* portrayal of architects from northern Portugal, concerns the dissemination of a design method rooted in drawing – a tool that condenses experience and translates it into form, giving it communicative power. For Siza, drawing is the “mediation from a pre-existing situation to a new and non-definitive one,”¹⁸ allowing the project's response to be simulated in poetic form. Drawing is also – and perhaps above all – a working tool, “not a romantic methodological proposal,”¹⁹ - that helps the architect to order the design process, “to learn to see the questions,”²⁰ and to recognise and rationalise those “tempting utopias”²¹ of the initial idea up to the rigorous verification of final solutions through their immediate visualisation.

The *Casabella* directed by Gregotti also had the merit of making Italy aware of a context of great cultural vitality, one not limited to Álvaro Siza alone, as presented by Manuel Mendes in issue 579 (May 1991).²² That publication, followed by an *Electa* monograph edited by Mendes and Nuno Portas,²³ showcased the architecture of the “Recent Generation” and the differences between the “two poles of expression” – Lisbon and Porto – which “diverge in the expectations and vitality of their poetics, in the diversity of their geo-cultural conditions, and in the specificity of the relationships between discipline and craft.”

In particular, the figure of Fernando Távora was introduced to the wider Italian public as a key reference for the northern Portuguese cultural context that developed between the school and the ateliers – a milieu that found in drawing “an instrumental support to invention” and in “the idea of a process as strong as a tendency”²⁴ working methodology aimed at addressing concrete problems.

What emerged from this narrative were historical contingencies that could no longer be reproduced,²⁵ but which that group of architects succeeded in transforming into spatial and formal qualities. They also fostered an atmosphere of openness and dialogue between teachers and students, strengthened over three decades by collective experiences such as the Inquérito and the SAAL Program – tangible legacies of both the traditions and the utopias of the

18 Antonio Angelillo, “Álvaro Siza: i recenti lavori in Portogallo,” *Casabella*, no. 579 (May 1991): 12.

19 Álvaro Siza, “Introduzione,” in *Álvaro Siza Architetto 1954–1979*, ed. Vittorio Gregotti and Italo Rota (Milan: Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea di Milano, 1979).

20 Vittorio Gregotti, “O outro,” in *Immaginare l'evidenza*, by Álvaro Siza (Bari: Laterza, 1998).

21 José Salgado, “Siza Designer,” *Casabella*, no. 667 (May 1999): 68.

22 Manuel Mendes, “Recente architettura portoghese (una geografia diffusa, alcune coincidenze),” *Casabella*, no. 579 (May 1991): 51–55.

23 Nuno Portas and Manuel Mendes, *Portogallo: Architettura, gli ultimi vent'anni* (Milan: Electa, 1991).

24 Mendes, “Recente architettura portoghese.”

25 The contributions by Manuel Mendes, Manuel Tainha and Fernando Távora reconstruct and summarise the context and a series of coincidences favourable to the creation of that cultural environment. In issue 678 of May 2000, Siza further describes that context by speaking of “conditions for unitary action.” With regard to these conditions Vittorio Gregotti will be very clear about their uniqueness in the *Catalogue of the exhibition at the Milan Pavilion of Contemporary Art* in 1979 in the essay “Le operazioni SAAL: un bilancio.” “Positive tension conditions of the Portuguese situation of the past years are intransferable to the condition of contemporary Italy, for example, it is possible to artificially reconstruct impossible participations.”

Revolution — which promoted direct exchange in an environment marked by expressive freedom and a strong awareness of Portugal's social issues.²⁶

The works of José Gigante, João Álvaro Rocha, and Adalberto Dias — alongside the more recent architecture of Álvaro Siza — demonstrate a heterogeneous search for expressive language that confirmed a distinctive feature of the school's pedagogy: the complete absence of models or systematic responses in favour of a design method conceived as a tool for validating needs that are always specific and real.

As the analysis suggests, Vittorio Gregotti used selected projects from the cultural milieu of Porto to articulate a distinctly "militant" editorial line. His aim was to reaffirm the importance of certain principles: the continuity between landscape and project, the vitality of living tradition, the role of history as a foundation for critical practice, and the processual nature of design — a continual research process that highlights values already present in local contexts while simultaneously interpreting individual sensibilities and universal constants. Gregotti's cultural stance thus affirms the importance of dialogue and relationships in the architect's formative process — a professional who acts in the contemporary world yet employs knowledge of past values as a tool for investigation.

"Maximum Freedom, Maximum Responsibility": Values of Shared and Plural Knowhow

Without adopting such a "markedly militant" stance, Francesco Dal Co also deserves credit for continuing the broad narrative concerning the key projects and designers of the Porto context. From 1996 to the present, he has done so by repeatedly showcasing collective design experiences, comparing different generations of architects, and, above all, continuing to explore the issues that define architectural practice within that specific geographic enclave at the edge of Europe. He has paid particular attention to the dynamics of pedagogical methods inside and outside the school, and to the value of drawing as a fundamental tool.

Thanks to the research of Giovanni Leoni and Antonio Esposito, *Casabella* has, since 2000, hosted a series of articles devoted to the theoretical and design work of Fernando Távora. Issue 678, in particular, inaugurated a sequence of texts, interviews, and built works by the architect whom Jorge Figueira described as "the maestro of a small orchestra in search of another music."²⁷ From Giovanni Leoni's presentation of Távora,²⁸ from the accompanying series of photographs [Fig. 4], and from the project for the rehabilitation of a farmhouse in Pardelhas, one central value of Távora's production clearly emerges: continuity.

26 In the essay on page 57 of *Casabella* issue 579, Fernando Távora recalls the importance of Carlos Ramos, director of the school since 1952, quoting his phrase "maximum freedom, maximum responsibility." Fernando Távora, "Intorno alla scuola di Porto," *Casabella*, no. 579 (May 1991): 57.

27 Jorge Figueira, *Escola do Porto: um mapa crítico* (Coimbra: e|d|arq, 2002), 37.

28 Giovanni Leoni, "Un anonimo del XX secolo," *Casabella*, no. 678 (May 2000): 10–13.



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This characteristic manifests in Távora's work in several complementary ways. He grounds each project in the capacity to endow space with its natural harmony, reconstructing a system of relationships that accompanies approximations, displacements, viewpoints, axes, and human interactions with place. Yet this continuity is also temporal, expressed through the choice of a language that favours an overall vision, free from any protagonism that would undermine the identity of the consolidated space. These "deep relationships"²⁹ give architecture its roots, depth, and rationale, guiding the architect in the process of redefining a place.

There is also another form of continuity: that between the aesthetic and the everyday. This rests on Távora's conviction that the best of artistic and architectural production should find its place within the public realm, since the social purpose of architecture is its truest purpose — the power to foster relations between people. In several reflections collected in the following pages,³⁰ Távora returns to themes already encountered, such as the role of history and specificity. He

29 Fernando Távora, "Pensieri sull'architettura raccolti da Giovanni Leoni con Antonio Esposito," *Casabella*, no. 678 (May 2000): 14–25.

30 *Ibid.*

Fig. 4

Sequence of images of Fernando Távora's projects chosen by Giovanni Leoni for *Casabella* issue 678

stated: "I would like a clearer and more specific architecture, capable of counter-acting the processes of standardisation and globalisation," and of "accentuating specific data to enhance the 'taste' of reality." These statements confirm how his architecture and pedagogy were grounded in a "non-impositional but questioning attitude toward reality,"³¹ developed through context-oriented analytical practices aimed at balancing the conception of the work and its environment. These processes were based on a profound knowledge of local technical and artistic manifestations, regarded as essential to formal expression.

A final aspect worth emphasising concerns Távora's "choice of anonymity,"³² a mark of his deep humanism and rigorous professional discipline. From this character emerges an architectural theory centred on "circumstance" as a design instrument and on a "relationalist" interpretation of the architect's role. Drawing inspiration from José Ortega y Gasset and Martin Heidegger, Távora translated philosophical reflection into ethical and practical principles for the architectural craft. The "creator of circumstances"³³ is thus called to take responsibility for his work, broadening the spectrum of professional ethics toward the pursuit of harmony across all scales of design, where architecture and urbanism are understood as interrelated dimensions of a single discipline, and each individual building becomes part of a larger, harmonious whole – the city, the territory, the landscape.

Over the years, the journal has carried out significant work in documenting the "School phenomenon," which undoubtedly deserves further study. As previously mentioned, it is not the purpose of this essay to determine the existence or non-existence of a "School of Porto," but rather to analyse the central themes of that collective research and to evaluate their relevance today. This approach aligns with Dal Co's stated intention³⁴ to bring the issue of architectural education back to the centre of the debate, indirectly reaffirming the architect's central role in the processes of social development.

It is worth recalling that one of the defining features of the School's programme was its resistance to the intrusion of disciplines unrelated to the empirical knowledge of architecture. It sought to minimise technocratic interference and to limit the introduction of digital drawing – never, however, as a substitute for manual drawing³⁵ – in order to cultivate in students "the instinct that enables the organisation of space."³⁶

Álvaro Siza's contribution in Issue 770 is crucial for defining the system of values that continues to shape the work of Porto architects today:³⁷

31 Giovanni Leoni, "Un anonimo del XX secolo."

32 "In the contemporary world dominated by representation, it has had the courage to confront, with humanistic and conscious renunciation of its own linguistic identity, the greatest architectural myth, the search for a language of existence." *Ibid.*

33 Fernando Távora, *Da organização do espaço* (Porto: FAUP Publicações, 2007), 73.

34 Chiara Baglione, "Il farsi delle cose," in *Casabella 1928–2008* (Milan: Electa, 2008), 615.

35 On this topic, a reference text is Figueira, *Escola do Porto: um mapa crítico*.

36 Jorge Figueira, *Escola do Porto*, 98.

37 Álvaro Siza, "Sulla pedagogia," *Casabella*, no. 770 (October 2008): 3–5.

- (a) The project is an exercise in nonconformist mediation, using dialogue between past and future to provide a conscious response to a present issue.
- (b) The thesis of doubt and the cultivation of a critical spirit ensure adherence to the reality of specific situations, enabling the architect to pursue a social function.
- (c) The designer must be educated in drawing as a tool for interpreting reality
- (d) The architectural object must always be understood as a fragment of a larger landscape – whether urban or natural.
- (e) Architecture is not the affirmation of the ego but the outcome of a rational process where subjectivity and objectivity respond to a collective desire.

The collective project for the Aveiro Campus exemplifies this lesson on constructing the city through fragments, where urban unity derives from the capacity to intuit the qualities of the space between things – a form given by the fabric to the things themselves. As Álvaro Siza, author of the “plan review” for the campus, observes: “There is an essential problem: to be able to assemble different things, as in the contemporary city, which is made up of very heterogeneous fragments [...]. Trying to build a whole out of these pieces is fundamental to developing our methodology.”³⁸

This methodology, shaped more by the experience of guiding figures than by formal teaching axioms,³⁹ has developed over time through a well-established system of knowledge transmission. It is therefore important to recognise that this shared knowledge derives from circumstances of proximity that invite reflection – now more than ever – on the importance of learning architecture through the daily experience of practice. Such collaborations have made it possible to preserve the knowledge of building traditions while maintaining an open dialogue with contemporary sensibilities and needs, granting both equal dignity.⁴⁰ However, this proximity has not resulted in a unified style, but rather in an extraordinary set of dialects within the same idiom – plural languages yielding diverse formal outcomes.⁴¹ A great variety of autonomous lines of inquiry can nonetheless be traced back to a solid unity of values rooted in the cultural context in which these architects were formed [Fig. 5]. Marco Mulazzani refers to *des-continuidade*⁴² as the result of contamination and continuous transformation – a process that looks with admiration at the talent of predecessors while opening new paths of formal expression.⁴³

38 Álvaro Siza, quoted in Laura Peretti and Marie Clement, “Campus Aveiro: Nove capitoli della nuova architettura portoghese,” *Casabella*, no. 643 (March 1997): 12.

39 Eduardo Souto de Moura, “Porto, l’architettura e la sua scuola,” in *Architetti, Architettura* (Milan: Electa, 2023).

40 Antonio Esposito and Giovanni Leoni, “Architetti a Porto: una ‘scuola’?” *Casabella*, no. 700 (May 2002): 4–5.

41 Álvaro Siza, “Intimità e monumentalità,” interview by Carlos Seoane, *Casabella*, no. 678 (May 2000): 26–29; see also Carlo Magnani, “Fernando Távora,” *Casabella*, no. 713 (July 2003): 6.

42 Marco Mulazzani, “Porto: i giovani e i maestri, des-continuidade?” *Casabella*, no. 744 (May 2006): 44.

43 In his talk entitled “Exercises in Discontinuity. What Eduardo Souto de Moura did not learn from Álvaro Siza” at the seminar “Genealogy and Actuality of a School in Porto. The (Dis)Continuity of the Project” held in Parma on May 10, 2023, Marco Mulazzani quotes a phrase by Eduardo Souto de Moura: “what interests me in Siza’s work is talent.”

Fig. 5a-h

Images of projects published in *Casabella* by Fernando Távora, Eduardo Souto de Moura, José Fernando Gonçalves and Nuno Brandão Costa.

In the left column: (a) Fernando Távora, Renovation of a farmhouse, Pardelhas (1999), *Casabella* no. 678; (b) Eduardo Souto de Moura, House in Moledo (1998), *Casabella* no. 664; (c) José Fernando Gonçalves, Scout house extension, Oliveira do Douro (2001), *Casabella* no. 700; (d) Nuno Brandão Costa, recovery and extension of a house in the Minho (2016), *Casabella* no. 880 four interventions within an established landscape demonstrating an attitude assimilated in terms of dialogue with pre-existence.

In the right column: (e) Fernando Távora, Amphitheatre of the law school in Coimbra (2000), *Casabella* no. 693; (f) Eduardo Souto de Moura, Bragança Contemporary Art Centre (2008), *Casabella* no. 775; (g) José Fernando Gonçalves, Showroom Douroluz, Oliveira do Douro (2005), *Casabella* no. 744; (h) Nuno Brandão Costa, House in Afife (2004), *Casabella* no. 744 four interventions that testify to very different languages and expressive research.



5a



5e



5b



5f



5c



5g



5d



5h

This broad and inevitable openness – from the Region to the World – has not entailed the loss of certain original principles: the critical ability to select meaningful experiences from elsewhere, craftsmanship in construction and detail, engagement with the context, and an “acute sense of urban responsibility.” Altogether, these define “a line of resistance to the reduction of architecture to mere design [...] capable of restoring to architecture a civic role, fostering a critical attitude toward reality while continuing to measure itself against it.”⁴⁴

As analysed by Elisa Pegorin in Issue 880, the notion of tradition within this

cultural context is subject to constant transformation and formal reinvention, all within a shared process that rejects preconstructed stylistic models in favour of investigative methods grounded in drawing, the study of materials, construction techniques, and collaboration among the various figures involved in the realisation of the project.⁴⁵

The Lesson of Being “Sizian” without Being “Siziesque”

Partly as a result of the undeniable transformation of the educational institution from a small academy into a faculty enrolling hundreds of students each year, “the simulation of the atelier within the school is destined to become a nostalgic and insufficient exercise.”⁴⁶

Despite this, the cultural environment that continues to gravitate around that area of architectural production remains a rich heritage of references for the global culture of design.

At the conclusion of this analysis, it is therefore appropriate to ask what *Casabella's* work of dissemination, examined in this paper, has meant for Italy. It can certainly be said that this “media exposure” attracted the attention of an entire generation of young Italian architects who, over the past thirty years, have gone to study in Porto. The full effects of this cultural exchange may still remain to be seen; nevertheless, it is reasonable to hope that the outcome of this process of observation will not result in the mere repetition of a language, for that would mean failing to grasp the methodological lesson that constitutes the true

44 Vittorio Gregotti, “Portogallo, Europa,” *Casabella*, no. 760 (November 2007): 63.

45 Elisa Pegorin, “Porto: uma maneira de ser Portugal,” *Casabella*, no. 880 (December 2017): 50–52.

46 Figueira, *Escola do Porto*, 109.

essence of this collective experience.

The circumstances of the Italian context were—and remain—very different from those of Portugal, yet it is possible to identify affinities between the principles that guided the theoretical and practical orientations of the masters in both geographical spheres: from Rogers to Távora, from Gregotti to Siza. As José Miguel Rodrigues reminds us, architects of the recent generation strive to be “Sizian without being Siziesque,”⁴⁷ meaning that they work from principles rather than forms, from process rather than image, and from critical selection rather than imitation.

To adhere to the reality of things, in continuity with a living tradition, is to fulfill the collective desire of which the architect is the interpreter. Those who can inherit this message without becoming conformists will perhaps have understood the true lesson—one based on the shared values that this article has sought to analyse. Values that, even today, and perhaps more than ever, both Italian and Portuguese architecture continue to need.

47 José Miguel Rodrigues, *Palladio e o Moderno* (Porto: Circo de ideias, 2019), 94; quotation from Graça Correia, “Heirs/Heretics,” paper presented at the seminar “Genealogy and Actuality of a School in Porto: The (Dis)Continuity of the Project,” Parma.

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Autonomous Architecture, Postmodernism and Álvaro Siza

Álvaro Siza, *Postmodernism*, *Manfredo Tafuri*, *Peter Testa*, *Autonomous Architecture*

/Abstract

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, several authors—drawing, whether directly or indirectly, upon the aesthetic legacy of Immanuel Kant—sought to bring architecture closer to the realm of “pure” art. They advanced the view that architecture constitutes an autonomous discipline, governed by an internal logic independent of practical function or social circumstance. This conception of autonomy left a lasting imprint on architectural theory, particularly from the 1960s onwards, when its translation into architectural practice revealed enduring tensions between the freedom of form and the constraints of material and social reality. In the following decade, autonomy emerged as one of the defining themes of postmodern discourse, as various thinkers radicalised the notion by proposing a self-referential architecture—one that explored the inner logic of space and form as an autonomous system of meaning. Yet this Kantian understanding of architectural autonomy did not remain without its critics. Theorists such as Peter Bürger and Manfredo Tafuri argued that the idea of absolute autonomy is, in itself, an illusion, for architecture is unavoidably enmeshed in economic, political, and social contexts. This article argues that the Portuguese architect Álvaro Siza occupied a singular position within the architectural culture of those years, participating in the debates on autonomy that, at the time, animated the postmodern controversy led by figures such as Colin Rowe in the United States and Manfredo Tafuri in Europe. It is a debate that, even today, continues to define the essential question of architecture’s role and its ethical responsibility.

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The Idea of Autonomy

The term “autonomy,” as a prominent theoretical concept in architectural discourse and as a disciplinary strategy for architecture itself, was virtually absent from disciplinary debate until the mid-1960s. However, its use within the architectural field – at different times and with various interpretations – dates to the consolidation of aesthetics as a specific branch of philosophy in the late eighteenth century. This development is largely attributable to the growing separation between artistic production and everyday life, which, in the following century, radically transformed the system of art production.

These developments consolidated the idea of artistic autonomy, which would later, with the *l'art pour l'art* (art for art's sake) movement, support the notion that art exists in and of itself and should be valued solely for its intrinsic beauty and the aesthetic experience it provides – without the need to serve external purposes, whether moral, political, social, or functional. With this conception, art relinquished its traditional role, distancing itself from the concepts of mimesis and representation, as the notion of autonomy came to legitimize its new condition – one more closely aligned with the idea of artistic expression and self-expression.

It was the philosopher Immanuel Kant, in his work *Critik der Urteilskraft* (The Critique of Judgment, 1790), who consolidated aesthetics as a distinct branch of philosophy and associated it with the ideas of autonomy, disinterestedness, and what he called “Zweckmäßigkeit ohne Zweck” (purposiveness without purpose). Beauty, according to Kant, has a form as if it had a purpose, yet without serving any functional end; the object or work appears well-organized and harmonious, but serves no specific function – it pleases solely through its form.¹

Kant also employed the term “autonomy” in the field of ethics, defining the autonomy of the human will as the supreme ethical principle and the foundation of all moral judgment. In his view, the autonomy of the will was a necessary component in the metaphysics of morals, ensuring that rational agents are responsible for their own decisions. However, Kant distinguished aesthetic judgment from other types of judgment, namely moral and logical. When we say that something is beautiful, we are making a judgment of taste. This judgment is subjective, as it is based on the subject's feeling, and does not depend on concepts (it is not rational) nor on interests (it is not useful). In other words, the beautiful pleases “without interest” – it is a subjective, disinterested, autonomous, and purposeless appreciation.²

For Kant, the autonomy of the human will as the supreme ethical principle was fundamental to his conceptualization of artistic creation. Fine art is a form of human creation that imitates divine creativity. It is the product of the artist's genius who, through talent, transcends established rules and conceives new

¹ Immanuel Kant, *Crítica da faculdade do juízo* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 1992), 127. All the translation in English were done by the author.

² Kant, *Crítica da faculdade do juízo*, 263.

aesthetic ideas. With this conception, the German philosopher acknowledged the intangible values of art and emphasized the power of imagination and the autonomy of the language of artistic forms.

Although Kant identified autonomy with his aesthetic idea of the disinterested reception of art, initially he subordinated aesthetic values to moral will, suggesting that high culture promotes morality. However, this subordination was challenged by later movements such as *l'art pour l'art*, which advocated for absolute freedom of aesthetic judgment, leading the idea of autonomy to prevail in the 19th and 20th centuries. The complex relationship between morality and autonomy, however, was not confined to Kantian aesthetics; it continued to influence aesthetic theory in Central Europe and the United States, impacting thinkers of the past century such as the Austrian historian Emil Kaufmann, whose work was pivotal in consolidating the idea of autonomy in the field of architecture.

Architectural Autonomy

The idea of autonomy developed less obviously in architecture, unlike art, where the concept was more clearly formulated. During the 18th and 19th centuries, architecture was considered an art form, part of the field of aesthetics. The theories of the *École des Beaux-Arts* shaped the teaching and practice of architecture, promoting technical and artistic drawing as the main design tool. Architects were mainly trained as artists and buildings were idealized graphically, often without much concern for actual construction. This reinforced the “gap” between architectural design and the constructed building, an important idea for the concept of architectural autonomy. Over time, even without a movement equivalent to *l'art pour l'art*, architecture gradually began to be seen as an autonomous discipline, with its own artistic value, without depending solely on its utilitarian function.

In the 20th century, it was the Viennese art historian Emil Kaufmann who helped consolidate the idea of autonomy in the field of architecture with his book *Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier: Ursprung und Entwicklung der Autonomen Architektur* (From Ledoux to Le Corbusier: Origins and Development of Autonomous Architecture, 1933), in which he draws a line connecting the visionary architecture of the 18th century to the modernist movement of the 20th century. This work was pivotal in the critical reassessment of 18th-century architecture, particularly in recognizing the role of architects such as Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Étienne-Louis Boullée, and Jean-Jacques Lequeu, who had been relatively neglected by traditional historiography. Kaufmann regarded them as precursors of modern architecture, especially due to their use of pure geometric forms, the rational organization of space, and utopian concepts.

Kaufmann viewed architecture as a discipline with its own language and logic, not merely as a reflection of historical styles or social functions. His notion of architectural autonomy was predominantly formal, based on geometric purity

and rigor, as well as freedom from architectural precedents. This interpretation was grounded in the theory he developed, according to which the history of architecture could be understood as an evolution through three spatial systems: the organic system, characteristic of Gothic architecture; the classical system, present in the Renaissance and Baroque periods; and, finally, the autonomous system, inherent to modern architecture, which had been anticipated in the pioneering work of Ledoux, to whom he gave particular emphasis.

Although Kaufmann's notion of autonomy was not identical to its equivalent in the arts, the idea was derived from Kant's concept of the autonomy of the will, emphasizing individuality, difference, and the architect's self-expression as a form of artistic emancipation, in a manner like the idea of autonomy defended by many artists. It was on this basis that Kaufmann described disciplinary progress as the result of individual will, genius, and creativity, enabling a break from tradition and the dogmas of the discipline.³

In the essay *Die Stadt des Architekten Ledoux: zur Erkenntnis der autonomen Architektur*, dated the same year as *Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier*, Kaufmann deepened his studies on Ledoux and established a broader theoretical framework regarding the evolution of autonomous architecture by drawing parallels between the 18th-century architect and modern architects such as Le Corbusier, seeing in both a pursuit of formal autonomy. This work, focused exclusively on the design of the ideal city of Chaux, correlated the architect's work with Kant's ideas:

At the time when Kant rejects all the moral philosophies of the past and decrees the "autonomy of the will as the supreme principle of ethics", an analogous transformation takes place in architecture. In the sketches of Ledoux these new objectives appear for the first time in all their clarity. His work marks the birth of autonomous architecture.⁴

Architectural Autonomy in the USA

Kaufmann's concept of autonomy managed to extend beyond the narrow field of architectural history. In the United States, it influenced architectural practice, playing a key role in distancing American modernism from the social concerns that were central to the European architectural discourse before the Second World War. In Europe, between 1910 and 1930, there were significant social and cultural transformations, with major reforms, especially in public housing, promoted by liberal governments. At the same time, there was a strong architectural avant-garde, supported by an influential cultural elite. In the United States, however, this link between avant-garde and progressive social ideas was practically absent. Examples of architecture inspired by the European avant-garde of the 1920s were rare. Given this context, it is not surprising that modernism,

³ Tahl Kaminer, *Architecture, Crisis and Resuscitation* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 78.

⁴ Kaminer, *Architecture*, 78.

which emerged in Europe during this period, was received in the United States primarily as a style devoid of its political and social motivations.⁵

This interpretation began with the *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition* presented at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA) in 1932. It was through this exhibition and the influence exerted by the authors of its catalog, figures such as Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Alfred Barr, and Philip Johnson, that modernism was consolidated in the U.S. primarily as an aesthetic issue. This publication downplayed the progressive social content of the Modern Movement, as its authors at the time saw the architectural avant-garde as synonymous with originality, creativity, and a break from tradition, while disregarding its political dimension. For them, it was revolutionary only in the aesthetic sense.⁶ Thus, it is not surprising that Hitchcock and Johnson chose to highlight the stylistic aspects of the Modern Movement rather than its potential for social transformation. As Johnson would later state, the functionalist and Marxist aspects of modernism did not interest him, as he saw architecture primarily as a pure art form: "The functionalist part and the Marxian part [of modernism] left me cold, because to me architecture is a pure art, and it's art that interests me."⁷

Years later, historian Reyner Banham criticized this approach, arguing that although Hitchcock and Johnson helped popularize modernism in the U.S., they also hindered it by ignoring its utopian character and its vocation for social reform - elements essential to its understanding in Europe.⁸ However, this idea of the avant-garde, linked to the notion of autonomy, continued to dominate the discourse in the United States until the 1970s, when it moved to the forefront of the discipline as modernism came under scrutiny by postmodern criticism.

Architectural Autonomy in Europe

While in the United States Kaufmann's idea of autonomy was easily embraced, not only due to the specific context of the country at the time but also because the ground had been prepared earlier by the Museum of Modern Art, in Europe the influence of Kaufmann's ideas was felt in the Italian *Tendenza*, particularly in the theoretical work of Aldo Rossi, who brought this idea to the forefront of architectural discourse in the second half of the 1960s. Rossi shared with Kaufmann a fascination with Enlightenment architecture, especially the work of Boullée, and, like the Austrian historian, he viewed aesthetics and architectural form as the central aspects of the discipline.

The emphasis on discipline and the autonomy of form, proposed by Rossi and the *Tendenza*, was a reaction to the social transformation proposals of the modernist avant-garde, which, in its ambition to integrate architecture into the

5 Alan Colquhoun, *Modern Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 231.

6 Kaminer, *Architecture, Crisis and Resuscitation*, 79.

7 Kaminer, *Architecture*, 79.

8 Kaminer, *Architecture*, 79.

social and urban fabric, gave rise to excessively functionalist, characterless, and impersonal architectural artifacts, with no links to tradition or historical context. Rossi believed that architecture needed a concrete margin of disciplinary autonomy to fulfil its social function. This involved distancing architecture from the avant-garde culture of the “new,” on one hand, and from its submission to bureaucratic planning, on the other. Furthermore, disciplinary autonomy was intrinsically linked to the idea of architecture as knowledge and to the dialectical inseparability between theory and design. For Rossi, both were moments in a single process with a common cognitive purpose. The defense of the specificity of architecture and its disciplinary autonomy thus had not only an epistemological character but also a precise meaning in terms of ideological choices. In addition to opposing the commercialization of architecture and the city, Rossi was committed to the creation of a radically postmodern and non-capitalist society through the recovery of the architect’s specific field in the study and transformation of the city. This involved promoting an “urbanism for architects,” where urban phenomena were primarily considered from the perspective of architecture, as he argued in his book *L’Architettura della città* (The Architecture of the City ; Portuguese edition *A arquitetura da cidade*, 1977).

With this work, he sought to define an “urban science” built on exclusively architectural parameters. This did not mean complete independence from political, social, or economic spheres; his intention was to draw on other disciplines (sociology, geography, history, economics) to substantiate urbanism, but always from architectural parameters.

To provide a “scientific” foundation for the study of urban and architectural “artefacts,” Rossi turned to an idealistic conception focused on the analysis of transcendental architectural typologies. The Italian architect argued that the “type” was the only possible starting point for a rationally grounded architectural project, as it represented the logical, rational, and essential foundation of architecture, ensuring the specificity, transmissibility, and social meaning of the discipline within the context of its autonomy.

For Rossi, the type is the very idea of architecture, the element closest to its essence. As a basic principle, it is a Platonic model that allows history to remain “incorporated in the monument or in the city long after its creation.” While he believed in the existence of a “consciousness of the city” created by historical forces and “urban facts”, Rossi argued that this consciousness exists “in the monument itself,” rather than necessarily in the relationship between a set of buildings, comparing the latter to a work of art. In this sense, history endures in the form of the building even after its use has changed. Although Rossi asserted that typologies repeat across different moments and are “always imbued with a sense of history,” their ideality and autonomy meant that the ideal typology is “separated from reality,” situated beyond economic or social forces, becoming an idealist and transcendental category that exists beyond the contingencies of the passage of time.

Although the logic centered on the type is prominent in *L'Achitettura della Città*, Rossi's position evolved in several texts published during the early 1970s, incorporating analogy, seen as a compositional procedure linked to his "mental structure" and personal memory. This shift, influenced by the work of Carl Gustav Jung, resulted in the theory of the *La città analoga* (The Analogous City, 1976), in which the idea of autonomy began to coexist with analogical and autobiographical thought, combining history - now seen as an affective series of architectural fragments drawn from different times and places - with biographical aspects deeply rooted in the architect's personal life.

Rossi's theory, particularly the theory of the analogous city, marked a turning point in the critique of modern architecture and functionalism, and strongly influenced postmodernism in the 1970s and early 1980s. However, it was not without epistemological weaknesses that shaped the reception and critique of his work. Rossi placed excessive emphasis on the idea of typology, attributing it with an instrumental capacity far beyond what it possessed. His concept of the type was complex and not fully clarified in his writings, allowing his "method" to be reduced to simplistic formulas that his followers mechanically repeated (resulting in a new academicism that Rossi himself opposed). Moreover, he encouraged a focus on exceptional buildings, on the singular monument, often read as a work of art, leading to the gradual disappearance of concern for the city. Finally, there is a "qualitative leap" between analysis and design, with no logical continuity, which undermines the dialectical inseparability between theory and design that he advocated. Due to weaknesses such as these, his research did not result in a general and transferable theory of design, but rather in an explanation of how he personally made his own designs. For this reason, Rossi was met with misunderstanding and criticism from certain authors, some of whom were politically motivated. For them, the concept of autonomy, focused on the discipline itself, form, and the use of ideal historical typologies, as well as the transcendental and ahistorical approach to architecture, represented an aversion to the idea of progress, providing sufficient grounds to associate his work with "conservative politics."

Autonomy and Postmodernity

In the mid-1970s, during the height of the postmodernism debate, the idea of autonomy occupied a central place in architectural discussions, sparking passionate debates. The German literary critic Peter Bürger, in his book *Theorie der Avantgarde* (Theory of the Avant Garde, 1974), argued that the idea of autonomy could no longer be defended, as it conflicted with reality. During these years, modernist works of art, considered "purposeless," were achieving high market values, transforming autonomous art into a common commodity. This reality led Bürger to reassess the theory of artistic autonomy. Bürger distinguishes between the real autonomy of art - which emerged in the 18th century with the separation between art and everyday life - and the aesthetic theories that later

transformed this separation into an ideology that viewed art as entirely independent of society.⁹

Bürger argues that this idea is misleading: it contains an element of truth (the separation of art from practical life), but it becomes false when it assumes that this separation is the essence of art. Theories like those of the *l'art pour l'art* movement reveal this distance of art from everyday life, which allowed the historical avant-garde to critique the social disengagement of art. However, he argues that autonomous art has lost its critical capacity, as it is structurally disconnected from real life. Although avant-garde movements sought to challenge this autonomy, they failed to overcome this fundamental separation, which limited the political impact of art. Bürger notes that artistic autonomy does not prevent political positions but reduces their effectiveness.

Although Peter Bürger's theory mainly focuses on the visual and literary arts, his ideas also influenced architectural discussions during those years. Bürger points out that, if autonomy in art is already complex and contradictory, in the case of architecture - a discipline that, by nature, is deeply linked to everyday life and social structures - this complexity is even greater and less clear. While art can exist as an object separate from practical life, architecture rarely can detach itself from its social, political, and economic function. However, as we have seen earlier, several authors attempted to position architecture as a "pure" or autonomous discipline, focusing on form and architectural language, often disconnected from social needs.

Bürger challenges this stance by showing that the supposed neutrality or "purity" of architecture can also be ideological - concealing its function within economic and social systems. Thus, architects who attempt to reclaim a critical and transformative role for architecture (such as some avant-garde movements or key figures of postmodernism like Rossi) face the same dilemma: it is difficult for architecture to have a real political or social impact if it continues to assert itself as autonomous. In this sense, the application of Bürger's theory to architecture raises a central question: can architecture truly be critical if it insists on its autonomy? Rossi would certainly have answered yes. His defense of autonomy can be interpreted as a form of critical opposition to the commodification of architecture and the city, but reconciling these realities in practice is not simple, which leads critics like Bürger to question how disciplinary autonomy aligns with the dynamic, historical, and economic realities that shape architectural and urban phenomena.

Álvaro Siza: between Autonomy and Social Commitment

The "discovery" of the architect Álvaro Siza by Italian criticism in the early 1970s, have enshrined the image of a relatively marginal architect in face of major debates in the architectural debates of the time. The critical reception

9 Peter Bürger, *Teoria da vanguarda* (Lisbon: Vega, 1993), 101.

of his work conducted by authors like Vittorio Gregotti was guided by the widespread idea that his work, initiated under the premises of the revision of the Modern Movement had no theoretical dimension. A few years later, Siza occupied a unique position in the international architectural scene, when participating in the debates about autonomy that at the time were already dominant in the Postmodernism controversy led by key personalities such as Colin Rowe in the United States and Manfredo Tafuri in Europe.

It was the Spanish architect Oriol Bohigas who, in 1976, in the French magazine *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, explored Siza's work, framing it within the debates of Postmodernism. In the early 1970s, Siza had developed a highly poetic body of work based on the technique of collage, which revisited the linguistic foundations of rationalism while accentuating its "artistic aspects." Bohigas recognized in the methodology of the Portuguese architect an innovative trend in European architecture, placing Siza in tune with his peers in the international context¹⁰. Indeed, collage and citation were at the heart of the disciplinary debates of those years, allowing Siza a singular metalinguistic practice during that time. Siza articulated elements of the "place" with historical "dialects" of the modern movement, in a "Sizian" world of signs and images, which allowed dialogue with works and authors of his choice. Siza's method, which made no claims to scientificity and was based on an empirical intuition, was aligned with Rossi's theory of "analogous architecture" and positioned him prominently in the discussion of architectural autonomy, which, at the time, was already one of the most passionate debates in Postmodernism.

Colin Rowe was one of the first postmodern architects to propose an alternative approach that rejected the notion of architecture as a social tool, focusing efforts on the "creation of forms" and autonomy, where architecture referred primarily to itself. Following Kaufmann's idea of autonomy and aligning with the interpretation of modern architecture presented by the Museum of Modern Art in 1932, Rowe rejected the social reform agendas of the avant-garde, advocating for the need for alternatives to the dogmas of modernism, whose "traumatic authoritarianism" he completely rejected. He admired the aesthetic achievements of the 1920s, particularly the work of Le Corbusier, but regarded the "messianism" of the Modern Movement as a failure. In his book *Collage City* (1978), there is a particularly revealing statement of his defense of the autonomy of architecture: "In this way, we can enjoy the aesthetics of utopia without suffering the inconvenience of political utopia".¹¹

In Europe, as we have seen, the idea of autonomy was mainly promoted by Aldo Rossi, from Italy. It was also in Italy that this idea was most strongly contested, with the radical critique of Manfredo Tafuri. The Italian historian expressed interest in the concept of autonomy, converging even, though from a distinct perspective, with representatives of the so-called "critical" architecture/

10 Oriol Bohigas, "La passion d'Álvaro Siza," *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, no. 185 (1976): 42–43.

11 Rem Koolhaas, "La deuxième chance de l'architecture moderne," *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, no. 238 (1985): 2–3.

theory, architects such as Oswald Mathias Ungers and Peter Eisenman, in addition to Rossi himself. They framed architecture within a linguistic perspective, as an “autonomous language,” questioning function, meaning, construction, visibility, and the mediation of architecture. Tafuri, on the other hand, conceived autonomy as a demand for sociopolitical engagement and participation in the economic, cultural, and political spheres, in opposition to the hegemonic capitalist system, positioning itself outside of the established institutions – and, consequently, already compromised – such as the state, political parties, or unions. It was, therefore, an extension of the class struggle. In practical terms, his notion of autonomy was to be expressed, notably, in the self-organization of citizens into housing cooperatives and direct action.

In the seminal essay “L’Architecture dans le boudoir: The language of criticism and the criticism of language”, published in the same year as Peter Bürger’s *Theory of Avant-Garde* (1974), Tafuri criticized, negatively, the works of post-modern authors associated with the return to language, presenting them as examples of a flight by contemporary architects from the “realm of the real” into the “universe of signs.” This flight, which led to the conceptualization of “erotized” spaces by means of a “self-isolated language” (and thus alienated), was symptomatic of an attitude that sought to restore the object-like dimension and the character of uniqueness to buildings, removing them from their economic and functional context, fixing them as exceptional moments - and thus surreal - placing them in parentheses within the flow of objects created by the production system.¹² It is in this sense that Tafuri criticized Rossi’s idealistic approach, accusing him of emptying the meaning of historical forms by using them outside of their context. The result was an architecture of arbitrary signs, devoid of any historical or social content, which emphasized the singular object to the detriment of the urban context, denying or distancing the relationship between architecture and politics.

For Tafuri, the return to language was proof of failure, revealing the removal of architectural form from the realm of the everyday and the inability of contemporary architects to draw the necessary conclusions from the fate of the modernist avant-garde. The result was an architecture of excess and emptiness, symptomatic of the subjective alienation that had been reached in the post-war consumer society (in America, but also in Europe). It was little more than a pathetic repetition of the self-destructive project of the avant-garde, now relegated to the boudoir.¹³

In those years, Siza participated in the SAAL process, an initiative conceived in the aftermath of the Carnation Revolution, within a context of popular participation and the expectation of social transformation. In the projects of Bouça (1973-1977) and São Vítor in Porto (1974-1977), Siza worked closely with residents and local associations, developing contextual solutions and reflections on

12 Manfredo Tafuri, “L’architecture dans le boudoir: The Language of Criticism and the Criticism of Language,” in *Architecture Theory Since 1968*, ed. K. Michael Hays (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 161.

13 Tafuri, “L’architecture dans le boudoir,” 164.

the social nature of architecture. However, Siza viewed direct confrontation with the residents as an inevitable conflict, and in the brigades he coordinated, populist concessions were excluded from his lexicon. Siza drew a parallel between his commitment to the residents and the Brechtian notion of “distancing”,¹⁴ where representing their interests through architecture did not mean directly embracing their aspirations. The participation of the residents, although desired, was framed within a complex theoretical reference system through which Siza vehemently rejected the idea of autonomy while his practice revealed an artistic understanding of architecture. As he later stated, recalling the theory of the *l’art pour l’art* movement: “Architecture is art or it is not architecture.”¹⁵

This ambiguity regarding the issue of disciplinary autonomy, problematic considering Peter Bürger’s theory and Tafuri’s criticism, which places him in a heterodox position in relation to postmodernism, was analyzed during the 1980s by the American architect Peter Testa and the Portuguese historian Paulo Varela Gomes.

In 1984, Peter Testa analyzed Siza’s position regarding the idea of autonomy through works such as the Carlos Siza House (1976-1978), the Quinta da Malagueira in Évora (1977), and the projects for Berlin (1976-1983), as well as testimonies and texts from the Portuguese architect. Testa emphasized Siza’s singular position within the context of Postmodernism, as he distanced himself both from the dogmas of modern architecture and from more figurative postmodern practices, but also from regionalist proposals advanced by authors like Kenneth Frampton, which he interprets as a “reactionary traditionalism.”¹⁶ According to Testa, Siza’s experimental attitude, which does not separate from the demands of uses and customs, is not a form of localism or regionalism and is categorically different from the obstinately formal resignation of the “last” and “Post” modernists.¹⁷ It constitutes, instead, a dialectical process that relies on a creative dialogue with the context “as found” rather than relying on universal solutions or subjective inventions.¹⁸

Testa emphasizes that Siza implicitly rejects the notion of autonomous architecture. The theoretical position, which he expressed in testimonies and texts, and which Testa characterizes as a “non-imitative contextualism”¹⁹, suggests a process that operates not only within an objective reality, participating in the creation of the present cultural moment, but also within architecture, in “models” derived, at least in part, from the context and history, preserving its autonomy.

Although Siza does not endorse the imitation of dead styles or casual borrowings of historical forms and schemes, his incursions into history intensified in

14 José António Bandeirinha, *O processo SAAL e a arquitectura no 25 de abril de 1974* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2011), 254.

15 Álvaro Siza, *Writings on Architecture* (Milan: Skira, 1997), 31.

16 Peter Testa, *A arquitectura de Álvaro Siza / The Architecture of Álvaro Siza* (Porto: FAUP, 1988), 33–34.

17 Testa, *A arquitectura de Álvaro Siza*, 145.

18 Testa, *A arquitectura de Álvaro Siza*, 75.

19 Testa, *A arquitectura de Álvaro Siza*, 130.

these years, becoming research into the very nature of architecture,²⁰ as can be seen in the second phase of the Haia project (1989-1993) or the interventions at Quinta da Malagueira in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This metalinguistic re-appropriation of architecture is characterized by a certain aesthetic pleasure associated with the experience of architectural forms, which the Portuguese architect acknowledged in 1993 when referring to the “severely controlled sensuality of geometric forms.”²¹ Beyond its evident Corbusian connotations, this statement echoes the already cited essay “L’Architecture dans le boudoir” by Manfredo Tafuri, in which the “escape” of postmodern architects from the “domain of the real” to the “universe of signs” is critically noted. In Siza’s case, the pleasure results not only from the aesthetic perception of forms but, above all, from the manipulation of the artistic means of architecture, whose mastery reached superlative levels in works from the second half of the 1980s, such as the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Porto (1985-1996) and the Higher School of Education in Setúbal (1986-1995).²²

In a text published in 1989 about Siza’s projects for The Hague, Paulo Varela Gomes saw in the pure and austere forms of that period traces of an architecture that asserted its autonomy by eliminating (and being hostile to) other forms of knowledge. In a clearly provocative tone, the Portuguese historian rejected the critiques of Bürger, Tafuri, and Testa, seeing in these characteristics an obsessive will on Siza’s part to expel all non-architectural references from his work. According to him, this liberation of the “essence of the architectural act and place” in an autistic attitude and *tabula rasa* approach aimed to restore architecture to its original place; a place that, in an idealistic plane, can only be the first because “architectural knowledge is inherent to its productive process.” In this sense, “the origin of architecture lies in itself, it is intrinsic to the very act of design.”²³ With this idealistic argument, which harkens back to Rossi’s transcendentalism, Varela Gomes justified Siza’s desire to assert the autonomy of architecture against all external temptations.

Conclusion

The gradual rise of the idea of autonomy in architecture from the late 1960s was vital for the revitalization of the discipline after the crisis of the end of modernist utopias and for the recovery of its cultural relevance achieved in the 1990s. The return to autonomy helped architecture adapt to a new socio-economic context - that of neoliberalism, which emerged in the second half of the 1970s, and whose cultural demands now focused on the valorization of the market and individualism. The work of architect Álvaro Siza, which rose to international

20 Testa, *A arquitetura de Álvaro Siza*, 174.

21 Siza, *Writings on Architecture*, 129.

22 Jorge Nunes, “The Internationalisation of Álvaro Siza and the Myth of the Traditional and Conservative Architect,” in *Intelligence, Creativity and Fantasy*, ed. Mário M. Kong, Maria R. Monteiro, and Maria J. P. Neto (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2019), 135.

23 Paulo Varela Gomes, “Per forza di levare,” *Architècti*, December 3, 1989, 34.

prominence within this context, is an expression of the tensions experienced by the architecture discipline during these years. Siza is recognized both for his formal sensitivity and for the grounding of his works in the social, historical, and cultural context. Although he works with a poetic and formally autonomous language, this autonomy is not detached from social reality. His work resists the reduction of architecture to mere style - as Johnson and Hitchcock did with the modern architecture - and offers a critical and subtle alternative to the current neoliberal and post-critical environment, refusing to yield to the rhetoric of formalism that has marked the work of many contemporary "starchitects," whose works have become symbols of global capitalism. His work keeps alive the possibility of architecture with critical awareness - one that, even starting from a rigorous disciplinary language, remains deeply committed to the lives of people, to the place, and to memory. At a time when architecture is often captured by capital and media superficiality, Siza represents a resistant practice, where ethics and aesthetics remain inseparable, as initially proposed by Kant.

Fundings

This work is financed by national funds through FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., under the Strategic Project with the references UIDB/04008/2020 and UIDP/04008/2020.

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Postmodern Convergences: Architectural and Design Dialogues Between Tomás Taveira and Alessandro Mendini

Postmodernism, Architecture Design, Creativity, Dialogues

/Abstract

This article investigates the relationship between Tomás Taveira, a prominent and controversial figure of postmodern architecture in Portugal, and Alessandro Mendini, a member of Studio Alchimia, one of the most radical groups within the Italian postmodernist context. During a period marked by intense societal questioning of the concepts of taste and value, both architects emerged as key figures of the postmodernist movement. This research—unprecedented in both Portugal and Italy—explores this unique connection by focusing on a comparative analysis of architectural and design works representative of each. These case studies reveal aesthetic and conceptual parallels, further enriched by an exclusive interview with Tomás Taveira and previously unpublished visual materials from the author's private collection. The study offers a perspective on the impact of postmodernism in architecture, highlighting the creative interplay between Portugal and Italy.

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Introduction

This article examines the conceptual and formal intersections present in the works of Tomás Taveira and Alessandro Mendini, two of the most representative architects of postmodernism in Portugal and Italy. Both operated during a period of reconfiguration of twentieth-century architectural paradigms, explicitly rejecting the foundational assumptions of modernism. The analysis begins with the premise that, despite their distinct cultural contexts, their creations reveal notable convergences in their approach to both design and architecture.

Postmodernism, often interpreted merely as a reaction to modernism, is in fact a complex phenomenon with roots in the post-war period. Jean-François Lyotard identified this movement as a “thinking by oppositions that does not correspond to the liveliest modes of modernism”¹, suggesting a critical stance toward the grand narratives that defined modernity. In architecture, this position is expressed in the deconstruction of rationalist functionality, replaced by a heterogeneous compositional grammar in which citation and hybridization function as operative strategies.

Taveira and Mendini incorporate elements drawn from various memories and traditions, blending constructive practices inherited from the modern movement, shaped by industrialization with historical symbols and vernacular references. “These works reject modernist neutrality, embracing form as an active element of meaning”². Robert Venturi, whose influence Taveira openly acknowledges, “advocated for the value of ambiguity and complexity, introducing an alternative reading of architecture based on juxtaposition, multiplicity, and formal ambivalence.

This approach breaks with the logic of purity and functionality, proposing an architecture permeable to culture and everyday experience”³. The work of both architects reveals deliberate coincidences within a purposeful eclecticism, in which the architectural or design object emerges as a semiotic device. Postmodern aesthetics “takes symbols, archetypes, and is content to play around them, renouncing planning for scenography, and cosmetics without rediscovering the real workings of things”⁴. Within this framework, parody, citation, and the layering of styles are key strategies, rejecting the linear historical continuity upheld by modernist doctrine.

Attention is thus drawn to the notion that both authors share a common perspective: one that manifests through disciplinary contamination and the dissolution of boundaries between scales and functions. This study proposes a comparative analysis of the formal and methodological trajectories of Taveira and Mendini, with a particular focus on the 1980s, a pivotal decade marking

1 Jean-François Lyotard, *A Condição Pós-Moderna* (Lisboa: Edições Gradiva, 1989), 21.

2 Miguel Baptista-Bastos, recorded interview with Tomás Taveira, Lisbon, February 2025, unpublished interview.

3 Miguel Baptista-Bastos, recorded interview with Tomás Taveira, Lisbon, February 2025, unpublished interview.

4 Paolo Portoghesi, “Is Post-Modern Architecture Serious? Paolo Portoghesi and Bruno Zevi in Conversation,” in *Free-Style Classicism*, ed. Andreas Papadakis, guest ed. Charles Jencks, *Architectural Design*, no. 52 (1982): 20–21.

the consolidation of European postmodernism. It seeks to identify structural elements within their practices that transcend national and disciplinary boundaries, aiming to recognize a shared grammar of architectural and design intervention.

Adopting a hermeneutic and transdisciplinary approach, the analysis explores how both architects respond to modernist postulates by promoting an architecture that does not subordinate form to function, but instead embraces its playful dimension. An integrated reading of their productions is favored, considering their artifacts, both furniture and buildings, as components of a unified expressive system.

This research is grounded in a documentary base composed of visual records, specialized literature, Mendini's written reflections on Taveira, and an unpublished interview with Tomás Taveira conducted in Lisbon in February 2025. This testimony provides access to authorial perspectives on creative processes, influences, and affinities with Studio Alchimia and Mendini himself. Such proximity confirms the transnational circulation of ideas within postmodernism, reinforcing the need for an interpretive framework that transcends disciplinary and geographical boundaries.

"Andreas Papadakis (a publishing entrepreneur in the fields of architecture and design) was the link between me and Studio Alchimia, because I was doing things similar to theirs"⁵. Taveira and Mendini develop a poetics of visibility centered on the expressive autonomy of the object. Their architecture introduces an expanded semantics, in which buildings and furniture function as agents of symbolic and cultural construction.

"A philosophical and aesthetic alignment began to emerge! [...] a dialogue among the different arts, particularly between architecture and design. Achille Bonito Oliva played a key role in this, as he was the one who philosophically aligned us. He had a major influence on both me and Mendini, not only in our relationship with popular art but also in the question of scale in my works!"⁶.

The dissolution of boundaries between scales from object to built space, constitutes a strategic challenge to disciplinary conventions within the critical context of modernist normativity. In this light, it becomes evident how both bodies of work are inscribed within a logic of formal experimentation, contributing to a broader understanding of architectural and design languages in the contemporary era.

The research is based on a comparative and interpretative methodology, focused on the analysis of a selected set of works by Tomás Taveira and Alessandro Mendini. This approach considers the relationship between scale, function, and language as operative elements in the formulation of their respective proposals. The selection of case studies includes both design objects

5 Miguel Baptista-Bastos, recorded interview with Tomás Taveira, Lisbon, February 2025, unpublished interview.

6 Miguel Baptista-Bastos, recorded interview with Tomás Taveira, Lisbon, February 2025, unpublished interview.

and buildings, allowing for the identification of conceptual continuities across different levels of intervention. Among the examples studied are pieces such as the Poltrona Proust and the New Transfiguration collection, as well as the Amoreiras Complex in Lisbon and the Groningen Museum. The analysis highlights shared strategies such as the manipulation of form and color, historical citation, and the reconfiguration of conventional models. Access to original drawings further enriches the examination of design processes. The theoretical framework draws on authors such as Charles Jencks, Michael Collins, and Geoffrey Broadbent, whose reflections on postmodernism provide critical support for the interpretation.

Postmodernism: Definitions and Characteristics. Postmodernism and Its International Manifestation

Postmodernism emerged in the late twentieth century as a critical response to modernism not as a homogeneous style, but as an epistemological shift. It is characterized by the rejection of notions such as totality, objectivity, and linear progress, instead proposing a fragmented and plural understanding of reality⁷. It challenges the idea of a universal truth, valuing situated discourses and multiple forms of knowledge. Jean-François Lyotard famously defined postmodernism as “a distrust of the grand narratives that structure modernity”⁸.

The emergence of postmodernism occurred unevenly, varying according to cultural contexts. In the United States, it is associated with a critique of cultural homogenization and an emphasis on diversity within a society shaped by consumerism. In Europe, it is embedded in a theoretical and artistic debate surrounding the crisis of History, reason, and functionality⁹.

This movement does not imply a return to the past, but rather a critical reinterpretation of traditions and an appreciation for historicity. In the field of architecture, the formal and functional purity of modernism is rejected in favor of a hybrid and symbolic language. Architects such as Robert Venturi, Charles Moore, Michael Graves, and Tomás Taveira incorporate historical references and ornamental elements into their works¹⁰.

In the arts and design, postmodernism rejects absolute originality, favoring citation, collage, and reinvention. In design, movements such as Memphis, led by Ettore Sottsass, illustrate this approach with bold colors, irregular forms, and eclectic references. In literature, authors like Peter Handke explore fragmented narratives and intertextuality, reflecting the complexity of reality.

7 Michael Collins and Andreas Papadakis, *Post-Modern Design* (London: Academy Editions, 1989), 15–26.

8 Lyotard, *A Condição Pós-Moderna*, 46.

9 Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, “Interview with Robert Maxwell,” in *POP Architecture – A Sophisticated Interpretation of Popular Culture?*, ed. Andreas Papadakis (London: Architectural Design, 1992), 8–15.

10 Geoffrey Broadbent, “Tomás Taveira: An Architect of Plenty,” in *Architectural Monographs*, no. 37 (1994): 6–12.

Postmodernism in Italy and Portugal: Contexts and Influences

Italy and Portugal provide distinct but complementary contexts for understanding the development of postmodernism in architecture and design. Both countries experienced processes of democratic renewal in the 1970s and 1980s, which allowed for greater formal and conceptual freedom. In Italy, this period coincided with an intellectual environment conducive to critiquing the rationalist models of modernism.

In the 1960s, movements such as Radical Design emerged, led by groups like Superstudio and Archizoom, as well as authors like Alessandro Mendini. These movements proposed an experimental practice that rejected functional normativity, instead valuing irony, historical citation, and the blending of disciplines. Mendini stands out for his ability to integrate theory and practice, designing objects that transcend utilitarian function and incorporate cultural meanings. The Poltrona Proust exemplifies this approach by combining historical ornamentation with chromatic interventions, signaling a critical stance toward the modern legacy¹¹.

In Portugal, postmodernism emerged after the April Revolution of 1974, within a context of cultural redefinition. The 1980s saw its development, fueled by the country's accession to the European Community. Tomás Taveira took a unique position, distancing himself from the dominant architectural discourse and developing his own language, influenced by British brutalism, the pop universe, and Italian references. Works such as the Amoreiras Complex articulate elements of national heritage with contemporary color, form, and materials, representing a significant expression of postmodernism in the Portuguese context¹².

Thus, postmodernism in both countries reflects a critical reinterpretation of history, with design and architecture serving as means of cultural and identity questioning, highlighting the diversity of paths within a common international trend. [Figg. 1–2]

The Connection Between Tomás Taveira and Alessandro Mendini

Although the relationship between Tomás Taveira and Alessandro Mendini was not formally close, there is a clear convergence of ideas between the two architects, reflecting the principles of European postmodernism. Both believe that architecture and design should be understood not only as utilitarian functions but as cultural and social expressions. The use of historical elements, diverse stylistic references, and visual irony are common aspects in their works.

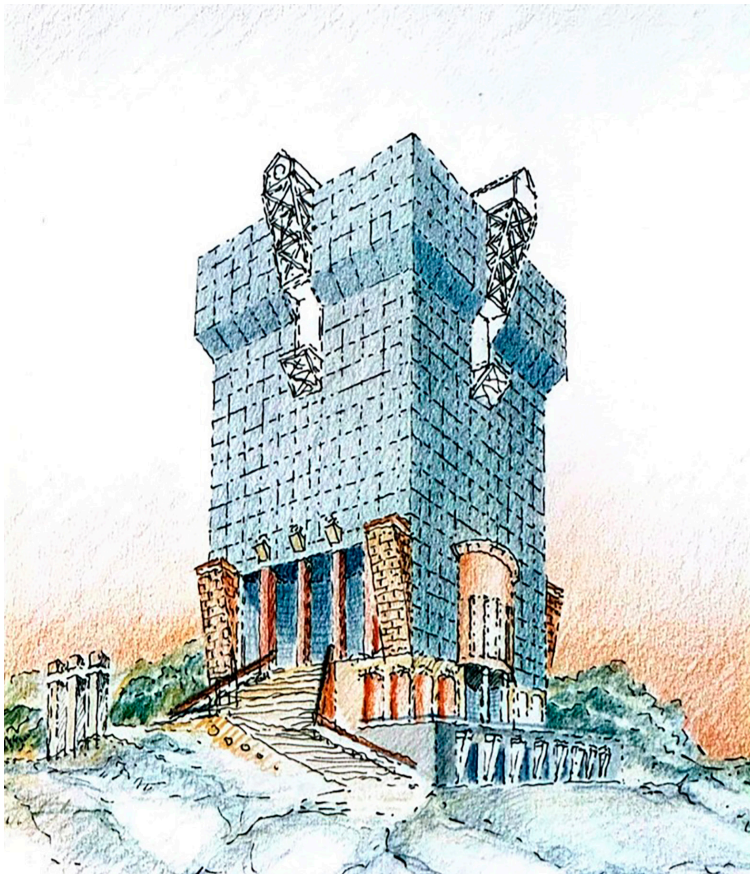
Despite their distinct contexts, Taveira and Mendini share the view that architecture should be an interdisciplinary space, not isolated. Mendini, with

11 Michael Collins and Andreas Papadakis, *Post-Modern Design* (London: Academy Editions, 1989), 32.

12 Michel Toussaint, "Tomás Taveira and His Work," in *A+U: Recent Works by Tomás Taveira*, ed. Toshio Nakamura (Tokyo: Yoshio Yoshida, January 1987), 31–34.



1



2

Fig. 1
Complexo das Amoreiras by
Tomás Taveira (Photo by the
author, 2022)

Fig. 2
Preliminary design drawing of a
tower from the Complexo das
Amoreiras created in 1980 by
Tomás Taveira (Collection of
Miguel Baptista-Bastos)

a background in industrial design, advocates for the fusion of art and design as essential for aesthetic renewal. Taveira, with a strong connection to architecture, draws on local cultural references, creating works that transcend mere functionality.

Both criticize the “universality” of modernism and advocate for design that respects history and embraces diverse influences. Mendini articulates this idea through the Studio Alchimia, which proposed new approaches to design, while Taveira, within the Portuguese context, challenged the rigidity of traditional architecture. As he himself stated: “I parodied against a rigid architecture, without color or dynamism!”¹³. The exchange of ideas between them, evidenced by Mendini’s writings on Taveira, demonstrates an affinity that goes beyond aesthetics, positioning architecture as a field of social and cultural reflection. This relationship results in a significant transformation in the fields of architecture, design, and art, contributing to a broader understanding of contemporary cultural identities.

Methods of Comparative Analysis. Justification of the Comparative Approach

The choice of a comparative analysis arises from the need to understand the similarities and differences in the practices of Tomás Taveira and Alessandro Mendini, both representative of postmodernism in distinct cultural contexts: Portugal and Italy.

This approach allows for the identification of direct influences between the two architects, as well as the cultural particularities that shaped their works. Taveira explains that, in the early 1980s, he emphasized the parallels between his proposals and the work of Studio Alchimia. While Mendini was central to the more exploratory proposals, Taveira acknowledges the importance of Achille Bonito Oliva, whose ideas consolidated the connection between architecture, design, and the visual arts, crucial in the theoretical and philosophical development that permeated the work of both Taveira and Mendini, strengthening their connection.

Selected Case Studies

Works by Taveira and Mendini representative of postmodernism were selected. The choice considered aspects such as scale, color, form, and cultural references. The cases illustrate key points in their respective productions and allow for the examination of the formal and conceptual dialogue between the two.

¹³ Miguel Baptista-Bastos, recorded interview with Tomás Taveira, Lisbon, February 2025, unpublished interview.

Comparative Study of the Amoreiras Complex and the Groningen Museum

The Amoreiras Complex (Tomás Taveira) and the Groningen Museum (Alessandro Mendini) are examples of postmodern practices with distinct approaches to historical reference. Taveira incorporates classical elements within a contemporary urban context, breaking with the modern functionalist model¹⁴. The work organizes volumes and forms according to a non-linear compositional logic, introducing recognizable formal variations. In the Groningen Museum, Mendini applies varied geometries and color as structuring elements of the museological proposal¹⁵.

The construction of the exhibition space rejects the neutrality of modernism and emphasizes the relationship between architecture and art. In both cases, the reference to the past is used as a design material, through formal operations that disrupt modernist continuity and propose new ways of relating to the context. [Fig. 3]

Proust Armchair, Ollo Collection and “New Transfiguration”

The Proust Armchair and the table and chairs from the Ollo Collection represent design operations in which Mendini questions the boundaries between design and architecture. In the Proust Armchair, a rococo-inspired seat is transformed by a dotted color pattern, inspired by the neo-impressionism of Paul Signac. The pictorial technique applied to the surface of the object, with a manually designed image, suggests an appropriation and recombination of visual codes. The reference to Marcel Proust places the piece in a literary and cultural context, functioning as a postmodern bricolage that combines historical forms with different expressions. The Ollo Collection, on the other hand, combines stylistic and symbolic elements from various repertoires. Both pieces utilize formal and semantic shifts, surpassing utilitarian function and engaging in a discussion on cultural heritage and contemporary production. Mendini creates an expanded field of intervention, challenging disciplinary categories and proposing a reflection on temporalities and citations: central characteristics of postmodernism¹⁶.

In the same vein, the New Transfiguration collection, presented by Tomás Taveira at ARCO'85, constitutes an experiment in transposing architectural principles into the realm of object design. Composed of chairs, ceramics, and shelves, the collection highlights the manipulation of scale, the use of graphic patterns, and the incorporation of multiple cultural repertoires. Taveira's practice reflects a methodology of visual and symbolic recomposition, where objects

14 Maria Heloísa Albuquerque, “Complexo das Amoreiras,” in *Guia de Arquitectura Lisboa 94* (Lisboa: Associação dos Arquitectos Portugueses / Sociedade Lisboa 94 / Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade Técnica de Lisboa, 1994), 374–375.

15 Stefano Casciani, *Alessandro Mendini: Imagination Takes Command* (New York: Phaidon Press, 2025), 190.

16 Casciani, *Alessandro Mendini: Imagination Takes Command*, 97.

serve as extensions of architectural discourse. The analysis reveals a process of meaning construction based on the appropriation, displacement, and assembly of formal elements, reflecting the tension between tradition and contemporaneity, function and expression¹⁷. [Fig. 4]

Banco Nacional Ultramarino (Tomás Taveira) and Interior of Frans Haks (Alessandro Mendini)

The design of the Banco Nacional Ultramarino in Lisbon highlights Tomás Taveira's practice in bridging architecture and interior design. The intervention integrates form, color, and cultural references into a unified spatial system. The color palette evokes identity elements, such as the Portuguese guitar and the Campo Pequeno, functioning as a symbolic mediator between the built space and the collective imagination. The furniture is conceived as an extension of the building, not as an autonomous addition, nullifying the conventional distinction between architecture and design. This strategy reflects the dissolution of disciplinary boundaries characteristic of postmodernism, incorporating multiple scales and expressive codes into a single design gesture¹⁸. [Fig. 5]

Similarly, the interior of the residence of Frans Haks in Amsterdam, designed by Alessandro Mendini, proposes a spatiality where art and design are treated in a non-hierarchical manner. The spatial organization, marked by the symbolic centrality of the bathtub and the duplication of the staircases, introduces scenographic elements that challenge functionality. The presence of pieces from the Memphis movement and the Ollo collection situates the house within a discourse of aesthetic experimentation. The division of the space between contemporary art and 19th-century art highlights a temporal juxtaposition logic. Mendini designs the domestic space as a place of coexistence between diverse cultural practices, reaffirming the postmodern principle of contamination between languages¹⁹.

Convergences Between Mendini and Taveira: A Postmodern Dialogue

The comparative analysis of the case studies highlights points of convergence and divergence between the practices of Tomás Taveira and Alessandro Mendini within the context of postmodernism. Despite cultural and geographical differences, both architects employ strategies that challenge the paradigms of modernism, promoting the fusion of architecture and design.

In architecture, the Amoreiras Complex and the Groningen Museum exemplify the manipulation of scale and the appropriation of historical repertoires, transcending the functional limits of modernist language. Taveira proposes a

17 Alessandro Mendini, "Tomás Taveira – New Transfiguration," introductory text for the exhibition catalog *New Transfiguration*, Galeria Cómicos, Lisbon, 7–30 November 1985, titled "Affascinante e Problematico."

18 Alessandro Mendini, *Introduction to Tomás Taveira* (UK: Artmedia Press, 2002).

19 Casciani, *Alessandro Mendini: Imagination Takes Command*, 171.

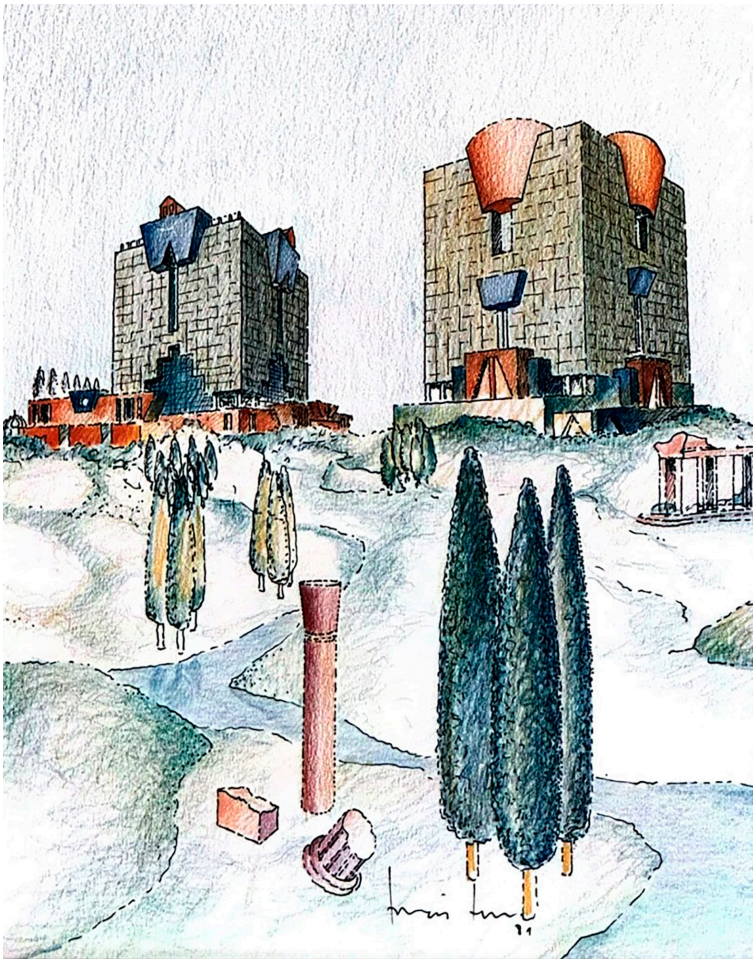
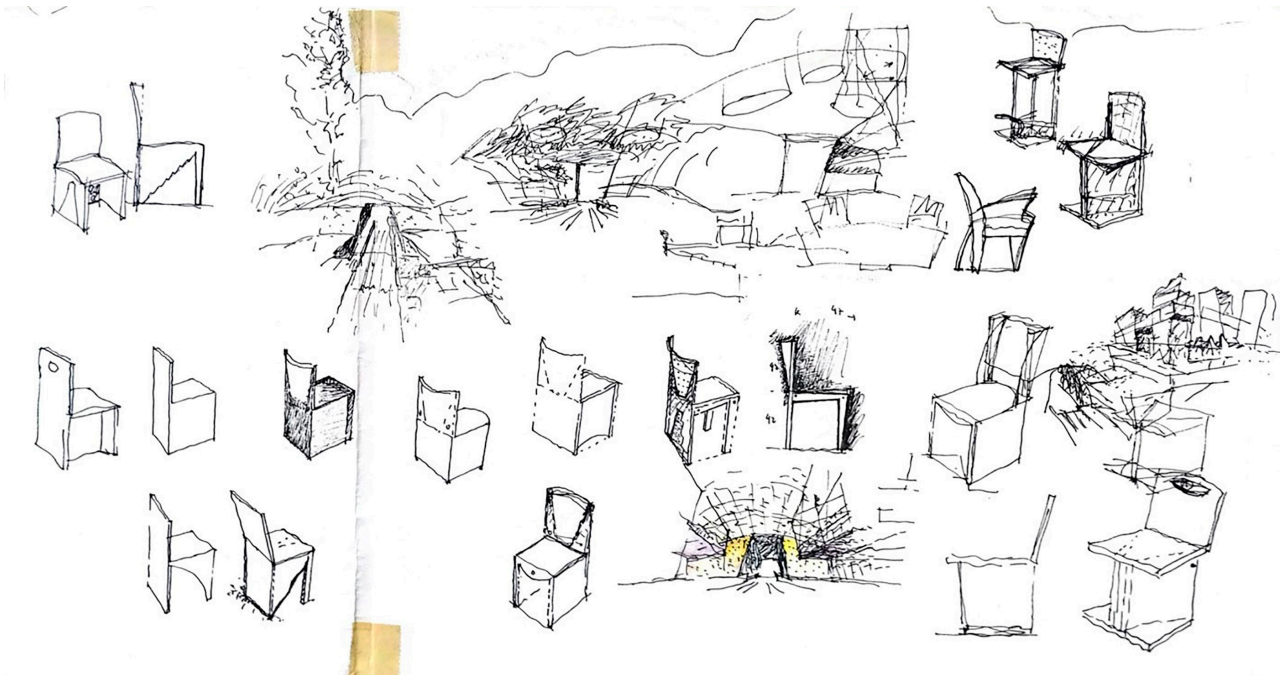


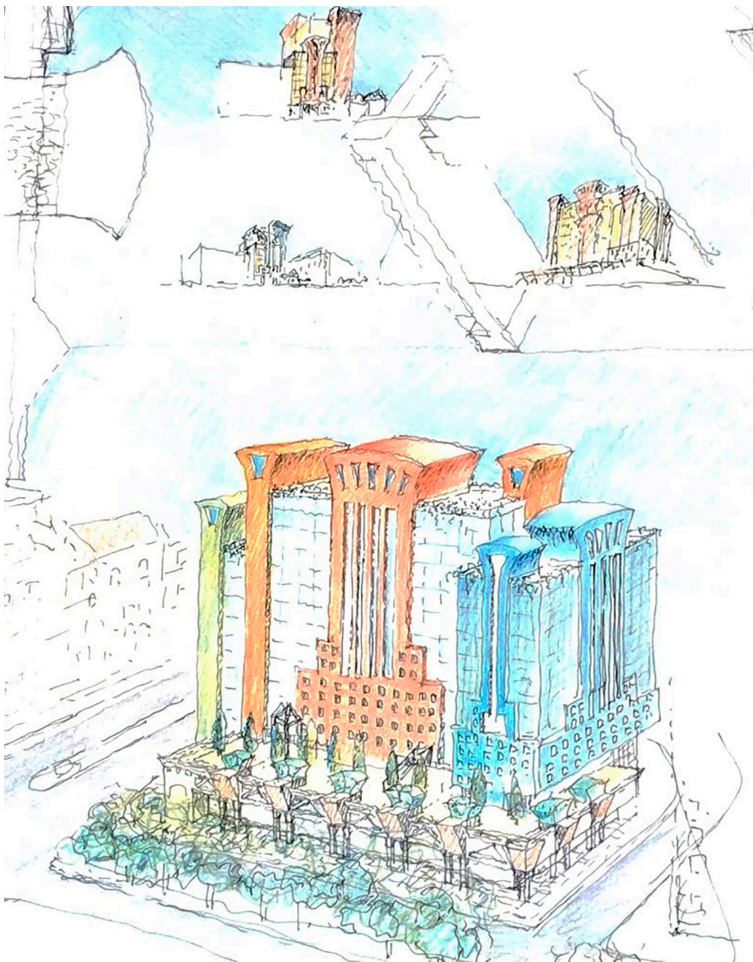
Fig. 3

Preliminary design drawing of two towers from the Complexo das Amoreiras showing the alternation of crowning elements, created in 1981 by Tomás Taveira (Collection of Miguel Baptista-Bastos)

Fig. 4

Preliminary study of chairs for the "New Transfiguration" exhibition, created in 1984 by Tomás Taveira (Collection of Miguel Baptista-Bastos)





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spatiality rooted in the Portuguese cultural imagination, while Mendini creates visual experiences marked by formal and symbolic juxtaposition.

In design, Mendini's works, such as the Poltrona Proust and the Ollo Collection, manifest a narrative and experimental approach. Taveira's "New Transfiguration" collection operates at the intersection between object and space, reiterating the indistinction of disciplines.

Finally, the BNU and the interior of Frans Haks reveal how both authors merge the scales of design and architecture, promoting a design logic in which aesthetics operate as a mediator between function, context, and cultural expression.

In summary, the analyzed cases demonstrate architecture and design as means of challenging modernist conventions, highlighting the formal and symbolic diversity of postmodernism. Taveira and Mendini, in distinct contexts, adopt critical approaches that question functionalist logic. The comparison of their practices allows for the identification of common procedures in the management of scale, color, and form, as well as the reinterpretation of historical references. These works contribute to defining a design language within the postmodern framework.

Fig. 5

Preliminary study. Prototype for the working project, created in 1983 by Tomás Taveira (Collection of Miguel Baptista-Bastos)

Results: the Diffusion of Scale in Architecture and Design. Scale and Design: Convergence between Architecture and Objects

The analysis reveals that the manipulation of scale, both in architecture and design, constitutes a structural element in the practices of Tomás Taveira and Alessandro Mendini. In both cases, there is a departure from modern conventions on proportion, allowing design objects to assume enlarged dimensions and buildings to incorporate formal characteristics associated with objects. This transition between scales establishes a continuous relationship between object and space, moving away from functionalist rigidity²⁰.

In the work of Tomás Taveira, this convergence between scales is evident in projects such as the Complexo das Amoreiras and the New Transfiguration collection, where the distinction between physical and conceptual scales is softened. The application of shapes and colors goes beyond mere visual integration, proposing an extension of the design vocabulary to architecture itself. In this sense, scale transcends its physical dimension, implying a conceptual reconfiguration of both space and form²¹.

Similarly, Alessandro Mendini adopts an approach that destabilizes conventional scale. In the Museum of Groningen, the architecture does not adhere strictly to functional criteria but approaches a composition of an objectual nature. The Poltrona Proust and the Ollo Table and Chairs exemplify the inversion of expectations regarding proportion and use. Mendini uses scale as a strategy to question the boundaries between object and architecture, operating at the intersection of art and design²².

Thus, scale is employed as a means of transition between disciplines, promoting the fusion of the domestic and the monumental. This approach reveals one of the central operations of postmodernism, where the built space and the designed object converge, proposing a new configuration between art, architecture, and design. The collages presented in Figs. 6, 7, and 8 illustrate the relationship between the works of the two architects, highlighting the parallels in their choices of forms, colors, and materials. These images demonstrate how both architects used design as a means of questioning and challenging established architectural norms. [Figg. 6–7–8]

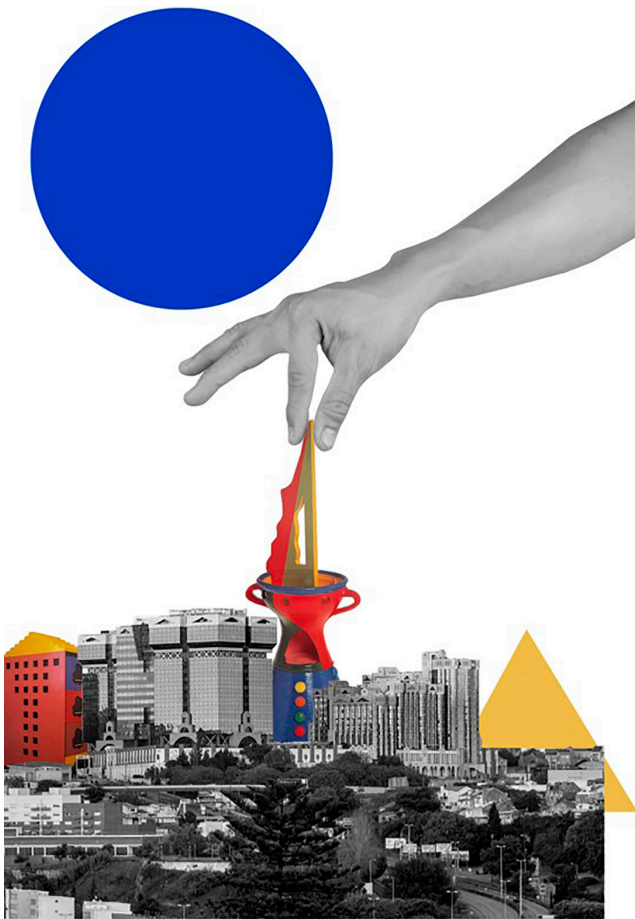
Discussion: the Impact of Postmodernism in Contemporary Times. Postmodernism and Aesthetics

Postmodernism continues to have a significant presence in contemporary architectural and design practices, distinguished by its plurality of influences and its emphasis on originality. Its aesthetics remain relevant, evolving distinctly

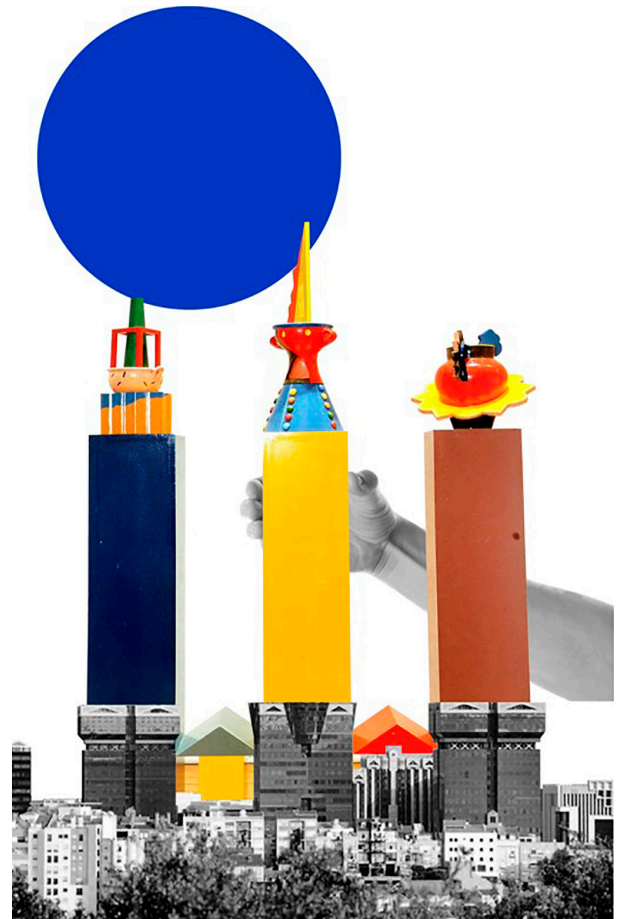
20 Roger Scruton, *A Estética da Arquitectura* (Lisboa: Edições 70, 2020), 45–78.

21 Valentina Moimas, "Tomás Taveira," in *Collection Architecture – La Collection du Centre Georges Pompidou* (Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 2016).

22 Casciani, *Alessandro Mendini: Imagination Takes Command*, 47.



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in the current context. By rejecting unified and universal exegeses, postmodernism prioritizes flexibility and subjectivity, reflecting contemporary concerns with cultural diversity and accessibility, while also enabling the production of previously considered unattainable objects through consumerism.

In the field of architecture, postmodern aesthetics expand the possibilities for visual expression, moving away from standardized forms and functionalist rigidity. By integrating historical elements and exploring new forms, it contributes to the creation of spaces that establish a dialogue with cultural memory, while also connecting with contemporary practices. In design, this approach is manifested in the reuse of forms, colors, and materials that evoke visual memories, bringing forth a historical dreaminess²³.

Nowadays, postmodernism is not confined to the pursuit of efficient technical solutions; rather, it also engages with history and collective memory, manipulating formal solutions, colors, and scales. The postmodern aesthetic, therefore, continues to exert influence on contemporary practice, not through literal adoption, but through its capacity to generate new

Fig. 6
Miguel Baptista-Bastos,
Collage of Lisbon Transfigured,
2025.

Fig. 7
Miguel Baptista-Bastos,
Collage of the Amoreiras Trans-
figured, 2025.

23 Charles Jencks, "Free Style Classicism—The Wider Tradition," in *Free-Style Classicism*, ed. Andreas Papadakis, guest ed. Charles Jencks, *Architectural Design* 52 (1982): 5–21.



8

meanings and interpretations within urban space and object design²⁴. In this sense, the impact of postmodernism on architecture and design remains significant, not merely for its challenge to aesthetic norms, but also for its ongoing creation of new possibilities for cultural signification and representation, readily apprehended and immediately consumed²⁵.

Conclusion

It is demonstrated that the practices of Tomás Taveira and Alessandro Mendini, although developed in distinct cultural contexts, converge in their questioning of the disciplinary autonomy between architecture and design, revealing an articulation between scales and languages within the framework of European postmodernism. Through a comparative analysis supported by the interview with Tomás Taveira, bibliography, and the relationships between recognized works, it was observed that both authors operate a blurring of the boundaries between the design object and the architectural building, promoting formal solutions that challenge the distinction between them in everyday life.

24 Tomás Taveira, *Tomás Taveira: Architectural Works and Design* (London: Academy Editions, 1990).

25 Volker Fisher, "Post-Modernism and Consumer Design," in *The Post-Modern Object*, ed. Andreas Papadakis (London: Academy Editions, 1987), 67–72.

Fig. 8

Miguel Baptista-Bastos,
Collage of the Complexo das
Amoreiras Transfigured, 2025.

It was identified that strategies are based on the contamination between architectural space, interior design, and the everyday objects used, with a prime example being the way each author explores scale as a primary operative variable in their works. The cases of buildings, as well as examples of furniture, reveal the deliberate intention to question modern paradigms of functionality, neutrality, and formal uniformity, in favor of a value system that integrates memory, fiction, and typological reinterpretation.

More than spontaneously adhering to a postmodern aesthetic, Taveira and Mendini construct a critical thought, where they incorporate both the avant-garde and the past as operative material, deconstructing the history of the arts. Their contribution lies in the formulation of a practice that makes architecture visible as an expanded field, where the building, the object, and the discourse intersect in a territory of plural meaning, configuring new modes of production and reception in the built space. "From an artistic point of view, I have always maintained a close connection with Mendini, frequently exchanging drawings and information. In the absence of the internet, the correspondence was made through letters and faxes, through which I created collages and reconfigurations"²⁶.

This integration of scales and different levels of design is reflected in an architecture that transcends mere functionality and explicitly seeks to question the relationship between form and function, the perception of space, and the organization of its architectural elements, as they come together in a multiplicity of cultural, historical, and social influences. The aesthetic variety and flexibility of the elements present in their works convey an extension between innovation and tradition, the local and the global, as fundamental aspects of our postmodern condition, whose relevance is undeniable in contemporary architecture.

Acknowledgements

This work is financed by national funds through FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., under the Strategic Project with the references UIDB/04008/2020 and UIDP/04008/2020.

²⁶ Miguel Baptista-Bastos, recorded interview with Tomás Taveira, Lisbon, February 2025, unpublished interview.

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Along the Railway. Italian Industrial Design in Portugal

Railways, Design, Fast trains, FIAT, "Foguete"

/Abstract

On the margins and, therefore, little known, is the relationship between Italy and the most performant trains on the Portuguese railway network. One of the most important cases was the advent of Lisbon-Porto-Lisbon line of Fiat Ferroviaria's self-propelled diesel-hydraulics trains, named in Portugal, "Foguete", known internally as "CP class 0500". The travel time between the two cities was 4.30 hours, only surpassed since 1993, - and with the protagonism of another product designed by Fiat Ferroviaria (today Alstom-Italia).

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It is not about architecture, perhaps more about design and, specifically, industrial design.

But it is still worthy of note as a relationship, at the very least curious, or even more than that: important! – between Portugal and Italy. It could be said to be a case of trust and mutual satisfaction that is easily verifiable, even on the margins. And for what matters, I believe this a little known relationship. In fact, the Fiat brand is famous and has a multitude of customers all over the world. We know very well that it was the automobile industry that would make it a reference in modern industry. The Fiat Balila (associated, it is true, with Italian fascism) and, very especially, the first series of the famous Fiat 500 remain in our memory for their sales success.

Fiat, becoming a powerhouse in the motorization and driving machinery sector, manufactured tanks, transport aircraft, fighter aircraft, fighter bombers before and during World War II, and supplied internal combustion engines to other manufacturers as well as jet engines in the post-war period, even producing a well-known light fighter-bomber used officially by several NATO countries and not only in the post-war period (in fact, the most conspicuous jet fighter-bomber of the Portuguese Air Force in the 70s and 80s, the agile and efficient single-engine Fiat G 91, was also manufactured by FIAT).

However, I am not going to talk about cars, tanks or planes, but rather about a sector that almost only specialists know about and that played an interesting role in the history of Portugal (and Spain, too). In fact, the railway sector was and still is, albeit with a different corporate name, one of the departments that has seen the greatest development by Fiat since the end of the 19th century. It was founded under the name Società Nazionale Officine di Savigliano (SNOS) in 1880. Initially dedicated to the maintenance and manufacture of railway equipment including carriages, wagons and various components, it later merged with another company, Società Anonima Italiana Ausiliare (1889), expanding its industrial reach with the manufacture of industrial machinery and heavy metal-working, including bridges, but participating in the war efforts, in the Great War (1914-1918), in the interwar period and, later, in World War II. This period saw the production of various types of armored vehicles, as well as commercial and military aviation, which were widely used by the belligerents of the Axis powers and, of course, in particular, by Italy.

The company's shareholder was Fiat, and this company assumed full control of railway production in 1970, and has since been known as Fiat Ferrotranviaria. After World War II, Fiat began producing components from various players in the sector, in the production of diesel locomotives and electric locomotives widely used on the Italian railway network of FS (Ferrovie dello Stato). Fiat machines established new standards in the railway sector, despite the competition that was emerging in Italy itself, but always managed to play a predominant role. The official catalogue of Fiat Ferrotranviaria¹ lists the various products, includ-

1 FIAT, *Materiale ferrotranviario* (Turin: Fiat Ferroviaria, 1970).

ing passenger carriages, freight wagons, auxiliary wagons, engines, bogies, mechanical and hydraulic transmission systems, diesel railcars (DMUs), electric railcars (EMUs) / diesel-hydraulic locomotives, diesel-electric locomotives and three-phase electric locomotives with various voltages of direct current (DC) and alternating current (AC), among which the powerful and monstrous (in the literal and figurative sense) E.626, as well as one of the first high-speed powerful traction locomotives, the famous E444, alongside (and in competition with) the other brands of two nations involved in the manufacture of cutting-edge railway equipment: France and Germany. Since the 1980s, it will have participation from General Electric, Ercole Marelli (Marelli) and Ansaldo. Today, trains are the result of several mergers of colleges of diverse origins, from the USA and the rest of Europe, of companies specialized in railway systems (brakes, on-board electronics, preventive signaling, safety systems, interior design, etc.). Italy, on the other hand, had and still has one of the densest and most efficient railway networks in Europe and even in the world. [Figg.1a-1b]

Portugal would have a considerably dense network on the mainland, which had grown since its first installation in 1856, until the connection to Spain in 1863, in an incredibly fast process driven by the then Minister of Public Works, Eng^o Fontes Pereira de Melo (1819-1887) ², through large international bank loans and with the help of a Spanish capitalist, José de Salamanca y Mayol, founder of Companhia Real de Caminhos de Ferro. This peculiar connection with Spain explains why Portugal would adopt the same gauge as the Spanish line, 1668 mm. In 1920, the network already had an extension of more than 2,803.755 km of broad track with a gauge of 1.668 mm and 758.075 km of narrow track with a gauge of 1.00 mm, in addition to the Cascais Line, which was 25.451 km long at the time.

Since then, and from 1930 onwards, several attempts at modernization were made, with steam traction predominating. The first signs were given with the adoption of fast trains, some very early, such as those pulled by locomotives of the 401-406 class (Krauss-Maffei) with aerodynamic lower fairing, in service since 1904. The main offer would be the Lisbon-Porto line, connecting the main cities of the country, many times with trains pulled by locomotives of the Pacific type of the 500 series. In 1940, the most serious progress, but with continuity compromised in effectiveness with the advent of the Second World War, was the adoption of stainless steel carriages of the North American patent Budd, manufactured in Portugal in the workshops of the company SOREFAME under license, even presenting an aerodynamic locomotive of the 500 class (locomotive 503) with aerodynamic fairing that followed the trends of the time, designed by Eng. Manuel Bruschy and exhibited at the Portuguese World Exhibition of 1940, in what would constitute the more prestigious national train, the "Flecha de Prata" (Silver Arrow). [Figg. 2-3]

² On Fontes Pereira de Melo see Maria Filomena Mónica, *Fontes Pereira de Melo: uma biografia* (Lisbon: Alétheia, 2009).

It should be noted that the railway relationship between Portugal and Italy began in 1931 when CN, Companhia do Norte, acquired 17 freight carriages and 3 vans for traffic on its narrow gauge (metric) track, from OFM - Officine Ferroviarie Meridionali, S.A., based in Naples, and they were successively reconditioned until their withdrawal in 1995! They became known as “Neapolitanas” and were well-loved by users. Some of them were recently (2020/21) recovered and returned to circulation on tourist trains, but occasionally ensuring current use. [Fig.4]



4

One sector that received greater attention in the context of the Portuguese railway in the 1940s was the architecture of stations, support equipment and housing for employees and technicians. The work of architects Cotinelli Telmo and Luis da Cunha was remarkable during this period, which began in the 1920s and progressed towards more cosmopolitan solutions in the following decades, after the nationalization and unification of the various Portuguese railway lines under the same company – CP. In particular, Continelli Telmo (1897-1948), who would become one of the pioneers of modernist architecture in Portugal, authored several projects that transformed the image of railway architecture with projects that were openly avant-garde for the time, despite a career that was prematurely interrupted but still filled with large-scale works that would be tedious to list here³. Let us focus on railway architecture, through the studies of João Paulo Martins⁴, since Telmo’s decisive contribution in this field is now known with a set of works that are mostly still in existence. The first projects from the end of the 1920s were still guided by classicist historicism and eclecticism, and this impulse, even due to the regime’s taste determinants, would continue until the end of the 1930s.

Still following eclectic standards, he, in collaboration with Luis da Cunha, designed the remodelling projects for the initial project for Coimbra “A” station (1923-1931), Tomar railway station (1928-1929), Azambuja station (1934), which was more restrained but had classicist references, and the Camões

3 Among his most notable works is the remarkable plan and general coordination of the Portuguese World Exhibition (1939–1940) with authorship of the Praça do Império, World Exhibition, Pavilion of the Portuguese in the World, and the Padrão dos Descobrimentos, in Belém; the plan and construction of the University City of Coimbra with the Monumental Staircase (1943–1950) according to a language derived from the “modernist neo-classicism” of Germanic origin, and the Standard Elétrica Installations on Avenida da Índia in Lisbon (1945–1948).

4 João Paulo Martins, “Cotinelli Telmo, arquitecto,” in *O caminho de ferro revisitado: o caminho de ferro em Portugal de 1856 a 1996*, edited by João Paulo Martins (Lisbon: Caminhos de Ferro Portugueses, 1996), 126–34.

Fig. 4

Vouga Valley metric gauge touristic train consist with three “Napolitanas” passenger cars, lead by a Henschel & Sohn Mallet compound steam engine CP E 200 class (photo by Pedro Mêda)

neighbourhood for the large railway centre of Entroncamento, intended for housing and daily life according to the garden city model and with a traditionalist character for the company's workers, with its respective school, Escola Camões (1923-1928). The shift towards a contemporary language is evident in the emblematic and recently restored work of the Estação de Sul e Sueste (1928-1932), on the banks of the Tagus, and in the alignment of one of the wings of the the 18th-century Pombaline monumental Praça do Comércio, with which it establishes a marked contrast, even against the will of the promoters at the time, in a frank adherence to innovative principles of Art-Deco tone, but already marked by international modernism. [Figg. 5-6]

The façade offered itself to the city with robustness, signaling the play of clear volumes and flat roof of the station block. João Paulo Martins says:

Fig. 5

Sul e Sueste station, Lisbon, (archive photograph, circa 1950; Wikipedia Commons)

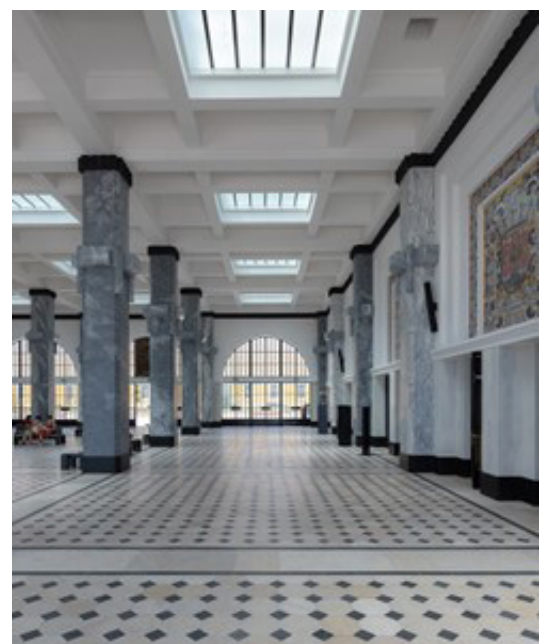
Fig. 6

Sul e Sueste station, Lisbon (Wikipedia Commons)



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On the two main elevations the portico with three circular arches revisited a theme dear to railway buildings around the world, ensuring immediate identification of its function. On the other hand, in the scenographic monumentality of the scale of these elements, the building acquired an undeniable urban character, of a public facility. And even if this image established an epidermal compromise, even if it did not do full justice to the more innovative statement of the interior space, it also revealed its modernity in the generous glazing of metal frames intercepted by the concrete roofs that projected in a cantilever.⁵



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5 Martins, "Cotinelli Telmo, arquitecto," 130.

The interior, in turn, gained, in the boarding room for the river crossing that led to the Barreiro train station on the south bank of the river, a transparency that revealed an innovative spatial reading, enriched by the materials of the marble cladding columns and modern design. [Figg. 7a-7b-7c] It will continue with a new aesthetic attitude in several support buildings and equipment less restricted to railway activity at the service of CP, but its most conspicuous contribution would be the series of automatic control posts that corresponded to the modernization of the network's switch system. The installations of the towers of Pinhal Novo (1935-1937), Ermesinde (1937; demolished), Rossio (1939) and Campolide (1940)⁶ are notable for their elegance, functionality and almost experimental plastic value in their modern vigor. In a way, it was a harbinger of changes in the railway network, of which the case reported here is yet another episode (after the inclement vortex of the outbreak of war in 1939-45) and an updating process began, which, even so, remained incomplete.

It was only in 1948 that the railway would be modernised, first with dieselisation due to the already high price of coal, but alongside the maintenance of steam traction, which declined until around 1974. Electric traction would be adopted from 1956 onwards, with the use of French technology from the "50 Hz Group", as it was known, and the country came to generalise power supply by catenary on the Porto-Lisbon line (and later, the others) with a voltage of 25,000 V alternating current at 50 Hz, single-phase (with the exception of the Cascais Line, of DC 1500 V). But diesel traction proved effective, and the date 1953 marks significant progress in the service of the backbone of the network.

In fact, one of the most important cases was the advent of Lisbon-Porto-Lisbon line of Fiat Ferroviaria's self-propelled diesel-hydraulics trains, named in Portugal, "Foguete" (Rocket), known internally as "CP class 0500". The travel time between the two cities was 4.30 hours, only surpassed in 1998, - and with the protagonism of another product designed by Fiat Ferroviaria (today Alstom-Italia). [Fig.8]

Three triple train units - with two motor carriages and one intermediate carriage each -, they arrived in Portugal between 1953 and 1954, coming from Savignano (Turin), similar to the TAF trains of the 595 class - formerly 9500 - from RENFE. They were immediately used on the "Linha do Norte" (Northern Line) in regular 1st class trains, with great acceptance from passengers and users. From a design point of view, it focused on clear lines with an aerodynamic contribution, which provided stable top speeds in a straight line on a horizontal platform at around 120 km/h. They were powered by two twelve-cylinder engines, one for each motorized carriage, delivering 505 hp each, 1010 hp in total ⁷.

The average operating speed was high, measuring around 100 km/h. The 174-seat coaches were equipped with comfortable, high-quality seats, with padding, fabric and cooked felt, and had a small bar-cafeteria service and, a



7a



7b



7c

6 Martins, "Cotinelli Telmo, arquiteto," 132.

7 FIAT, *Materiale ferroviario*, file 083/087.

curious refinement for the time, meals served on board in the passenger seat by stewardesses. It was, therefore, a diesel-electric railcar or “idromeccanica” as referred to in the Fiat Ferrotranviaria catalogue, number 083/087. It resulted from the development of lighter railcar variants that Fiat manufactured for FS, including the one catalogued under number 073⁸.

The first class of railcars that corresponded to what would become the Foguete acquired and operated by CP were used by Renfe, from 1952, and numbered according to the class 9501 to 9510 (Fiat catalogue, 080), silver in colour, but without air conditioning equipment. A year later, a new order would include the supply of air-conditioned railcars, identical to those of CP. The characteristic hump on the vehicles was intended to receive the “conditioning” equipment and it was in this form (Fiat 086/087 catalogue) that they entered service in Spain (RENFE) and Portugal, here also initially in silver with a red stripe and dynamic lettering with the name “Foguete” on the front. [Fig. 9] The “Foguete’s” compositions were organized, according to railway slang, in the manner explained in the table comprised in the Fiat catalogue [Fig.10]

This means that it was made up of two passenger vehicles with a traction motor at the ends, with an intermediate carriage, i.e. M+Rp+M, where M=motorized. The drive was provided by horizontally arranged engines, gaining ample cabin space throughout the entire composition, with traction being transmitted by means of a cardan shaft to one of the motor bogies located at the end of the vehicle. The twin-cylinder engines, as mentioned, had 505 hp, which together provided correct operating stability and high speed, making it possible to still progress with the train if one of the motor units broke down, albeit at controlled speed⁹. [Figg. 11a-11b, 12]

The transmission system was complex, with a mechanical gearbox and not a hydraulic one - with five positions or as they say, with “five gears”. Although common in other engines, this type of “gearbox” (as they say in slang) could be a reliability problem, as happened with other Fiat models. However, given that these compositions were intended for journeys with few stops, which means few starts, the driving met the delicacy required in manipulating the gears in this type of transmission, since it would be necessary to guarantee the synchronization of the engines in terms of rotations and effort. [Figg.13a-13b] The design, although it followed on from other more modest and less powerful units, was very elegant and compared positively with French railcars – largely, in fact – and with high-quality, exclusive 1st class diesel railcars, produced four years later (entering service in 1957) such as the VT 11.5 of the Deutsche Bundesbahn (DB) and the RAM / DE4 of the SBB¹⁰ and NS¹¹, of the SBB and NS (Swiss and Dutch) (all from the notable TEE network). [Fig.14]

8 FIAT, *Materiale ferrotranviario*, file 083/087.

9 FIAT, *Materiale ferrotranviario*, file 083/087.

10 SBB/CFE/FFS (Schweizerische Bundesbahnen/Chemins de fer fédéraux suisses/Ferrovie federali svizzere).

11 Nederlandse Spoorwegmaatschappij.

Figg. 7a-7b-7c

Towers of Pinhal Novo (1935-1937), Campolide (1940) and Ermesinde (1937; demolished), <https://imovel.patrimoniocultural.gov.pt/detalhes.php?code=4980645>, Accessed March 2026



8



9

087

CP
PORTUGAL

autotreno diesel idromeccanico condizionato (M + Rp + M)
tren automotor diesel hidromecánico acondicionado (M + Rp + M)
 air conditioned triple-car diesel hydromechanical set (R + dT + R)
rame autorail diesel hydromécanique climatisé (M + Rp + M)

potenza *potencia* power output *puissance* 2 x 505 CV
 tara *tara* weight *tare* 54,4 + 43,8 + 54,4 t

velocità massima *velocidad máx.* max. speed *vitesse max.* 120 km/h

rodiggio *disposición de los ejes* wheel arrangement *disposition des essieux* 2 — B ≡ 2 — 2 ≡ B — 2

posti seduti *asientos* seats *places assises* 64 + 46 + 64 = 174

bar e cucina *bar y cocina* kitchen and bar *bar et cuisine*

scartamento *ancho de vía* gauge *écartement* 1.668 mm

comando multiplo *mando en múltiple* multiple control *commande multiple*

10

The front of the trains was rounded, equipped with one large headlight and double upper signaling lights at the top ends, and two main headlights at the bottom, according to the Iberian standards in force at the time. The driving screen was divided into six, four across the face, two on each side for side vision. The inclination and curvature of the structure was effectively aerodynamic and a special touch was provided by the shock plates that are integrated into a rounded rectangular box. Side skirts covered the wheels of the three vehicles, also as an aerodynamic solution. The silver-colored composition would be, later on, painted dark blue with red stripes, while maintaining its elegance and even renewing its image, following the color range in effect at CP during the 60s and 70s. [Fig.15]

Fig. 8

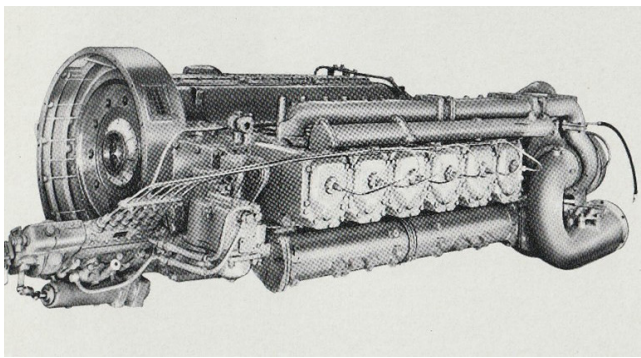
O Foguete. CP class 0500 (FIAT, Materiale Ferrotranviario), silver with red lining

Fig. 9

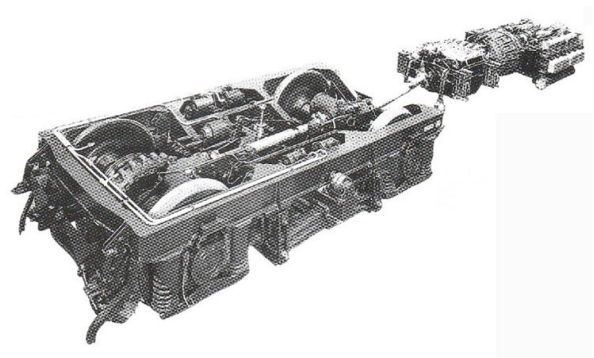
O Foguete. CP class 0500's logo

Fig. 10

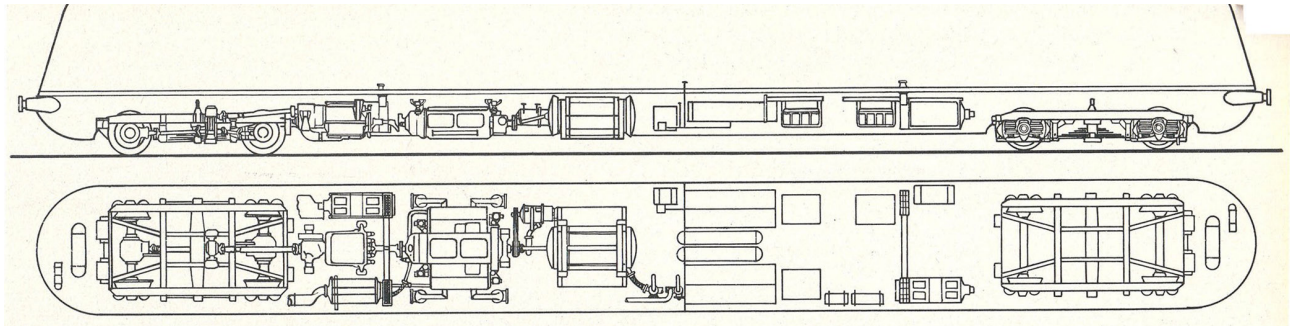
O Foguete. CP class 0500, technical description, (file 087, in FIAT, Materiale Ferrotranviario, catalogue)



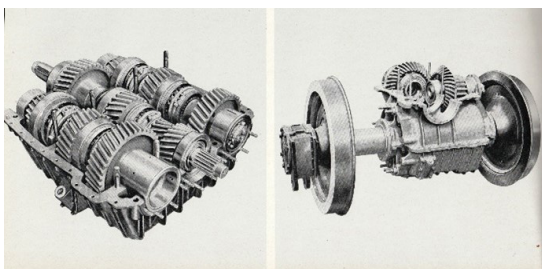
11a



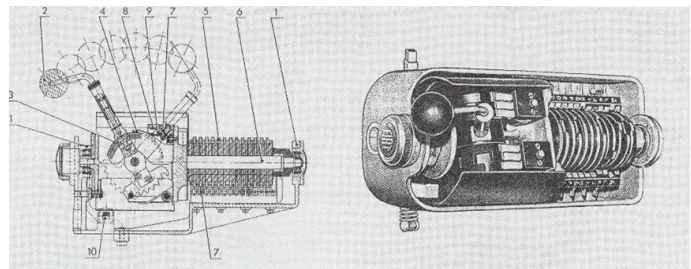
11b



12



13a



13b

The service, in the main axis of the country, lasted until 1966, with the trains later being transferred to services in the South of the country, initially (1973) with exclusive 1st class and then, from the 80s onwards with 2nd class. [Fig.16] It would soon begin to serve only the Algarve axis, connecting Lisbon from Barreiro (after a river crossing) to Vila Real de Santo António. For this line, the combi would gain its third paint version, more flashy and substantially less elegant, but quite striking: white, with a red base and red stripes. The fronts received red signal bars, with the lettering “Sotavento” on the flanks. [Fig.17]

It is abandoned (still!) at Barreiro station, and is in the care of the National Railway Museum while it awaits funding from the European Union and crowd-funding for its necessary and, I would say, very urgent restoration, costing more than 1.5 million euros. Miniature models of this composition are scarce. But the Ibertren factory produced a CP version in silver in the H0 scale (1:87), and two others in RENFE colors (silver and blue). Versions of CP models in blue and in the Sotavento version are even rarer and are the result of artisanal transformations, which are now considerably expensive if they appear at model

Fig. 11a-11b

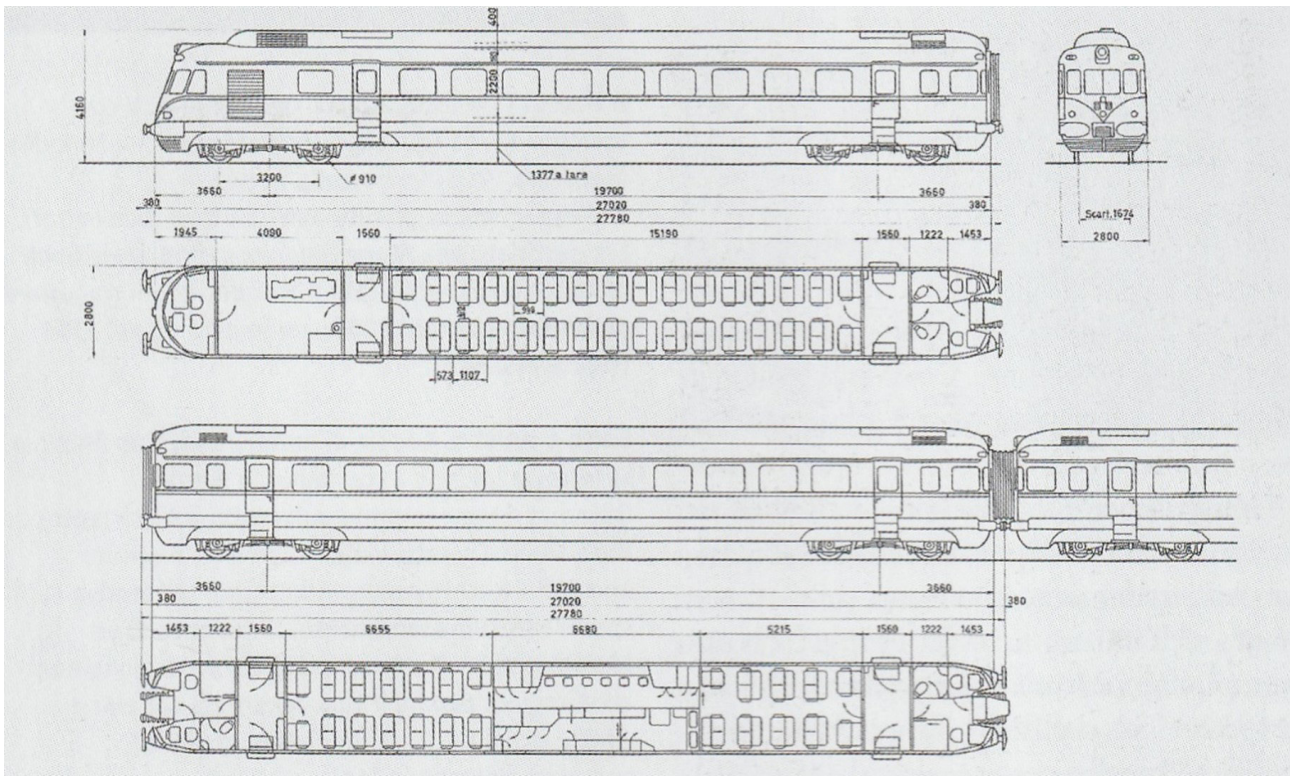
Twin-cylinder engines, 505 h in FIAT, Materiale ferroviario, file 083/087. Detail

Fig. 12

Motor unite profile and plan, Cardan shaft: motor bogie in FIAT, Materiale ferroviario, file 083/087. Detail

Fig.13a-13b

Transission gears in FIAT, Materiale ferroviario, file 083/087. Detail



14



15

Fig. 14

CP class 0500 / RENFE class 9501, overall profiles (FIAT, Materiale Ferrotranviario, catalogue)

Fig. 15

CP class 0500 / RENFE class 9501 (photo CP archives)

railway conventions. The adoption of Fiat railcars – or better yet, the “Foguete” – was a huge success, and although it only offered first-class seats, it was frequently used on Lisbon-Porto journeys, replacing steam locomotives, with a significant advantage, as the large Pacific steam engines could only reach Gaia, as their weight prevented them from crossing the D. Maria I Bridge with re-entry trains, which was not the case with diesel trains. **[Fig.18a-18b]** A notable political moment occurred in 1958 involving the Rocket. This is the apotheotic arrival of Gen. Humberto Delgado, an opponent of Salazar’s dictatorial regime, and a candidate in the presidential elections of that year, which were thought to be, for the first time, “free”, which did not happen...



16

The candidate’s acclaim in Porto, and then on his return to Lisbon, was a sign of the regime’s deterioration, even before the start of the so-called War in Africa. And the fact put the regime’s police on high alert. Now the journey between the two cities was made in the “Foguete”, which was in itself a symbol of the regime, and the fact was recorded in the media at the time, and in a recent and excellent documentary about, precisely, the Foguete train, by SIC television channel¹².

Humberto Delgado would be murdered in 1965 by the PIDE/DGS regime political police in a desert in Los Almerines near Olivença. The Humberto Delgado Foundation, in fact, organised a special train on the 40th anniversary of the event, on the 3d. of October 1998, connecting the S. Bento station in Porto to the Santa Apolónia station in Lisbon, to commemorate the event, for which CP provided a 5600 electric locomotive¹³ and eight Corail type carriages with dedicated liveries. **[Fig.19a-19b]**

This was not the only contribution of Fiat production to the national railway network. In fact, known as TER trains (Tren Español Rapido), (previously called TAR – Tren Automotor Rápido), from the company in neighboring Spain, the incumbent operator RENFE (class 597, former class 9000), circulated from 1967 until around 1989, connecting Madrid to Lisbon and back, with equal excellence of performance. It was a two-element composition, with a motor vehicle and a trailer, and could be used in a double composition of four vehicles with multiple control. **[Fig.20]** There were many differences between this design, which dates back to 1962 when RENFE first ordered it, and the previous TAF or CP’s “Foguete”. Lighter, with a horizontal engine under the floor, they nevertheless had a single traction bogie, in this case located at the rear of the motor vehicle, next to the trailer¹⁴. **[Fig.21]**

12 “História do foguete Portugal abandonado,” produced by Isabel Mendonça, directed by Pedro Mourinho, SIC, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7lXxTTlpuw>, Accessed March 2026.

13 Siemens Eurosprinter, first generation.

14 FIAT, *Materiale ferroviario*, file 155.

Fig. 16

CP 0500 “Sotavento” (archive photograph), final livery



17



18a



18b

Leaving from Santa Apolónia or from one of the main stations in Madrid (Atocha, Chamartin or Delicias), it travelled along the Cáceres branch line, entering the Alentejo border and passing through Abrantes towards Santa Apolónia. Flashy, relatively quiet for diesel machines, they delivered 800 hp and reached a speed of 120 km on the flat. The 1st class vehicle offered 56 seats and the 2nd class vehicle 72, with bar and restaurant service. The service, nor any other that replaced it and that took the place of the also extinct Lusitania Expresso, exists today. It should be noted that, surprisingly, Lisbon and Madrid are two of the only European capitals in the EU without any direct rail connection at the moment.

Once again, Fiat technology was chosen for these trains and, in Spain, its life was long and eventful and, although demoted to current regional services, it covered the entire Spanish network with dozens of units¹⁵. It should also be noted that many of these vehicles have been remodeled and modernized by RENFE, with the introduction of driver's cabins that comply with the recent safety

¹⁵ Orestes Santanera, *I treni Fiat: ottant'anni di contributo Fiat alla tecnica ferroviaria* (Cremona: Automobilia, 1997), 75–76.

Fig. 17

CP 0500 "Sotavento" in Barreiro (Wikipedia Commons, 2020)

Fig. 18a-18b

Gen. Humberto Delgado arriving in Porto, 1956; and returning to Lisbon (Wikipedia Commons)



19a



19b

standards imposed in the EU¹⁶. It is no coincidence that currently, the most modern element of CP's high-speed trains consists of the locally called Alfa Pendular, class 4000 (Portuguese version of the Fiat Pendolino ETR 460 with an upgrade from the 480 class), also manufactured by FIAT and a regular presence in "Linha do Norte" and today reaching Braga, to the North, and Faro to the South. Design pieces, some fifty years apart, but in both cases referencing the modernization of railways and long-distance passenger transport.

The development of tilting train technology had been tested since the 1930s, but it would only be enjoyed with some consistency during the 1970s, with several manufacturers looking for the best solutions for a tilting system. In fact, tilting offered the possibility of increasing operating speed without requiring expenditure on profiling and geometry of road layouts with sharper curves, being able to behave comfortably and better overcoming curves with a smaller radius, such as those that existed in Spain or Italy, for example.

It is no coincidence that these two countries were the ones to propose and market tilting train solutions. The TALGO patents with a natural tilt, i.e., with gravitational tilt of the boxes, while FIAT, in Italy, would develop what is called active or controlled tilt, in fact so that it could be used in electric traction trains depending on the pantograph-catenary binomial, with bogies registered and patented in 1967, however improved and largely perfected with on-board electronics and optical monitoring of the wheelset/box/track ratio, under the direction of Eng. Paolino Camposano. In reality, the process results from an hydraulic process included in each bogie, and from a weight distribution in which the center of gravity, in compliance with a gyroscope setting, is maintained for vertical alignment of the pantograph axis.

The intermediate research periods led to the first Italian pendulum trains from Fiat Ferroviaria, which soon attracted the interest of European operators (and those in North America and North Africa). A series of designs, almost always signed by the factory, initially gave rise to great classics that allowed to ensure, through experimentation, the reliability of the Italian pendulum system, with the famous ETR 401 (ETR = Elettro Treno Rapido) standing out, notably due to its unusual appearance. Adopted by the Italian FS and explored there, it would later be tested in other countries. [Figg. 22a-22b] But the next step would consecrate

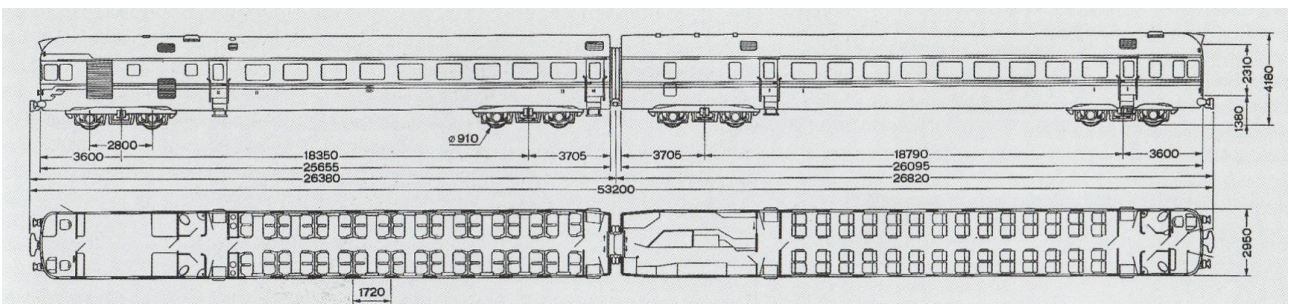
Figg. 19a-19b

"Comboio da Liberdade", special train by CP, 1998 (photos by Jaime Amaro)

16 Santanera, *I treni Fiat: ottant'anni di contributo Fiat alla tecnica ferroviaria*, 75–76..



20



21

the system with the presentation of the ETR 450, which constituted the first pendulum train for current operation definitively adopted by the FS with great success. A railcar, of course, with electric drive and the same aggressive aerodynamic lines. With the ETR 450, the use of the pendulum system in Italy became a sensation, and the increased speed even provided an alternative to the high-speed category, when competition from the very fast TGV of French origin began. Fiat developed the pendulum train, and its name would come to explain its fundamental characteristic: "Pendolino"¹⁷.

The versions that follow correspond to a simple restyling, based on Giugiaro's initial design and offer an elegance that blends with lightness and speed. The same can be said of the first interior arrangements and respective design, with an approach to commercial aviation logistics in the organization of spaces and seats but with greater spaciousness and comfort. The standard will henceforth be the ETR 460¹⁸, known in Italy as "Freccia Bianca".

17 Santanera, *I treni Fiat: ottant'anni di contributo Fiat alla tecnica ferroviaria*, 187–219.

18 From ETR 460, derived the ETR 470 and the ETR 480. They are distinguished by detailed aspects related to the requirements of each operator, but it is in the core of the engine and the energy captured that the differences lead to these different classifications. Thus, while the ETR 460 is defined by the capture of 3 kV in DC (direct current), the 470 model is bi-current and can capture 3 kV DC or 15 kV in alternating current. The 480 version can operate at 3 kV DC or 25 kV AC. The British 390 class, the Slovenian 310 class, the Finnish Sm3 and the Spanish Alaris class are derived from the ETR 460 version. The Swiss version TABDe 500 is more advanced, with design by Pininfarina and was manufactured by a consortium of Adtranz, Schindler Waggon and Fiat-SIG. A new Pendolino 1000 is currently explored as lightweight fast train passenger service in Italy, known as Frecciarossa.

Fig. 20

RENFE class 597 (FIAT, Materiale Ferrotranviario, catalogue)

Fig. 21

RENFE class 597 (FIAT, Materiale Ferrotranviario, catalogue)



22a



22b

This platform will give rise to the Alfa Pendular, technically known as the CP 4000 class, with the number designating the power of the composition (4000 hp), provided by 12 asynchronous motors, with onboard components from ADTranz and Siemens. [Fig.23] CP's Alfa, is objectively, it is a version of the ETR 460, for 25 kV at 15 Hz, consisting of six vehicles, all with traction bogies with integrated motor and two pantographs on the end carriages, in perfect symmetry from a structural point of view. It has two classes, Tourist and Comfort, having been manufactured under license by the -unfortunately- extinct SOREFAME. [Figg.24-25]

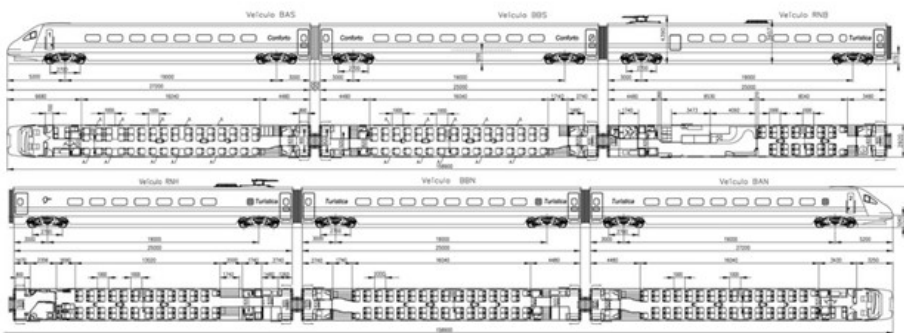
The first examples entered service in 1999 featuring white, red and blue chromatism, horizontal fins and a red front. In their second phase of use, in the so-called mid-life review, they were completely revised and reformulated, with new interiors and a more sober presentation color – metallic gray with numbering on each car. It has a maximum speed of 220 km, only reached on properly prepared stretches, but offering an average of 3h 27m on the Lisbon-Porto route. As you can see, it was only in the late 1990's that the record of the first FIAT portuguese train – the "Foguete" - was broken by a train by FIAT.

Figg. 22a-22b

FIAT, Laboratory train, type 7199 experimental highspeed and variable axis; ETRs 450 from FS (Santanera, 1997)



23



24



25

Fig. 23

Alfa Pendular, 1st livery (photo CP archives)

Fig. 24

CP class 4000 (CP archives, technical layout)

Fig. 25

Alfa Pendular, "second life" new livery (2012) New livery

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From Brera to Lisbon: Skyscapes, Astronomical Observatories and Meridians

Architecture, Astronomy, Observatories, Heritage, Lisbon

/Abstract

It may seem like a pretext – and it is a pretext! – but the existence of the Brera Astronomical Observatory (1764) raises several questions of Italian-Portuguese scope: (1). the presence in Portugal of astronomers and mathematicians from the Society of Jesus, professors at one of the most qualified schools of European cosmography from the 17th-18th century – the *Aula da Esfera*, in Lisbon; (2). the leading role of Italian astronomers in the “golden” years of the reign of D. João V, in Portugal and in overseas territories, in the development of observation of the stars, in topography, terrestrial and cosmic geography and in the measurement of Time, be it, or not updated by the Copernican proposals; (3). and the memory of the oldest observatories in the kingdom of Portugal, contemporary with the notable Milanese scientific structure. The scope of marginalized architecture also arises here, serving as a reminder of multiple scientific achievements with repercussions on eighteenth-century architecture. Our aim is to reactivate these “places of memory”, some of them humble testimonies (the “meridian” of the Mafra Convent), others just narrated memories (the observatories of the Colégio de Santo Antão – today Hospital de S. José – or the observatory of the Paço da Ribeira, the *Arsenal Cosmochronometro*), others still brought to us with rigorous documentary vigor, although demolished or never built and giving rise to a work of crypto-history of architecture (as with the project of the large observatory of the University of Coimbra; then the small observatory that was “de facto” built and later demolished in the middle of the 20th century), others that still exist (such as the Tower-Observatory of Paço da Bemposta; the site of the Escola Politécnica Observatory; and Tapada da Ajuda Observatory) as a fleeting but real presence of those past times that our century must preserve and revive. A heritage challenge for our time.

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Astronomical Knowledge between Italy and Portugal

The existence of the Brera Astronomical Observatory (1764)¹ raises several questions of Italian-Portuguese scope. One fact that puts us on the track of Portuguese-Italian relations is the contemporaneity of many of the advances in astronomical science, mathematics and natural physics – what we would today call astrophysics – on Italian soil, and the similar process, although not as full-bodied, carried out in Portugal during the 17th century and especially during the reign of D. João V or even later, throughout the 18th century until the end of the 19th century. In short, a moment of transition to modernity.

It is no coincidence that one of these protagonists, Giuseppe Ruggiero Boscovitch², the Italianized name of this Croatian (or Serbo-Italian) born in Dubrovnik (then Ragusa), joined the Society of Jesus, already in Milan, assuming a prominent role. The Society of Jesus would also be, in the kingdom of Portugal, the model institution for astronomical studies³. On the other hand, in terms of current affairs, that is, for our 21st century, an aspect that has interested us greatly stands out: the existence of an architectural astronomical heritage materialized in achievements of evident impact and monumentality and that urgently needs to be known, studied and preserved. The astronomical heritage is defined as “the material evidence relating to astronomy and to social uses and representations of astronomy”; and this heritage can assume various natures such as:

- (1) tangible objects, monuments, places and landscapes connected to celestial bodies;
- (2) movable objects, such as instruments and archives;
- (3) intangible knowledge, such as primitive knowledge related to astronomy;
- (4) natural environments that foster human interest in the celestial vault⁴.

1 For the Brera Observatory, see Pasquale Tucci, ed., *Da Brera a Marte: storia dell'Osservatorio astronomico di Milano* (Novara: De Agostini, 1983); Mario Carpino, “Breve storia dell'Osservatorio astronomico di Brera attraverso i suoi strumenti,” *INAF – Osservatorio astronomico di Brera*, <http://www.brera.inaf.it/utenti/carpino/didattica/> Accessed July 2015; Giuseppe Schio, “Brera,” in *Enciclopedia Italiana* (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1930); Wayback Machine, Internet Archive, <http://www.merate.mi.astro.it>, Accessed 2024, <https://web.archive.org/web/19971017000149/http://www.merate.mi.astro.it:8>; Graziela Buccellati, Pasquale Tucci, and Arturo Balboni, *I cieli di Brera: astronomia da Tolomeo a Balla* (Milan: Università degli studi di Milano, 2000). See also the website of the Museo Astronomico di Brera, <http://www.brera.unimi.it> Accessed March 2026.

2 For Ruggiero Giuseppe Boscovich, see Ruggiero Giuseppe Boscovich, *De centro gravitatis* (1751); and *Philosophiae naturalis theoria redacta ad unam legem virium in natura existentium* (1758). See also “Boscovich,” *La storia dell'Osservatorio astronomico di Brera attraverso i suoi strumenti*, MUsAb – Museo Astronomico di Brera, <http://museoastronomico.brera.inaf.it/>, Accessed 2024; and Jonathan Wright, *Ruggiero Boscovich (1711–1787): Jesuit Science in an Enlightenment Context* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014).

3 For recent studies on the subject or related matters, see especially Henrique Leitão, *Sphaera Mundi: a ciência na Aula da Esfera; manuscritos científicos do Colégio de Santo Antão nas coleções da BNP* (Lisbon: Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, 2008); Henrique Leitão, *Os descobrimentos portugueses e a ciência europeia* (Lisbon: Alétheia and Fundação Champalimaud, 2009); and Henrique Leitão, Cândido Marciano da Silva, and Luís Tirapicos, eds., *Estrelas de papel: livros de astronomia dos séculos XIV a XVIII* (Lisbon: BNP, 2009). See also Rómulo de Carvalho, *A astronomia em Portugal no século XVIII* (Lisbon: ICLP, 1985); Angela Delaforce, *Art and Patronage in Eighteenth-Century Portugal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Carlos Fiolhais and José Eduardo Franco, *Jesuítas: construtores da globalização* (Lisbon: CTT, 2016); Manuel J. Gandra, *A astrologia em Portugal: dicionário histórico-filosófico* (Lisbon: Arcano Zero, 2010); and Miguel Soromenho, “Astronomia-Astrologia,” in *A ciência do desenho: a ilustração na coleção de códices da Biblioteca Nacional*, ed. Joaquim Caetano and Miguel Soromenho (Lisbon: BNP, 2011).

4 Michel Cotte and Clive Ruggles, “Introduction,” in *Heritage Sites of Astronomy and Archaeoastronomy in the Context of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention: A Thematic Study* (Paris: ICOMOS/IAU, 2010).

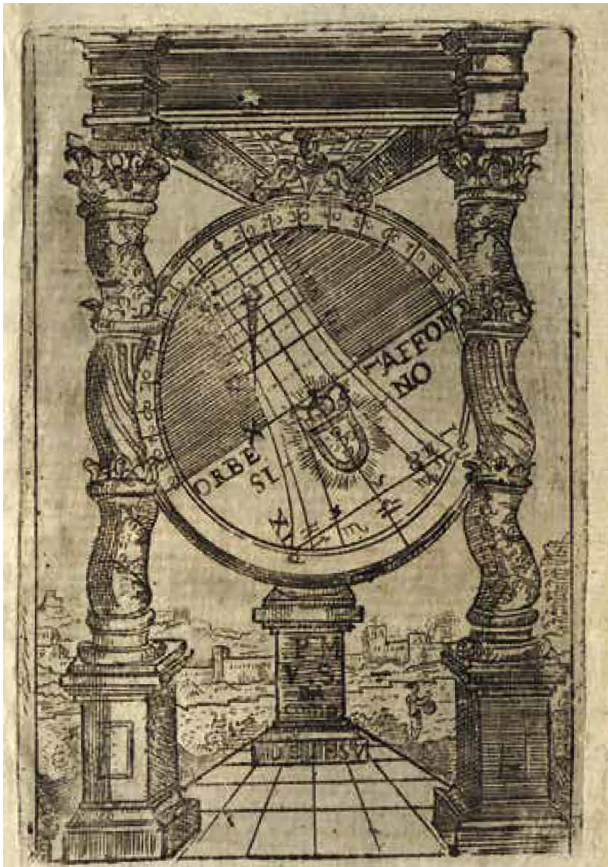
In Portugal we must highlight the pioneering role played by the *Aula da Esfera*, the classes held in the Jesuit College of Santo Antão⁵. Benefiting from the international – we would even say internationalist and proselytizing – character of the Company and the systematization of a universal – or unique, for the Company’s schools – teaching, the famous Ratio Studiorum, numerous high-status teachers from Spain, France, Italy, Holland, Germany and Great Britain flocked to Lisbon, Coimbra and Évora. The circulation of knowledge and the experience of teachers thus came closer to true science, although it was still a teaching process that admitted acquired truths and promoted a bookish teaching style, guaranteed, however, by highly qualified teachers, of which we highlight Valentim Estancel for his proposal with architectural, albeit “mobile” consequences. Estancel’s procedures were also dedicated to nautical science and problem-solving, which he intended to resolve by proposing new instruments, as can be seen in several of his works, starting with *Orbe Afonsino* (1658)⁶ and the treatise *Typhis Lusitano* (1663)⁷. The *Typhis* would be an instrument that combined a compass and a concave sundial, along with instrumental inventions such as the “magnetic bosseta”, illustrated with drawings. The most interesting of all is a page dedicated to the “monumentalization”, if you can call it that, of the *Typhis*. It is presented to us framed by a triangular canopy, supported by three Solomonic columns – a noteworthy solution with no typological precedents. This new device is inserted there on a large scale, with the most distant pedestal bearing the initials F. V. S. as the inventor’s signature. [Fig.1]

Among the Italians of this first phase, the famous Father Lembo (or Giovanni Paolo Lembo) (1570–1618) stands out. Lembo accepted the observations of Galileo and Tycho Brahe, proposing a mixed system, which he developed, everything leads us to believe, during his stay in Portugal, in Santo Antão, between 1615 and 1617. According to his cosmological model, Venus and Mercury gravitated around the Sun, but the Sun gravitated around the Earth. And the fascination of these times of great discoveries is not far removed from the present day, in which the most radical theses are tested and sometimes even adapted in the face of a consecrated teaching body, which is difficult to remove – and less due to reactionary resistance (which there was also, obviously) but rather due to explanatory difficulties – these two manuscripts kept in the Torre do Tombo, in

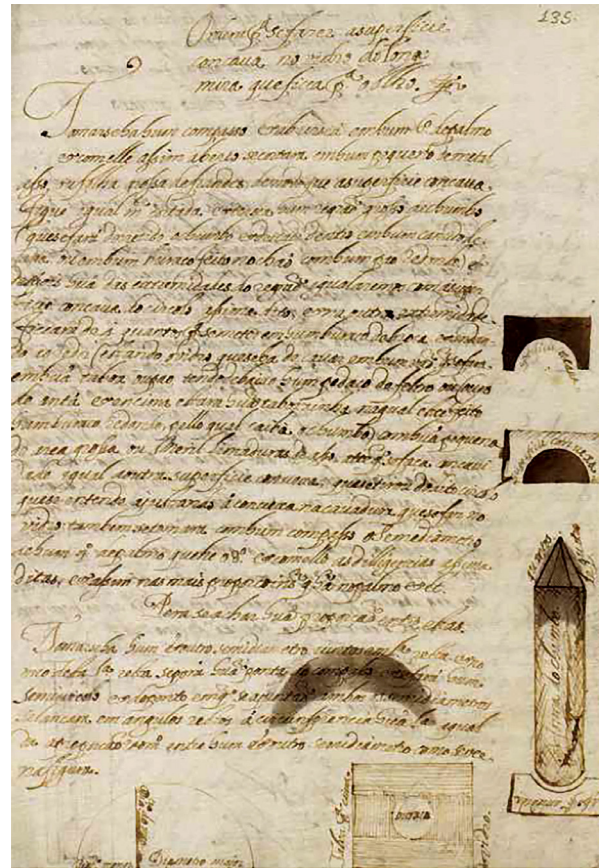
5 The College of Santo Antão was to be a major undertaking. The church, now demolished, followed the model of the Gesù in Rome and even had a dome over the transept. Today, all that remains of this complex is the immense sacristy, luxurious in materials and a good indicator of the richness of the building, in an architecture from a period of transition between plain architecture and the first baroque, before its radical transformation to house what is now the Hospital de São José. The complex maintains, in addition to the old sacristy, a cloistered court, the Porta do Carro and the old gatehouse, all internally decorated with historic tile panels from the mid-18th century. The original design was by Baltasar Álvares (1579–1613), with later interventions by Diogo Marques Lucas (1614) and João Antunes (1689–1702), to whom we certainly owe the large and primitive sacristy. In this context of Portuguese architectural production, which encompasses the Philippine cycle, as mentioned above, but also post-Restoration architectural achievements (post-1640). Today it is an immense mass that dominates the Sant’Ana hill, imposing its massive silhouette on the city, synonymous with the importance it held as a central teaching institution for the Jesuits and home to the famous Aula da Esfera.

6 Valentim Estancel, *Orbe Afonsino ou horoscopia universal* (Évora: Impressão da Universidade, 1658), Lisbon, BNP, BPNM I 2-40-1-91; and the Latin manuscript *Orbis Alfonsinus sive Horoscopium sciothericum universale* (1658), Lisbon, BNP, Cod. 21361.

7 Valentim Estancel, *Typhis Lusitano ou regimento navtico, novo o qual ensina tomar as alturas, descobrir os meridianos, demarcar as variaçoens da agulha a qualquer hora do dia e noite, com hum discvrso practico sobre a navegação de leste a oeste*, after 1661, Lisbon, BNP, Cod. 22641.



1



2

Lisbon, although very simply illustrated⁸, are the only ones of his authorship that have been preserved, attesting to their importance for the history of science⁹. In them, remember, he explains, nothing less, how to build. [Fig.2]

Another prominent Italian active here was Cristóforo Borri (1583-1632), known to be a practitioner of telescopic observation, which he applied during his stay in Portugal, in Coimbra, around 1627, moving on to Lisbon, where he mainly dealt with nautical science, which implied a refined astronomical knowledge¹⁰. Among several works – most of them handwritten, according to copies by students¹¹ – his *Collecta astronomica*¹² published in Lisbon stands out, featuring an illustrative set of engravings by an unknown author but certainly prepared by Bruno (another first name by which Borri is known in Portugal), in what is one of the treatises most richly provided with scientific iconography among those printed in Portugal, this one in the workshop of Matias Rodrigues. [Fig.3]

8 Giovanni Paolo Lembo, “[Matérias de matemática],” 1615–1617, Manuscritos da Livraria, ms. 1770, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisbon.

9 Leitão, *Sphaera Mundi*, 121–24.

10 Leitão, *Sphaera Mundi*, 131.

11 For Cristoforo Borri, see *Tratado da arte de navegar pello Reverendo P. Christophão Brono da Companhia de Jesus*, 1628, Évora, Biblioteca Pública de Évora (BPE), Cod. CXXVI; *Compendium problematum, meteororum, et parvorum naturalium, copied by Ignatius Nunes*, 1627–28, Lisbon, BNP, Cod. 2378; *Arte de navegar*, 1628, Coimbra, Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra (BGUC), Ms. 44; and *Regimento que o P. Christopham Bruno da Companhia de Jesus, por ordem de S. M., da aos pilotos das naos da India para fazerem as experiências sobre a arte de navegar de leste a oeste*, 1628, Rio de Janeiro, Fundação Biblioteca Nacional (FBN), Ms. 1-12.

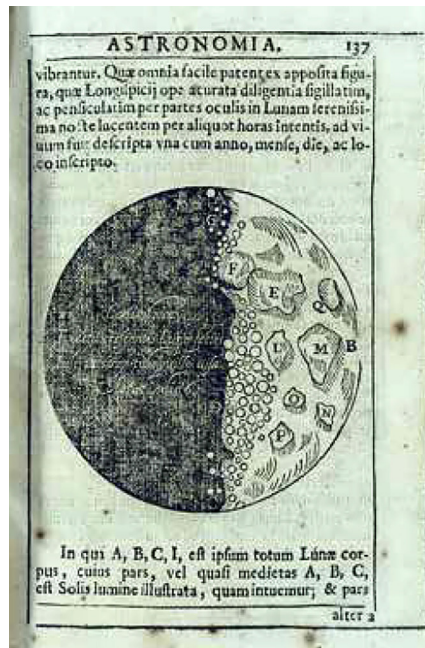
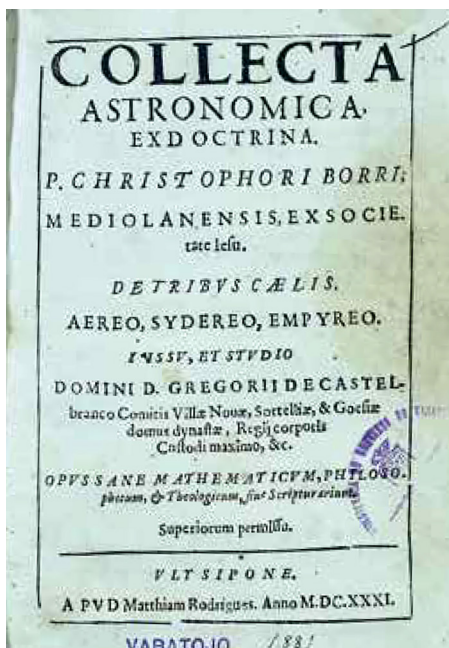
12 Cristóforo Borri, *Collecta astronomica, ex doctrina P. Christophori Borri, Mediolanensis, ex Societate Jesu: De tribus caelis, aereo, sydereo, empyreo [...] opus sane mathematicum, philosophicum, & theologicum* (Lisbon: Matias Rodrigues, 1629), Lisbon, BNP, Var. 1881.

Fig. 1

Typhis lusitano, in Orbe Afonsino ou Horoscopio Universal (Évora, 1658). Valentin Estancel. Biblioteca do Palácio Nacional de Mafra (I 2-40-1-91)

Fig. 2

“Ordem para se fazer a superfície concava no vidro de longa mira que fica para o olho”, de *Tratado da Esfera e Outros Tratados Matemáticos, de Giovanni Paolo Lembo* (1615-1617). Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo, Lisboa (Manuscritos da Livraria, n.º 1770, f. 135; PT/TT/MSLIV/1770)



3

Italian Influences in the Scientific Circles of the Reign of D. João V

During the time of D. João V, not only did the interest in astronomical and cartographic matters continue, but it is known that among the cultural matters that interested the monarch was the establishment of libraries equipped with the most recent (and also the most striking, although old) books, prints, letters and maps existing in Europe, to the point of organizing with his ministers and ambassadors systematic purchasing campaigns without (or with few) financial limits. In the field of astronomy, the reign of D. João V, in line with the rest of his achievements, went through one of its most fertile periods. It is known from documents that the royal family and the king himself delved into these matters, sometimes out of curiosity, other times out of sincere involvement, in response to the king's immense curiosity. Following the example of the Academies of the time, the monarch is present at conferences and discussions on scientific matters, among which those of a cosmographic nature stand out¹³, in one of which the highly erudite 4th Count of Ericeira, D. Francisco Xavier de Meneses, was involved:

The Count of Ericeira, wanting to make his universality communicable in all literature, and to direct hearts and discourses to moral virtues, and to science, removing useless speculation from them, instituted in his palace a congress of erudite people, with the title of Portuguese Academy, whose laws are comprised of twenty-two precepts. The assemblies will begin on May 26th, and will continue every Wednesday afternoon.¹⁴ The most illustrious and learned people of the Court¹⁵ were present.

13 On Carbone's observations and astronomical activity at the Johannine court, see the summary in Carvalho, *A astronomia em Portugal no século XVIII*, 41–44.

14 *Gazeta de Lisboa*, no. 23, June 10, 1717, cited in Carvalho, *A astronomia em Portugal no século XVIII*, 38.

15 Carvalho, *A astronomia em Portugal no século XVIII*, 38.

Fig. 3

The Moon as represented in *Collecta astronômica*, Cristóforo Borri (1631). Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Lisboa (Var. 1881, p. 137)

At this time, two astronomical observatories were also installed, one at the Colégio de Santo Antão, led by Giovanni Battista Carbone (1694–1750), a Jesuit based in Portugal, who would assume a prominent role as an advisor to the king in all matters, including the commissions for the Royal Building of Mafra, and obviously in what was his speciality, astronomy –, but also in the Royal Palace of Lisbon, or Paço da Ribeira. With Domenico Capassi and Francesco Mussara, who accompanied him on his arrival in Lisbon in 1722, the king's intention was to commission him to carry out astronomical observations in South America – certainly as a result of cosmological and astronomical agreements but also to resolve the already long-standing problem of correctly calculating longitudes for the purposes of improving maritime navigation, but Carbone would remain on the continent and would be invested with the status of “royal mathematician”. Correspondent of the Royal Society of London, where he published several observations in the famous *Philosophical Transactions*, it was also through him that Portugal became largely integrated into the European scientific circles of the time. The Paço da Ribeira observatory would have had two telescopes of reasonable range, around three meters long, in line with those used in other countries at the time, the result of very special orders placed in Italy and France¹⁶.

Angela Delaforce assures that

meanwhile, D. Luís da Cunha was tasked with ordering the plans for the Observatory of the Royal Academy of Sciences in Paris, as well as the designs for all the respective instruments. In 1725, the Portuguese court commissioned the works of Philippe de la Hire, astronomer to Louis XIV, for the new observatory, together with the French translation of the works of Isaac Newton.¹⁷

The Paço da Ribeira Library would become one of the most important (if not the most important) in Portugal, unfortunately lost in the 1755 earthquake with all its contents. It was designed, in fact, to contain scientific instruments, such as a large armillary sphere, manufactured precisely under the technical direction of Father Carbone. Further, Angela Delaforce writes:

The documents suggest that the library was organized so that scientific instruments could be used alongside consultation of the latest theoretical treatises, and, indeed, the ordering of instrumentation ran parallel to that of the relevant technical texts. A didactic initiative of this type was already evident in 1721, when a series of texts dedicated to science, mathematics and navigation were commissioned from Jean Mariette in Paris by D. Luís da Cunha. Around the same date, two pendulums designed for calculating longitudes were ordered from a certain Monsieur Sully, an



4

Fig. 4

D. João V as patron of the arts. Engraving by Gaspere Sennarij (c. 1740). Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Lisboa (E 42 V)

16 Delaforce, *Art and Patronage in Eighteenth-Century Portugal*.

17 Delaforce, *Art and Patronage in Eighteenth-Century Portugal*, 86.

instrument maker from Bordeaux who had workshops in Versailles. In The Hague, in April 1723, the Count of Tarouca purchased a pair of rare celestial and terrestrial globes made by the famous Venetian cosmographer Vincenzo Coronelli. They would have been five palms in diameter and must have been similar to those that Coronelli made for Louis XIV in 1683, remarkable for their dimensions. From 1725 onwards, and even later, after D. Luís left Paris, Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon (1697-1782), a young cartographer at the French court, was tasked with supervising orders for the royal library in Lisbon.¹⁸ [Fig.4]

All these facts end up coinciding with the publication of an influential treatise by the astronomer and mathematician Francesco Bianchini (1662-1729), an up-to-date man of science informed by Newton's discoveries, which contains observations of the planet Venus, entitled *Hesperii et Phosphori nova phaenomena*¹⁹, from 1728, naturally dedicated to his benefactor (and prestigious patron in Rome), D. João V, something that resulted from the scientific exchanges between Carbone and the illustrious Roman scientist, which is immediately acknowledged on the front cover, which features an engraving of the monarch's effigy held by the goddess Minerva, accompanied by Atlas holding the celestial globe with the constellations, the work of the artists Stephanus Pozzi and Rocchus Pozzi, the first as a draftsman, the second as an engraver²⁰. The astronomer will decide on the honorary names of some of the spots on Venus (*machie*) such as *Mare Regis Emmanuelis* (Emmanuel's Sea King) or those of Portuguese discoverers. It was also during the reign of the Magnanimous that the Oratorians began their teaching as innovators in the field of education. In the context of the so-called "Catholic Enlightenment" and following the proposals of Luís António Verney, a critic of Jesuit teaching, the support of D. João V and later of D. José to the priests of the Oratory would lead to a renewal in the field of pedagogy and, for what concerns us now, in the field of astronomy. Even so, within the Society of Jesus there was a desire to follow the progress of science and to welcome the proposals of the Copernican model and Kepler.

One of the most prominent renovators of compendial teachings of a cosmographic-astronomical nature would be Inácio Monteiro, who was a professor of Mathematics at the College of Arts, in Coimbra. Inácio Monteiro (1724-812) would write, without shame, that

Many applied themselves to observing, others to calculating and adjusting the system of the world with various and ingenious hypotheses. In one of these the earth was seen (to which almost everyone had granted complete rest until then) thrown by a German, the excellent Nicolaus Copernicus, from the center of the firmament to the Ecliptic, where he

18 *Art and Patronage in Eighteenth-Century Portugal*, 86.

19 Francesco Bianchini, *Hesperii et Phosphori nova phaenomena sive observationes circa planetam Veneris [...] nunc primum editae sub auspiciis Sacrae Regiae Majestatis Joannis V* (Rome: Giovanni Maria Salvioni, 1728), Lisbon, Biblioteca da Ajuda (BA), 35-XV-21.

20 Leitão, *A ciência na "Aula da Esfera"*, 182.

made it revolve around the Sun, from which he took away all movement and brought it to the center. Tycho Brahe, the famous Danish astronomer, wanted to return the land to its former possession for a second time. Astronomers have been divided between these two parties; but the majority declare themselves in favor of the first²¹,

thus opening the field to doctrines that until then were «heretical» in their *Compendium of Elements of Mathematics*, giving particular importance to the physical sciences in their exposition, as Rómulo de Carvalho points out. And the historian of sciences says more, giving an account of the frankness of this Jesuit priest:

It should be noted that it was only in 1758, after the publication of this *Compendium*, that Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* was ordered to be removed from the Index of forbidden books by Pope Benedict XIV, a date from which it became possible to speak of the heliocentric doctrine a little more freely.²²

The work came after all in the wake of a work by Noel Regnault, *Origem Antiga da Fysica Moderna*, which was translated into Portuguese by an unknown person, João Carlos da Silva (obviously, a possible pseudonym), published under the date of 1753, five years before the ban on Copernican ideals was lifted. With the congregation of St. Phillip of Nery Oratorians, an almost complete openness to the New Astronomy was finally achieved. Cherished by the king, he ordered the construction of the Royal Palace of Necessidades as a royal residence and religious college, reaching the end of the 18th century with a work in which the assumptions of old science were questioned and the new ones were irrefutably accepted, a task that was undertaken, in terms of dissemination, by the wise priest Teodoro de Almeida, with his monumental work *Recreação Filosófica* (1751-1800), in ten volumes, with an updated survey of all branches of knowledge of what would then be called natural philosophy.

From Italy to Portugal and the Memory of Astronomical Heritage.

It is now up to us to remember the achievements that some have perished, but others have persisted in memory, in writings and plans of great value. Interestingly, some of them along with the long and fascinating life and constant updating of one of the central European observatories – and of the Italian Peninsula, if not of Central Europe. Observatories, major pieces of architectural astronomical heritage. This is where the magnificent Milanese observatory of Brera, born from Boscovicci's initiative, takes on special importance. However,

21 Inácio Monteiro, *Compêndio dos elementos de matemática*, 2 vols. (Coimbra, 1754–56), cited in Carvalho, *A astronomia em Portugal no século XVIII*, 25.

22 Carvalho, *A astronomia em Portugal no século XVIII*, 25.

the Observatory's built history would be long and rich²³. The Observatory would undergo numerous changes in response to various scientific directions and the political context that conditioned and determined such changes, with the increase in the observatory's various functionalities, to the point that in the mid-19th century the structure was (as it still is today) completely modified. Boscovitch's founding observatory has been assimilated and absorbed by the various changes and additions, in such a way that it is difficult to recognize the original building. This is the one that interests us here, created within the framework of the first Milanese Enlightenment. The oldest engravings show its positioning as an addition to one of the corners of the Palace, inspired by the Roman project by Martino Bassi of the Collegio Borromeo in Pavia from c. 1573 continued until 1590. The so-called "Palazzo" would therefore be built as a College of the Society of Jesus under Francesco Maria Richinni, with work beginning in 1615 and being completed by his son Gian Domenico Richinni in 1658. It has a Baroque containment in the Milanese tradition with additions in height and two observation towers. That was the possible limit. [Fig.5]

A precious model – or wood model – survives from its first iteration. Quoting from the Museum's file:

This is almost certainly the original wooden model built by Ruggero Giuseppe Boscovich (1711-1787) to illustrate his project for the Astronomical Observatory to the rector of the Jesuit College of Brera. The model reproduces the two floors of the Observatory with the terrace and the two towers. The long quadrant hall, which faced east, is incomplete: the outer walls and ceiling are missing, while the wall that separated it from the small entrance hall is present. Downstairs, there are four rooms. The two to the north have no floors. The floor of the two rooms facing south, however, can be raised and under one of them you can read the inscription "della Compagnia di Ges". The four rooms have one window each, so there are two windows facing south and two facing north. Inside you can see the column that supports the roof, as well as the balcony that gives access to the entrances of the two towers. To the north, the external walls follow the square plan of the lower floor, while inside the room has an octagonal plan created with internal walls. The large windows in the hall have wrought iron grilles. To the southeast and southwest the balconies are triangular. The two towers cross the roof and are closed by conical covers with longitudinal openings covered by a hatch. Some external stairs connect the various floors of the building. The joints between the various parts are made in such a way that you can easily disassemble the

23 Aldo Kranjc, Guido Tagliaferri, Pasquale Tucci, and Renato Valota, *Da Brera a Marte: storia dell'Osservatorio astronomico di Milano* (Milan: Nuovo Banco Ambrosiano, 1983); Mario Carpino, "Materiale didattico," *Osservatorio astronomico di Brera*, <http://www.brera.mi.astro.it/~mario.carpino/didattica/>, Accessed March 2026; Giovanni Virginio Schiaparelli, *Le opere di G. V. Schiaparelli*, vol. 2 (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1930); *Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnica Leonardo da Vinci: sezione di astronomia* (Milan: Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnica, 1956); Edoardo Miotto, Guido Tagliaferri, and Pasquale Tucci, *La strumentazione nella storia dell'Osservatorio astronomico di Brera* (Milan: Unicopli, 1989); Graziela Buccellati, Pasquale Tucci, and Arturo Balboni, *I cieli di Brera: astronomia da Tolomeo a Balla* (Milan: Università degli Studi di Milano, 2000); and "Polvere di Stelle: The Cultural Heritage of Italian Astronomy," INAF, <https://www.beniculturali.inaf.it/musei/milano/>, Accessed March 2026.

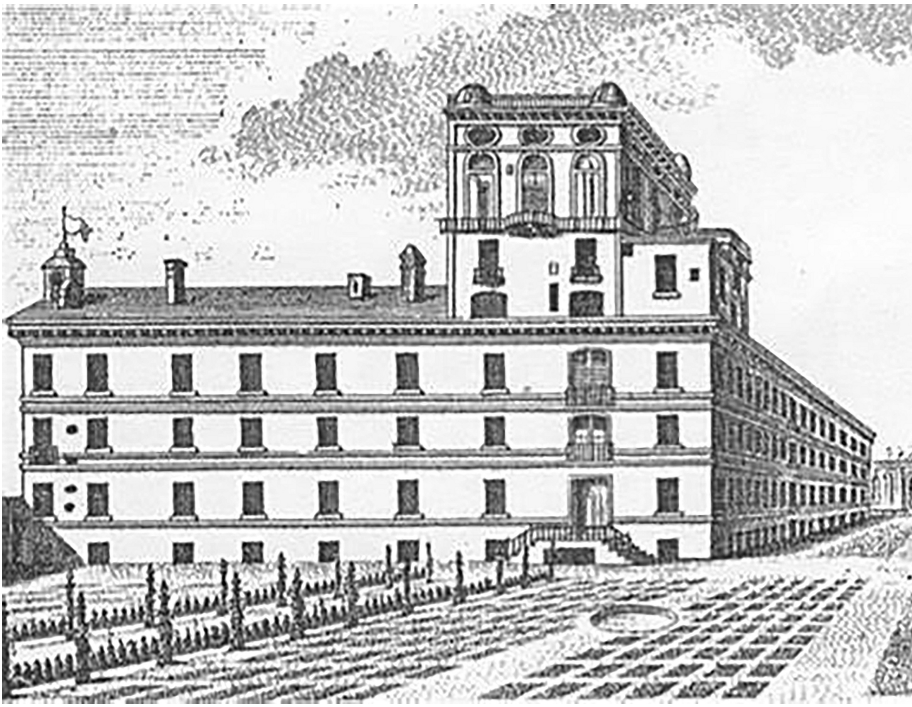


Fig. 5
South facade of Brera Palace (Collegio) with the new observatory. Engraving, 1778

5



6a



6b

model to observe its interior. Representation of the functional model of the first architectural project of the Brera Astronomical Observatory, in Milan.²⁴ [Figg. 6a-6b]

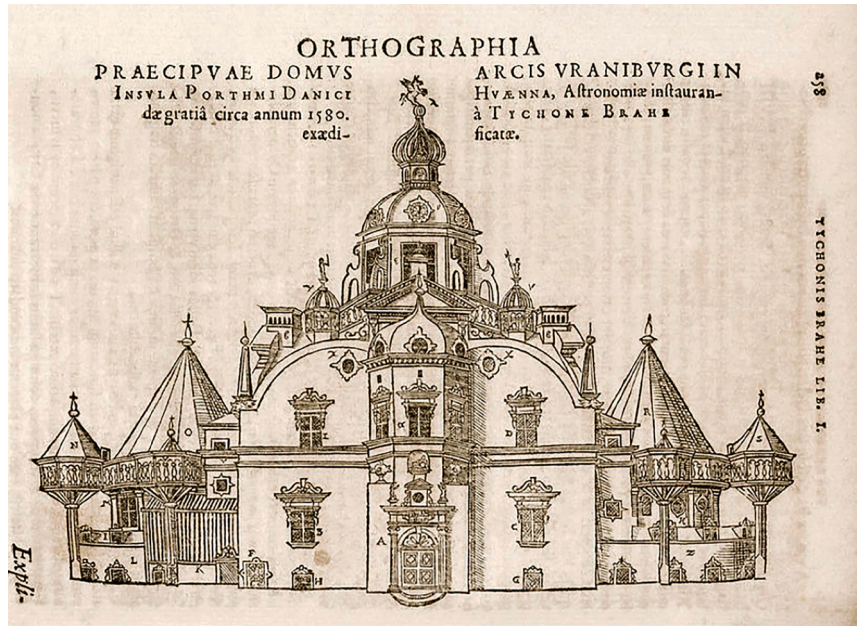
For a parallel, let us refer to the architectural fairytale of Uraniborg (1546-1601) invented by Tycho Brahe (to the point that it could be said to be an “utopia” from a Wes Anderson film), the most extraordinary structure ever built for astronomical observation, unfortunately lost but of which drawings, engravings and

Figg. 6a-6b
Model of the first architectural project of the Brera Astronomical Observatory, in Milan (Museo nazionale della scienza e della tecnologia Leonardo da Vinci, Milano (catalogue)

²⁴ Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnologia Leonardo da Vinci, <https://www.museoscienza.org/> Accessed March 2026



7a



7b

reconstructions resulting from it remain. It does not have the richness of the Danish structure, since it started from more advanced assumptions than those of Tycho, and with a substantial investment in the scientific component of the new times, the eighteenth century. [Figg.7a-7b, 8]

What survives today of the Brera Observatory after successive alterations makes it, however, one of the most surprising structures of its kind in the world. Boscovich was also responsible for supervising the establishment of the great meridian line in Milan Cathedral (Milan, coincidentally or not, was the Roman Mediolanum), installed by Giovanni Angelo Cesaris and Francesco Reggio. It



8

Fig. 7a-7b
 Left: Engraving of Uraniborg observatory in *Historia coelestis* (1666) by Albert Curtz [Lucius Barretus] (1600-1671) (old.maa.org/, Accessed March 2026); Right: Engraving of Uraniborg observatory in *Atlas maior, sive cosmographia blaviana* (c. 1662) (sciencephotogallery.com/, Accessed March 2026)

Fig. 8
 Brera Observatory. Milan, today (adapted from Google Earth)



10



9a



9b

was intended, like many others installed in churches, to calculate the Easter days and the precise time since the Austro-Hungarian Empire adopted, on the initiative of Count Di Wilczek, governor of Lombardy, the “transalpine central time”. [Figg.9a-9b]

This is another relevant example that should be noted, the “meridiana” (or the meridian line) in Milan Duomo – what we might call a “solar observatory”. At noon, the sun enters through a hole located 24m high in the south wall, illuminating the brass line that continues up the north wall of the Duomo. The moment was signaled to a tower of the Palazzo dei Giureconsulti and from there to the Sforzesco Castle: a cannon shot marked the time for the adjustment of the clocks in the city²⁵. Interestingly, in the gigantic Palace-Convent of Mafra, ordered to be built by D. João V (founded 1717-1744/1775), a meridian line also exists in the so-called Casa da Meridiana²⁶, embedded in the floor, and it is certain that in addition to this detail, other astronomical observation activities were carried out in the Royal Building (or “Real Edifício” as it was then named), during the 18th century. [Fig.10]

However, in Portugal, no such older observatories survives. We have seen that observatories existed, such as those of Aula da Esfera in the Jesuit Colégio de Santo Antão – today Hospital de S. José – or the observatory of the Paço da Ribeira. Others were also quite curious, if not mainly determined for astronomy

Figg. 9a-9b

The “meridiana” in Milan Duomo, 1786 (Photos by the authors)

Fig. 10

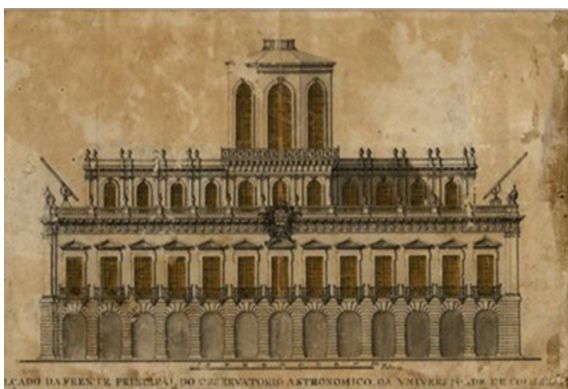
Mafra. “Real Edifício” Meridiana (photo by J. Marciano da Silva, in *SIS: Bulletin of the Scientific Instrument Society*, (2011): 110).

25 John L. Heilbron, *The Sun in the Church: Cathedrals as Solar Observatories* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 266–71.

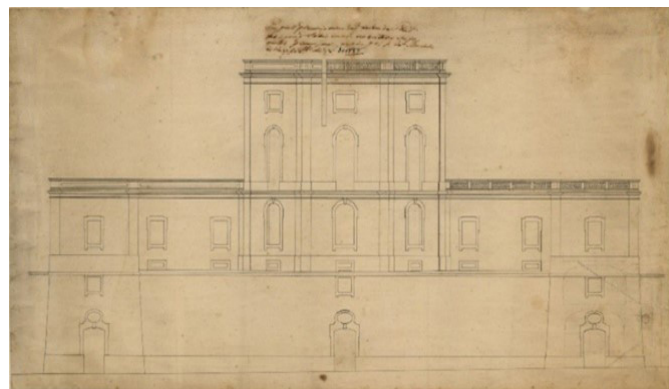
26 Cândido Marciano da Silva, “Note on the Mafra Meridian,” *Bulletin of the Scientific Instrument Society*, no. 110 (2011): 32–34.

but towards the intimately connected problem of the correction of Time/legal hour/chronometry in relation with longitude calculations – such as the Arsenal *Cosmochronometro* in Lisbon with his high balloon to determine the setting of the hours²⁷. From the time of the creation of Brera Observatory, there are others, still brought to us with rigorous documentary vigor, although demolished or never built and suggesting a work of crypto-history of architecture (as with the project of the large observatory of the University of Coimbra; then the small observatory that was “de facto” built and later demolished in the middle of the 20th century), others that still exist (such as the Tower-Observatory of Paço da Bemposta; the Escola Politécnica Observatory; and Tapada da Ajuda Observatory) as a fleeting but real presence of those past times that our century must preserve and revive.

The expulsion of the Society of Jesus from Portugal in 1758–1759²⁸, launched an identical movement in other European kingdoms, however, without Boscovitch having felt any immediate or even long-term consequences. Following the reforms of the General Studies – which also extinguished, in 1762, the teaching of the priests of the Oratory – and the publication of the new Statutes of the University of Coimbra, which extended over a long period, becoming effective in 1772, the Enlightenment rose as the dominant teaching, especially in the phys-



11a



11b

ical sciences and mathematics, with evident consequences regarding experimental science and the setting up of Laboratories, among which the Chemistry and Physics Laboratory and the Astronomical Observatory of the University of Coimbra. Both new buildings and the renovation of older ones date from that period, when neoclassicism was first introduced in Portugal under the direction of the British William Elsdén (act. 1756-1777)²⁹. One of the most conspicuous

27 António Estácio dos Reis, *O Observatório Real da Marinha* (Lisbon: CTT, 2009). See also Fernando Correia de Oliveira, Observatório (blog), <http://observatoriorelogioshistoricos.blogspot.com/>, Accessed March 2026.

28 See: Fiolhais and Franco, *Jesuítas*; see also Sheila J. Rabin, “Early Modern Jesuit Science: A Historiographical Essay,” *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1, no. 1 (2014): 88–104; Maria de Lurdes Craveiro, “A arquitectura da ciência,” in *Laboratório do mundo: ideias e saberes do século XVIII* (São Paulo: Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, 2004), 49–101; and Maria de Lurdes Craveiro, “A Companhia de Jesus entre Coimbra e Macau: espiritualidade e ciência,” in *O Colégio de Jesus entre Portugal e o mundo* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2020), 193–226.

29 Maria de Lurdes Craveiro, “Guilherme Elsdén e a introdução do neoclassicismo em Portugal,” in *Portugal e Espanha entre a Europa e além-mar* (Coimbra: Universidade de Coimbra, 1988).

Figgs. 11a-11b

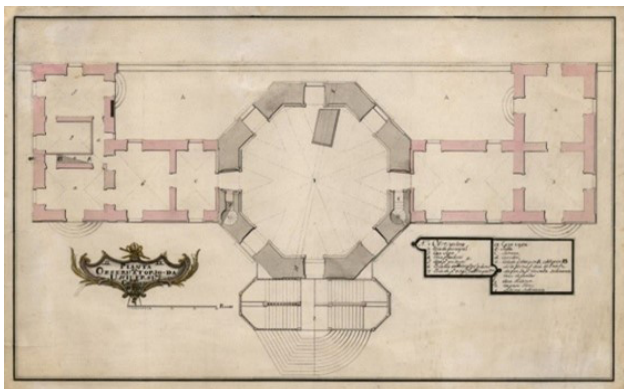
Astronomical Observatory of the University of Coimbra. First project by William Elsdén (1773). MNMC, Museu Nacional Machado de Castro, Coimbra; Inv. 2945/DA 23 (https://www.uc.pt/org/historia_ciencia_na_uc/Textos/observa/observa, Accessed March 2026)

projects was the new astronomical observatory. The plan was ambitious, and it is worth admitting that it was excessive, requiring large sums of money to be carried out. Elsdén's plans give us a good idea of the building dimensions integrating the features of a modern European observatory³⁰. [Figg.11a-11b, 12]

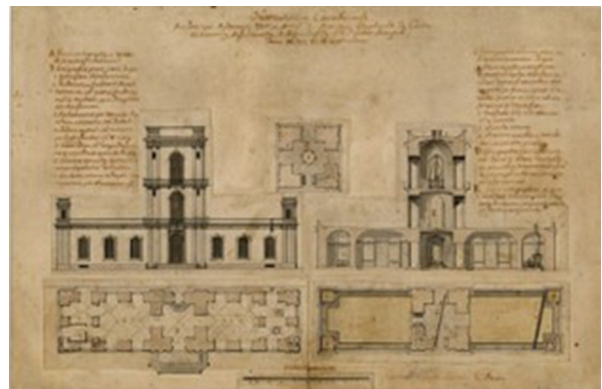
Maria de Lurdes Craveiro, who studied the process, tells us about the Provision of the Marquis of Pombal

given on [...] the 16th of October (1772), which incorporated the Castle of Coimbra into the perpetual Domain of the same University; His doors, and all the lands, which belong to him and them, for the establishment of the Astronomy Observatory; of the Teachers' Quarters, and their Assistants; and the Custody of Optical Instruments.

The project would not see fruition and would be replaced by another, substantially more restrained, but still authored by Elsdén. The building was already under construction in 1774 and reached the first floor in 1777, but the work was frozen and without continuity, as everything that had been built up to that point was demolished. Incomplete, a process of replacement with a substantially more modest observatory began, now designed by Manuel Alves de Macomboa³¹. [Fig.13]



12



13

In 1788, the work on the observatory designed by Manuel Alves de Macomboa was already progressing and would be installed in the southernmost part of the so-called Pátio das Escolas³², although its official inauguration only took place in 1799, certainly due to delays in the arrival and installation of the optical equipment. With its central tower, it stood out prominently in the skyline of the city of Coimbra; and despite being a relatively simple project with a very discreet neoclassical language, it is essentially functional without any major adjectives³³.

30 Maria de Lurdes Craveiro, "Reforma Pombalina da Universidade," in *Dicionário da arte barroca em Portugal* (Lisbon: Presença, 1989).

31 Maria de Lurdes Craveiro, *Manuel Alves Macomboa: arquitecto da Reforma Pombalina da Universidade de Coimbra* (Coimbra: Instituto de História da Arte da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra, 1990).

32 Craveiro, *Manuel Alves Macomboa*.

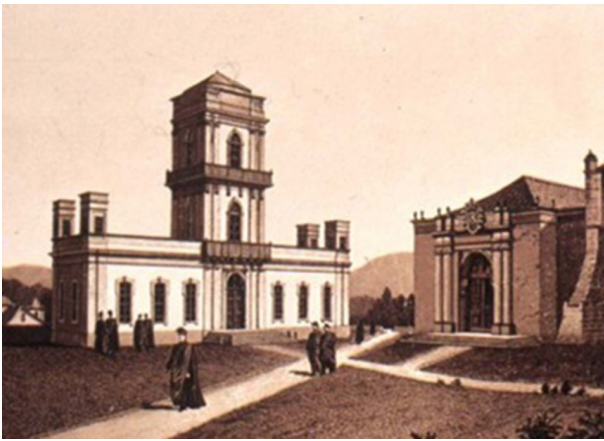
33 Craveiro, *Manuel Alves Macomboa*.

Fig. 12

William Elsdén, Second project of the Astronomical Observatory for the University of Coimbra 1774-1777 (unbuilt) https://www.uc.pt/org/historia_ciencia_na_uc/Textos/observa/observ, Accessed March 2026

Fig. 13

M. Alves Macomboa, Final project of the Astronomical Observatory for the University of Coimbra, 1788-1799 (Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra. BGUC Ms. 3377) https://www.uc.pt/org/historia_ciencia_na_uc/Textos/observa/observ, Accessed March 2026



14



15

This more modest observatory remained standing for almost two centuries, but would also disappear in the 20th century, due to the requalification works of Coimbra's University, and what remains of it is only the project and engravings (and photographs) that give us an accurate portrait of it. [Fig.14-15]

Advances in science and a controversy regarding a topic of celestial mapping (the position of the star Argelander) led to the construction of the most important observatory in history in Portugal in Lisbon: the Royal Observatory of Tapada da Ajuda. Its origin and construction have been studied in detail and is one of the best documented cases. It was born from the desire to provide the kingdom with a center for sidereal astronomy studies on par with the most modern ones, and for this reason, the Lisbon observatory constitutes a perfect copy – although with a different arrangement according to its orientation – of the Pulkovo Observatory, in turn derived from the more modest Dorpat Observatory in Tartu (Estonia). The local project was due to the French architect Jean Colson (whose biography is little known) and José da Costa Sequeira (1800-1872), under the scientific direction of Frederico Augusto Oom (1830-1890) and the supervision by correspondence of the astronomer director of Pulkova, the famous Otto Friedrich Wilhelm (Vassily Yakovlevich) Struve (1793-1864) (with whom Oom spent five years, precisely, in Pulkova), under the auspices of King D. Pedro V, its effective founder-patron (1857). [Fig.16]

We will not dwell on this "central" observatory as it has been extensively studied, highlighting the recent – and excellent – study dedicated to it from a historical, architectural and phenomenological point of view by Pedro Abreu³⁴ in a work he co-coordinated. It does not, in itself, constitute a heritage problem, being well preserved and integrated into the University of Lisbon and, as such, protected and still active, especially on determining the "legal hour". Replica of Pulkova, like the latter, it has a medium-sized body with a central plan where

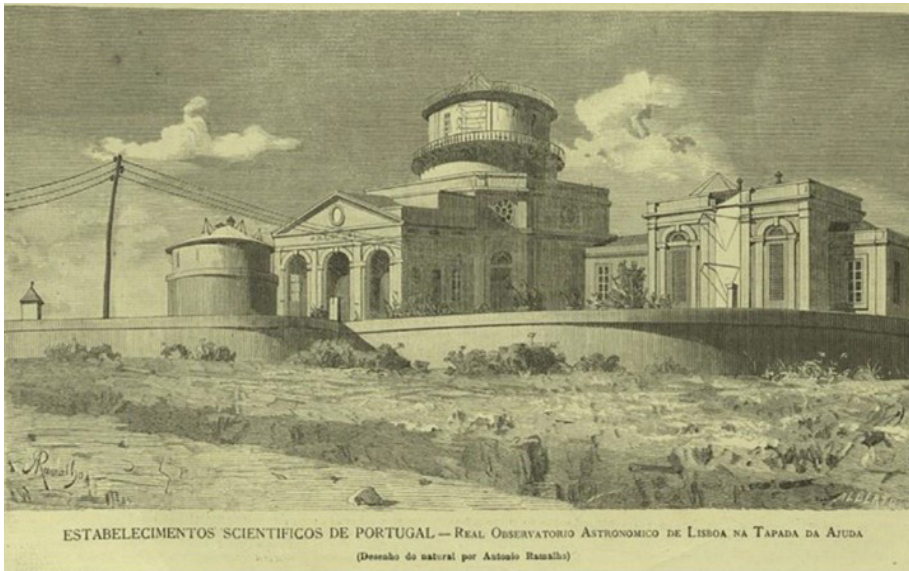
Fig. 14

M. Alves Macombo, Final project of the Astronomical Observatory for the University of Coimbra, 1788-1799. Engraving 19th century

Fig. 15

M. Alves Macombo, Final project of the Astronomical Observatory for the University of Coimbra, 1788-1799. Photograph (c. 1930)

34 For Pedro Abreu, see "The Lisbon Astronomic Observatory: Elements for the History of Its Architecture," in *Proceedings, XV National Meeting of Astronomy and Astrophysics*, Lisbon, 27–29 July 2005, ed. J. Afonso, N. Santos, A. Moutinho, R. Agostinho (Editora: Scientific World, Inc, 2006); "Um templo para a ciência: O Observatório Astronómico de Lisboa (arquitetura e história)," in *Revistas de Arquitetura: Arquivos(s) da Modernidade*, ed. Marieta Dá Mesquita (Lisboa: Caleidoscópio, 2011): 194-217; José Duarte Gorjão Jorge and Pedro Marques de Abreu, *O Observatório Astronómico de Lisboa: arquitetura da obra* (Lisbon: Caleidoscópio, 2019).



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the larger observation dome sits; two arms on each side, extend the internal dependencies according to the functional scheme of the Russian observatory and include at their ends two large observation rooms with an integral opening in their structure for the purposes of astronomical observation due to the instrumentation that was installed there³⁵. It is completed by two domed batteries facing each side of an observation terrace with outdoor work tables. It marks, on the Ajuda highs attached to the wooded Monsanto hill crest, the city's skyline to the west. [Fig.17]

Another piece of astronomical heritage that survives is still virtually unknown. This is the Bemposta Observatory Tower, in Lisbon. It is located in front of the Palácio da Bemposta, known as Paço da Rainha, as it was established by D. Catarina de Bragança, widow of Charles II of England after his return to Portugal, becoming her residence. The works date back to 1694, but it would be completely modified and largely rebuilt according to a project by Manuel Caetano de Sousa (1738-1802), in a construction campaign that lasted until 1791. The Tower, which was both a bell tower and a clock tower, was separate from the main body of the Palace. With successive destinations, it would finally be assigned (by Decree of December 9, 1850) to the Army School, founded in 1837



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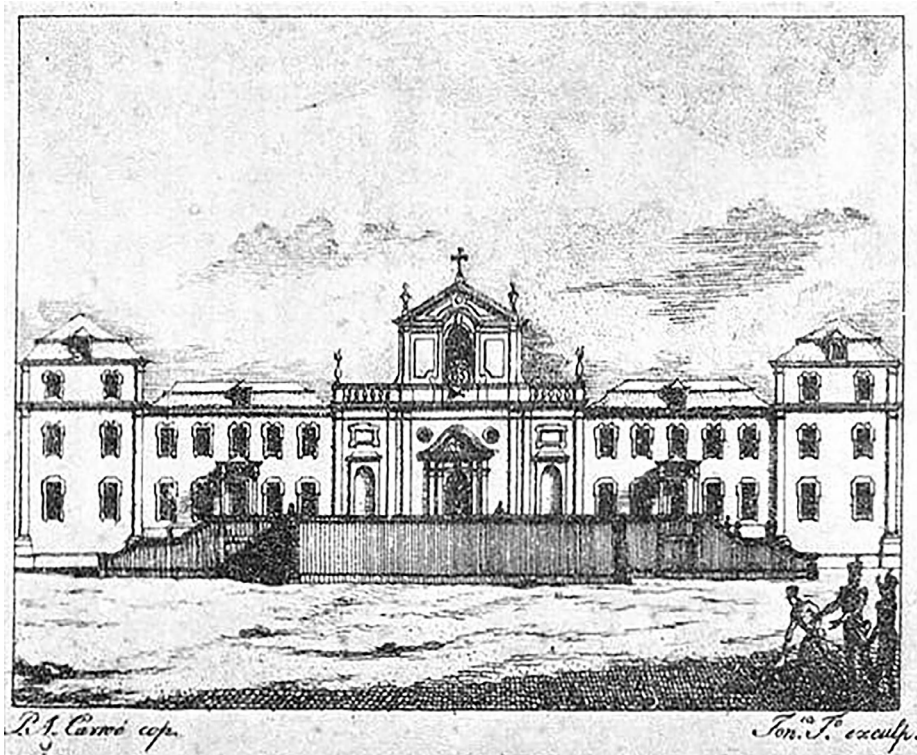
Fig. 16

Real Observatório da Tapada Ajuda, Engraving, magazine *O Occidente*, no. 96, dated August 1881, p.188

Fig. 17

Bemposta Observatory Tower, Lisbon. In front of Paço da Rainha or Paço da Bemposta

35 "The parallax measurements of the star Argelander (number 1830 in the Groombridge catalogue) obtained by Hervé Faye, director of the Paris Observatory, did not coincide with those obtained by Peters and Otto Struve, from the Russian Pulkova observatory. Faye met Wilhelm Struve, Pulkova's director, in Paris in 1847 and again in 1848, and they discussed their differences vividly. To resolve the controversy (which had meanwhile extended to the parallax of other stars) Faye proposed, at a meeting at the Paris Academy of Sciences on February 11, measurements at a latitude further south, where these stars pass in a position close to the zenith, using for this purpose a zenith telescope – recently improved by Faye and more precise for these operations. The choice fell on Lisbon" (Abreu, "Um templo para a ciência," 3).



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(current Military Academy), and although little is known about its origin, the beginnings of the Observatory must date back to 1849 and would be installed with its rotating cylinder situated at the top of the Clock Tower. Scientific activities were carried out during the 19th and 20th centuries, compatible with the training of officers in matters of practical astronomy.

Another observatory in Lisbon deserves mention, and this one has some similarities when fully active and before its dismantling, with the optical dome systems of the last phase of the Brera Observatory, although it does not have the same importance and prominence in national terms and, much less internationally, despite the valuable work carried out there. This is the Astronomical Observatory of the Polytechnic School, located in the heart of the Lisbon Botanical Garden, now an integral part of the National Museum of Natural History and Science (MUHNAC36). It is late, since it was only completed in 1898, and its activity will continue for almost the entire 20th century, and this is where much of its technological and architectural interest lies, as it was designed in an integrated way, that is, comprising several valences, support rooms and a residential area. Its history, however, is linked to a much older institution, and here, once driven and created by the Society of Jesus. Its construction was completed in 1619, designed by the architect Baltazar Álvares (1560-1630), and consisted of a façade with a church with a nave and side altars in the center and two blocks, one to the south and the other to the north of the temple in a symmetrical composition. In plan, the dependencies were developed around this main nucleus, following a rectangular plan, with a late Renaissance language. [Fig.18]

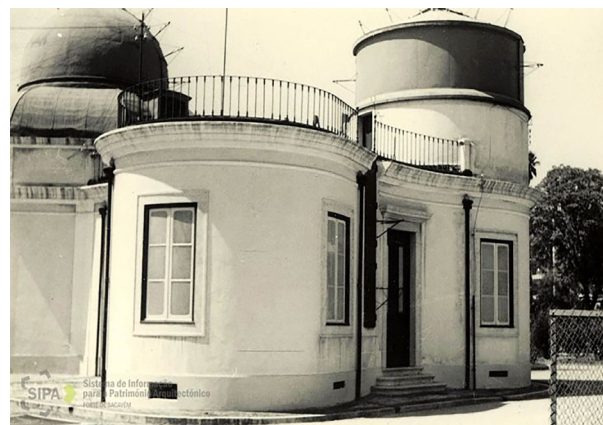
Fig. 18

The College of Cotovia main façade. Later "Colégios dos Nobres". Engraving. (as it was in the early 19th century)

36 Museu Nacional de História Natural e da Ciência, <https://www.museus.ulisboa.pt>, Accessed March 2026.



19a



19b

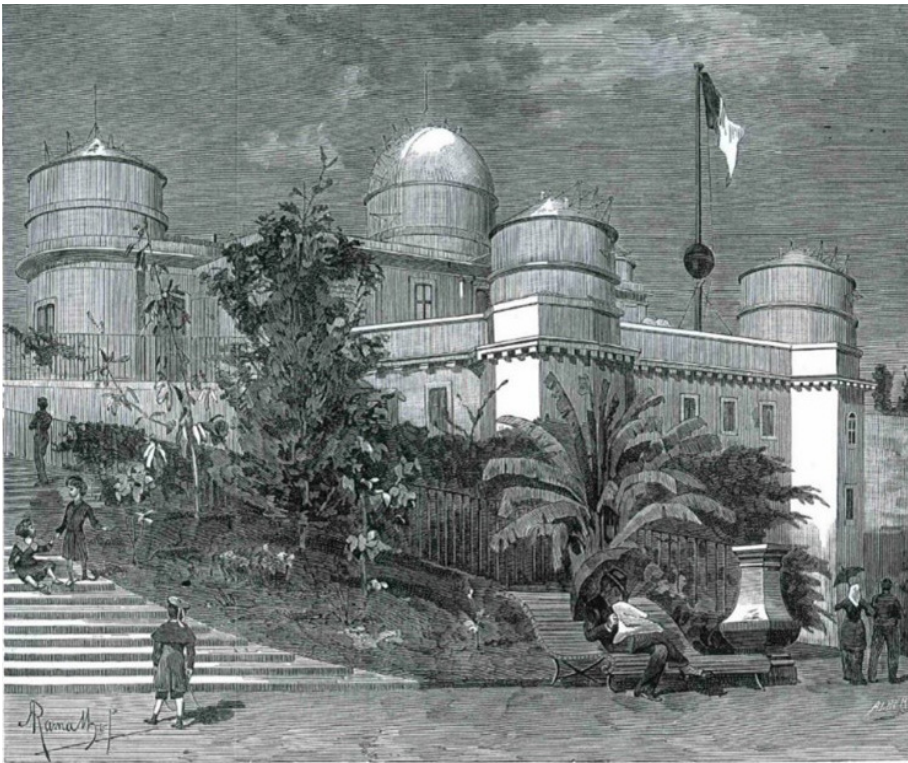
A fire destroyed it in 1694, followed by its reconstruction. But it would again be seriously damaged in the 1755 Earthquake and eventually rebuilt. This is also the time that will see, shortly afterwards, in 1757/1758, the extinction of the Company. The building would, however, serve to house the Royal College of Nobles – redesigned by Carlos Mardel (c. 1695 - 1763) –, an institution intended for pre-university education for aristocrats, on the initiative of Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo (1699-1782), future Marquis of Pombal, in 1761 until its closure in 1837 as a result of educational reform, becoming the Polytechnic School. By then, a new fire had ravaged the facilities and a new building was designed under the intervention of a comité directed by José Feliciano da Silva Costa (1797-1866) and Filipe Folque (1800-1874), from 1845, and an earlier architectural project initially designed but which would later be taken up by Pierre-Joseph Pézarat (1801-1872), and in turn, completed under the direction of Joaquim Nunes de Aguiar (1812-1872), following neo-classical canons. In 1911 it was converted into a Faculty of Sciences, and today it is a school that is part of the University of Lisbon. [Fig.19a-19b]

The complex had (and has) a rectangular plan with a large interior courtyard or “cortile”, and the Meteorological Conservatory with four corner turrets and an octagonal central drum was installed on the rear façade, that is, in the back of the complex, in a tower that topped the central body of this rear façade. An old design, sufficiently expressive, gives an account of the observation device. But an astronomical observatory required a place that the spaces and structures of the roof of the main building could not accommodate, so it was decided to build a new building, with considerable impact, at one end of the eastern platform, bordering the hill where the Botanical Garden was (and continues to be) developed, from there down. In fact, the complex was built in a suitable location on a hill – Monte Olivete or “Cotovia” – overlooking one of Lisbon’s valleys and with unobstructed views and more rarefied in terms of competition with public lighting or interfering halos. [Fig.20]

Construction began in 1875, but the project was later rebuilt and relocated under the direction of Victor Gomes da Encarnação. The observatory was

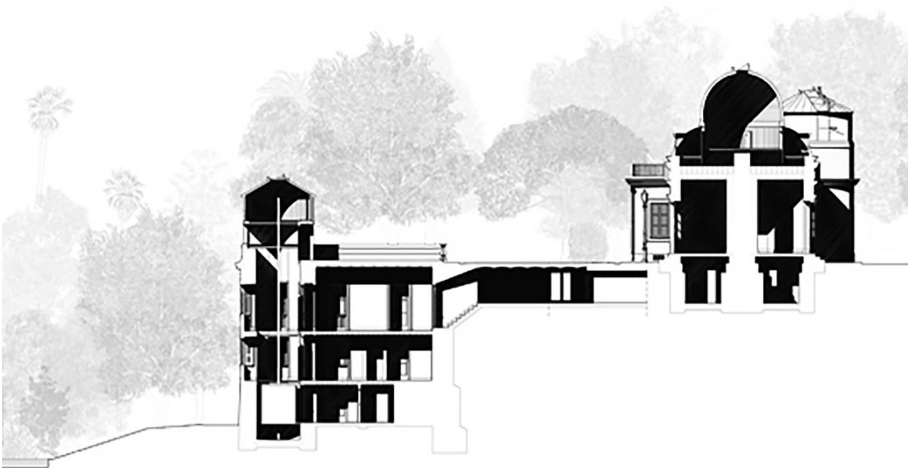
Fig. 19a-19b

Astronomical Observatory of the Polytechnic School, Lisbon (Photo SIPA)



OBSERVATORIO ASTRONÓMICO DA ESCOLA POLITÉCNICA DE LISBOA (Desenho de natural de A. Ramalho)

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inaugurated in 1889 following a plan that was advanced for its time, despite being intended primarily for teaching spherical astronomy. It has a centered plan; and the central, octagonal body is crowned by a bulbous dome. It is complemented by compartments in its "H" shaped floor plan angles. This is joined by a second construction that overcomes the unevenness of the elevations at the back. In a second phase, this body appears, in plan, connected to the central body, and later appears, certainly at the end of the 19th century, represented with a terrace in between, and it is certain that this was its final design and execution. The most precise description is given to us in the magazine *O Occidente*,

Fig. 20

Astronomical Observatory of the Polytechnic School, Lisbon. Engraving. In magazine *O Occidente*, no. 118, dated April 1, 1882

Fig. 21

Astronomical Observatory of the Polytechnic School, Lisbon. Cutaway drawing Project by the architect. J. P. Falcao de Campos and Appleton & Domingos Architects, Ltda

No. 118, dated April 1, 1882. So, in total, it has a hemispherical dome (the main one) and two conical observation domes at the north and south ends made of masonry lined with wood, in addition to two movable cylinders in the body located at the lower level. One of the outermost compartments is the Meridian Room, which has an enveloping slit indicating the precise direction of the meridian and is entirely covered (including the ceiling) with mahogany paneling from Guinea: it was “used for astronomical observations with the aim of determining longitude or local time, measuring the transit of stars with an instrument called a meridian circle”. A balloon, visible in the picture³⁷, fulfilled the function of determining and signaling midday, with a cannon shot and the balloon falling, replacing what was previously part of the Navy Observatory that it came to replace. [Fig.21]

Today, part of these crops and the set remain, as well as around 200 of the instruments that equipped it, are part of the historical collection of the Museum of the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Lisbon (MUL/MUHNAC), although materials have been lost or dispersed. It is not currently a museum, but the complete restoration has already begun, with a project by the architect J. P. Falcao de Campos and Appleton & Domingos Architects, Ltda., being a fundamental pole of the history of science and astronomy in Portugal, with unique scope and efficiencies.

When comparing this device to Brera we are not exaggerating. In fact, the various phases of updating and modernization of the Brera Observatory, although not in distinct physical circumstances as it is not an isolated complex but rather an observatory framed and assimilated to a large “palazzo”, cannot help but echo in the configuration of this Lisbon observatory. And the dates coincide, and in terms of installed technologies, Lisbon is more modest, Brera is richer.

A Final Remark... Just Look up at the Sky...

The Brera Astronomical Observatory presents itself as a starting point for a fascinating story. It is a starting point for a network of forgotten astronomical heritage in Portugal, a collection of marginalized architectures that bear witness to the collaboration between Italian and Portuguese astronomy since the 17th to the 19th century, as well as the perpetual link between scientific knowledge and architectural production. As such, let us realize that we are presenting here a set of examples that have helped humankind to shape its understanding of its place in the *cosmos*, its position in the vast and infinite Universe, its understanding of the firmament and the beams of light that move over our heads, as well as its understanding and measurement of time. And although many of the examples mentioned have disappeared, or simply fallen into oblivion, their

³⁷ Pedro Abreu, “Um templo para a ciência: O Observatório Astronómico de Lisboa (arquitetura e história),” 3. Regarding the “time ball,” see Fernando Correia de Oliveira, “The Arsenal Balloon,” Observatory of Historical Clocks of Lisbon, <http://observatoriorelogioshistoricos.blogspot.com>, Accessed March 2026. See especially António Estácio dos Reis, *O Observatório Real da Marinha* (Lisbon: CTT, 2009).

legacy still remains in our collective memory. Our challenge today – in this century of uncertainty – is to ensure that this fabulous heritage is not lost to the terror of time. Preserving and studying these places of memory is a fundamental step towards understanding how science and architecture have intertwined throughout history. Portugal and Italy share a common scientific past, and it is up to today's generations to recognize and value this connection.

The past is not a burden – it is a foundation. The architectural astronomical heritage of Portugal and Italy, whether standing, vanished, or never realized, are more than relics; they are symbols of an enduring quest for knowledge. Their stories deserve to be told, their contributions recognized, and their legacies preserved. And as we navigate the complexities of scientific advancement in the 21st century, we would do well to remember the lessons of the past – the legacy of History –, because the architectural astronomical heritage, the legacy of science and architecture that once mapped the stars can still guide us – if we are only willing to look up at the sky and take notice of its magnificence...

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Álvaro Siza in Naples A Poetic Infrastructure for the City

Subway, Naples, Italy, Álvaro Siza, Urban Reorganization

/Abstract

Álvaro Siza's work, beginning in 2004 and not yet completed, in designing Naples' Municipio metro station represents a union of contemporary architecture and the city's historical, cultural and archaeological context. The subway station, in the very center of the city, stands out for its ability to transform a simple work of transport mobility into a work of urban art, as well as in the transformation of the historic center, linking the 1930s maritime station with the new square. Siza – together with Eduardo Souto de Moura with Tiago Figueiredo – uses local materials, creates bright and welcoming spaces that dialogue with the historic environment. A large void that eliminates urban disarticulations, and that – inspired by the paintings and ancient representations of this part of the city – is inspired by local traditions, incorporating elements of the Neapolitan archaeological heritage, without ever losing sight of the functionality of the infrastructure. Through the project, Siza manages to connect the past and the future, bringing out a new urban identity. His work contributes to improving urban quality and reducing the gap between different areas of the city, promoting new urban spaces. In this way, the Naples subway becomes a symbol of rebirth and innovation, albeit reflecting the praise do chaos that animates the city.

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At the centre of Álvaro Siza's thought there is always the city, whether it is designing an infrastructure, an architecture, or an object. Just think of interventions such as the Malagueira neighbourhood in Évora (1977-97), where the elevated system of infrastructure – the aqueduct – gives the large residential district the urban structure it needs. Or, in Lisbon, the strategic role assumed by the route of the metro and the Baixa-Chiado station in the project for the recovery and redevelopment of the historic quarter after the fire of August 25, 1988 – an intervention concluded in 2016 with the construction of the missing pedestrian path connecting Chiado and Largo do Carmo. And again, in Porto, the inclusion in the city of the Aliados and São Bento metro stations (2005-06, with Eduardo Souto de Moura), with the redesign and standardization of Avenida dos Aliados and Praça da Liberdade into a single large public space¹. Finally², in Naples³, the intervention of the Municipio Station of Line 1 of the subway, where the project of the underground station, a transit and interchange space, an access pivot to a new system of connection between the port and the city [Fig. 1–2]: is closely intertwined with the project for the redevelopment of the urban surface spaces of Piazza Municipio, between Palazzo San Giacomo, the Maschio Angioino (Castel Nuovo) and the twentieth-century Maritime Station [Fig. 3]: a system of crucial places for the city, rich in historical memories stratified over the centuries⁴.

The Naples metro project began in the seventies of the last century and entered a construction phase in the following decade. The opening of the first section of Line 1, between Piazza Vanvitelli and the Colli Aminei, dates to 1993, the project suffered setbacks and was marked by a lack of direction and vision. With the arrival of Giannegidio Silva (1941-2015)⁵ [Fig. 4] as president of the MN (Metropolitana di Napoli) in 1995, the construction of the metro experienced a new impulse and a peculiar characterization. In 1998, construction sites were opened for the sections of Line 1 that cross the city centre and, between 2001 and 2003, five new stations were inaugurated⁶. Silva's project envisages entrusting the construction of the individual stations to different architects, both Italian

1 General references (in chronological order) on Álvaro Siza about these projects: Peter Testa and José Quintão, *A arquitectura de Álvaro Siza* (Porto: Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto, 1988); Pedro de Llano and Carlos Castanheira, eds., *Álvaro Siza: Works and Projects* (Milan: Electa, 1995); *Álvaro Siza* (Lisbon: Blau, 1998); Kenneth Frampton, ed., *Álvaro Siza: tutte le opere*, preface by Francesco Dal Co, texts by Álvaro Siza (Milan: Electa, 1999); Kenneth Frampton, *Álvaro Siza: obra completa* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 2000); Nuno Grande and Carles Muro, eds., *Álvaro Siza: in/disciplina* (Porto: Fundação de Serralves, 2019); Fernando Márquez Cecilia, ed., *El Croquis: Álvaro Siza 2015–2022* (Madrid: El Croquis Editorial, 2022).

2 Another project completed by Siza in Naples is M.A.D.R.E. – Donnaregina Museum of Contemporary Art (2004–06, with Studio DAZ Architetti Associati).

3 Siza already knew the city of Naples well, because during the 1980s, he had been offered several projects for the city, including "Proposals for Caserta," Naples (competition 1983–84); "Urban plan for Pendino neighbourhood," Naples (competition 1986); "Urban Plan for Monterusciello and Campo Flegrei," Naples (competition 1986–87). See Michel Toussaint and Maria Melo, *Álvaro Siza: obra incompleta projectos / Incomplete Work Projects* (Lisbon: A+A Books, 2024).

4 On the Municipio Station of the Naples Metro, see the main reference texts in the bibliography.

5 Francesco Minervini, "Giannegidio Silva: storia di un ingegnere," *Rassegna ANIAI*, no. 1–2 (2014): 76–95. In the same monographic issue of the journal, see also Álvaro Siza, "Omaggio a Giannegidio Silva," *Rassegna ANIAI*, no. 1–2 (2014): 16–19.

6 They are the Museo and Piazza Dante (Gae Aulenti) stations; Salvator Rosa and Materdei (Alessandro Mendini); Cilea, later renamed Quattro Giornate (Domenico Orlacchio). See Benedetto Gravagnuolo, "L'architettura delle stazioni," *Rassegna ANIAI*, no. 1–2 (2014): 52–55.

Fig. 1

Álvaro Siza, studies for the arrangements of Piazza Municipio (Álvaro Siza archive)

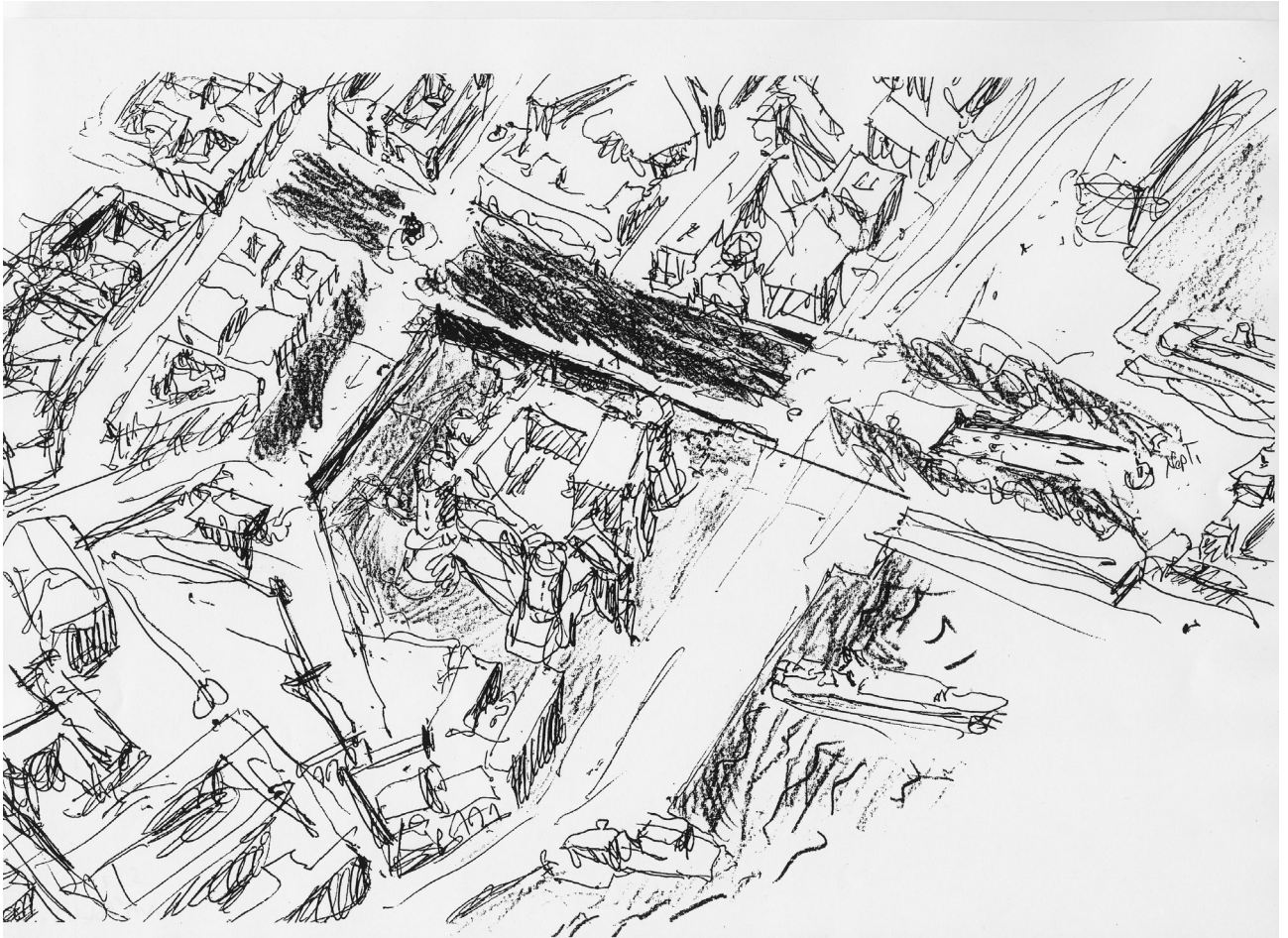
Fig. 2

Álvaro Siza, study for the piazza Municipio from Palazzo Municipio (Álvaro Siza archive)

Fig. 3

Tavola Strozzi, dated 1481-87 with the Aragonese and the port of Ischia (Museo Nazionale San Martino, Naples)





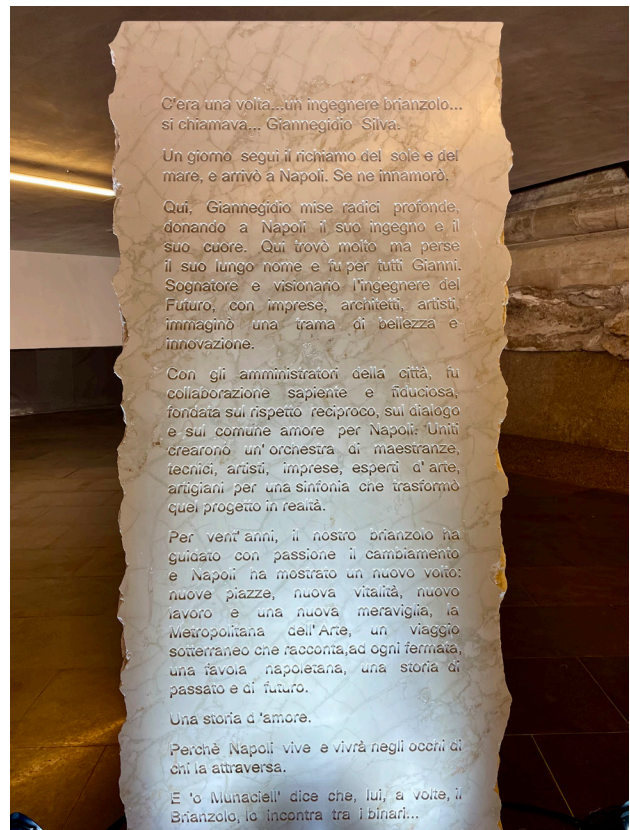
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and foreign, who are flanked by numerous artists – a program, the latter, known as *Le Stazioni dell'Arte* (Art Stations), developed by the critic Achille Bonito Oliva, consultant of the MN Company. The large and diversified team of personalities involved restores Silva's desire to qualify the infrastructure by creating a sort of "widespread museum" for visitors-travellers of all ages, social backgrounds and cultural levels – a "mandatory museum"⁷ in the words of Bonito Oliva – transforming the metro stations into places of contemporary art experience. For the Municipio Station, assigned to Álvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura [Fig. 5–6], was chosen the artist Michal Rovner⁸, author of an installation – *Passages (Naples) 2014* – created with the fresco technique and video projections [Fig. 7] which, despite occupying a forty-metre-long wall in the mezzanine [Fig. 8] of the station, offers itself as a decidedly discreet presence: not an "added decoration", but complementary to a "fabricated" work of art, in the words of Souto de Moura, from "Roman stones, Spanish walls and contemporary concrete"⁹. [Fig. 9]

Called by the Naples Metro in 2003, Álvaro Siza involved Eduardo Souto de Moura in the task, engaged in a similar design experience for the Porto Metro¹⁰. [Fig. 10] The tried-and-tested partnership will later be joined by Tiago Figueiredo [Fig. 11], a long-time collaborator of Souto de Moura and present in the Metroporto project, while the local architect of support is Daniela Antonini - Studio DAZ. On the part of Metropolitana di Napoli, NME Napoli Metro Engineering works as consultants for the system project; Francesco Paolo Russo and Carmina Sangiuliano for the structural design. From the initial phase the Archaeological Superintendence of Naples, responsible for the excavations was Daniela Giampaola; since 2017, the research activities aimed at the design of the architectural and archaeological restoration of the uncovered areas have been entrusted to the CFR Consorzio Futuro in Ricerca and the



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7 Achille Bonito Oliva, "Il museo obbligatorio," *Rassegna ANIAI*, no. 1–2 (2014): 10–11.

8 Roberto Collovà, "Le stazioni dell'arte," *Casabella*, no. 869 (2017): 24–25.

9 Regarding *Le Stazioni dell'Arte* of the Naples metro, characterized "by a certain post-modern tendency and anything but minimalist, but with a lot of color and a lot of decoration," Souto de Moura observes that "today, works of poor architecture are often made, in which you then must make a decoration, put colors. We – and Siza in particular – have always had a certain resistance. It should be the Roman stones, the bricks, the walls, the contemporary concrete columns, to manufacture the work of art." See "Storie: conversazione tra Álvaro Siza ed Eduardo Souto de Moura con Nicola Di Battista," *L'architetto*, no. 1 (2018): 41, 48. All the translations in English were done by the author.

10 Fatima Fernandes and Michele Cannatà, eds., *Eduardo Souto de Moura: a arquitectura do metro; obras e projectos na área metropolitana do Porto* (Porto: Civilização Editora, 2006). Marco Mulazzani, "Porto: la metropolitana," *Casabella*, no. 739–740 (2005–2006): 112–131 (with an interview by C. Tapparelli with Souto de Moura and a text by the architect).

Fig. 4

Stele in honour for Giannegidio Silva (photo Elisa Pegorin, October 20, 2025)



5



6

Department of Architecture of the University of Ferrara with the coordination of Alessandro Ippoliti. At the time of the assignment to Siza and Souto de Moura of the Municipio Station, intended to serve Line 1 (passing) and Line 6 (terminal), the infrastructural framework is already defined, as regards the route of the tracks and the location of the lift shaft from the platforms, in a transport logic independent of the configuration of the surface spaces. On the other hand, the designers' conviction is that:the construction of the Metro is in fact the foundation of a profound urban transformation"; on the contrary, "the necessary excavations, the diversion of infrastructure networks, convenient access and other conditions oblige the definition of a new urban project"¹¹.

The first studies identify three synchronic and interdependent operations. The organisation of the first underground level of the station – the mezzanine atrium at an altitude of +2.50 metres – in continuity with the level of the moat of Castel Nuovo, chosen as the main access point to the Municipio Station; the construction of a connecting path underground between the mezzanine and the Maritime Station; the restoration and strengthening of the large sloping esplanade that extends from Palazzo San Giacomo (to the west) to the port (to the east).

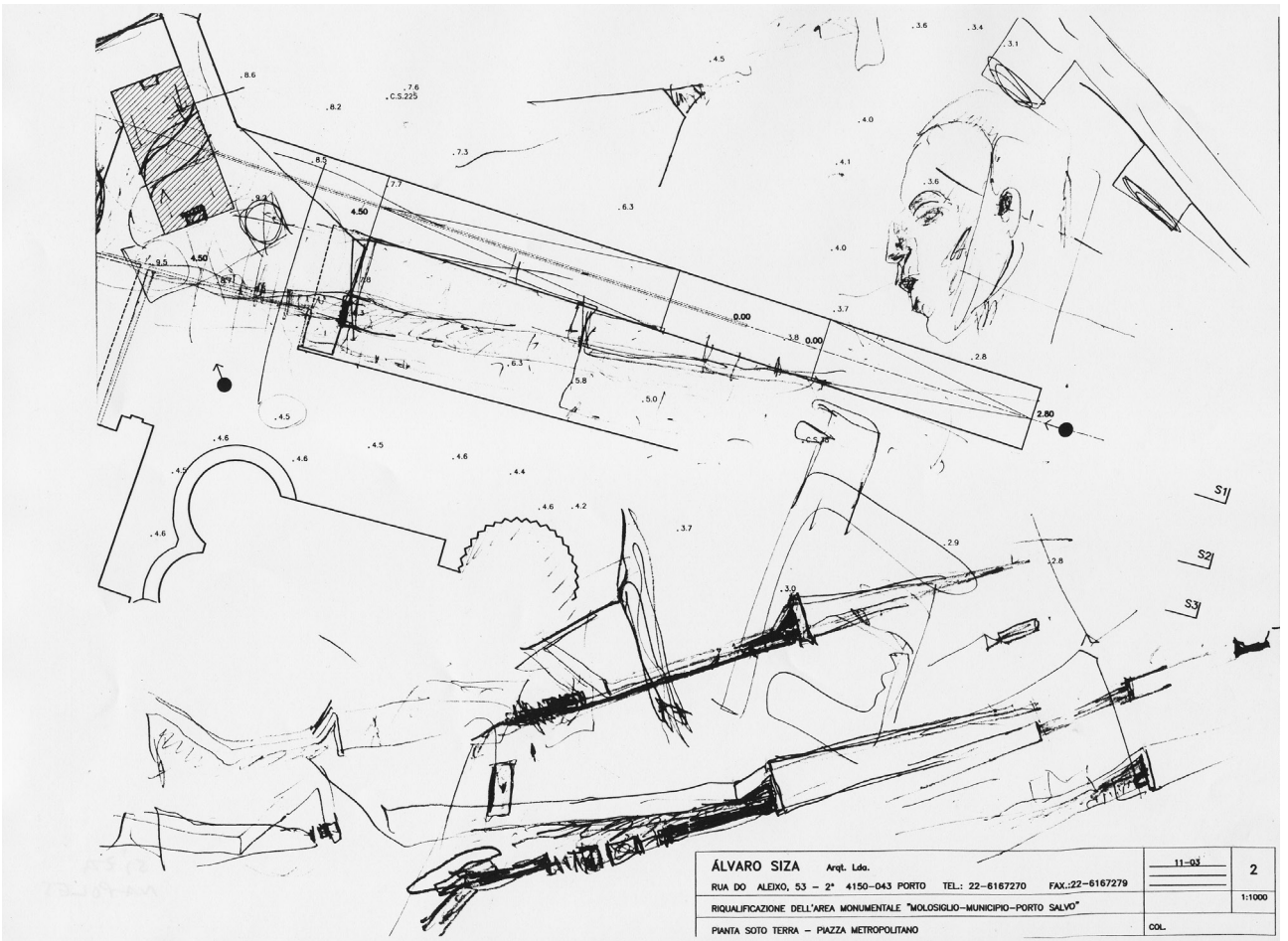
11 This quote and the following one, from the project report, are in Roberto Collovà, "Napoli: una stazione per la metropolitana," *Casabella*, no. 869 (2017): 20–21.

Figg. 5-6

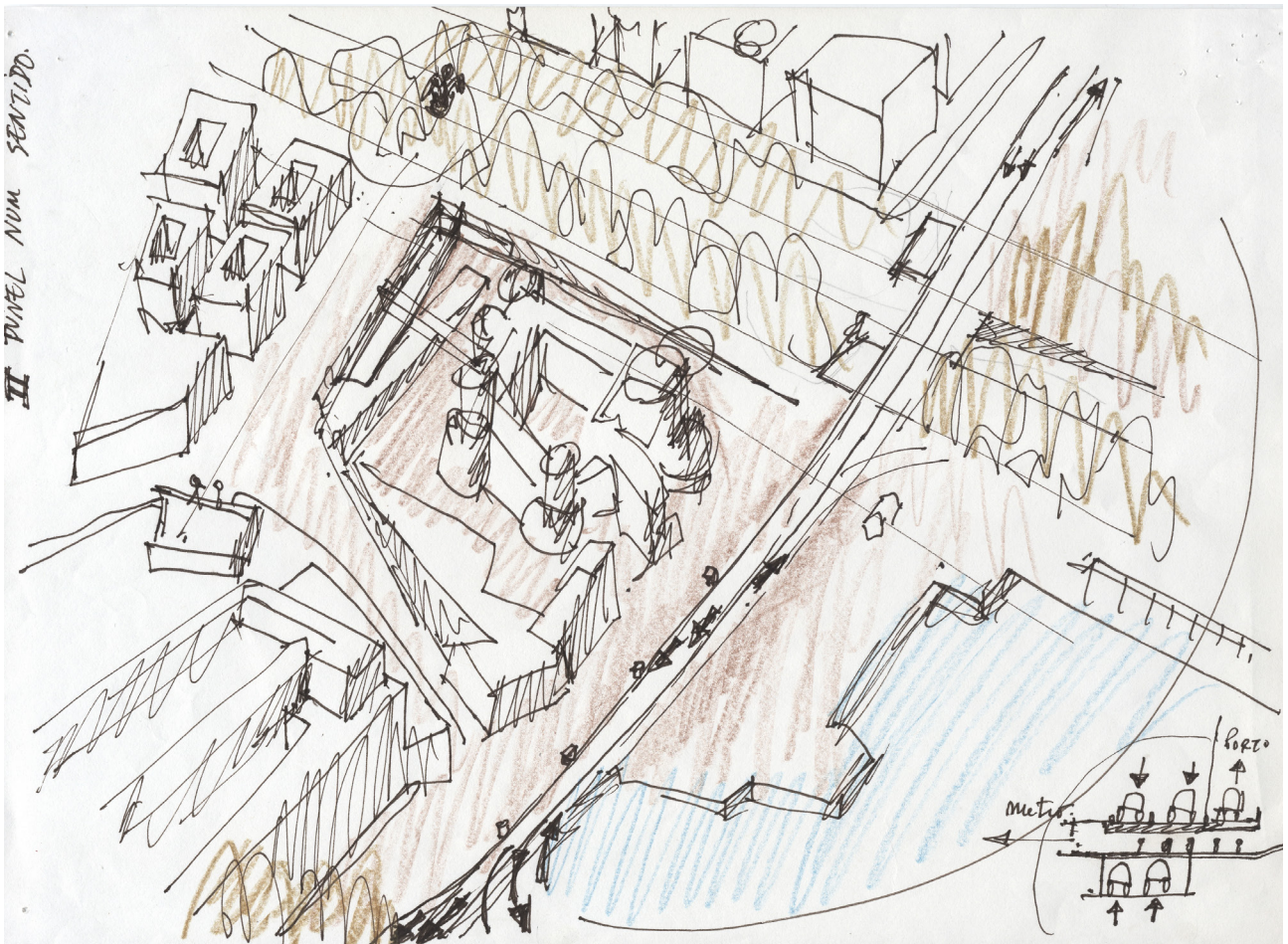
Álvaro Siza, Souto de Moura on the construction site (Private archive)



7



8



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This visual continuum – say the architect Siza – dominated by the hill and the Castel Sant’Elmo, is the fundamental element in the geography of Naples. Maintaining it is the goal of this project¹².

Two plates from February and March 2004, densely annotated and drawn, show these actions. Around the rectangular well that contains the vertical connections with lines 1 and 6, the large underground room of the mezzanine [Fig. 12] branches out in different directions: to the south, towards the moat of the Castel Nuovo; to the west and north, to other points of ascent on the surface; to the east towards the port, with a sloping path that, under the very busy Via Acton, climbs with a slight ramp to the square in front of the Maritime Station. The underground path is perfectly aligned with the reservoir of Piazza Municipio and with the footprint on the ground of the equestrian monument to Vittorio Emanuele II, located at the height of Via Medina¹³. A double dotted line marks the longitudinal axis of this street-square, indicating a continuous skylight – called by the designers as the *fenda* (in Portuguese: a cut, a slit) [Fig. 13] – extended

12 Álvaro Siza and Tiago Figueiredo, interview by author, Atelier Siza, Porto, October 8, 2024.

13 The monument dedicated to Vittorio Emanuele II was inaugurated in 1897. In 2010 it was removed and moved to Piazza Bovio (formerly Piazza Borsa).

Fig. 7

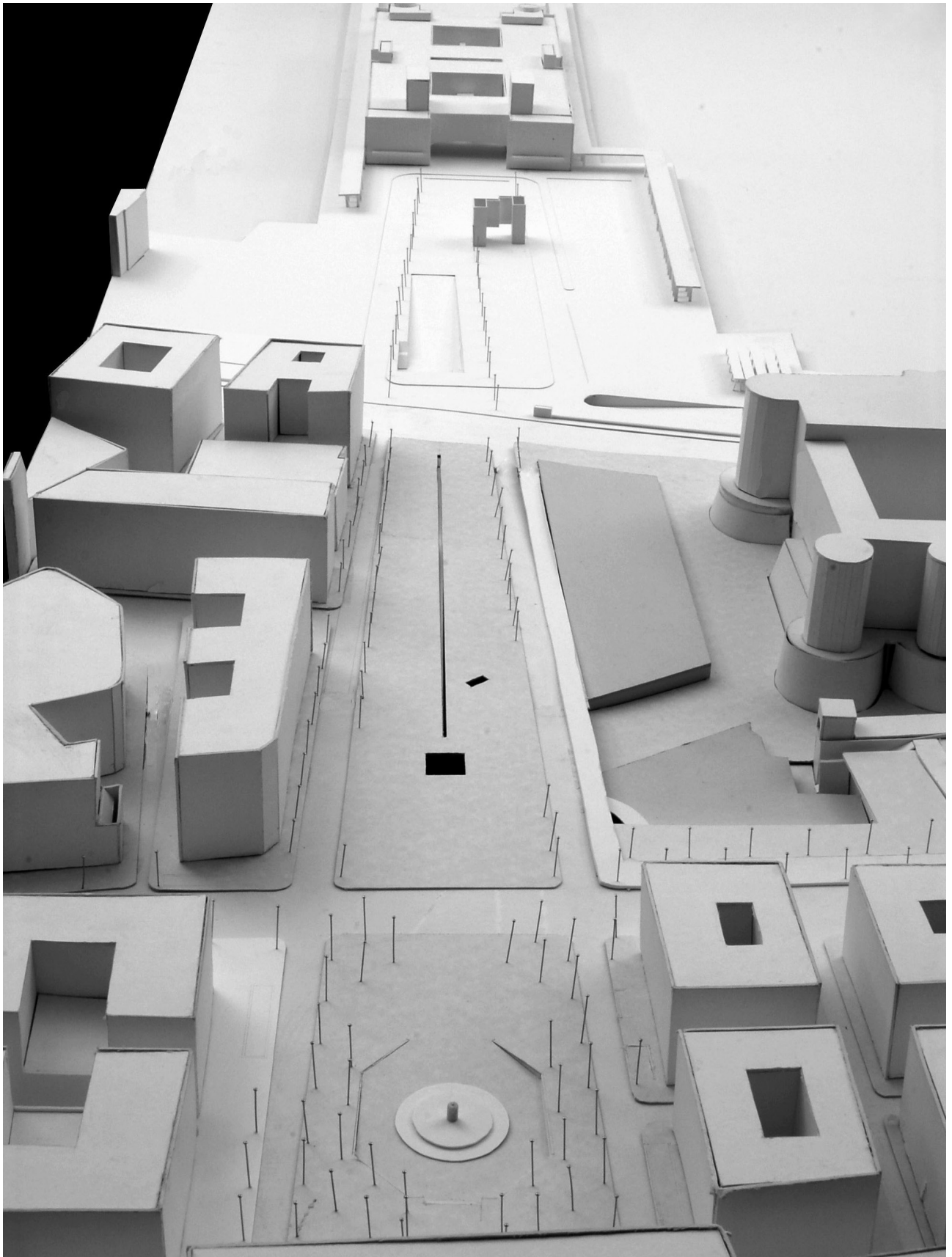
Installation on the wall of the artist Michel Rovner, 2016 (Álvaro Siza archive)

Fig. 8

Álvaro Siza, study for the mezzanine station of the subway (Álvaro Siza archive)

Fig. 9

Fig. 09 Souto de Moura, study of Piazza Municipio and the circulation of Via Acton (Álvaro Siza archive)



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Fig. 10
Model of the project (Álvaro
Siza archive)

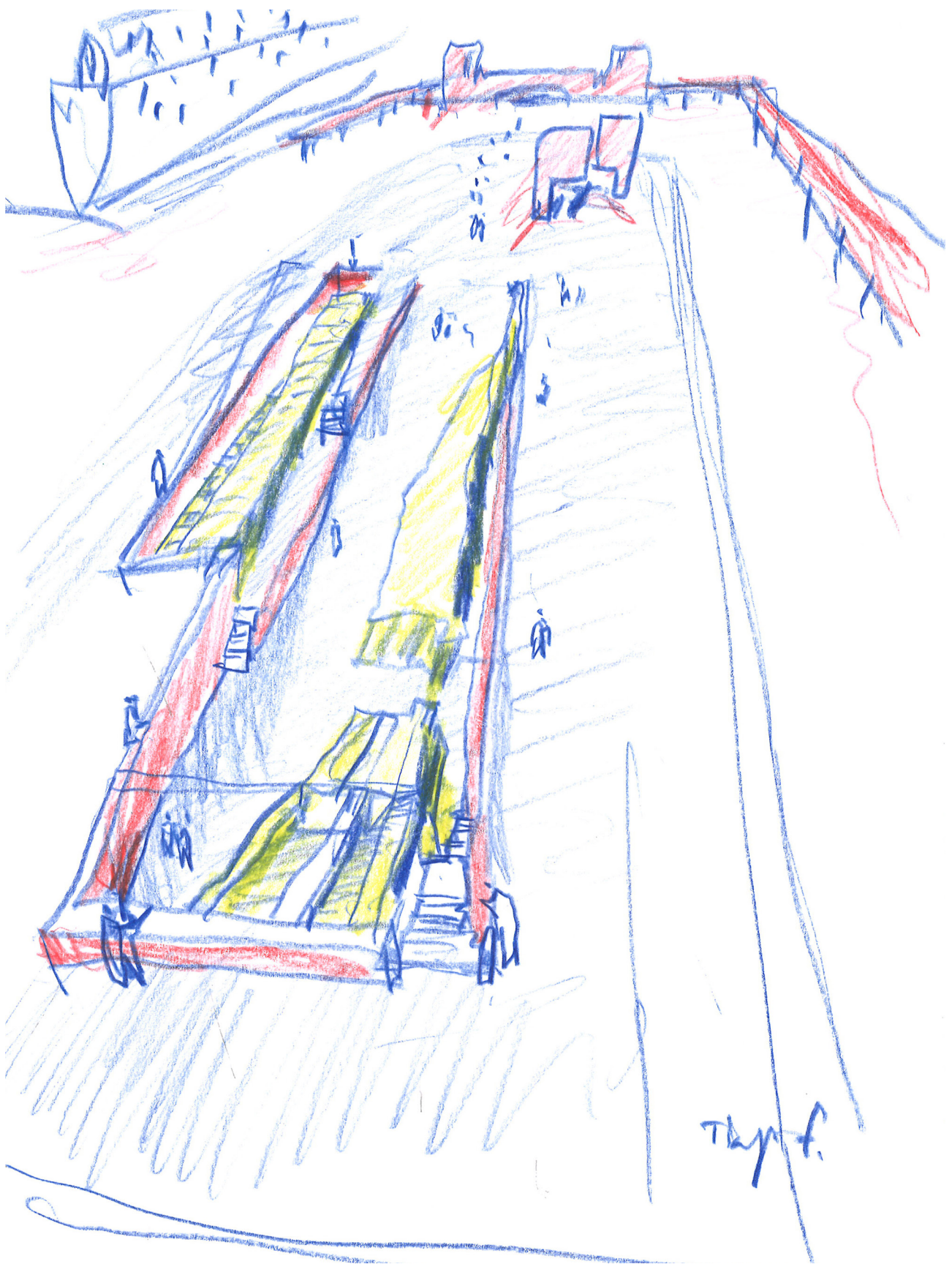
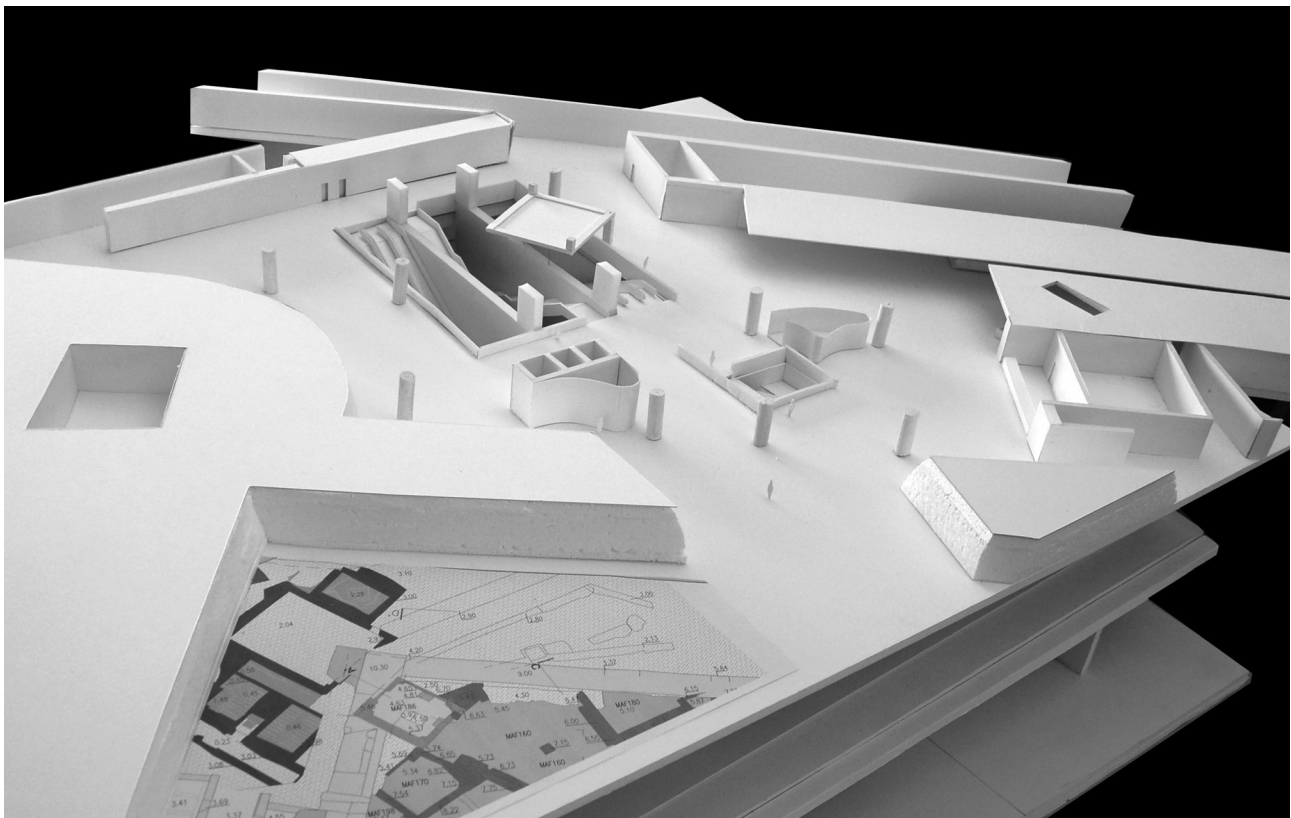


Fig. 11

Tiago Figueredo, study for the from pedestrian to the tunnel to the maritime station after the archeological vestiges, 2015 (Tiago Figueredo)



12

between the beginning of the Via Acton underpass and the rectangular well in the centre of the mezzanine, on the vertical of which the square geometry of a fountain is outlined. [Fig. 14] The layout given to the mezzanine atrium of the station corresponds to the first studies of the arrangement of the surface space, with rows of trees on the sides of Piazza Municipio, from Palazzo San Giacomo to Via Acton, the monument to Vittorio Emenuuele II, the square fountain and the long thin slit of the skylight, coinciding with the historic visual axis between the port and Castel Sant’Elmo. [Figg. 15–16–17]

Among the documents that testify to the historical sequence of transformations that have taken place since the fifteenth century, safeguarding the “visual continuum” that characterizes and qualifies the urban space, of certain importance for Siza and Souto de Moura’s project is a view by Antonio Joli [Fig. 18], from the mid-eighteenth century, from the Molo Grande towards the Basilica of San Giacomo degli Spagnoli¹⁴ and Castel Sant’Elmo.

In addition to restoring the continuity of the ground level that rises progressively up to the church, whose façade appears framed by two rows of trees, the painting shows the seventeenth-century fountain of Neptune in the foreground. A series of photographic views of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries illustrates the configuration subsequently assumed by this space, with discontinuous “islands” of gardens that dot Piazza Municipio up to the pier, the presence

14 The sixteenth-century Basilica was incorporated in the early twenties of the nineteenth century in the palace of the Ministries of the Bourbon government, the current Palazzo San Giacomo.

Fig. 12

Model of the mezzanine of the subway (Álvaro Siza archive)



13

at the height of Via Medina of the monument to Vittorio Emanuele II, the disappearance of the fountain of Neptune, moved in 1898 to Piazza della Borsa, and the appearance after 1936 of a new “backdrop”, slightly off-axis, consisting of the Maritime Station¹⁵.

One of Siza’s first study sketches for the arrangement of the surface area shows his intention to preserve the equestrian monument in its position and bring the fountain of Neptune, recomposed in Via Medina in 2001, back to the square towards the port¹⁶, to provide the large spatial basin with two intermedi-

15 The Maritime Station was built between 1933 and 1936, following a competition won by Cesare Bazzani. See Aurelio De Rose, *I palazzi di Napoli* (Rome: Newton & Compton, 2001).

16 The fountain of Neptune (1600–1601), originally near the Arsenale, has been moved several times, before and after its eighteenth-century location in Via del Molo. In 1898 it was mounted in Piazza della Borsa; in 2000 it was removed for the works of the metro and reassembled in 2001 in Via Medina. In 2014–15 it was dismantled again and rebuilt in Piazza Municipio.

Fig. 13

Fenda (“taglio”) in the tunnel leading from the subway to the port (photo Elisa Pegorin, 2025)



14

ate visual goals and articulate with the fountain the passage between the exit ramp from the mezzanine of the station and the Piazzale della Marittima.

This hypothesis was abandoned following the decision of the Municipality to remove the monument to Vittorio Emanuele II and the request to Siza, in 2010, to study an appropriate arrangement of the fountain of Neptune in Piazza Municipio (completed in 2015). However, the architect still needs to recompose the misalignment introduced by the Maritime Station in the “visual continuum” between the port and Castel Sant’Elmo. Thus, was born the idea of a new fountain, the Porta del Mare [Fig. 19], a sculpture-architecture essential for its role as an axial connection between the twentieth century building of the Maritime Station, the geometry and spaces of the new surface arrangement and the historic visual axis between the port and Castel Sant’Elmo¹⁷.

The fundamental elements described so far of the proposal developed between 2004 and 2006 remain in the continuation of the design process. The large rectangular shaft (25x30 metres) is “filled” with escalators and stone stairs that descend from the mezzanine to Line 1 (platform at -20 metres) and Line 6 (connecting branch at -4.71 metres; platform at -10.26 metres). [Fig. 20] The two paths at different speeds are put in visual relationship by an oculus with an

Fig. 14

Aerial view of the surface intervention (courtesy photo of Alessandra Chemollo, 2018)

Fig. 15

Siteplan of the ground-level drawing (Álvaro Siza archive)

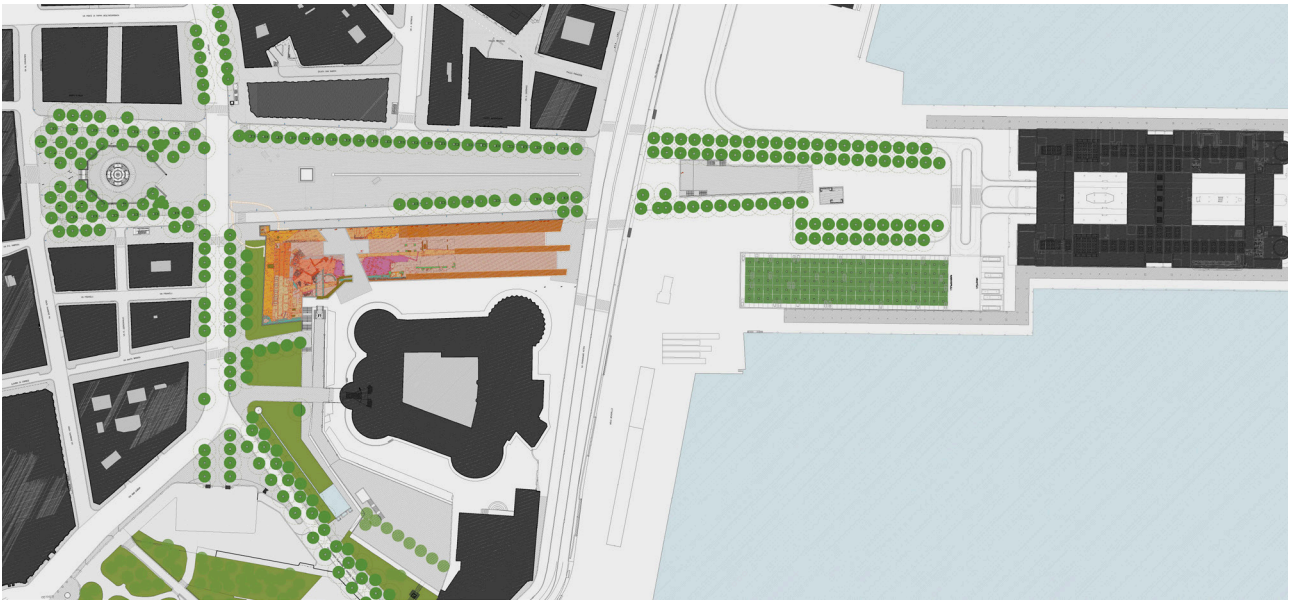
Fig. 16

Plan of the mezzanine (Álvaro Siza archive)

Fig. 17

Longitudinal section from Palazzo S. Giacomo to the Maritime station (Álvaro Siza archive)

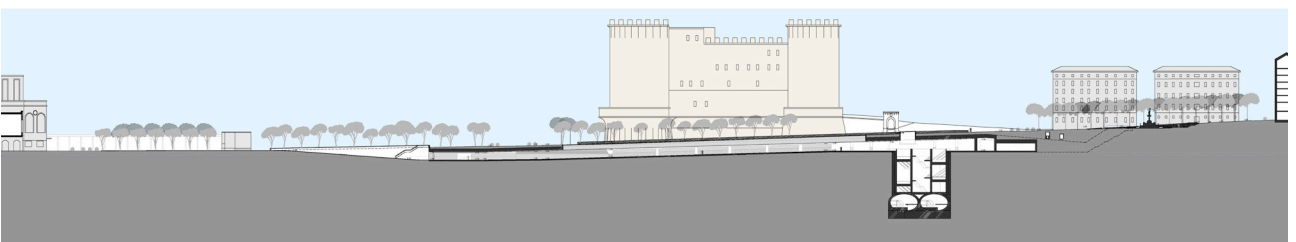
17 Elisa Pegorin, “La porta marittima di Napoli,” *Abitare la Terra*, no. 65 (2024): 47. Álvaro Siza and Tiago Figueiredo, interview by author, Atelier Siza, Porto, October 8, 2024.



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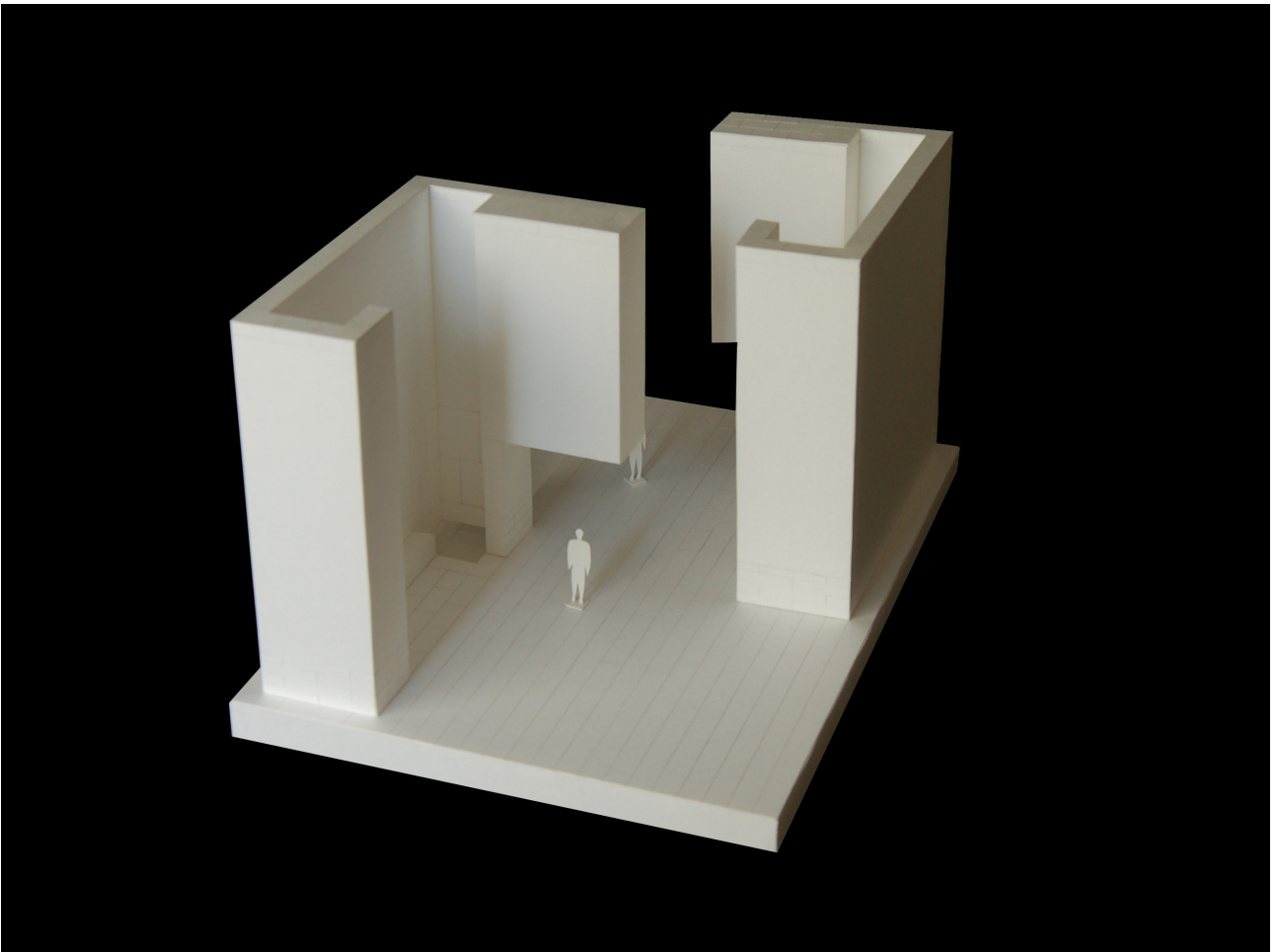
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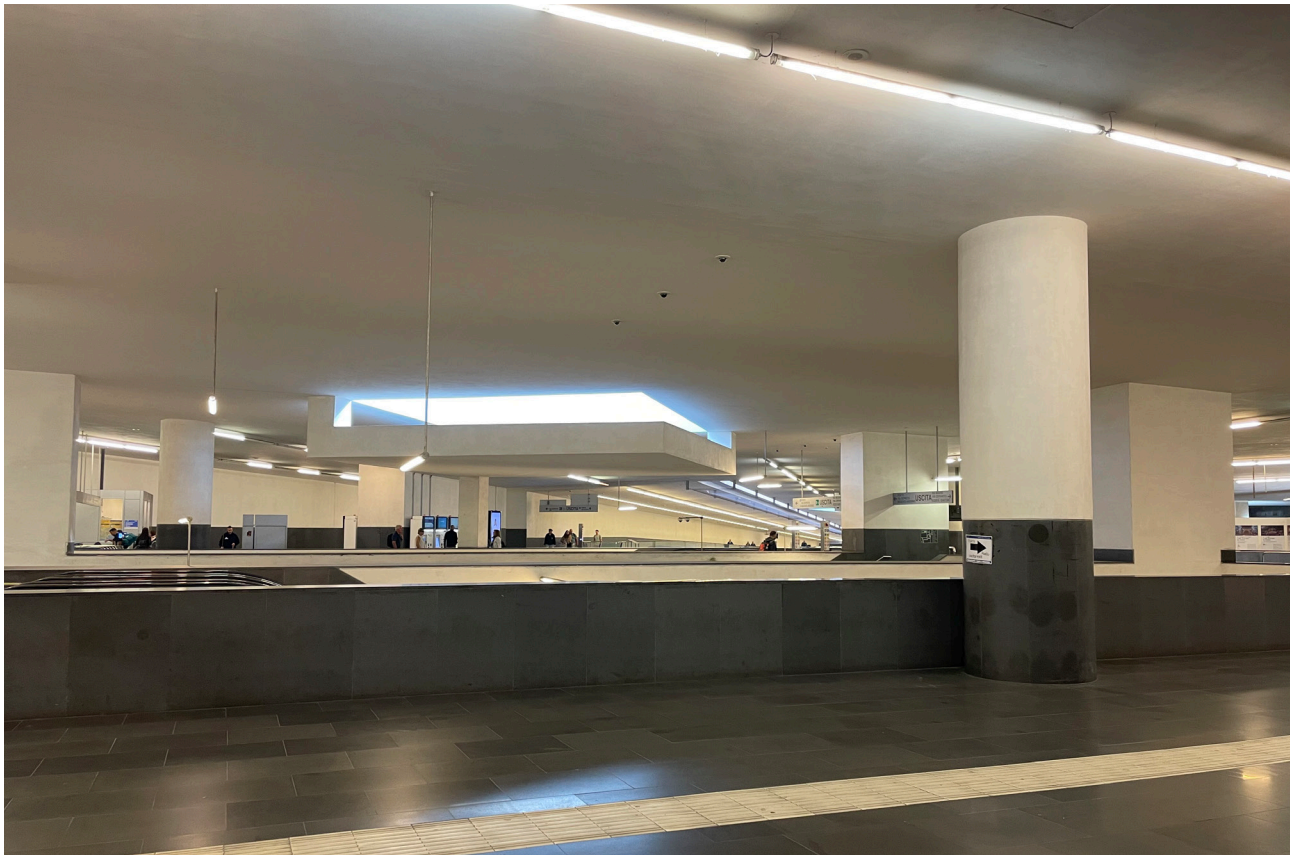
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“Aaltian” shape – which, however, Siza says in an interview¹⁸ is inspired by Le Corbusier – [Fig. 21] while the horizontal passages between the ramps are configured as real rooms, new spaces of a contemporary “underground Naples”. Essential spaces, in the design of the artifacts and in the elementary choice of surface finishing materials, white plaster and black lava stone – a chromatic relationship, even if not a concertation of materials, deeply rooted in the history of the city¹⁹. The desire to keep the well in communication with the outside, abandoning the initial idea of an opening that would have allowed air, light, and rain to penetrate the subsoil, is finally resolved by filtering the access of natural light in the mezzanine. Above the well, an opaque square-shaped skylight measuring 10 x 10 metres away from the roof – an inverted table, a solution often adopted by Siza in museum spaces – spreads a diaphanous luminosity into the mezzanine, through the bottom of the basin placed on the surface on the axis of Piazza Municipio and the *fenda*.

18 Roberto Collovà, “Napoli: una stazione per la metropolitana,” *Casabella*, no. 869 (2017): 22. About the opening of the oculus, in a conversation with the author of this paper, Siza states that “basically, it was a matter of creating this feverish spirit that is Naples, those who go up look at those who go down”; as for the shape: “it had to be a circle. It has to do with Le Corbusier; I have this image of Le Corbusier. But every architect works with reference to the world of architecture that he knows [...]. Often these influences do not arise voluntarily but are things that are found in the subconscious [...]. The subconscious is a good friend.” Álvaro Siza and Tiago Figueiredo, interview by author, Atelier Siza, Porto, October 8, 2024.

19 In the conversation with the author, Tiago Figueiredo recalls how the initial choice of material for underground constructions was brick – “a brick of Roman dimensions.” The needs of technological equipment (ventilation, etc.) would probably have led to the adoption of prefabricated brick walls, which could not be controlled by the architects. Hence the decision to resort to plaster and volcanic stone (although not the piperno of Naples, but the lava stone of Etna), also following a visit to the city made by Siza with Francesco Venezia. Álvaro Siza and Tiago Figueiredo, interview by author, Atelier Siza, Porto, October 8, 2024.

Fig. 18

Antonio Joli, view of Naples from the Port, mid-18th century (Private archive)

Fig. 19

Model of Porta Marittima (Álvaro Siza archive)

Fig. 20

View of the interior (photo Elisa Pegorin, 2025)



21

Fig. 21

Drawing of Álvaro Siza of the oculus, in the day of the opening of the station, 2015 (Álvaro Siza archive)

As the construction site of the subway progressed, the architectural project evolved, continuously enriching itself in the confrontation with the numerous “quality obstacles” it encountered, namely the continuous, important discoveries of archaeological remains belonging to different eras – Greek, Roman, late medieval, Angevin, viceregal – emerged from the excavations of the Castel Nuovo moat, from those of the route of Line 6 and, subsequently, of the ascent of the underground road to the port. Starting from 2003, during the excavations for the construction of the station, Roman ships (I-III century AD) were found; the excavations of the moat bring to light the foot of mighty fortifications – the Bastione Vicereale, the tower of the pier and the tower of the Incononata – and a room of the Angevin era with fragments of frescoes, identified as part of the Palazzo Del Balzo. The excavations of the route of Line 6 intercept the remains of two overlapping ports, from the Hellenistic and Roman periods, as well as thousands of artifacts related to these activities. The need, or rather the desire to find an adequate location of the archaeological remains in the general design (in line with what was pursued in the arrangement of the surface spaces), [Fig. 22], has continuously questioned what is envisaged by the project, making it a sort of open work and forcing Siza and Souto de Moura to a continuous exercise of discretion²⁰, or to choices on the direction to be taken to harmonize the project with the extraordinary schedule of the place. Agreement means deep respect for the vestiges found, but also determination to use archaeology as the material of the project – for example, the Viceregal bastion as a “support” for the roof of the mezzanine of the station²¹. [Fig. 23] It also means the desire to return to the city, “in an unprotected form”, part of the extraordinary heritage that emerged during the course of the work – a suggestion that has a lot to do with the “principle of continuity that informs the entire project”²².

The progression of the archaeological finds discovered during the excavations is clearly shown by the comparison between some plans of the overall arrangement at the mezzanine level.

October 2004 and May 2006 – with the suggestive hypothesis of creating an underground room for Roman ships; June 2010, with the tower of the Incononata, the Viceregal bastion and the tower of the pier entirely brought to light. The Viceregal bastion is “perforated” at the main access to the station

20 Francesco Dal Co, “La duplicità del tempo,” *Casabella*, no. 869 (2017): 16–17.

21 Souto de Moura declares, “We use archaeology not as a field of investigation, not as a material for scientific contemplation, but as a useful material for our projects. A stone wall is not there only to be photographed and to place a legend next to it with the words “ancient Roman wall” or “Spanish”; for us, this wall serves to support the ceiling of the entire station. A relationship with history operational, rather than contemplative.” See “Storie: conversazione tra Álvaro Siza ed Eduardo Souto de Moura con Nicola Di Battista,” *L’architetto*, no. 1 (2018): 42. Siza’s thought is identical; for him, the Naples project was a “succession of adventures, discoveries, and the fundamental desire not to destroy the archaeological remains, but to maintain them [...] involving them in the project. For example, the surface of Piazza Municipio rests on the very strong city walls. Ruin is not only something that serves as a contemplation of history but is part of the project.” Álvaro Siza and Tiago Figueiredo, interview by author, Atelier Siza, Porto, October 8, 2024.

22 Antonio Esposito and Giovanni Leoni, “La stazione Municipio della metropolitana di Napoli: rifondare l’immagine e la materia della città,” *U+D Urbanform and Design*, no. 20 (2023): 112. The principle of “historical continuity” (obviously not in a figurative sense) that inspires the project is continuously recalled by Siza and Souto de Moura.



22

from the moat and taken – “although only in the tectonic figure”²³ – as a supporting element of the southern edge of the reinforced concrete roof of the mezzanine. Along the north side of the Viceregal bastion up to the tower of the pier, parallel to the pedestrian gallery connecting the mezzanine and the Marittima, there is a covered space, initially designed as a “museum” and then as an information centre for welcoming visitors; on the south side of the bastion, towards the moat of Castel Nuovo, the archaeological park extends. The remains of the Greek and Roman ports, punctually listed by the Sovrintendenza (Architectural Superintendency), were dismantled to allow the construction of the convoy tunnels and the Line 6 station, and then refitted on artificial platforms²⁴.

The last important archaeological emergence is that of the walls of the ancient port, from the Angioino-Aragonese and Bourbon ages, in the area in front of the Maritime station. A further variant of the project, in 2017, involved the ramp of the pedestrian connection to the station, with the redesign of the square on the port and the Porta del Mare. It is not possible, here, to delve into the impressive structural (and plant) project of the subsoil, the various phases of which, visible

23 Roberto Collovà, “Napoli: una stazione per la metropolitana,” *Casabella*, no. 869 (2017): 21. The consolidation of the viceregal bastion takes place through the construction of a reinforced concrete wall. The roof slab of the station rests punctually on groups of micropiles.

24 See Marco Mulazzani, “Siza e Souto de Moura: il progetto e il cantiere,” *Casabella*, no. 869 (2017): 34–36.

Fig. 22

View of the archaeological remains at the subway exit towards the maritime (photo Elisa Pegorin, 2025)



23

until 2017, are documented by thousands of photographs of the construction site. The close integration between the structural organism, the architectural space and the interventions in the archaeological area are however evident, in particular with regard to the roof of the mezzanine of the station and the pedestrian street, which form the artificial surface plane of Piazza Municipio between Via Medina and Via Acton. The roof of the tunnel consists of a lightened reinforced concrete plate structure, configured with two symmetrical overhangs of 9.5 metres spaced by a central slot 1 metre wide – the aforementioned *fenda*, through which it is possible to see Castel Sant’Elmo at the top of the hill.

The determination with which Siza pursued the construction of this sort of hypogeum *miradouro* (belvedere) that puts the underground city and the surface city in visual and physical relationship, brings us back to the beginning of these notes, to the fundamental element in the geography of Naples identified

Fig. 23

Torre dell’Incoronata inside the station (photo Elisa Pegorin, 2025)

in the “visual continuum” between the port and Castel Sant’Elmo. The visual axis founding the place comes true in the (immaterial) trace of the *fenda*, which guides the gaze to the surface from the portal of Palazzo San Giacomo, through the fountain of Neptune and the long spatial basin of the square, up to the port, detecting an offset with the façade of the Maritime Station. From this gap, we have said, arises the need for the Porta del Mare, a sort of bifocal device connecting the Marittima, the geometry, the spaces of the new arrangement and the historic visual axis between the port and Castel Sant’Elmo. The fountain appears represented in the project for the first time in 2010; its size and position did not yet fully correct the divergence of the two axes. In 2012 the fountain was specified in plan and height and was inserted in the wooden maquette of the entire area: from this moment on, it accompanied the general project in its evolution, changing in relation to the archaeological discoveries of the ancient port, the requests of the Sovrintendenza and the municipal administration that led, in 2021, to the suppression of the water basin due to alleged maintenance difficulties.

The latest changes, in 2022, are the result of an accurate general study of the surrounding urban environment, seeking the best possible relationship of the Porta Marittima with the archaeological remains, the ramp, the station and the new project of the Molo Beverello. It is evident that the Porta del Mare, assiduously cared for over ten years and awaiting construction, is not an ornamental object for Siza, of which the project can do less. On the contrary, by revealing and correcting the distortions introduced into the site by the twentieth century building of the Marittima, the new non-monumental testimonial legitimizes the contemporary project, inserting it according to a principle of continuity in the historical sequence of transformations that took place in the place, finally returned to its dimension as a public space, the heritage of the community.

As Siza says:

Naples is not just what you see, in glory or in degradation. But you can almost feel, under your feet, the breath of an invisible or hardly visible world, which has been coming for centuries, building the city of today²⁵.

25 Álvaro Siza, “Nápoles,” in *01 Textos por Álvaro Siza*, ed. Carlos Campos Morais (Porto: Civilização Editora, 2009), 309.

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White Walls, Ideological Margins: Revolution and Identity in Italian-Lusitanian Architectural Dialogues

Tendenza, Post-1974 Portuguese Architecture, Casabella Continuità, Ernesto Nathan Rogers, Álvaro Siza'

/Abstract

This article examines the exchanges between Italy and Portugal until the 1970s, demonstrating how Italian architectural culture informed, though not entirely determined, Portuguese project culture during and after the Estado Novo. Drawing on Portuguese journals, archives and built works, it identifies distinct phases of reception: the late 1940s engagement with *Casabella* and E. N. Rogers; the 1950s–60s appropriation of neo-rationalist methods; and the post-1974 assimilation of *Tendenza*. Central to this inquiry is the figure of Távora, whose network of Italian interlocutors (Gardella, Albini, Rogers) and dissemination of their discourse through the *Inquérito* (IARP) furnished decisive resources for the emerging Oporto School. The article further reconstructs Siza's early formation, mediated through Távora, Italian publications, and "Italian" readings of Aalto and Loos, tracing how his compositional principles evolved distinctly after the Revolution. Among the archival evidence examined is Silvia Viana de Lima's 1960 translation of Rogers' essay "L'Architettura moderna dopo la generazione dei Maestri," that reveals the depth of Portuguese engagement with Milanese discourse. The article contends that the Oporto School, while deeply indebted to Italian neo-rationalism, synthesized these conceptual instruments with vernacular traditions, late Nordic modernism, and revolutionary imperatives. A disciplinary position shaped by specific conditions: delayed modernization under dictatorship and subsequent post-revolutionary transformation. The study challenges historiographies that assimilate the Oporto School into the narrative of modern movement continuity, arguing that no full modernism took root in Portugal under the Estado Novo. Postwar Portuguese architecture is positioned instead as a belated but consequential "realistic postmodernity", a third way forged through transnational dialogue, in which Italian neo-rationalism played a constitutive rather than incidental role.

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Architect, educator and historian, Gregorio Carboni-Maestri works at the intersection of architectural project history, theory, practice and activism, forging tools to confront the structural crisis of capitalism and its spatial consequences. Born in 1977 and raised across Italy, Brazil, and Belgium, he splits his time between Genoa, Brussels, and Berlin, where his daughter Nehara lives. He studied at La Cambre, the Facoltà d'architettura civile del Politecnico di Milano, and FAUP in Oporto, where he took part in the historic center rehabilitation through the now-defunct CRUARB-CH. Before creating his own practice, he worked at offices such as RPBW, ACPV and Archea. He earned his doctorate in 2015 from the Università di Palermo with a dissertation on the American scene of the 1960s and 70s, under the guidance of Sandro Scarrocchia and Kenneth Frampton. Between 2013 and 2015, he was a visiting research scholar at Columbia University and received a Graham Foundation grant to create and study first-hand the Kenneth Frampton Archives. In 2017, he was appointed post-doctoral visiting research scholar at the CCA. He has since held visiting positions at the Politecnico di Milano (2024), Università di Bergamo (2025), and Université Laval in Québec (2026). He taught history of architecture, cities, and territories at UCLouvain and is currently Premier maître APA teaching architectural studio at La Cambre Horta, ULB. His research centres on the theory of the project and its entanglement with societal and ideological transformations, with particular emphasis on post-war developments and the *Tendenza*. In a period of war, systemic crisis and deepening inequality, he is committed to reclaiming architecture as a discipline that serves the invisibilized majority and the broader 99%.



In the 1930s, under the Estado Novo, Portuguese architectural journals looked to Fascist Italy as a model of modernity aligned with authoritarian values. This admiration was mostly aesthetic. With WWII and Portugal's isolation, the connection faded, leading to editorial stagnation until a renewed interest in Italy emerged in 1948.¹

This second moment—following the editorial connection of the 1930s and early 1940s—displayed new characteristics. Italy was no longer admired solely for its architecture vocabulary. The novelty lay in the interest in its approach—its theoretical and programmatic framework in relation to the city, to publishing, and to the academic world. *Casabella Continuità* and the group of architects associated with it, became an essential point of reference for *Arquitectura*. Added to this was *Arquitectura Portuguesa's* growing attention to design, furniture, interiors centered on Gio Ponti's *Domus*. Almost everything about Italy captured the interest of nearly everyone, each according to their own vision. Certain figures who had already appeared before the war re-emerged in a new light recognized as intellectuals: no longer simply designers, but individuals endowed with theoretical, political, and a social vision. They carried and echoed an architecture born of the Resistance - a voice of the newly established Italian Republic, born of a civil war and a partisan revolution.

In 1948 that love story between Portuguese and Italian architecture—never fully declared nor understood—seemed to solidify. The Portuguese magazine *Arquitectura* drew heavily from Italian architectural discourse, echoing its compositional and socio-political themes. It admired Italy's focus on social housing, especially at the 1948 Milan Triennale, and helped integrate these ideas into Portuguese architecture. In the final issues of 1949, the editorship of the journal *Arquitectura* was assumed by Alberto José Pessoa (1919-85), an architect who, at that time, still operated within a language of compromise, expressed through forms of prudent stylistic moderation. The change in direction was felt in the journal, marking a decline in interest, as well as in the political tone of the publication, which became more moderate. The debates and theoretical research topics, which until then had drawn vitality from Milanese experiences and the *Congresso*, diminished until they disappeared, giving way to a sequential publication of individual projects. These, although characterized by a high formal quality, did not possess great civic depth. Attention to what was being experimented with in Italy also waned.

In 1951, in the midst of Portugal's isolation, Fernando Távora attended the CIAM in England, where he met the future members of Team X, Coderch, and was introduced to the Torre Velasca, Zevi's writings and the Italian architect who would have a significant influence on his work and that of many Portuguese architects in the early 1950s.

¹ Gregorio Carboni-Maestri, "Fernando Távora: The Struggle from Português Suave to the Shifting Aesthetics of Resistance from 1923 to 1953," *Histories of Postwar Architecture* 5, no. 11 (2022): 216–55.

In the same year, even the traditionally conservative and interior design oriented magazine *Arquitetura Portuguesa* dedicated an issue to the IX Triennale di Milano, highlighting the Portuguese interest in Italian innovations. These modern, democratic works contrasted with the Portuguese reality.²

It was no coincidence that this infatuation with Italy flourished with particular intensity during the pivotal historical juncture of 1948-1950—years marked by attempts to break with the past within the most intimate folds of the critical processes of Portuguese architecture. The vast and feverish Italian postwar laboratory was observed with engaged admiration and an almost devout attention, which had tangible repercussions on the design front. These influences were destined to manifest, a few years later, with eloquent visibility, especially in the works of the new generations—Távora foremost among them.

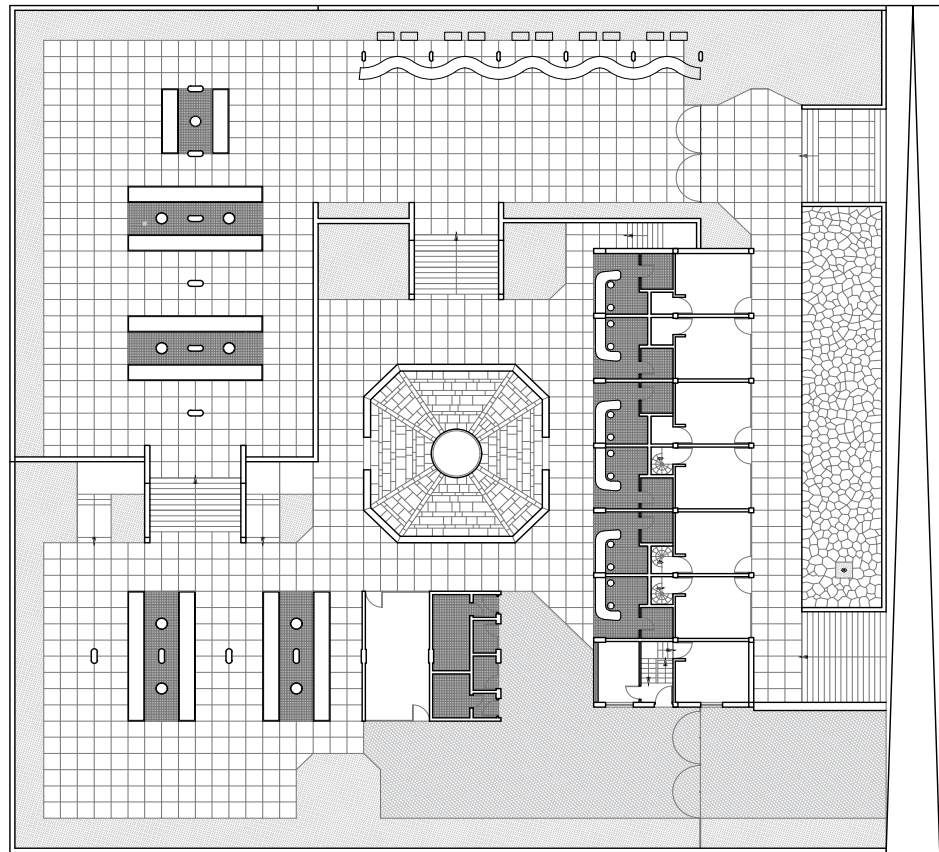
In 1953 the project for one of the most important buildings of the Távora studio began: the Mercado Municipal de Santa Maria da Feira, [Fig. 1] whose cantilevered roof recalls elements of projects such as Rome's Stazione Termini and reflected the stylistic trends that had been spreading in Italy for more than a decade. Távora, probably also influenced by his travels to Milan and the Italian magazines he perused, seems to have captured these developments in his work. Similarities could be traced in works such as Villa Marmont (1940) by Gio Ponti, but it also anticipated affinities that can be found in projects built in the same years, such as the kindergarten in QT8 in Milan (1951) by Arrigo Arrighetti [Fig. 2], Villa Baletti by Ignazio Gardella or Casa Armando Bini (1952–1953) by Ico Parisi.

During the development of this project, in 1955, the Portuguese State funded the Inquérito à Arquitectura Regional Portuguesa (IARP). Távora formed a team responsible for exploring the Minho region and directed this research towards a typological, historical, anthropological and sociological study with strong Italian resonances. Research that helped to demonstrate that popular architecture was more in line with complex and articulated visions than the suave style so beloved of the dictatorship. Research that had a considerable impact on the ESBAP and the work of his studio. A professional studio that the young Álvaro Siza Vieira joined in 1955. The latter had been attending ESBAP since 1949, a period marked by a dense succession of "Italian waves" that, despite cyclical hesitations, left a profound mark on the architectural educational landscape of the time. It was a period in which the novelties, ideas and creative tensions coming from Italy crept within the walls of the academies and found in the *Arquitetura* a vehicle for transmission.³

At the CIAM in Dubrovnik in 1956, Távora, inspired by the IARP and the Italian debate, proposed a "Third way" for Portuguese architecture, independent of both reactionary nationalism and abstract internationalism. In his narratives, he

2 Gregorio Carbone-Maestri, "Tendenze italiane, vie lusitane: architettura analoga: inchiesta storico-critico-analitica sulle influenze e dialettiche fra architettura moderna e contemporanea portoghese ed italiana, dai primi del Novecento, ai giorni nostri" (Master's thesis, Politecnico di Milano, 2007).

3 Álvaro Siza Vieira, interview by Gregorio Carbone-Maestri, Porto, 2004, audiocassette recording.



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frequently alluded to the heterogeneous milieu and international network cultivated during his involvement with CIAM. Among the few with whom he established ties were the Italians Albini and Gardella.⁴

As Siza himself recalled, joining Távora's office represented the threshold to global architecture for him, thanks to his international contacts. It was within this office, which was replete with foreign and Italian books and periodicals, that Siza encountered Bruno Zevi's book *Storia dell'architettura moderna 1. Da William Morris ad Alvar Aalto: la ricerca spazio-temporale*.⁵

The works of Zevi and, naturally, those of Aalto, along with many other Italian publications of the time, played a significant role in the cultural formation of the architect from Matosinhos. For the young Siza, this marked the beginning of a phase that had fundamental consequences for his education and early design activities: an "early Siza" *pre-25 de Abril*, itself divided into two sub-phases, indirectly conveying elements of the Italian debate.

The first was influenced by two key figures: his teacher and friend Fernando Távora, who embodied a Portuguese translation of currents coming mostly from Italy, amalgamating critical revisions by architects such as Rogers, Scarpa,

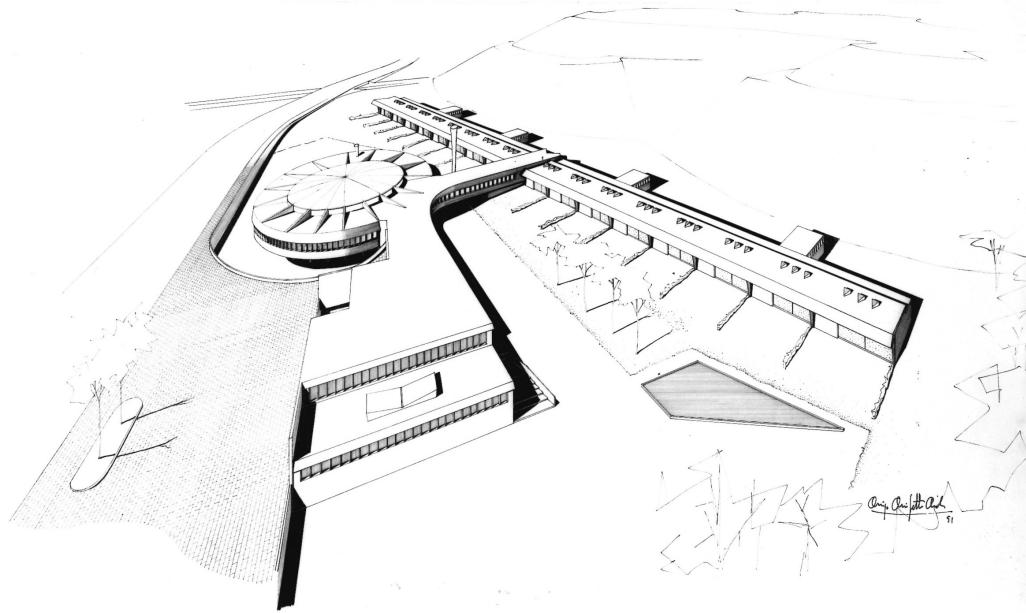
Fig. 1

Municipal Market of Santa Maria da Feira (1953–1959), drawings by Dario Erioli. Mantua Hub of the Politecnico di Milano, Távora Architetture Paesaggi Genealogie, research and teaching activities coordinated by Barbara Bogoni and Marco Cillis (in B. Bogoni and M. Cillis, *Architetture Paesaggi Genealogie*, Milan: Biblion, 2025)

⁴ Juan Frechilla Camoiras, "Fernando Távora: conversaciones en Oporto," *Arquitectura, revista del Colegio Oficial de Arquitectos de Madrid*, no. 261 (1986): 22–28.

⁵ Siza Vieira, interview by Carboni-Maestri, Porto, 2004.

TAX N.	COMUNE DI MILANO	UFFICIO TECNICO	DIVISIONE PALAZZI E MON.
18	PROGETTO DI UNA SCUOLA ELEMENTARE AL O.S.S.S.	Arrigo Arrighetti	
	VISTA DALL'ALTO	APRILE 1951	



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Albini, Ridolfi, Mollino, De Carlo, Gardella, and Valle, as well as second-hand Italian translations from the Catalan architectural context. The other figure, Alvar Aalto, became known to Siza thanks to Italy,⁶ as Italian rediscovered and enthusiastically disseminated the work of the previously little-known Finnish architect.

This “Italian” Aalto-Távora sub-phase was followed by another design moment influenced by an additional figure introduced in Portugal through the Italian debate: Adolf Loos.⁷ Despite a short period of stagnation, the magazine *Arquitectura* soon re-established itself, starting in 1956, as a central platform for Portugal’s most active architectural movements. It firmly established itself as the magazine later mythologized by historiography—a kind of Portuguese counterpart to *Casabella* *continuidade*, embodying an “*Arquitectura* *continuidade*” in its own right.

In that same year, Fernando Távora, together with Siza, began the vacation home for Dr. Fernando Ribeiro da Silva in Pinhal de Ofir (1956–1959).⁸ The aesthetic approach paralleled developments in Italy during the same period, such as Luigi Piccinato’s elementary school in Borgo Venusio, Matera (1953) and, to some extent, Gregotti, Meneghetti, and Stoppino’s Sforza House at Stradella (1953). Similar explorations were later undertaken by Helg and Albini in the Villa Allemandi at Punta Ala (1959–1961).

6 Kenneth Frampton, *Álvaro Siza: tutte le opere* (Milan: Electa, 1999), 574.

7 Francesco Dal Co, “Álvaro Siza and the Art of Fusion,” in *Álvaro Siza: Complete Works*, ed. by Kenneth Frampton (London: Phaidon, 2000), 7.

8 Michel Toussaint, *Casa de férias em Ofir / Summer House at Ofir* (Lisbon: Blau, 1992).

Fig. 2

Arrigo Arrighetti, school project, 1951, Milan. Archivio Storico Civico e Biblioteca Trivulziana, Arrigo Arrighetti Collection 24, file II, no. 7 (Comune di Milano – all legal rights reserved)

From that moment, *Arquitectura*, directed since 1957 by the very italoophile Nuno Portas, became more substantial, articulated, and comprehensive in every aspect, unprecedented in the periodical's history. It assumed the characteristics of a truly modern magazine, capable of representing what was being produced—or hoped to be produced—in Portugal. This endeavor established a particularly attentive and fruitful relationship with Italy, once again observed with extraordinary interest. The magazine resumed again a militant and progressive stance, characterized by a pronounced intellectual and social commitment, giving rise to a cultural action of great depth. The analyses spanned from painting to urban planning, from civil to religious architecture.

Parallel to these in-depth studies of Italian editorial taste, the magazine included other articles of equally Italian “origin”, concerning issues of industrial design and interior architecture.⁹ Expressions of the *professionismo colto*¹⁰ such as Vitellozzi, Eugenio Montuori, Figini and Pollini, with their *chiesa* La Martella, exemplifying a paradoxical industrial architectural language church,¹¹ Luigi Carlo Daneri, Castellazzi, Fadigati, and others found space in the magazine's pages.

In the subsequent year, 1958, Távora presented the results of his IARP inquiry to dictator Salazar, who was surprised by the architect's youth. Távora succeeded in shifting the design approach towards a neo-vernacular, almost idiomatic-brutalist attitude—inaugurating its Third way of post-Rogers flavour.

With the culmination of the Inquiry, Portuguese architecture seemed to emerge, embracing a broader perspective while maintaining its indigenous roots. No longer an observer, it actively engaged in a dialogue that aspired to an international dimension, free from the constraints imposed by the “suave Portuguese” style. A remarkable formal expressiveness matured, characterized by plastic-constructive richness interwoven with local references, measured realism, and an organic impetus. This synthesis found its epitome in Siza's nascent works. Nuno Porta's *Arquitectura* served as a chronicler of this evolution, while perpetuating its dialogue with Italy—a nation that provided a multifaceted reference point for both culturally committed figures and those less politically entangled. Its influence manifested in elegant intellectual explorations, audacious experiments in reinforced concrete reminiscent of Nervi,¹² or Ponti's professional rigor.

In its issue 68 (July 1960), *Arquitectura* dedicated sixteen pages to Siza, with emphasis on the *Grupo de Moradias em Matosinhos*.¹³ This work already exhibited distinctive traits of an evolving architectural poetics. But what was particularly surprising in this issue was the featured work of a hitherto unknown Silvia

9 Articles such as António Sena da Silva, “Formas utilitárias industriais e artesanais,” *Arquitectura*, no. 59 (1957): 31.

10 Maria Vittoria Capitanucci, *Il professionismo colto nel dopoguerra* (Milano: Solferino Edizioni, 2015).

11 Luigi Figini and Gino Pollini, “Igrejas de La Martella e Baggio,” *Arquitectura*, no. 60 (1957): 31–33.

12 Pier Luigi Nervi, “A influência do betão armado e os progressos técnicos e científicos sobre a arquitectura presente e futura,” *Arquitectura*, no. 71 (1960): 43.

13 Nuno Portas, “Grupo de moradias em Matosinhos,” *Arquitectura*, no. 68 (1960): 14.

Baudouin Viana de Lima. Her designs, whose architectural characteristics resonated with those of Siza, strikingly emphasized the emergence and stabilization of primary elements of architectural composition, notably the wall, which assumed an unexpected, if not unprecedented, centrality in the Lusitanian context, regaining a formal tension and semantic significance that had gradually dissipated in the post-World War II Portuguese landscape.

A renewed centrality that was more and more evident, albeit less explicitly, in the works of other masters such as Távora and Keil do Amaral. This resurgence was not merely stylistic but structural and spatial, reinstating the wall as a directive element in architectural space and placing it at the heart of a revitalized compositional play. In this process, a clear influence from the Milanese environment emerged, whose impact became increasingly manifest in defining not only a language but a precise design attitude. To dispel any ambiguity regarding the origins of these tendencies in the case of Silvia Viana de Lima, a document dated 23 March 1960 serves as evidence: the translation—undertaken by herself—of Ernesto Nathan Rogers' essay *A arquitetura moderna desde a geração dos mestres*,¹⁴ originally published in *Casabella Continuità*, no. 211, in June–July 1956, under the title “L'Architettura moderna dopo la generazione dei Maestri”.

A remarkable 30-page booklet, which remained somehow overlooked by historiography, resurfaced in 2004 during archival research.¹⁵ At first glance, this work might be dismissed as a mere editorial endeavour—a straightforward translation of a minor document. However, deeper examination reveals it to be of significance. As elucidated by Carlos Ramos in the volume's introduction, the text embodies the final wish of its translator, the young Silvia Baudouin Viana de Lima—“an eminent and dear pupil of this School.” Aware of her impending demise, she entrusted her parents with the publication of this specific *Casabella* essay from E. Nathan Rogers, deeming it “a matter of honour.”

This poignant biographical detail underscores the profound esteem in which the Milan School was held by that generation of students. The publication, though concise, encapsulates and elucidates a previously unnamed movement that, within the subterranean currents of Portuguese architectural education and practice—particularly in Oporto—fostered a privileged cultural rapport between Portugal and Italy. Prior to this, such a connection could only be inferred from fragmentary evidence: appearances of Italian articles in periodicals, stylistic references, conceptual parallels in the works of intellectually attuned architects, interviews or the infrequent travels of professionals.

Ramos's heartfelt testimony in the introduction is particularly illuminating:

It is since the advent of Modern Architecture that, from time to time – as if to call to order the professionals who, less alert and more inexperienced, are irresistibly seduced by the apparent vigour and variety of contemporary

¹⁴ Ernesto Nathan Rogers, *A arquitetura moderna desde a geração dos mestres*, trans. Silvia Viana de Lima (Porto: Edições C.I.A.M., 1960).

¹⁵ Carbone-Maestri, “Tendenze italiane, vie lusitane,” 111.

aesthetic concepts and currents – the great stars descend into the field with their unquestionable authority, to which others have already bestowed their faith and their valid and opportune contribution and testimony. Ernesto Rogers' manifesto fits into this healthy rotativism, [...] whose content and coherence of thought and action deserve to be highlighted. The analysis he makes of the 'four stars of the first magnitude' – Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier – and the distinct role he gives to each of them in the task of definitive consolidation of the 'movement', is simply impressive in its fidelity, affection and respectful attitude. A masterly lesson in idealism and exemplary 'intransigence', [...] doctrine generously and prophetically employed in it. Ernesto Rogers' manifesto fits into this salutary rotation, [...] whose content and coherence of thought and action merit emphasis.¹⁶

In the ensuing years, Távora embarked upon the conception of both the town hall and a banking institution in Aveiro (1963–1967). **[Fig. 3]** In this venture, he grappled with the notion of monumentality, approaching it with an unexpectedly intimate perspective, intertwining it with explorations and studies aimed at rejuvenating the city's decorative lexicon. This vision materialized through the building's proportions and its dialogue with the surroundings, as well as in the design of its apertures, which harkened back to the architectural heritage of numerous pre-war public edifices on the Italian peninsula, resonating with the movements led by Albin, Rogers, Samonà, and notably, Gardella.

And, years later, within the coastal enclave of Caxinas, the Cova Housing Complex (1970–72) emerged as another articulation of an "Italian-imported" sensibility in the architectural language of Álvaro Siza. In this case an indirect one, Adolf Loos. Herein, one discerns the embryonic formulation of a poetics that would become definitive of his oeuvre: the austere, implacable white wall. This device, later substantiated and reaffirmed in the post-Revolução years by the theoretical armature of Aldo Rossi and the Milanese school, constitutes a salient manifestation of what has come to be recognised as the Oporto School—a phenomenon that, while sharing certain formal and theoretical affinities with the Tendenza, emerged from distinctly Portuguese historical and political conditions, processing Italian influences through its own critical framework.¹⁷

The 25th of April 1974 marked not merely the overthrow of a regime, but an inflection point in Portugal's architectural trajectory. The Revolution, propelled by a coalition of young military officers, students and workers—bearing socialist aspirations that, as in post-'45 Italy, would be subsequently deflected by the elites—acted as a catalyst for architectural redefinition.

16 Translation by the author.

17 See, for example, Manuel Mendes, "Recent Portuguese Architecture (A Widespread Geography, Some Coincidences)," *Casabella*, no. 579 (May 1991): 51–55; Nuno Portas and Manuel Mendes, *Portugal: Architecture, the Last Twenty Years* (Milan: Electa, 1991); and Jorge Figueira, *Escola do Porto: um mapa crítico* (Coimbra: eldlarq, 2002).



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Prior to this juncture, the national architectural discourse, like the political condition, had wavered in a liminal state of confused and fragmented experimentations, typical of the 1960s and early 1970s. This uncertainty, paradoxically, bore traces of an Italian derivation too. But it was through the convulsive energy of the Revolution that Portuguese architecture underwent a decisive rupture—both epistemic and formal. In this crucible, architecture was summoned not merely to respond, but to intervene; not merely to reflect, but to redeem.

Out of this rupture emerged clarity: typological, compositional, and stylistic. A new disciplinary consciousness coalesced—one that gravitated around the

Fig. 3

Fernando Távora, Town Hall and Caixa Geral de Depósitos, 1963–1967, Aveiro (Photograph Copyright © Paulo Lousinha – all legal rights reserved)

figure and legacy of Fernando Távora, but also benefited of the Italian cultural and design armamentarium. Within this matrix, the architectural project assumed an ethical valence, becoming an instrument of societal reconfiguration.

This emergent ethos was documented, interpreted, and disseminated in the pages of *Arquitectura*, the journal that became both chronicler and agitator of the new condition. And the impact was immediate: on the 6th of August 1974, the first provisional government instituted the SAAL (Serviço Ambulatório de Apoio Local), under the direction of Nuno Portas, then Secretary of State for Housing and Urbanism. Thus commenced one of the most generous and paradigmatic episodes of post-revolutionary architectural praxis—a noble, if ultimately thwarted, attempt to realign architecture with the emancipatory aspirations of the *polis*.¹⁸

Among the most emblematic examples of this transformative period stands Álvaro Siza's SAAL São Victor project, a true paradigm of the post-revolutionary era that commenced in the year of 1974. He had just completed two projects: the Borges & Irmão bank headquarters in Vila do Conde (1964–1974) and an unexecuted office building planned for Avenida D. Afonso Henriques in Oporto (1968–1974). These designs revealed the depth of the change that would occur in his design language after 1974, starting with São Victor, serving as silent testimony to the transition from a freer compositional attitude to an architectural philosophy imbued with social responsibility.

In both pre-'74 instances, traces of earlier phases remained evident: compositional systems wherein architectural elements—windows, doors, walls, planes, even the rhythm of the *pilotis*—never appeared as isolated or autonomous entities but seemed to emerge from a concatenation of complex design moves. These often rooted in a diagonal and dynamic logic that favoured spatial tension over symmetry, flowing beyond the rigid definition of parts. With the onset of the revolutionary fervour and societal upheaval of that period, this aesthetic-design phase in Siza's work came to an abrupt and decisive end. An immediate and irreversible metamorphosis occurred, leading to an Italian-accent linguistic transfiguration evident in the design of the S. Victor housing estate, completed four years later. Here, a language of walls, linearity, and order manifested, permeated by a metaphysical quality akin to the *Tendenza* movement. This emerging language crystallized into the archetypal expression of Siza and, by extension, the contemporary national architectural identity.

This solidarity did not arise through a direct and unequivocal link with concepts such as 'sensitivity,' 'universality,' 'spontaneity,' or 'regionalism' attributed to various Oporto School authors. Instead, the quintessence of erudite and intentional Portuguese architecture reflected a particular ideological expression of a post-revolutionary Portuguese identity—civic, almost generic—*chã*—. An

18 José António Bandeirinha, *O processo SAAL e a arquitectura no 25 de abril de 1974* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2007).

existential—and political—connection with Italy had been established, wherein Rationalism, the Third Way, Neorealism, and the Tendenza represented not merely stylistic panoramas but conceptual resources that Portuguese architects critically appropriated and transformed, synthesizing them with neo modernist vocabularies, vernacular traditions and revolutionary urgencies into a distinctive architectural position that exceeded its Italian sources. Siza’s “white wall,” which subsequently became almost a national linguistic symbol for all architects, did not so much allude to Le Corbusier’s avant-garde purism but rather to the millenary tradition evoked during that revolutionary period.

It became evident how the prior inclinations of the School of Oporto toward the critical experiences of Italian schools—particularly the Milanese, active between the 1930s and 1960s—were configured as dialogue, admiration, observation, emulation, influence, shared sensitivity, transmission, and study. These elements, conveyed largely through figures like Fernando Távora and others, generated a profound bond destined to take root deeply in the essence of Portuguese architecture. Thus, at a historical juncture urgently demanding design theories and practices capable of responding to the era’s complexity—based on a rational, materialist, and, in part, communist-inspired vision of society and space—the infusion of contributions from the Tendenza movement and what might, with certain critical indulgence, be termed today as a “third Italian infatuation,” asserted itself with surprising naturalness. This bond seemed to connect Aldo Rossi to the new generations of the insurrectionary period, with feedback that integrated into Portuguese architectural culture. From this relationship, from this composed passion, emerged, in part, the contemporary Portuguese architecture as we recognize it today, with figures such as Álvaro Siza Vieira, Eduardo Souto de Moura, Gonçalo Byrne, and others, not solely linked to the School of Oporto.

In the evolution of Portuguese architecture during the post-Carnations period, the nascent architectural language could not overtly adopt the lexicon of Rossi. This restraint stemmed not only from Rossi’s style being of Italian origin—while Portuguese architects aspired to realize finally a distinctly “popular” architecture—but also from prevalent misinterpretations. Initially, many misconstrued the style of Rossi and the Tendenza movement, perceiving it as a progressive iteration, or at worst, a ‘fascist’ version of Português Suave. This led to profound misunderstandings and distortions within the Portuguese community regarding Rossi’s work, with some hastily labeling him and superficially associating his architecture with the monumentalism characteristic of Muzio and Piacentini.¹⁹

Nevertheless, this did not deter numerous projects from emulating Milan’s Gallaratese, resulting in what could be termed an acute “Gallaratesitis” within the Portuguese architectural context of that era, of which Malagueira [Fig. 4] also formed an indirect part.²⁰ In Malagueira (1977–97) this architectural ethos finds

19 Siza Vieira, interview by Carboni-Maestri, Porto, 2004.

20 Carboni-Maestri, “Tendenze italiane, vie lusitane,” 131.

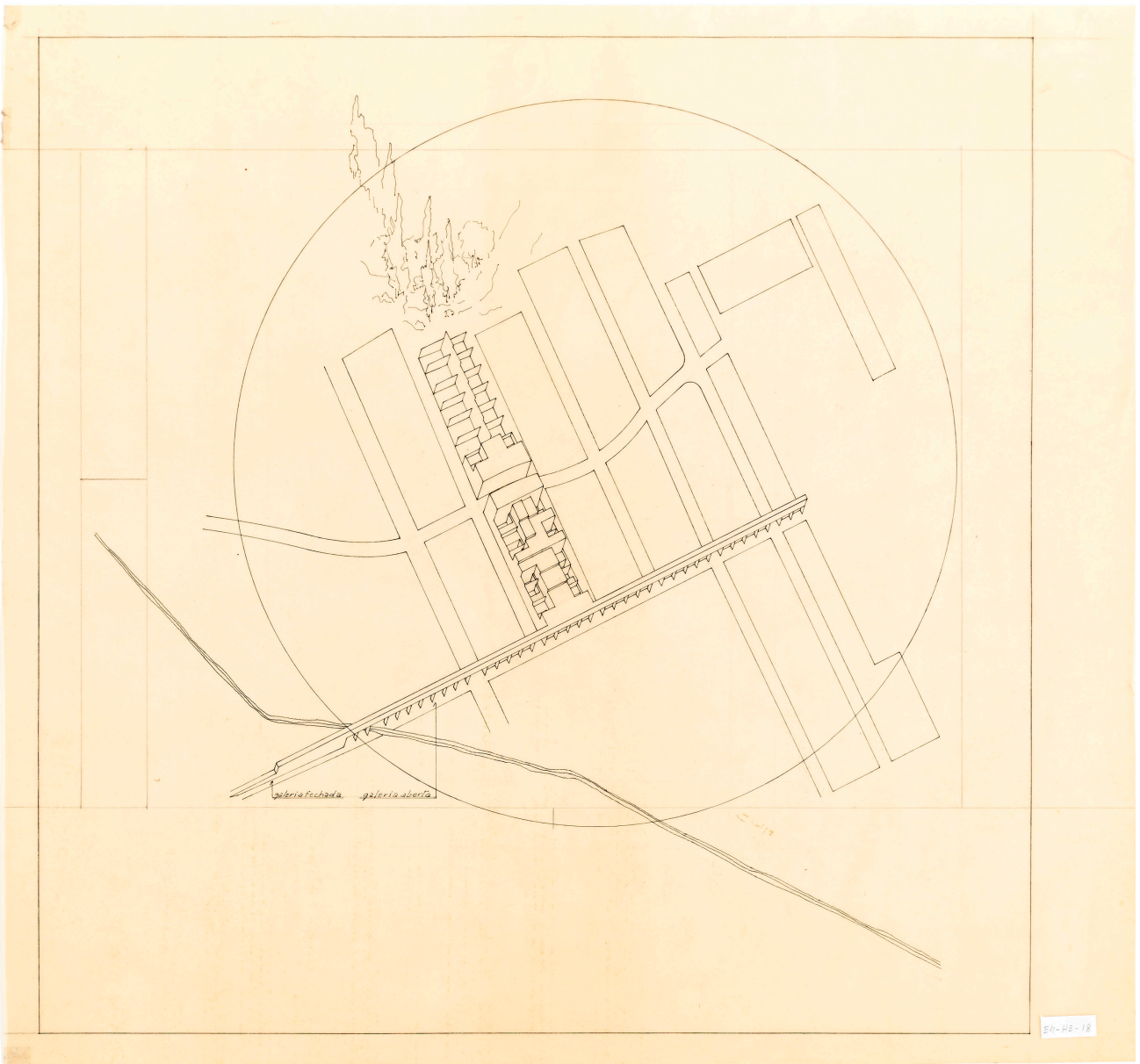
its most articulate expression. Not solely in the urban morphology redolent of Rossi's *L'architettura della città*, but more pointedly in the typological rigour and the dialectical deployment of apertures—windows and doors conceived not as scenic episodes but as anti-picturesque instruments, evoking a reterritorialised Loos filtered through Aldo's theoretical lens. This was a post-revolutionary poetics in which form became a vehicle of historical redress.

The influence of Rossi's thought and Italian neo-rationalism permeated this phase, initially under subtle guises, occasionally camouflaged, yet betrayed by recurrent and significant lapses that unveiled a new compositional matrix. In the São Victor project, for instance, this presence manifested, albeit subdued, in one of the most eloquent details: the incorporation of existing ruined walls into the design of the popular houses. These remnants were intentionally preserved as unmistakable signs of the Rossi school's influence—an intellectual, Piranesian gesture that simultaneously accepted reality and acknowledged the traces left by Salazarism in a Portugal both reborn and ancient, gradually emerging from a half-century of enforced torpor.

Rossi's echo extended beyond this fragment of ruin; it also revealed itself in the regular and repeated sequence of windows and doors, which, for the first time, appeared as elements endowed with formal autonomy—recognizable and complete. This regularity reflected the overall order of the design, determined by the nature of the program—a series of affordable housing units—and the constraints imposed by the client. The overarching compositional strategy established the key principles: walls as continuous, autonomous planes; regular fenestration as elements with formal independence; ruins incorporated as signs of historical memory. São Victor itself employed coloured render—pale turquoise / teal—rather than the white surfaces that would later become emblematic. These compositional and typological principles, drawing upon Loosian and Aalto matrices, would crystallize in subsequent works into the austere white plaster that became definitive of Siza's mature language and, by extension, of Portuguese post-revolutionary architecture.

Thus emerged an architectural language marked by neo-purist forms of modernist taste, one that resonated with Italian neo-rationalism while remaining irreducible to it, shaped equally by local vernacular traditions, the specificity of the revolutionary moment, and a critical engagement with multiple international sources. While these forms referenced Italian precedents, they also mirrored a still unresolved, perhaps incongruous, relationship between that generation of designers and the historical masters of the Modern Movement.

During its prolonged and stagnating interlude under the New State, vast stretches of Portuguese twentieth-century architecture lay inert, lulled and slumbered beneath the anaesthetic grip of fascism. This dominion forbade modernity, in its broadest sense, from emerging or taking root in Portugal. In architecture, what the regime wrought stood as an interrupted, then fragmentary, and finally compromised and frustrated modernity. An unclaimed modernity



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remained untested, recuperated only in fragments, and conformed ideologically to the regime's will. Even when the belated and fleeting embrace of American corporate modernism fell under the agonizing clutch of Estado Novo, the more conscious architects discerned, with bitter clarity, that nothing in the formalities of late *modernisme* bore any intrinsic promise of democracy or emancipation.

Yet this delay in Portugal's architectural evolution left the first purist Modernity—its initial ideological and formal phase—untouched in the eyes of some architects, a vision untainted, a distant memory of an ideal never realized. This shielded Modernity lingered untouched in its formal purity, suspended within the spirit of its time, unburdened by the once-alluring enthusiasms and naïvetés of the technical-futuristic positivism of its national bourgeoisie.

In time, this idealization, caught in the narrow oscillation of its growth, transformed itself. To the architects of Oporto, it became a pragmatic, political,

Fig. 4

Álvaro Siza, site plan with axonometric housing blocks, 1977, Malagueira, Évora (Ink on film, 479 × 510 mm. DMC 3140, Drawing Matter Collections)

critical, then resilient, and above all, resistant formal weapon of struggle. Yet it yielded, as all things must, to the unrelenting force of reality and the widening gulf of historical distance. It turned into a postmodern modernity. And if, with the Revolution, modernity arrived bereft of the Modern architectural movement, Modernism and Modernity could not be mistaken for a single phenomenon.

Yet, though in Portugal, the full bloom of Modernity did not find its consummation before the Revolution, this truth is now gainsaid by an ever-multiplying host of historians, scholars, and academic institutions. These, often abetted by public authorities through congresses, gatherings, publications, exhibitions, learned orations, and university research, weave an illusory narrative of a “normalized” Lusitanian modernity. The purpose of such a fabrication appears to be the construction of a historiography that secures Portugal’s rightful place within the grand current of European modernism. And yet, as with Lusotropicalism’s palliation of colonial brutalities, this endeavour, at best, overlooks—or at worst, erases—the dictatorial regime’s oppressive shadow that held Portugal and its colonies in its grip from 1930 to 1974, stifling, arresting, and isolating the nation.

The Estado Novo did not merely constrain the Modern Movement in Portugal—it reduced it to an episodic, peripheral, and, in the grand reckoning, wholly inconsequential affair. This revisionist effort belongs to a larger, insidious tendency of our times, whereby the past is not so much interrogated through the lens of rigorous inquiry and empirical truth but rather refashioned upon unspoken melancholies, enforced rehabilitations, reworkings for the sake of prestige, and identity-driven revanchism.²¹ This inclination, ever more prevalent in contemporary historiography, bends itself to the confirmation of distorted narratives by singling out exceptions and anomalies, thereby turning History into what one *wishes* had come to pass, rather than what truly *did*.²²

However, unlike what some critics contended—and often the very designers embroiled in such analyses—the Oporto School’s approach did not embody an evolving postmodernity. Jorge Figueira, to cite an instance, in his *A Periferia Perfeita: Pós-Modernidade na Arquitectura Portuguesa, Anos 60 - Anos 80*, depicted Portugal as an “ideal periphery,” for, in the fullest sense of a postmodern exercise, it no longer appeared in relation to a dominant “modern” center. From this vantage, Portuguese architecture might have arisen “more majestic.”²³

Once more, there seemed to be a will to weave narratives of virtue and rehabilitation through the prism of the School, as though, by means of a process of so-called *presentism*, historiography might rewrite an idealized past.²⁴ Yet, such had never been the purpose of historiography. And here, the postmodern

21 Richard J. J. Yidana, “Controlling Narratives, Controlling Histories: Political Discourses of Anticolonial Nationalism” (PhD diss., State University of New York at Binghamton, 2006).

22 See, for example, John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (New York: Routledge, 2019), which exemplifies this tendency.

23 Jorge Figueira, “A periferia perfeita: pós-modernidade na arquitectura portuguesa, anos 60–anos 80” (PhD diss., Universidade de Coimbra, 2009), 14.

24 François Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time*, trans. Saskia Brown (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

ought to have been enclosed within clearer bounds and properly understood.²⁵ One could scarcely speak of an “after” in a nation that had never truly known an authentic modern phase. But the matter did not rest there. For, even supposing one acknowledged a “subsequent” in the sense of critical transcendence—a notion valid for Távora and his circle of peers—the label “postmodern” still posed its troubles. Particularly so when the revolutionary age dawned—that moment of socio-political modernity’s ascent, an immune response against the capitalist-fascist tumor, borne of antibodies cultivated through years of political engagement, even within the realm of architecture.

This, in turn, averted the perilous descent into the abyss of antimodern postmodern cynicism—the unraveling of Marxist legacies under the weight of deconstruction, the dissonant fugue of Parisian post-structuralism, the demobilizing *riflusso* of the 1980s, the ethereal abstractions of Gianni Vattimo in 1983, the illusory finality heralded by Fukuyama’s end of history in 1992, or the self-congratulatory dismantling of meaning celebrated by Mark Wigley in 1994. Happily, such illusions now lie behind us. We have awakened to the enduring flow of history and with it, the promise of new April 25ths. And white walls. With windows.

25 Pérez Zagorin, “Historiography and Postmodernism: Reconsiderations,” *History and Theory* 29, no. 3 (1990): 263–74.

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VISUAL

After all, 'tutti Spinaceto!' Adrift, on Nanni Moretti's back

Daniel Maurício Santos de Jesus



1

BIOGRAPHY

Daniel Jesus (b. 1969, Vila Real de Santo António, Portugal) is an architect, academic, and integrated researcher at the CIAUD research center at the Lisbon School of Architecture, Universidade de Lisboa. He holds a PhD in Theory and Practice of Architectural Design (2014), funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), and a degree in Architecture (1994) from the same institution, the latter supported by a grant from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

His doctoral research, entitled (In)discipline of Architecture: Fictional Drift into a Didactic Statement, Resistant to Absurdity, laid the groundwork for his ongoing investigation into the correlations between architectural production and its social, political, and economic contexts. He currently coordinates SUSTENTA - Laboratory for Sustainable Project, an initiative that operationalizes this research into practical inquiry.

As a faculty member in the Department of Architecture/Project since 1999, Jesus teaches specialized didactics in the Master's program (2nd cycle), focusing on the course Architecture and Ideology. In this capacity, he also supervises Master's theses stemming from this thematic area. His academic work is further disseminated through regular participation as a lecturer and co-organizer of international seminars, as well as through publications in peer-reviewed journals and edited book chapters.

Prior to his full-time academic career, he practiced architecture for a decade (1994–2004). Significant from this period was his work as co-author of several public buildings in Timor-Leste, including the Diocesan Curia of Dili and the Baucau Maternity School, developed within the Group of Studies for the Rehabilitation of Timor Lorosae (GERTIL).



<https://doi.org/10.60923/issn.2611-0075/21993> / ISSN 2611-0075
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Preamble

The year was 1994 (thirty-one years ago), and I was watching *Caro Diario* (in its original version) at cinema *King* – my first encounter with Nanni Moretti’s filmography [Figg. 1a-1b]. One might say I was, quite literally, run over. By an intriguing dramaturgy, tangential to the Theatre of the Absurd (Ionesco, Beckett, Adamov, Pinter, etc), heightened by the cynical use of language and an exhilarating musical selection – *Batonga* (Angélique Kidjo), *I’m Your Man* (Leonard Cohen), *Didi* (Khaled), *The Köln Concert* (Keith Jarrett). It was infeasible not to climb onto the back of Nanni’s Vespa, which became a mediating device for staging a *dérive*¹ through Rome (and Ostia), little knowing how premonitory it would be of a certain ontological predisposition. This first morettian film predisposed me to an avid search for his earlier works, a retrospective binge-watching spree, and poorly tempered anticipation for each new release.

“Ideological terrorist”, “grand inquisitor”, “ferocious portraitist”—the many definitions of Moretti’s singular personality all stem from the author’s relentless pursuit of language’s mystifications and the absurdities of communication.²

After showering the auteur with praise, I enthusiastically shared his films with students: “The professor has it on DVD!”—a joke in an era of streaming and unchecked accessibility. From then on, a Nanni’s film would punctuate every period, every revolutionary upheaval in my life. Nanni and I, *fratelli!*

Nanni, Architect in Rome

Even when I go to other cities, the only thing I enjoy doing is looking at buildings. How lovely it would be to make a film solely of buildings, of panoramic shots of buildings.³

The voiceover accompanied the scooter’s journey through Rome, which, under the atypical August silence, offers itself as an alternative semantic field. The subtitled representation belies the arbitrariness of the *dérive*, summoning the viewer into a conflicting spacetime of contemplation, imagination, and evocation. Like someone selecting postcards for friends, the Rome of *Caro Diario* first insinuates itself conspiratorially to the viewer, implicating them as co-protagonists of the drift: “Garbatella, 1927; Villaggio Olimpico, 1960; Vigne Nuove, 1987; Monteverde, 1939”. Fragments framed and sequenced by the

1 By direct reference to the “Theory of the Dérive” by Situationist thinker Guy Debord, the *dérive* constitutes a psychogeographical procedure, allowing the study of urban environments’ effects on the psychological and emotional states of those who undertake it. In practice, beginning from a predetermined location, the individual or group embarking on a *dérive* will follow an undefined route, allowing the urban milieu itself to “reveal” the path at random. The theory was first articulated in 1958 and published in draft form in the *Internationale Situationniste* journal.

2 *O cinema e uma geração italiana* (Lisbon: Cinemateca Portuguesa, 1992), exhibition catalogue, Lisbon, March 21–April 13, 1992. Translation by the author.

3 *Caro diario*, film, directed by Nanni Moretti (1993; Lisbon: Atalanta Filmes), DV. All translations in English were done by the author.

Figg. 1a-b

Left: Nanni Moretti (director). *Caro Diario* (Dear Diary). 1993. Film poster. Rome: Sacher Film, 1993. <https://www.sentire-ascoltare.com/news/caro-diario-poster-film-nanni-moretti-4k/>, Accessed May 15, 2025.
Right: Nanni Moretti (director). *Il Sol dell’avenire* (A Brighter Tomorrow). 2023. Film poster. Rome: Sacher Film / Fandango, 2023. <https://ciaotutti.nl/italiaanse-taal/film/il-sol-dell-avvenire-nanni-moretti/>, Accessed May 15, 2025

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motorised lens invoke a topological reading of space, with no greater intrigue than the figuration of an intuited relationship between architectural forms and the memories of their making – an irresistible recipe for a neophyte in architectural practice, as I was in distant 1994.

But political tremors soon surfaced: “Sometimes, I’m not content. And I say I’m preparing a film. And the host asks, ‘What’s it about?’ A Trotskyist pastry chef in conformist 1950s Italy – it’s a musical.”⁴ The contemplative serenity of the *dérive* gives way to a sudden jolt, a direct interrogation of life and its *mode d’emploi*. Perec’s novel⁵ and its fragmented structure – a labyrinthine exploration of a Parisian apartment building through “Jigsaw puzzle” methodology (mapping lives through objects/architectural details) – translates directly to Moretti’s *Caro Diario* vignettes. Also, its focus on urban narratives, spatial critique, and ideological interpellation, mirrors the analysis of Moretti’s *derive* as an exposure of “colliding worlds”. Thus, the correlation between *Architecture and Ideology*⁶ is summoned by the political subjectivity of the curious inquisitor [Fig. 2]: the compulsive doorbell-ringer and the homeowner who answers – occupants of the exterior and interior spaces moulded by each unequal regime – interact on the threshold born out of both a theory of borders and a theory of property.⁷ Yet this



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interpretation only crystallised later, as I came to recognise the seminal nature of Moretti’s cinema. An equivalent proposition is refined further when the narrator invites the viewer to follow him to Spinaceto:

4 *Caro diario*, film, directed by Nanni Moretti.
5 See Georges Perec, *La vie mode d’emploi* (Paris: Hachette, 1978).
6 Faculty of Architecture, University of Lisbon. “Didactic Theme and Correspondent Teaching Module Developed within the Context of the 5th Year MIARQ [Integrated Master’s in Architecture].” https://www.fa.ulisboa.pt/images/20242025/Temas_5_ano/TURMA_C_Daniel_Jesus.pdf, Accessed April 30, 2025.
7 Thomas Piketty, *Capital and Ideology*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020), 15.

Fig. 2
Daniel Jesus, title sheets and expository captions for academic briefs in the 5th year of the Integrated Master’s in Architecture at the University of Lisbon, academic years 2023/24 and 2024/25. Theme: *Architecture and Ideology*

a recently built neighbourhood; always invoked pejoratively: What, are we in Spinaceto now? Where are you from? Spinaceto? Then I recall reading a script titled *Flight from Spinaceto*, about a boy who escapes that neighbourhood, leaves home, never to return. So, let's go see Spinaceto!⁸

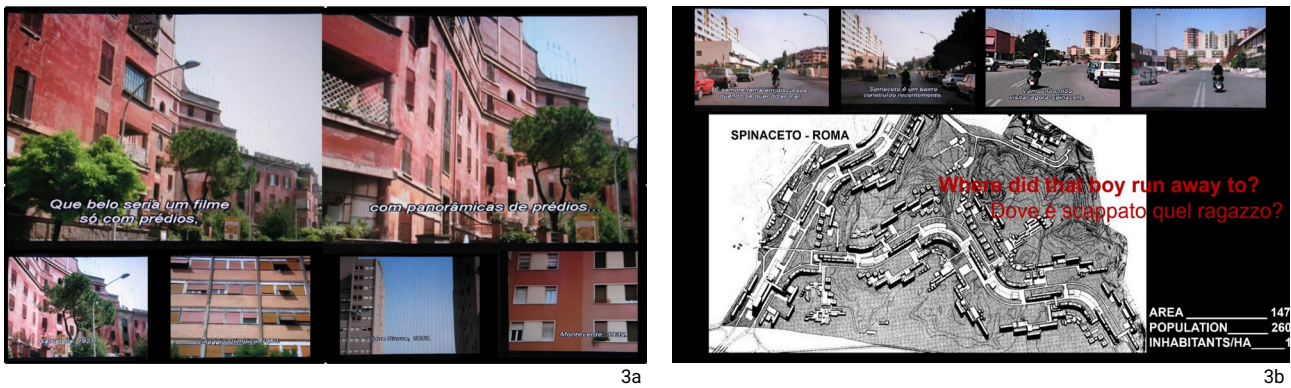
The road leads to the neighbourhood, but a retaining wall blocking the Vespa's path stages an absurdist exhaustion of intrigue—Spinaceto's concrete estrangement versus the fugitive boy's origins. Yet, in passing, a fleeting exchange occurs with an occasional interlocutor—a lazy Estragon in sunglasses, perched on the boundary wall—waiting for Godot?⁹:

I imagined Spinaceto much worse. It's not that bad.

Exactly! I was just thinking the same!

Ciao!¹⁰

With the interaction concluded—the point was made: *damn modern urbanism*—we release the narrator to drift along gentler paths (*dérive*: feminine noun, evolving with the waves; at the mercy of the current; adrift; without a way of life; without governance) while we linger a little longer (at a safe distance) near Spinaceto, parsing the text as a transitive verb—to *dérive*, to deviate from the normal course [Fig. 3a-3b].



The Late Triumph of L'unité, Back From an Early Origin

From the strict observation of buildings, or panoramic shots of buildings, one discerns how the Spinaceto neighbourhood—occupying 187 hectares and housing roughly 26,000 inhabitants—equates to, say, the Nuovo Corviale building: 986 metres linearly accommodating 1,600 units, designed from 1972 onwards and constructed in Rome between 1975 and 1984 to house around 4,500 people. They are equivalent in marking the epilogue of a period of heroic modernist achievements, materialising the political agenda of the Modern Movement – laudable in its aim to universalise access to housing. Large-scale, concentrated

Fig. 3a-3b

Frame analysis from *Caro Diario* (Moretti, 1993), Chapter 1: *In Vespa* - with comparative urban analysis diagrams examining the circulatory hierarchy and socio-spatial configuration of Spinaceto, Rome's postwar neighbourhood (*quartiere*).

8 Moretti, *Caro diario*. Translation by the author.

9 Samuel Beckett, *En attendant Godot* [Waiting for Godot] (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1952), act 1.

10 Moretti, *Caro diario*. Translation by the author.

housing projects erupted as the ultimate technical response to the socialist project initiated in the 19th century. The application of Taylorist mass-production strategies, based on unity and large-scale urban repetition, would later be demonised as the nefarious effect of a conception that sociologically and economically quartered the lived fabric of the city. The gradual abandonment of this mandate from the 1980s onward was replaced by neoliberal optimism in the market economy as the necessary and sufficient instrument to address historical universal aspirations. And it left these heroic Noah's Arks adrift, as ruined testimonies of a time when the imagination of an egalitarian and just possibility once seemed attainable.

Yet, the boy resolved to abandon Spinaceto must be granted the right to disillusionment with the lived response materialised by modern architecture and urbanism. And he must be granted the initiative to head south in search of a milder, more convenient future, inspired by Mediterranean geography and climate as cradles of Epicurean good living. However – as travel literature attests, from its archetype, Homer's *Odyssey*, to successive iterations like Voltaire's *Candide* – we learn that journeys are made of misadventures and deceptions. The case in point: a boy escaping Spinaceto would be no exception to this age-old literary praxis.

And so he did, this spinaceto: first, enlisting the help of a cousin in Naples' import-export business to secure temporary passage on one of the two remaining buildings of the Vele di Scampia, a residential complex in Naples, within an area of 115 hectares. It was constructed between 1962 and 1975, but five of these buildings were successively demolished in 1997, 2000, 2003, 2020, and from the two remaining, only one will be redeveloped. Too bad, our hero eventually traded the deluge of the social project, leaving the last of the stranded flotilla of ships, for boarding the "real" cruise ship MSC World Europa – a greater deception, one might think, many of us have fallen for in our time, lured by promises of a more modern, prosperous vessel, a more democratic and fraternal voyage. How, then, to fault his confusion in directly associating collective housing with transatlantic travel, joining the long list of victims of Le Corbusier's prestidigitation, the same sleight of hand that mistook house arrangements for cities, and cities for mechanical devices like cruise ships.

It is well known how ocean liners enthralled the *architect of architects*, who found in efficient technological formalisation the ideal metaphor for his "machine for living." Fascinated by the technological forms of cars, planes, and ships, relying on technical rigour and unequivocal efficacy, he invoked the transatlantic liner as a recurring paradigm in his theoretical output. The device interested him as a manifestation of "indisputable functionality," a premise foundational to validating modernist dogma in architecture. He saw this technological figuration as a possible analogy – expressed literally on various occasions and scales in his built work, notably in the Unité d'Habitation project. The ship-building, successively anchored to post-WWII aspirations of dignified universal residence—first incarnated in Marseille, later reborn as Spinaceto, Corviale, or

Scampia—became the faithful custodian of the Arcadian nature informing the modernist imaginary [Figg. 4a-4b].

In “The Unité d’Habitation at Marseille as a Collective Housing Prototype”, William Curtis declares Le Corbusier’s Marseille prototype pivotal in the evolution of thought and materialisation of collective housing:

It was a difficult building to ignore for any later architect facing analogous tasks. To chart the lessons learned from it, and the various reactions to it, is to provide an extraordinarily clear summary of Western architectural attitudes over a period of nearly a quarter of a century.¹¹



4a



4b

If formal analogy is indisputable under the expressive freedom of the architect-author, the lasting effects of the rhetoric extolling machine efficiency – i.e., promoting the symbiotic relationship between form and function in transoceanic vessels—deserve renewed interpretation in light of present conditions.

11 William J. R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture since 1900*, 3rd ed. (London: Phaidon Press, 1996), 437.

Figg. 4a-4b

Formal and symbolic analogy between residential typology and cruise ship “architecture”: Case study of high-rise buildings in Vele di Scampia, Naples (sourced online, 15 May 2025)

Indeed, Le Corbusier used the *machine* primarily as a rhetorical device: stripped of functional value, became modernist rhetoric – a semiotic stand-in for progress, as ornamental as the styles it scorned.

The machinic gaze symbolising the modern world as an era of revolution and transition (cf. Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera*)¹² was long ago observed as a totalising symphony, where mechanical devices humanise and humans automate. As if the artificial and organic could meet at some imaginary future point, sharing the same dynamics and purpose. It is in this oneiric, symbolic vein that the nautical-mechanical analogy dear to Le Corbusier (and contemporaries) gains evocative power. To the common man, the ocean liner presented itself less as a technological object than as emancipation from an unsatisfactory existence. The redemptive voyage to the New World—or merely to a *new world*, as Spinaceto desired—became meaning inscribed in the transatlantic signifier, filling the collective imaginary across successive epochs.

Yet the experience of the crossing itself varied radically according to passengers' economic circumstances – different for the proletarian and the affluent bourgeois (or aristocrat). This held true for aquatic vessels but became far more radical in the static zoning of terrestrial ships organised by functionalist urbanism. Regardless, for all parties, the transoceanic voyage's imaginary retained a cinematic, oneiric dimension – captured by Federico Fellini in *Amarcord* (1973)¹³ or later in *E la nave va* (1983)¹⁴. Whether it signified sophisticated leisure or, at the opposite extreme, redemption from an unworthy existence, both designs are paradoxical to machinic homogenisation and repeatability.

In truth, the formal and dimensional reality of functionally optimised physical space – methodologically, from a strictly rational standpoint, the very traits that served as reference for Le Corbusier and his modernist peers – would contradict the benevolent imagination [Fig. 5]: “one does not travel; the ship is a floating factory. Outside, the infinite ocean seems too vast, and the sailor's cabin too small. Prolonged confrontation with this incommensurable difference drives all sailors mad”.¹⁵

So retorts Bruno Ganz's character in Alain Tanner's *Dans la Ville Blanche* (1983), the story of a Swiss sailor (an oddity in itself) who docks and stays (spoiler alert) in Lisbon. One imagines the global architectural vanguard, gathered aboard, a ship, for fourteen days between Marseille and Athens during the First (Maritime) International Congress of Modern Architecture, saw no major flaw in the correlation. The Unité's replication ad nauseam mirrors the sailor's cabin's *existenzminimum* – hypertrophic agglutination betraying its emancipatory promise.

12 *Chelovek s kinoapparatom* [Man with a Movie Camera], film, directed by Dziga Vertov (1929; Moscow: VUFKU), 35mm, black and white, silent, 68 min.

13 *Amarcord*, film, directed by Federico Fellini (1973; Rome: F.C. Produzioni), 35mm, color, 123 min.

14 *E la nave va* [And the Ship Sails On], film, directed by Federico Fellini (1983; Rome: RAI Televisione Italiana/Vides Produzione), 35mm, color, 132 min.

15 *Dans la ville blanche* [In the White City], film, directed by Alain Tanner (1983; Geneva: Citel Films), 35mm, color, 108 min.



5

But none of this should trouble a Spinaceto survivor too much, for the confines of such housing are scarcely felt aboard today's colossal cruise ships—perfected as globalised temporary housing units, modelled on paradigms of hotel luxury and comfort.

At journey's end, whether imposing ships or other efficient machines photographed and metaphorised by modern architectural conceptualisation, they attained their fullest meaning as futurist symbols of dream and liberation—not through the efficiency that seduced functionalist thinkers. That efficiency had long conformed the space and time to which modern man submitted in the industrial city since the 18th century, trapped in forced ritualisation, repetition, and normativity, within a context that only ever *appeared* to offer opportunity and freedom.

And Yet, Alis Ubbo

Alis Ubbo is the title of a Portuguese documentary film,¹⁶ and would have been the name of the Phoenician trading post at the mouth of the Tagus River—a *Porto Seguro* (Safe Harbour), translated from the original tongue. A reliable place, then, for our refugee to disembark, stowed away on a Mediterranean cruise ship from Sorrento to Lisbon (a mere few pool-lengths away). Thus, we cross Moretti's mythical *Flight from Spinaceto* (from *Caro Diario*) with the fate of Tanner's sailor in *Dans la Ville Blanche*—both landed in Lisbon. Fiction's advantage: it allows all timelines to converge.

The flight from Spinaceto—rooted in emancipation from the concentrational condition imposed by subsidised Unité neighbourhoods, large-scale residential conglomerates—is recursively transposed onto the nautical technological device that inspired it. The supreme irony: today's cruise ships celebrate the self-sufficiency and ubiquity of the Unité d'Habitation, unmoored from place, indifferent to urbanistic constraints. A modern, global space/time unit, sailing

Fig. 5

The Corbusian Dialectic, as Jekyll & Hyde: Poetic Form-Maker versus Urban Eraser - From the Phenomenological Light of Ronchamp to the Cartesian Grid of Plan Voisin (Digital Collage Study, author's photomontage, 2014)

16 *Alis Ubbo*, film, directed by Paulo Abreu (2018; Lisbon: Filmin), streaming video.

to historic cities where such architectural inscription would be unimaginable (discounting dystopian speculations like the Plan Voisin for Paris or the Plan Obus for Algiers). The corollary of this potent, grandiose idea moves from city to city with unrepentant regularity – far from celebratory – making front-page news only when a liner *fails* to dock in Lisbon.

The Tagus estuary, once the “Atlantic starting point of what, under puerile reasoning, was imagined as a Portuguese sea,” and the city that grew along its banks now stand as undisputed attractions on global tourist itineraries. Architecture, capitalised, seized the opportunity to design a new cruise terminal at the foot of the historic landscape, institutionalising “the best of all possible worlds through the best of all possible architectural figurations.”¹⁷ Confident that “the best architects design the best cruise terminals” and aware that “la nave ritorna tutti i giorni” (the ship returns every day), we are left with the cruise ‘floating city’ grotesquely juxtaposed to Alfama’s hillside fabric – a collision of transience and permanence, staged by global tourism [Figg. 6a-6b].

Whether this triumphal realisation of the new terminal does justice to or undermines the theory underlying the 1931 *Athens Charter*¹⁸ (which affirmed the importance of historic ensembles) or the 1987 *Washington Charter*¹⁹ (protecting cities from pollution and vibrations) is debatable. But the temporary, inhabited walls of cruise leviathans juxtaposed with Alfama’s delicate topography demand spatialised critique.



6a



6b

Unfortunately, the triumphal, periodic colonisation by these floating housing units, whether docked in Lisbon or Dubrovnik, transcends mere scalar counterpoints or figure-ground relations. The juxtaposition of both labyrinthine devices in conflicting figurations – alleys and buildings vs. corridors, decks, and bulkheads

17 Voltaire’s *Candide* satirizes Leibniz’s principle of compossibility—and its distillation into the “sufficient reason” doctrine, which posits as its corollary that “everything is for the best” and that we inhabit the “best of all possible worlds.” See Voltaire, *Cândido ou o optimismo* (Lisbon: Guimarães Editores, 1999).

18 First International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, *The Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments* (Athens, 1931).

19 ICOMOS, *Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas* (Washington Charter) (Washington, D.C., 1987).

Figg. 6a-6b

Lisbon’s cruise interface: Carrilho da Graça’s terminal as threshold between tourist flow and historic urban fabric. The new welcome infrastructure for occasional shipping tourism, a landmark of contemporary architecture, winner of the 11th Secil Prize for Civil Architecture (Arch. João Luis Carrilho da Graça, inaugurated 2017) (Images sourced online, 15 May 2025).

– cinematically expresses a divergence between concatenated worlds: the city, willingly or not, becomes a site where affluence and precarity, permanence and transience, opportunity and desire collide. The construction cranes in the background testify to the complementary process of “ongoing gentrification” alongside cruise tourism. They reveal how the historic city’s material renewal surrenders to this invasive, “modern” form of discovery and appropriation: each home converted to short-term rental smartly commodifies the entire city – possible joys no more than 15 minutes apart, minus the time drivers and tour operators take to shuttle between potential domiciles and daily *mise-en-scène*.

Discounting the (increasingly sparse) permanent residents’ residual attention to this phenomenon, let us imagine, for argument’s sake, tourists marvelling at each other in an endless flow, indifferent to the specificity of days or seasons. One cannot say how many still gather by the river as spectator-navigators, observing from their floating stage the assault and invasion undertaken by their disembarked counterparts, now boarding a swarm of tuk-tuks for conquering the adjacent hills: a true Teatro del Mondo²⁰ drama unfolds. Nor can one guarantee that these others, after their mechanised, breathless ascent to the river viewpoints interspersed like alveoli among the houses, are able to distinguish the simulacrum mirrored in this make-believe discovery.

It is in this tragicomic, antithetical framing that we reunite with our Candide (renamed for analogical and literary convenience), “freshly escaped



7a



7b

from Spinaceto.” Disembarking in Lisbon thirty years later, leaving behind a then-empty summer Rome, he finds a city perpetually full, bursting at the seams. He may retrace Nanni’s *dérive* on a Piaggio, but solipsism is now impossible. In Lisbon, the Italian Vespa mimics into an *Asian wasp!* Instead of riding pillion, the tourist industry thrives on generalised plagiarism, re-enacting convenient transport through hills and alleys [Figg. 7a-7b].

20 Floating art installation designed by Aldo Rossi, inaugurated in Venice in 1979 for the occasion of the 1980 Venice Biennale.

Figg. 7a-7b

Film frames still from *Caro Diario* (Moretti, 1993), Chapter 2: *Isole* – juxtaposed with author’s photography (2025) of parked *tuk-tuks* at Miradouro da Senhora do Monte, Lisbon

And again, inspired by Nanni Moretti, who updates his Vespa drift (and our hope) in *Il sol dell'avvenire* (A Brighter Tomorrow),²¹ now on electric scooters rekindling a distant communist harmony, Lisbon's tuk-tuks proliferate – *eco-friendly* – placing the city's picturesque within reach of all proletarians-by-desire. In Lisbon, when the sun rises at *Portas do Sol* or sets at *Senhora do Monte* belvederes, it is always for the many.

Eppure Si Muove (And Yet It Moves)

Contrary to Tom Wolfe's satire on architectural modernism,²² Le Corbusier was not the first architect to build "a Radiant City inside his skull." His pamphleteering utopian vision found relative cultural and social receptivity in its time. In architecture's specialised domain, his ideas endure, with some typologies now repurposed for globalised tourism's million-dollar maritime business.

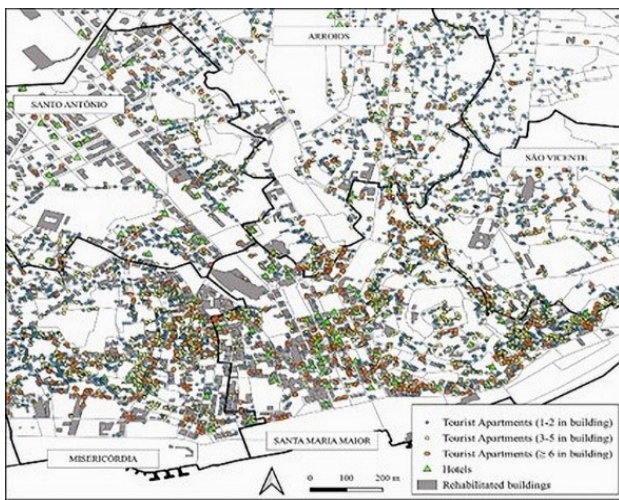
The transatlantic liner, as device and metaphor of industrial-technological progress, still plays a dual role: a nomadic housing unit, scaled up to embody passenger fantasies of freedom and escapism; and a ghostly apparition to port-city residents, invaded by its grotesque, polluting presence and the periodic tourist depredation it unleashes.

Some destruction is necessary, but much violence is compulsive. There is no "non-violence" – the city has always staged class struggles, conflicting motivations, and divergent aspirations. And as power – as it stands – protects an order now determined by capital replication and the sacrosanct value of property, we discern, backstage at the *Grand Hotel Lisboa*, growing demands for *homes to live in*. [Figg. 8a-8b]

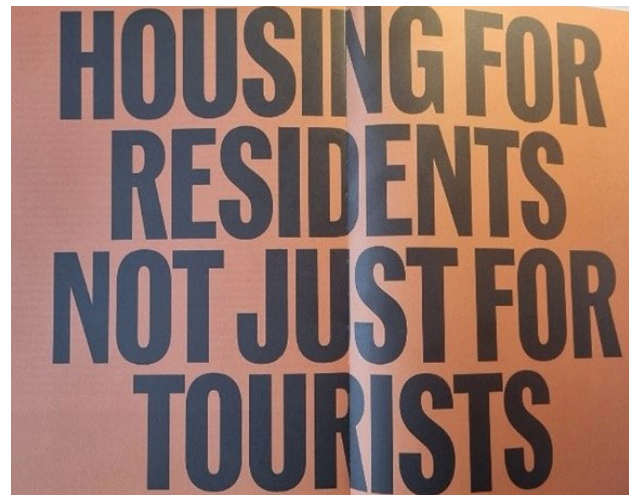
Yet there is no cause for despair. In some other chapter of *Caro Diario*, an academic solely devoted to studying James Joyce's cryptic novel *Ulysses* for decades—and a longtime sceptic of television's utility—eventually wrote a letter to His Holiness defending soap operas as a means to foster interest in the fates of distant, unfamiliar families. Similarly, *asian Vespas*, too, rebranded as *tuk-tuk*, bring to my doorstep origins far removed from my own, welcoming voyagers to Lisbon! Like the famed protagonist of *Candide*, whom Voltaire had arrive in Lisbon just in time to witness (and suffer disgrace in) the devastation of the 1755 earthquake, we are all heirs to Ulysses' inaugural literary journey and to a historical web of human trafficking—so much so that the Aperol Spritz has become the most sought-after drink in the once-working-class neighbourhood of Graça. And why not? Spinaceto, too, are welcome, and will find itself, upon crossing the Tagus estuary, amid a full-blown real estate earthquake: access to permanent housing swept away by a speculative tsunami, where buying or renting alike collapse into the same vast wasteland. Now, the artifice of human

21 *Il sol dell'avvenire* [A Brighter Tomorrow], film, directed by Nanni Moretti (2023; Rome: Sacher Film, Rai Cinema, and Le Pacte).

22 Tom Wolfe, *From Bauhaus to Our House* (London: Picador, 1993), 29.



8a



8b

transformations – much like Nature herself – is an irredeemable process, where no action lacks a reaction, no product arrives without residue.

Under the lens of technological apparatus as social determinant, Jean-Luc Godard's *Film Socialism* (2010) frames the cruise ship as a representation of contemporary capitalism, reimagining it as an encapsulated, savage accumulation of divergent impulses. Here, "socialism" is posited as an undeclared alternative to the ills plaguing society under capital's domination.

Let us, then, embrace Moretti and Godard: their cinematic pavés recast cruise ships as *Battleship Potemkin*²³—stormed for revolution, with cabins redistributed "according to possibility, by measure of need."²⁴ In accordance with this gauge, the Unité's failure lies in its Taylorist "ability"-based efficiency—betraying Marx's "measure of need"—while cruise ships literalize its inversion: luxury for some, precarity for others. With each daily sunset, in service to the emancipatory freedom of real estate investment – excluded from the chain of surplus-value appropriation, we are left to gaze from afar at refurbished "penthouse apartments we will never afford"²⁵—all that remains for us *spinacetos* is to demand an exchange: for every Alfama courtyard lost, we demand a floating cabin—a tidal-energy Potemkin with laundry strung across balconies, storks nesting in smokestacks [Fig. 9a-9b].

Rescued from realist quotidian, the cruise ship docked to the Tagus' banks, bound by environmental and social imperatives – offering a fitting epilogue to Corbusian fabulation – is hardly an implausible image. The Cruise Terminal in Alfama, a landmark of contemporary Portuguese architecture, can also be repurposed as a public market— cabbages from Caneças versus bivalves from the Mar da Palha, for the customer to decide—or rehabilitated as a public school,

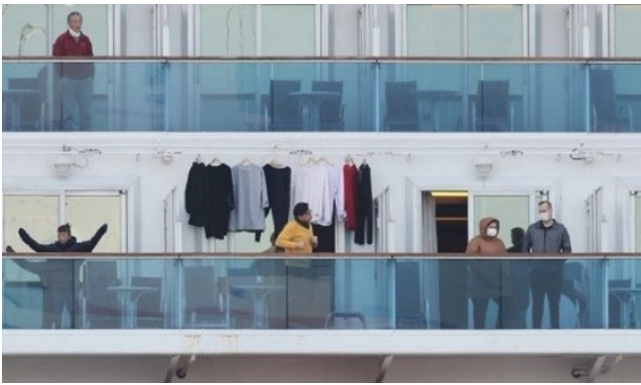
23 *O couraçado Potemkin* [The Battleship Potemkin], film, directed by Sergei M. Eisenstein (1925; Moscow: Goskino), 35mm, black and white, silent, 75 min.

24 Adapted from "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!" in Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, 615.

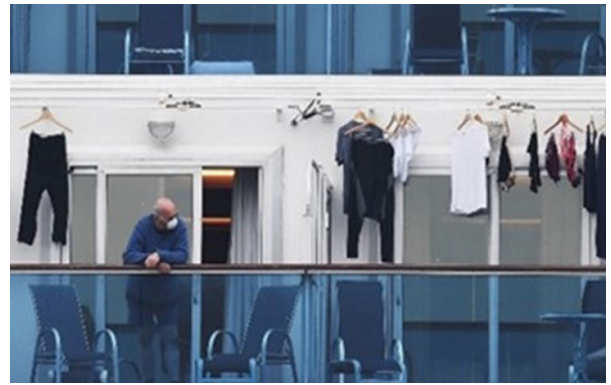
25 Moretti, *Caro diário*. Translation by the author.

Fig. 8a-8b

Double exposure: short-term rental heatmap vs. housing rights protest (documentation from *Habitar Lisboa: Uma Perspetiva Arquitetónica sobre uma Crise Contemporânea* (Lisbon: Monade, 2023)



9a



9b

open to children from Mediterranean ports and beyond. The river has always been an open door, a stage for Spinacetos' departures and arrivals. And in the same stroke that vanquishes global tourism's "entrepreneurs and collaborators," the insurgency of the world's proletariat will germinate (onboard) – still to unite!

And if, by some twist of fate, we were to find ourselves aboard with a Trotskyist pastry chef – or, more modestly, with some Marxist banker—the conditions would be ripe for a splendid musical film set to the tune of *Lo Stato Sociale*:²⁶

[verse 1]

E fai il cameriere, l'assicuratore
 Il campione del mondo, la baby pensione
 Fai il ricco di famiglia, l'eroe nazionale
 Il poliziotto di quartiere, il rottamatore
 Perché lo fai?
 E fai il candidato, poi fai l'esodato
 Qualche volta fai il ladro o fai il derubato
 E fai opposizione, e fai il duro e puro
 E fai il figlio d'arte, la blogger di moda
 Perché lo fai?
 Perché non te ne vai?

[chorus]

Una vita in vacanza
 Una vecchia che balla
 Niente nuovo che avanza

26 Lo Stato Sociale, "Una vita in vacanza," on *Primate* (Garrincha Dischi, Universal Music Italia, 2018).

Fig. 9

Domesticity in confinement: improvised laundry systems on the *Diamond Princess* (2020 Quarantine) <https://inews.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus-japan-cruise-ship-passengers-test-positive-diamond-princess-395341>, Accessed May 15, 2025

Ma tutta la banda che suona e che canta
Per un mondo diverso
Libertà e tempo perso
E nessuno che rompe i coglioni
Nessuno che dice: "Se sbagli, sei fuori"
Sei fuori, sei fuori
Sei fuori, sei fuori

[verse 2]

E fai l'estetista e fai il laureato
E fai il caso umano, il pubblico in studio
Fai il cuoco stellato e fai l'influencer
E fai il cantautore, ma fai soldi col poker
Perché lo fai?
E fai l'analista di calciomercato
Il bioagricoltore, il toyboy, il santone
Il motivatore, il demotivato
La risorsa umana, il disoccupato
Perché lo fai?
Perché non te ne vai?

[chorus]

Una vita in vacanza
Una vecchia che balla
Niente nuovo che avanza
Ma tutta la banda che suona e che canta
Per un mondo diverso
Libertà e tempo perso
E nessuno che rompe i coglioni
Nessuno che dice: "Se sbagli, sei fuori"
Sei fuori, sei fuori
Sei fuori, sei fuori

[bridge]

Vivere per lavorare

O lavorare per vivere

Fare soldi per non pensare

Parlare sempre e non ascoltare

Ridere per fare male

Fare pace per bombardare

Partire per poi ritornare

[chorus]

Una vita in vacanza

Una vecchia che balla

Niente nuovo che avanza

Ma tutta la banda che suona e che canta

Per un mondo diverso

Libertà e tempo perso

E nessuno che rompe i coglioni

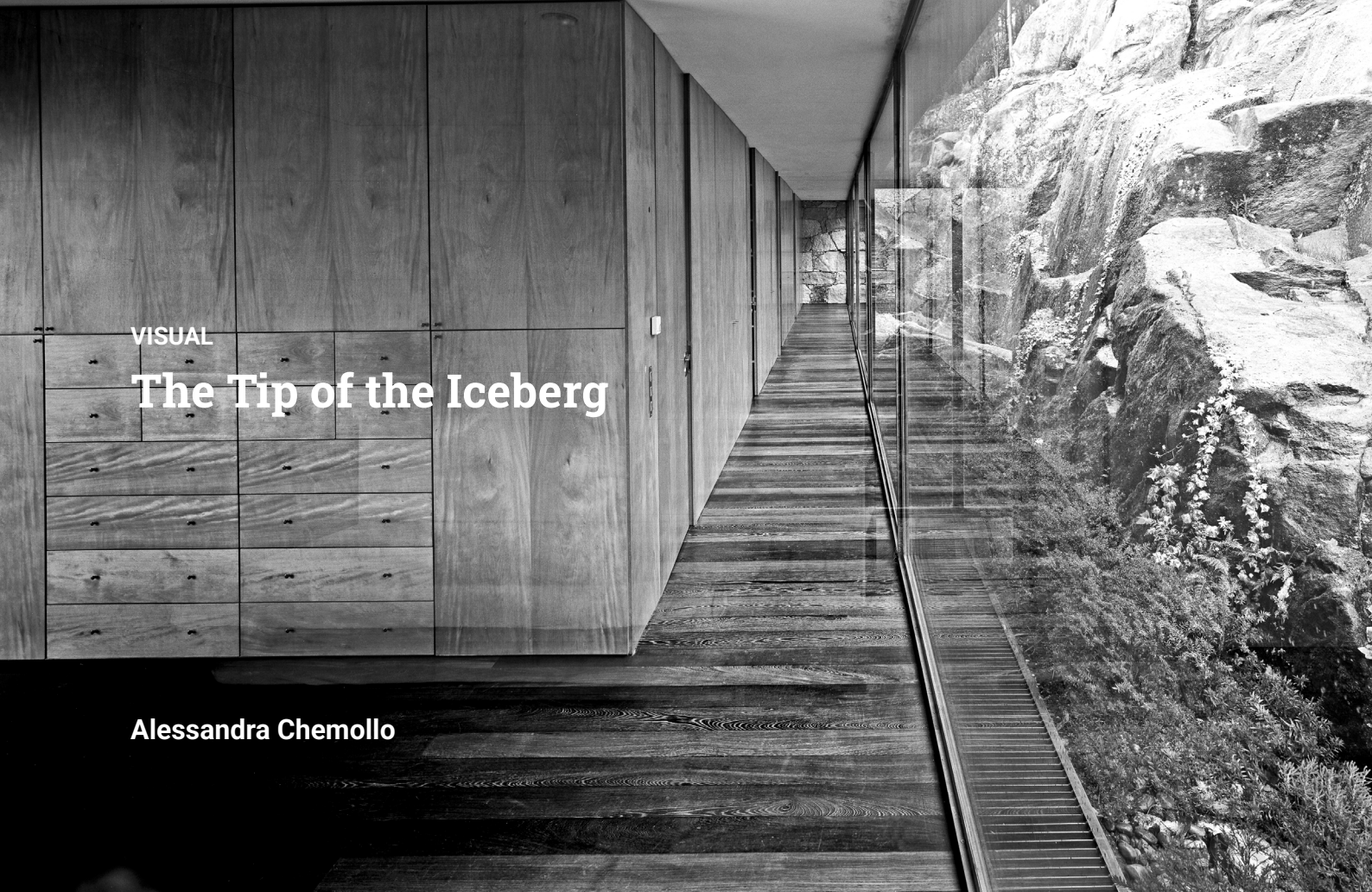
Nessuno che dice: "Se sbagli, sei fuori"

Sei fuori, sei fuori

Sei fuori, sei fuori

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VISUAL

The Tip of the Iceberg

Alessandra Chemollo

1

BIOGRAPHY

Alessandra Chemollo was born in Treviso on the 20th of August 1963 and lives in Venice. She graduated from the University IUAV of Venice with a thesis on the relationship between Architecture and Photography.

Her reflection on the representation of architectural works is developed in her professional work and in her self-produced projects, without interruption.

He has realised photographic projects to illustrate numerous monographic texts, deepening specific ways of interpreting architectural works from documentary sources, thanks to his close collaboration with architectural historians – starting with his experience with Manfredo Tafuri.

In her 30 years of professional experience, she ranges from historical to contemporary architecture and develops theoretical areas with didactic and curatorial purposes.

Since 1986 she has worked as a photographer; between 1991 and 2013 she worked with Fulvio Orsenigo (ORCH – www.orsenigochemollo.com). Since 2013 she has been teaching the Photography module of the Master of Landscape at IUAV.



<https://doi.org/10.60923/issn.2611-0075/23508> | ISSN 2611-0075
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Photography is something that has to do with our encounter with the world: we could say that it is the recording of the image that we give back when our inner self confronts the outside world, through a process of selection.

This inner image varies from person to person and is generated both by something we decide, of which we are aware and which is the result of a series of choices, and by what arises from circumstances, from what happens to us—often randomly—with something we had not anticipated.

We could also say that it has a similarity with what Carl Gustav Jung defined as synchronicity and what the world of quantum physics has defined as entanglement: it concerns something that goes beyond the dimension of cause and effect, that eludes logical processes and is inherent in the right side of our brain (which is not the part that organizes, but the part that makes us feel whole, makes us feel connected to everything).

To summarize this introductory concept, I fondly recall the words of a dear friend who was also a great teacher to me, Giovanni Chiaramonte: photography makes us feel transparent when we take pictures.

We are accustomed to looking at the photographed subject, to seeing through all the levels at which a photographer gives shape to his encounter with the world, passing through them without seeing them in order to look at the thing represented by the photograph.

And we do not realize that the very moment the photographer decides to use one lens rather than another, for example, they have already chosen a way of looking at the world (from what distance and from what point of view, with what involvement in relation to the scene and with what relationship between the parts located at different distances from each other). Not to mention the moment that is isolated from the flow, or the portion of vision that is cut out: whatever choice the photographer makes is interpretative.

And then, in the words of Ugo Mulas, there is a counter-shot in photography: the moment I photograph, the photograph photographs me.

The very moment we look and therefore select what to look at, the selection we make challenges our experience and, as Borges says, brings out memories, fears, predictions.

My job is to work on the interpretation of an interpretation. I never thought it was reductive to photograph space, a space designed by someone else, because I never thought my job was to fit the space into a frame by squeezing it in; I always thought there was something more complex that needed to be articulated. At the linguistic level, it involved bringing together a world of references inherent in photographic vocabulary with an ability to understand what architecture seeks to represent through space.

I trained by working for four years with Manfredo Tafuri, photographing Renaissance architecture and trying to understand how Renaissance architects

referenced antiquity. This approach—which is fundamentally one of listening, but also of decoding and documenting, because I believe that documenting is the primary act—has always been mixed with a sort of stratification of meaning, in which what I was trying to convey had to do both with the object I was photographing and with what I was able to decode about the generative process of that object/space) and with other issues that have always underlie my representation. For example, the dimension of time has certainly always been part of my work, but so has the attention to capturing something that concerns the world of allegory, together with that of rhetorical figures and then irony, trying to keep alive the awareness that when I look—at the very moment I look, I am also being looked at.

While I trained with Manfredo Tafuri—who initially gave me precise instructions on how I should look at things—at the same time, while working with him, I was photographing large production and storage facilities for Benetton: reportages in which the dimension of representation was that of rapid change, told with my camera around my neck, without using a tripod, climbing around and trying to capture the very fast pace at which things happen on a construction site. I believe that these two elements are, in some way, the main ingredients that I then mixed together in my work: this slow, attentive observation—which I would dare to define as philological, even though I think it presumptuous to call it philological — and the fact of paying attention to what is happening, of being ready to capture what is happening, trying to keep together the irony, but also the stratification of meaning that the image generates, seeing how these figures can bring other figures to light, how they can have another meaning beyond what the thing gives me back.

Knowing full well that what I am doing—and therefore also the physical object of the photograph I am going to produce—is at once a testimony, a record of something that is “objectively” happening, but also always and in any case generated by the choice of a point of view: I have always thought it important to try to declare this point of view so that my subjectivity is clear.

Sometimes this point of view is imposed by the project – I can’t say that I choose it – but other times I choose it myself – by being there – because the secret is to be there – and also by imagining myself there, because, for example, in order to take some photographs I had to imagine what I would see, or decide in advance to photograph a piece of architecture at the moment it is being used, decide to work among people, take the space away from the architect’s imagination and bring it into the world.

My first published photograph is a photograph from 1986, and it is the image that confirmed to me that I should work on the idea that the architect had thought of giving form to through space rather than on the form itself, that the secret lay in taking a step back, trying to work on the idea and restore that idea, translating the idea into the language of photography: this is why I think we are talking about an interpretation of an interpretation.

Photographing several works by the same architect allows us to work on the lexicon of architecture, to articulate a photographic language, to choose a coherent way to photographically convey the design vision, which is different every time, because each architect articulates his language in a different way.

My photographic campaign in 1999, illustrating the entire work of Alvaro Siza, followed a few years after my thesis at the IUAV in Venice, in which I investigated the relationship between architecture and photography in the history of Siza's work, analyzing various publications and collecting testimonies from various protagonists, including Roberto Collovà, Mimmo Jodice, Giovanni Chiamonte, as well as Alvaro Siza himself.



For this reason, my photographic work on Siza's work was very special to me: in every situation in which I found myself photographing, I had as a guide, in addition to the project content—which I knew in detail—the various iconographic variations developed over time, which I had analyzed during my thesis work.

When Alvaro Siza's work was presented to the Italian public by Vittorio Gregotti in 1972, Gregotti raised the issue of the indescribable nature of Siza's architecture: for this reason, early publications of his work mainly focused on details.

The first conscious action of my work was to broaden the field of vision, comparing the works with their context, populating the spaces, measuring them with a contemporary temporality.

And then, thanks to the wonderful encounters I had, for example with Giovanni Chiaramonte, I understood a number of things, such as the fact that Alvaro Siza works on non-perspective spaces and therefore working on

space with a perspective tool such as the camera—the heir to Renaissance vision—also means constructing sequences.

However, what really had a profound influence on the structure of my photographic work came from what I received directly from Alvaro Siza, from what Siza told me about his relationship with photography during the interview he gave for my thesis in September 1994:

I don't make any recommendations to photographers, and I don't take them to see my works because I think photography has its own autonomy, and with sensitivity—and sensibilities differ—you can understand a lot about architecture through fragments of the concept. The reality of a work goes, I believe, much further than what we consciously seek; many things escape us. It can be a surprise, a photograph; we can also understand, with a photograph, things that were not conscious, the product of memories [...] unconscious ones.

The monograph on the work of Eduardo Souto De Moura came three years later. My photographic campaign began with photographs of the house in Moledo and a wonderful two-day meeting with Antonio Esposito and Giovanni Leoni, locked away in Souto De Moura's studio, where Eduardo explained his work to us project by project. At the end of that meeting, I suggested shooting mainly in black and white because I felt that the photographic narrative of Souto de Moura's work placed a lot of emphasis on the quality of the materials and the quality of the details, while there was a need to bring out the spatiality that had remained almost in the background until then: in my opinion, shooting in black and white would allow us to work more on the idea of space.

We are obviously talking about work done entirely on a tripod, entirely on medium format film. I printed the photographs for the book myself, one by one, in the darkroom, except in a few cases where I chose to work in color where it made sense.

The two books by Souto de Moura and Tavora are collective works. There was a continuous dialogue with Antonio Esposito and Giovanni Leoni (and with Ivana Barbarito, with whom I shared the photographic campaign), and my photos are, I think, everyone's photos. They are the result of knowledge that was given to me, that was shared.

Eduardo says that an architect creates a single project in his entire life, and I believe that a photographer, who has the great opportunity to see everything, can try to convey this idea that he is truly creating a single project.

The latest photographic campaign, on the work of Fernando Tavora, was a very special experience. In both cases, the opportunity to work so closely with Eduardo on the one hand and Fernando Tavora and Fernando Barroso on the other was a tremendous opportunity.

Perhaps the thing that struck me most about Tavora's architecture, apart from the density of culture that permeated it, was the attention paid to the space between things. This is something that comes across very strongly in his work, this holding together of the different parts that define their space.

This, I must say, is perhaps the photo I love most of Tavora's work, but because I love what he did, which was to work around the tree. It seems to me that telling this story of how he goes around the tree is telling the story of Tavora.

A question I have always asked myself—and here I hope my photographs provide an answer—is whether there is a way in which things ask us to photograph them.

I believe that listening is fundamental, trying to restore by digesting and forgetting, as Graça Correia said yesterday. What my photographs record is always the meeting point between something I thought about in terms of framing and what happens at the moment the shot is taken.

John Berger talks about storytelling as the 'emerging of the unspeakable'. He says that the theme is to find the most appropriate way to express what I have intuitively grasped, which exists with the autonomy of a melody or a pattern of colors: the theme of this narrative is that of precision in rendering.

I believe that this is precisely the theme. I call it precision without rigidity: finding a way to be precise without being rigid. So, let what comes come, but welcome it and try to render it with precision.





VISUAL

The Relationship Between Portugal and Italy in the World of Architectural Culture, through the Lens of the Porto School of Fine Arts

Graça Correia

1

BIOGRAPHY

Graça Correia graduates in Architecture in FAUP (Oporto, Portugal) in 1989. She collaborates until 1995 with Souto Moura, having later co-authored several projects, namely the Hotel and Catering School of Portalegre. She holds a PhD at UPC in Barcelona in 2006. Invited researcher at FAUP, where she obtains the title of National Habilitation in 2022, associate professor at FCATI-ULP and has been a visiting professor at numerous universities.

In 2005, with Roberto Ragazzi, founded the CORREIA/RAGAZZI Arquitectos studio, whose works have been widely awarded, published and exhibited nationally and internationally, as in the special issue of the 80th anniversary of *Casabella* and in the monograph: *Correia/Ragazzi, Arquitectura 2005-2018* by the Spanish publisher TC Cuadernos. In 2022, a monographic exhibition was held at Corte Ca' Lando, organised by the IEA of the University of Padua and the Order of Architects of that city, with the support of *Casabella* magazine. Author of several books and regularly publishes numerous articles in specialized journals. Member of the jury of the ENOR Award 2020, co-curator of the Open House Porto 2022 and co-author and presenter of several television documentaries for RTP2.



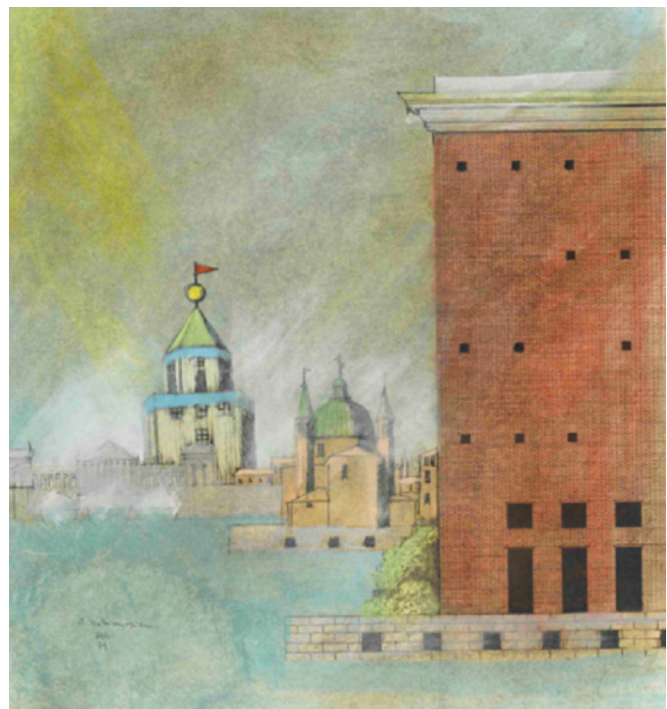
<https://doi.org/10.60923/issn.2611-0075/23685> / ISSN 2611-0075
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On a personal note, it would seem evident – with a Portuguese-Italian marriage – to have an approach on this topic. Especially since the tradition of such marriages goes back a long way in Portuguese history, having been inaugurated by the first king of Portugal Afonso Henriques that married a Savoia from Italy – in Portugal, we changed the v to a b and called her Dona Mafalda de Saboia – even if at that time Italy had not yet become the Italy we know today.

In architecture, however, as in art and design, Italy and Portugal have shared some fundamental characteristics over the last hundred years, which have led to direct collaboration and a deep affinity. The challenge of presenting a thematic or monographic approach stems from this almost biographical idea, in order to bear witness to the possible results of an affinity that, in this text, we submit to the theme of schools, masters, and genealogies with a view to verifying any intersections between architectures that may have resulted from them. We can start from Portugal's interest in Italian studies on the city, which saw Aldo Rossi as an important figure, but above all, in this particular case, from the inevitability of the autobiographical nature of this contribution.

We therefore propose to present an autobiography that is all the more scientific in light of the validation of the facts presented here, which we believe are easily verifiable. Having entered the Porto School of Fine Arts in 1983 – less than 10 years after the Carnation Revolution – the interest in Rossi was all too evident, and the Project I program for the previous academic year, and therefore for the colleagues who welcomed us in the faculty, had been the creation of a traveling theatre. And, obviously, this was no coincidence. It is also clear that, after 40 years of the previous regime, there were not many books available to us at the time, let alone books on architecture, and even fewer ones in Portuguese. [Fig. 1]

Today, 40 years later (since 1983), it will be very difficult for students to understand this reality given the proliferation of publications we have today – both physical and digital – it would seem that it is an equally difficult task for them to carefully select what they should read – but all teachers who are witnessing this moment remember that, without architecture books, we had no idea what our teachers were developing, or what architecture was. I remember that very few of my classmates who started with me in the first year knew who Álvaro Siza was, so we are talking about a reality that now seems difficult to explain.



1

Fig. 1
La Tendenza, Italian architecture 1965-1985



Fig. 2

1st International Architecture Seminar, Santiago de Compostela (Rossi in the center and Eduardo, first on the left at the top) 1976

2

But when I entered the Porto School of Fine Arts, there was a tiny publication that had been produced by fourth-year students in the 1982/83 academic year, which immediately showed us both their interest in Italian architecture and spaces, and the possibility of making books. It is worth noting, albeit retrospectively, that attesting to the importance of Portugal-Italy relations, the person who sent me the digital copy of this publication was precisely an Italian architect, Carlo Gandolfi, whose affinity was inevitable since we both researched an extraordinary architect as part of our doctoral studies, we are both professors with a practice that we have not given up (even during our doctoral studies), believing that designing is also researching.

Of course, it is evident now that this trip, the first International Architecture Seminar in Santiago de Compostela [Fig. 2], in 1982/83, would be an inspiration for the future of the school. In the photograph of the attendees, we can see Aldo Rossi as the central figure and Eduardo Souto Moura – whom none of us knew – on the left. But why is this so interesting? It is interesting because it obviously guided the school towards a certain direction.

It is also interesting to note that *Casabella*, particularly from 1982 to 1996 when Vittorio Gregotti was its director, but also when Francesco Dal Co took over, has undeniably been a driving force behind the great relationship between Portugal and Italy over the last 20 years. [Fig. 3]

And this is the story I have to tell.

In the early 1980s we were a group of cheeky kids, that decided to make a book about what our teachers did at school. We asked Fernando Távora, the professor of General Theory of Spatial Organization, for a drawing, which was used to produce a beautiful silkscreen print. It is important to note that with Távora – starting in from his wonderful classes – an enormous affinity was easily established from the very first day. Together with Manel Maria Reis and

António Portugal – who would become an excellent architect, unfortunately no longer with us today – we presented the screen printing to the whole school and friends, that financed the production of the book. From there, we went to the teacher's offices and some contributed with texts, others with their projects, resulting in an extraordinary book produced between 1984 and 1986, Páginas Brancas, which I think is valued much less today than it should be. We have to notice that Siza's first monograph, Profissão Poética (Poetic Profession), whose author Pierluigi Nicolini passed away very recently, was published in 1986, and the other books about Siza appeared in 1988/89, and thereafter.

So, what did these kids do? A book whose careful reading allows us to understand a kind of adolescence period of this school in Porto. It was also an extraordinary experience: students entering teachers offices and understanding what architecture was, how it was done, and what an office was like. [Fig. 4]

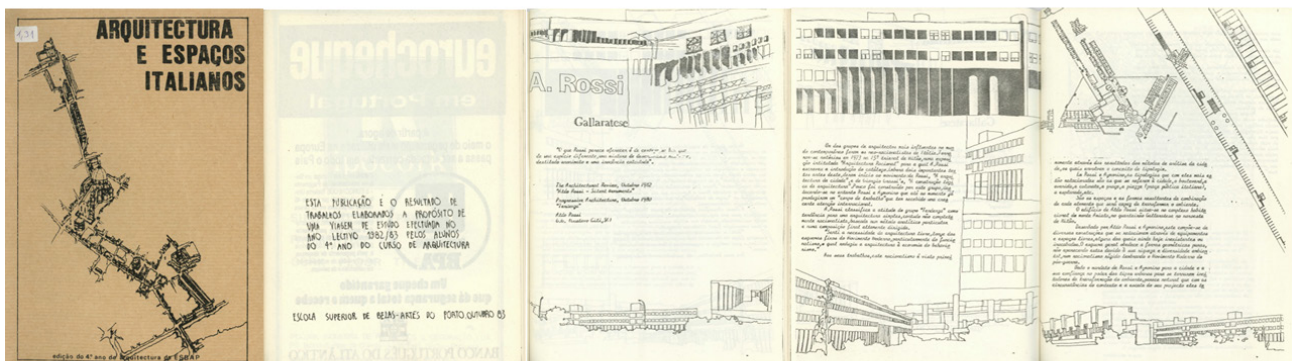
Of course, we were completely overwhelmed when we entered Eduardo Souto Moura's office – still a complete stranger at the time – and this professor gave us a project he had done in Italy, the Ponte della Accademia. He also showed us the drawings, how the drawings were worked on, how they evolved, why the drawing was coloured. Also, how it was necessary to think about references, which at the time we still had no idea what they were; but how the drawings suddenly showed us another scale and construction materials, details. And how these details showed a design that was different from the ones we knew, which were rigorous; this design had things we didn't recognize or knew: hinges, steel profiles, hesitations, but this is what we published. What was beautiful was

Fig. 3

Arquitetura e Espaços Italianos: publication that had been produced by fourth-year students in the 1982/83 academic year

Fig. 4

In the Fine Arts of Porto with Fernando Távora, who writes in the dedication: to Graça Correia, "Mother" of the initiative, 1984



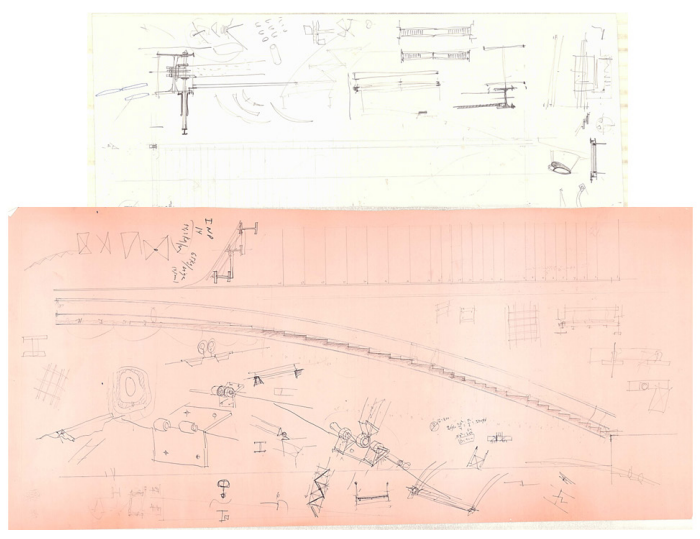
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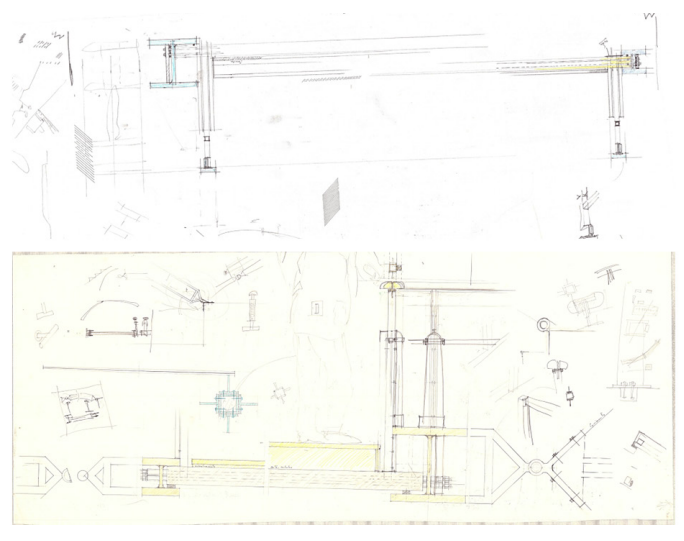
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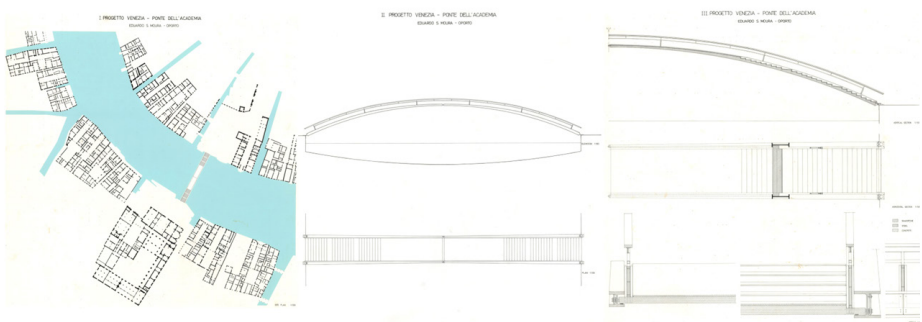
Figg. 5, 6, 7, 8
 Sketches by Eduardo Souto
 Moura for the Ponte dell'Acca-
 demia in Italy

realizing – while working in the offices – what the drawings represented, what the detailed drawings meant. [Fig. 5, Fig. 6, Fig.7, Fig. 8]

For example, concerning the drawing as a tool, which was so important at school, and at that moment starting to realize how this act that was constructed. That the drawing we saw at the end (published) was a drawing that was redrawn from scratch, that the final design is constructed through the accumulation of many drawings, because no one does it in one stroke, they learned and developed through repetition. And so, to arrive at that drawing that would later become a silkscreen print, we would redraw and draw and draw. And this was an absolutely extraordinary learning experience. [Fig. 9, Fig. 10, Fig. 11]

It is important to note that Eduardo Souto Moura, besides being unknown, was not yet appreciated by everyone. Therefore, the book *Brancas* pages is a historical document if we carefully read the text that Alexandre Alves Costa writes instead of a project, where he says:

Tending to be uncritical, developing an empirical process that is inattentive or less attentive to reality, Porto's new architecture runs the risk of failing to reflect on the aesthetic distance of architecture, placing plastic coherence in itself as the absolute value of formalism and not in a complex system of relationships that should be clarified. Unable to achieve a transformative dimension, architectural work is fatally condemned to



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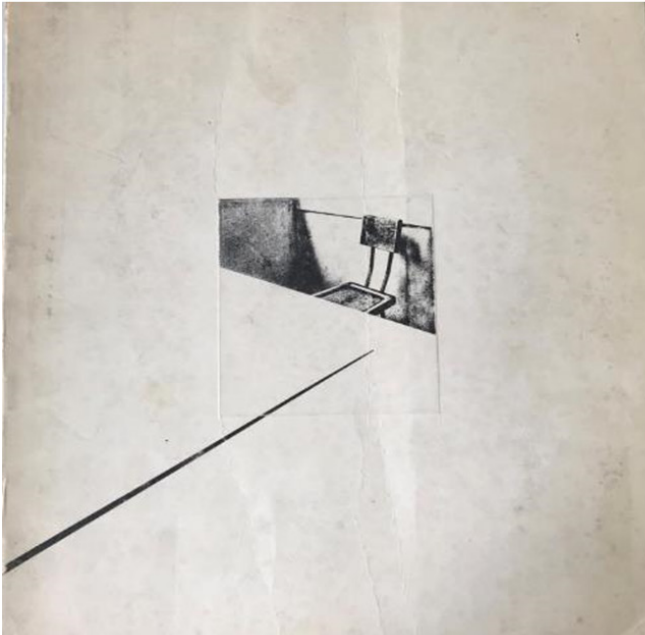
Fig. 9
Plan, sections, and construction details for the Ponte dell'Accademia in Italy, designed by Eduardo Souto Moura

Figg. 10, 11

Sketches by Eduardo Souto Moura for the Ponte dell'Accademia in Italy

be overtaken by the law of the strongest, which builds and controls the landscape. By losing its real dimension, diluting its message or rendering it incommunicable, architecture will fail to fulfil its role. This is the issue that the new generation will have to resolve in order to survive.¹ A. Alves Costa, 1985 [Fig. 12]

Siza would only respond much later, in the first publication of Eduardo Souto



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Moura's work by GG in 1991, when, at the end of his introductory text to the work, he says, naturally responding to Alves Costa:

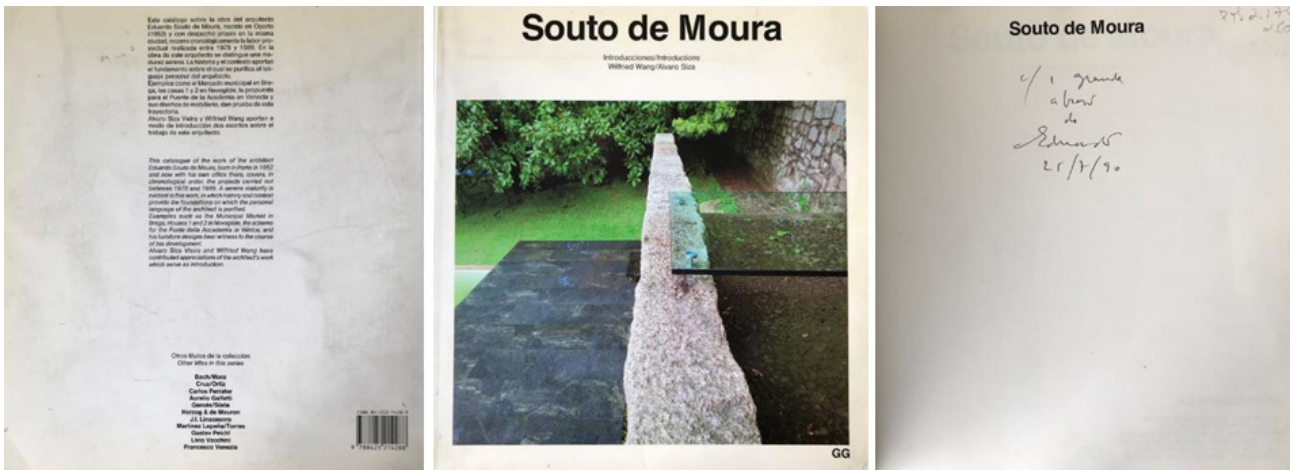
For all these reasons and more, Souto de Moura is ripe for inclusion in the "exceptional talent/incommunicado" file. Those in the School where he learnt to become an architect who advocate "ease of transmission" as an approach to teaching might find something there, however, to raise a doubt in their own minds: that file is filling up, to increasing acclaim, with an ever greater and more disturbing number of schemes by architects from previous generations, by those of their own generation, and by others, amongst whom are some of their own students. It would seem, after all, that the incommunicado are communicating.² A. Siza, 1990 [Fig. 13]

1 " Tendencialmente acrítica, desenvolvendo um processo empírico e desatento ou menos atento em relação à realidade, a nova arquitectura do Porto corre perigo de deixar de refletir sobre a distância estética da arquitectura, colocando a coerência plástica em si própria como valor absoluto do formalismo e não num complexo sistema de relações que se devia clarificar. Não podendo conquistar a dimensão transformadora, a obra de arquitectura está fatalmente condenada a ser ultrapassada pela lei do mais forte, que constrói e controla a paisagem. Perdendo a dimensão do real, diluindo a sua mensagem ou tornando-a incommunicável, a arquitectura não cumprirá o seu papel. Esta é a questão que a nova geração resolverá, para sobreviver."

2 Article "Secretary of State for Culture. Cultural Centre in Porto (1981)" by Álvaro Siza in *Souto Moura*, Editorial Gustavo Gili, Barcelona, 1990.

Fig. 12

Páginas Brancas, 1984



And so it was extraordinary for us students – fascinated by what we had seen in Eduardo’s office and even more so because we were already his students in the Project IV class—when, in 1986, the issue of the magazine of the Official College of Architects of Madrid (which was currently lost in the FAUP Library, where I looked for it and searched with its current custodian) was published, containing, for the first time, Souto Moura alongside Távora and Siza, Architects of Oporto, with a text by Wilfred Wang, precisely the other author in the aforementioned GG monograph. It is also important to highlight the participation of Luís Mansilha and Carlos Martí in the editorial, the latter being one of the professors I will seek out to do my doctorate in Barcelona. [Fig. 14, Fig. 15, Fig. 16]

This magazine was a real “stone thrown into the pond” because, as I said at the beginning, we already admired a Souto Moura who did not yet exist. And whose recognition, like that of Siza, also came “from outside”: no one is a prophet in their own land, and so it remains. And, naturally, aware that much of what we believed always came from outside, we never stopped looking at the work that appeared to us in Italy, and very quickly our fascination immediately fell on the work of Venezia, whose drawings absolutely fascinated us, and which, at the same time, we thought, but isn’t it exactly the same as Siza’s drawings? Or were they really? Later we realised (in the fourth year) that they were closer to those of Souto Moura. [Fig. 17] And looking at his drawings, we confirmed that Souto Moura also looked at them, which clearly informed his own, as much as those of Siza or, as we would later realize, those of Scarpa. And we remember that Eduardo often says, “I didn’t even need to leave Portugal, because I was in Siza’s office, and all the cream of architecture passed through there, it was as if I were going out, staying inside.” We realized, when we saw the drawings, that perhaps Eduardo’s drawings had something to do with Venezia’s drawings, we understood better that drawing also has an identity that results from references, just like projects. And at that time, in our fourth year, we were there between Siza and Eduardo, trying to draw like them. [Figg. 18-19] Showing the project for the first assignment of the fourth year, that I did with Souto Moura, is relevant because it allows me to tell an entertaining story. Of course, we drew what we saw, eager for information, and Souto Moura, looking at my elevations, said:

Fig. 13
GG’s first monograph on the work of Eduardo Souto Moura

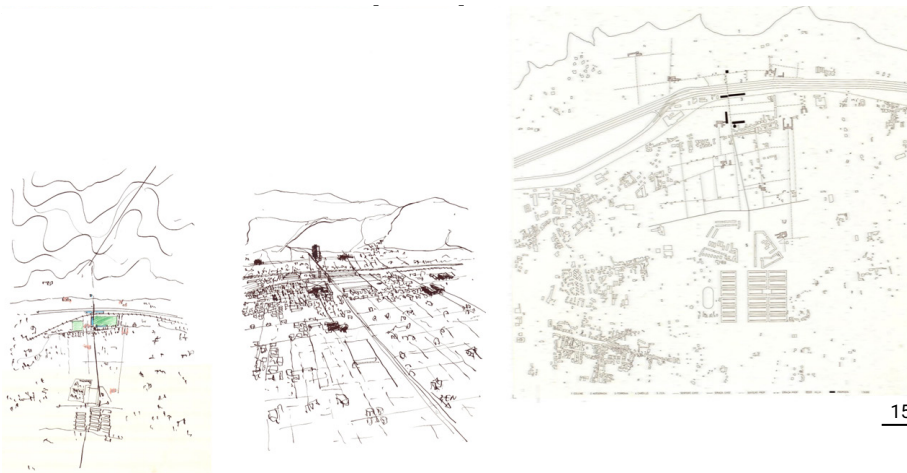
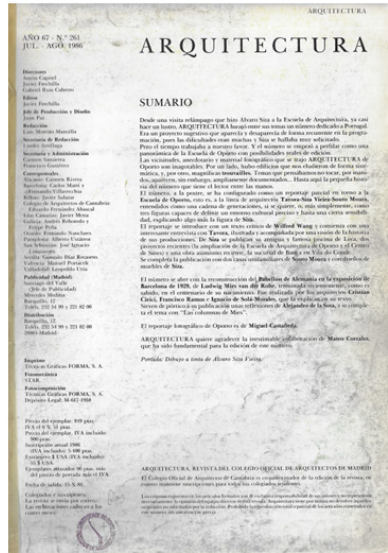
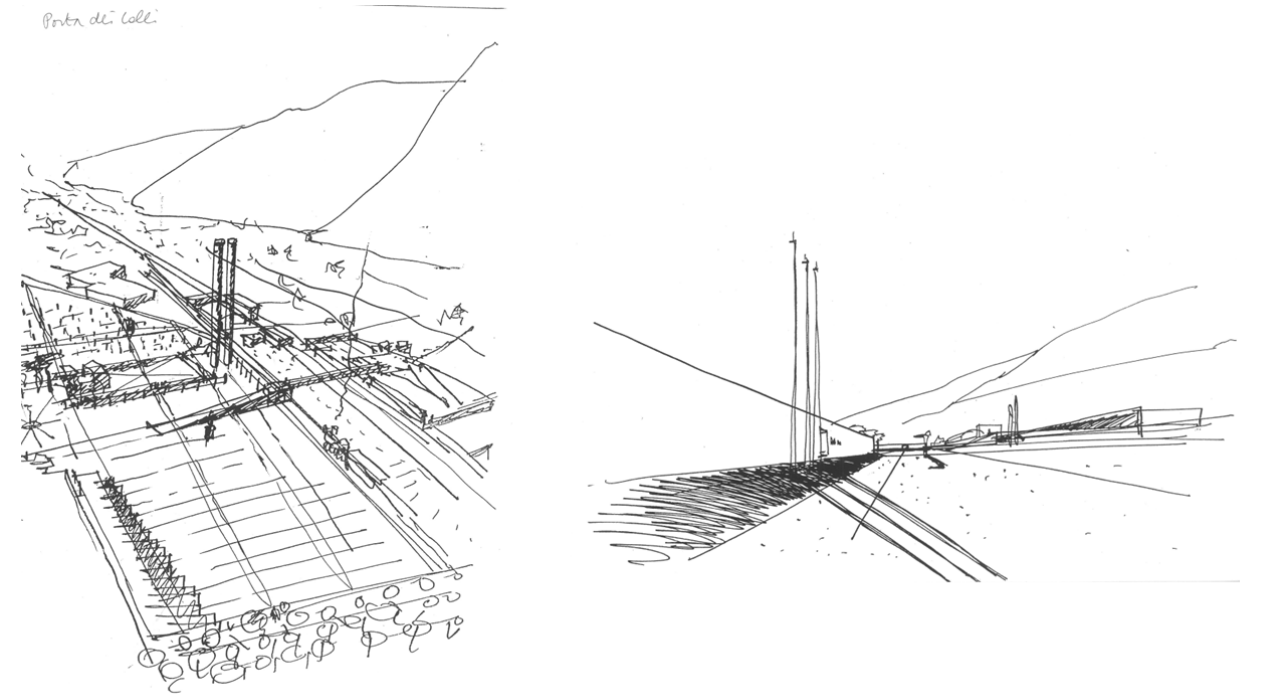
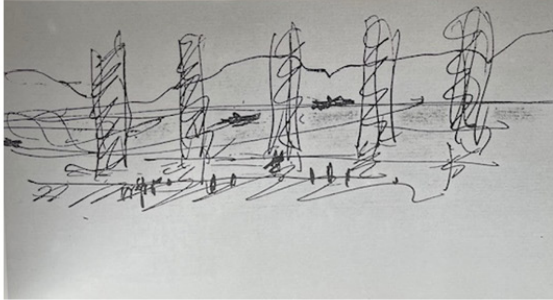


Fig. 14
Issue of *Arquitectura* magazine of the Official College of Architects of Madrid, in 1986

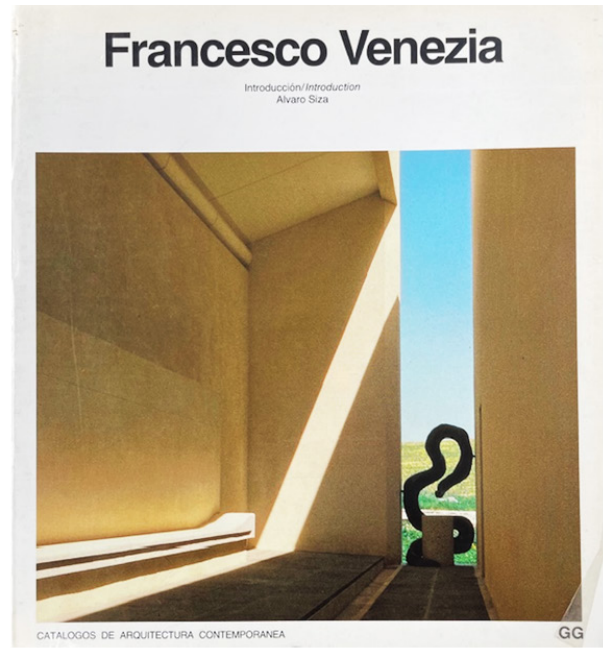
Fig. 15
Detailed Plan for Porta dei Colli, Palermo, 1987, by Eduardo Souto Moura

Fig. 16
Sketches for the Detailed Plan for Porta dei Colli, Palermo, 1987, by Eduardo Souto Moura

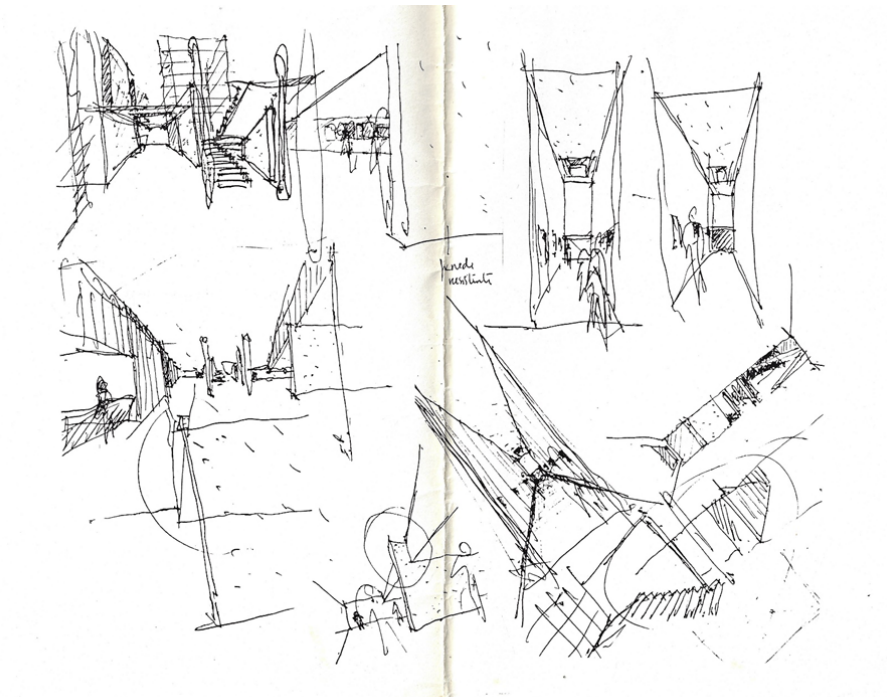




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Fig. 17

Sketches by Francesco Venezia

Fig. 18

GG's book on the work of Francesco Venezia

Fig. 19

Sketches by Graça Correia for a 4th-year project under the guidance of Souto Moura at FAUP, 1986/87

“Graça, this is very Grassi!” And I thought he was joking with me, Graça/Grassi, I didn’t understand why, because, in fact, I didn’t know who Grassi was. Of course, what I knew were Eduardo’s drawings, also influenced by Grassi, and eventually, from this class, Grassi’s monograph, published in 1984, but I’m not sure if it was already in the library in 1986—I certainly hadn’t seen it yet—after that it never left our work desk. [Fig. 20, Fig. 21, Fig. 22]

But the most extraordinary change Souto Moura brought to me, and eventually in all the students of those years (who were not many, since in 1991 he left FAUP, and Project IV never to return, a topic that would be interesting to explore in depth one day), came from his first international interview for a Swiss magazine. It is in this 1997 issue of *Faces* magazine that he says he refuses to believe in the idea of modernity breaking with history, presenting the example of Peter Behrens’ Turbinenfabrik, designed in the light of a Greek temple with a different construction system: steel columns. Now, this idea of modernity breaking with the past was obviously something that all our teachers repeated ad nauseam, something I instinctively didn’t believe in and which, of course, needed to be rethought, one of the things I have been trying to do since then. In fact, I finished my PhD, which reflects a lot on this topic, in 2006, and even so, I felt, from 1987 until now, that it was very easy to talk about who they wanted us to talk about, but what was very difficult was to talk about who no one wanted us to talk about. Yesterday, Italy finally recognized, thought the person of Francesco dal Co at Gulbenkian, the importance of this work and that my motivation was justified.

Of course, motivated by this fascination that came from observing the first drawings of the Ponte della Accademia in Venice, even before finishing my degree I went on to work at Souto Moura’s own office, witnessing, understanding, and deepening this relationship with Italy. In fact, right from the first project I collaborated on, I learned a huge lesson, because Eduardo told me he was going to use Scarpa’s table, “you know, it has that transparency, which is necessary to expand the space, and then we’ll put that stone that hides the air conditioning, you know which one?” And I said, no... “You don’t know who Scarpa is? Then tomorrow you go to the library and on your way back you’ll find out who Scarpa is!” And so, I went to learn who Scarpa was and then travelled and learned on the spot. The challenge was constant. And that’s how we learned after school, and of course, from Scarpa came those stones and, eventually, Albini also appeared, because it was impossible to go to one place and not the other. [Fig. 23, Fig. 24, Fig. 25, Fig. 26, Fig. 27, Fig. 28]

During the trip, at a certain point, I finally understood why there was a horse in the drawings of the Ponte della Accademia, something I had never understood before; of course, it came from the same place as those extraordinarily detailed drawings. And then, in 1989, when I finished my degree, this wonderful book, *Palazzo Abatelli*, published by Electa, appeared, featuring António (Esposito), Giovanni (Leoni), and Raffaella (Maddaluno), making it clear that Electa was also a privileged source of this relationship between Portugal and Italy. But one



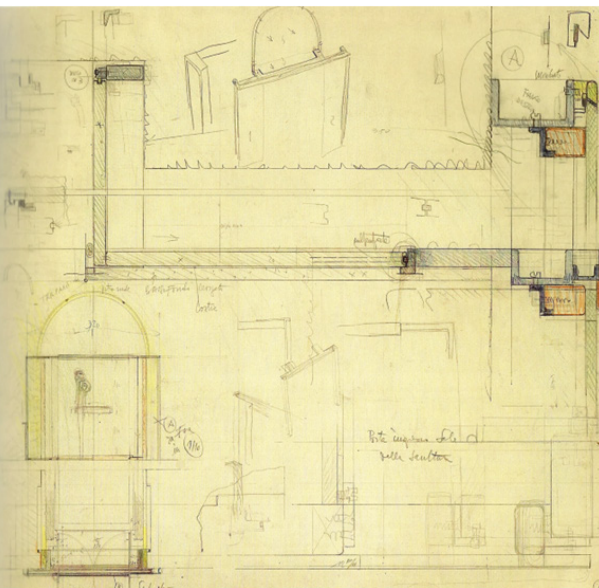
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Fig. 23

Carlo Scarpa, Castelvecchio Museum, Verona, 1959-73

Fig. 24

Civic Museum and New Art Gallery in the Eremitani Complex. Franco Albini and Franca Helg, Padua, 1969-1979

Fig. 25

Carlo Scarpa, Castelvecchio Museum, Verona 1959-73

Fig. 26

Sketches by Carlo Scarpa, Castelvecchio Museum, Verona



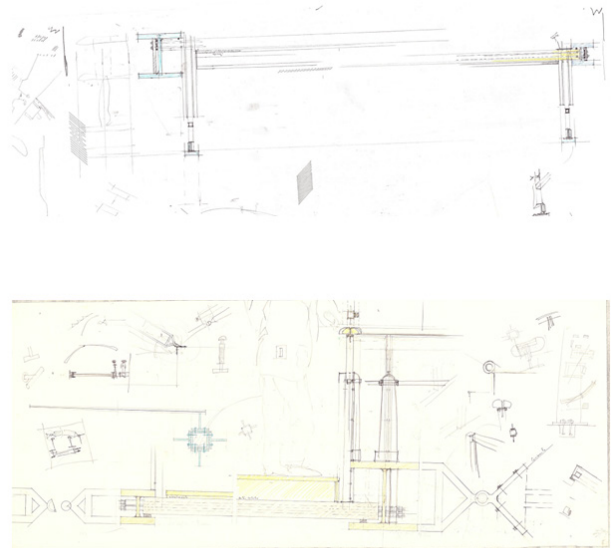
of the reasons that justified my autobiographical approach was the nature of the last conversations we had in the office in 1996, the year I left, about the monographic issue of *2G magazine* on Souto Moura. Although it was published in 1998, everything was being prepared a few years earlier, and I often asked Eduardo “but then, what about Rossi’s scientific autobiography and work?”

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Thinking that, at first glance, his work is not directly related to Rossi’s, after those first drawings; but he would make it clear in the *2G* interview that what was important was, in fact, this awareness of the subjective dimension of Rossi’s decision and that he tries to find his own decision not in Rossi’s biography but in his own autobiography, and therefore establish what can be done with the our visual scenario, and Eduardo added, “only the less intelligent confused their own autobiography with Rossi’s, and used it” directly and incorrectly. This sharing made perfect sense and, together with the trips, allowed us to have a kind of flashback and understand where all those details we did in the office came from. When they entered Eduardo’s work and the way they discreetly related to other influences—his and no one else’s—it allowed us to identify the relevance of statements that were so often controversial. And to see that yes, Gardella was also on the wall the whole time we were designing the Geosciences faculty, and that his extraordinary phrase, which I only recently learned, said it all:

Culture is a necessary nourishment for the training of architects, but it becomes a useless burden on the stomach if theoretical knowledge and practical experience are not absorbed, digested, I would say “forgotten” in the bloodstream of doing.³

Siza also repeated in many classes that references must be forgotten in



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Fig. 27

Eduardo Souto Moura, Ponte dell’Accademia, Venice, 1985

Fig. 28

Details’ sketches : Carlo Scarpa, Castelveccchio Museum, Verona and Souto Moura, Ponte dell’Accademia, Venice

3 Ignazio Gardella, “Docente di Elementi di composizione, intervistato dagli studenti dello IUAV per il periodico studentesco”, in *Venezia Architettura*, Venezia, settembre de 1952, p. 17. “La cultura è cibo necessario alla formazione dell’architetto, ma diventa inutile peso sullo stomaco se resta cultura stralciata, se cioè le cognizioni teoriche e le esperienze pratiche non si integrano le une con altre, e se non sono assorbite, digerite, direi “dimenticate” nel circolo sanguigno del fare”.



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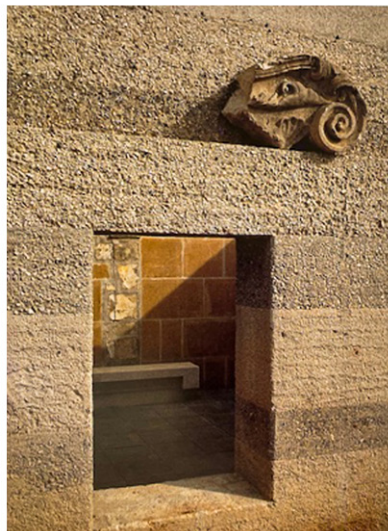
order to be used later, and it is clear that Gardella was also on Fernando Távora's wall. [Fig. 29-30] And then, in the work, we identify these references in this beautiful way, which is never direct, but which is clearly a result of culture, this digested culture, this influence that we saw in the first sketches, in the very first drawings and which, as Siza likes to say, is the subconscious, which is our best friend, from which we draw ideas when we need them. [Fig. 31, Fig. 32, Fig. 33, Fig. 34]

How wonderful it was when I met Ruy d'Atouguia and exchanged so much during those 10 wonderful years with him, and about him. One could only fall in love with such a fascinating subject. It was extraordinary to meet him and hear the whole story, which is much longer than the one we know, and to see how fascinated he was with Franco Albini and how little with Leslie Martin, who, sadly, later did what they should have done: the first expansion of Gulbenkian, the CAM (Centro de Arte Moderna Gulbenkian). Anyway, there was an affinity with Albini (even a physical resemblance) in that they shared ideas with the same elegance. [Figg. 35-37]

And, at the same time, another theme that I had seen in Eduardo's office was



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Fig. 29

Fernando Távora, Municipal Building, Aveiro, 1963–67

Fig. 30

Ignazio Gardella, Casa alle Zattere, Venice, 1958–62

Fig. 31

Eduardo Souto Moura, House in Boavista, 1983–88

Fig. 32

Francesco Venezia, Giardino Segreto, Gibellina, 1972–85



33

"...recebemos os impulsos do subconsciente, que acumula todas as experiências próprias ou alheias e que vêm ao de cima apoiar quando é preciso, porque o nosso subconsciente é nosso amigo: quando é preciso, ele actua."
Álvaro Siza



34

Fig. 33

Display stand by Carlo Scarpa, Castelvecchio Museum, Verona

Fig. 34

Álvaro Siza Taipas Series.

repeated: projects influencing each other. When we look at the Gulbenkian complex, we see the Liceu Padre António Vieira; these were the works present in the office and in the model of the first version of the Foundation's elevations, we see this photograph that Juan Rodrigues took of the Liceu Padre António Vieira [Fig. 36-38]. Because, of course, there were affinities between everyone, just as between the Pousada da Nazaré – which Eduardo claimed to have “copied” with me in Portalegre – was linked to Ignázio Gardella, and he to Távora, who links us all. [Fig. 39, Fig. 40, Fig. 41] When Roberto Ragazzi joined the office in 2005, coming from IUAV, he naturally brought his heroes with him, who were Italian, and the scope of this Portugal/Italy relationship expanded even further, now including his teachers, those he admired, and an absolutely fantastic book that we discovered on our first trip to Italy together. And then we went straight to meet Alberto Gallardi, the author, and headed straight to Ivrea and Olivetti [Fig. 42, Fig. 43, Fig. 44, Fig. 45, Fig. 46, Fig. 48]. So, we began to create our own field of references, always through Electa, always through *Casabella*, guided by Francesco da Co, who showed us everything that Eduardo had talked about in

Fig. 35

Ruy Jervis d'Athouguia, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon 1959–1968

Fig. 36

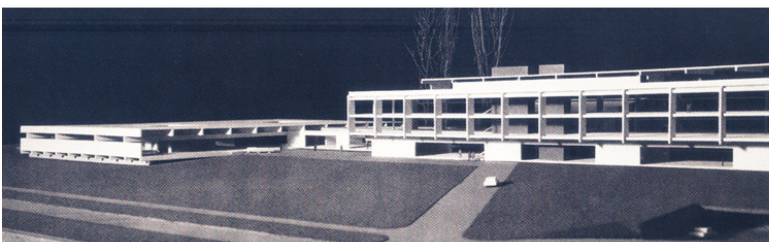
Padre António Vieira High School, Lisbon 1959–1963

Fig. 37

Portrait of Franco Albini

Fig. 38

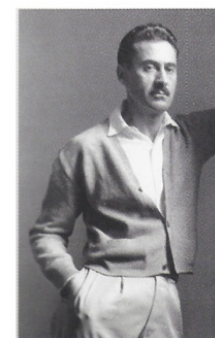
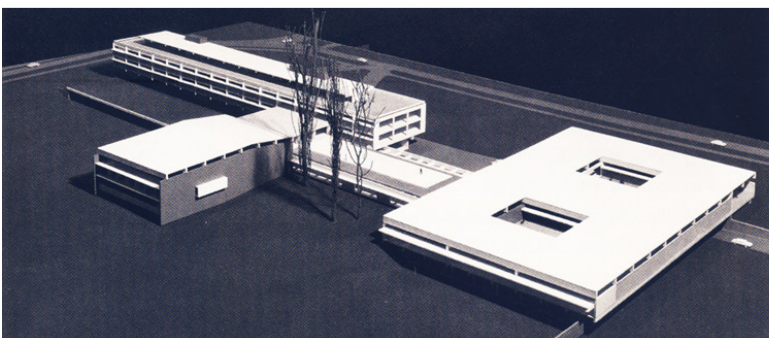
Portrait of Ruy Jervis d'Athouguia



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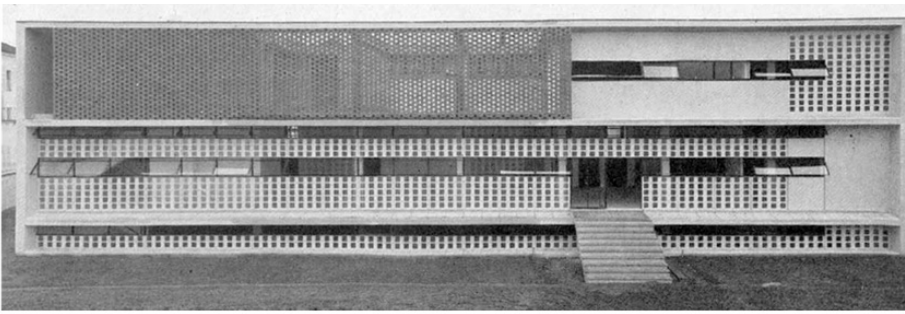
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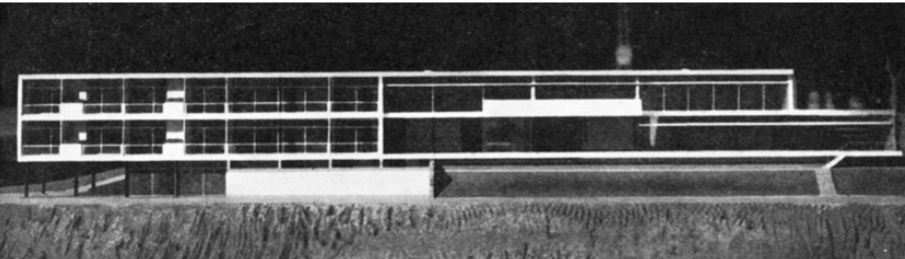
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Fig. 39

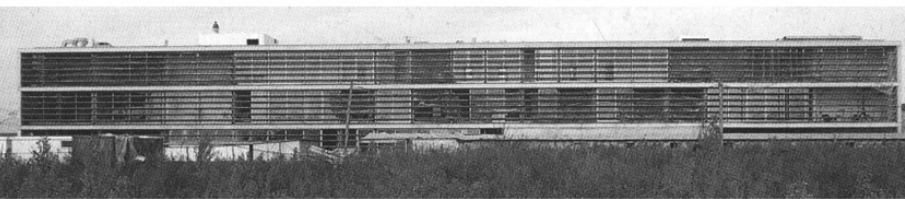
Ignazio Gardella, Anti-Tuberculosis Dispensary, Alessandria, 1934–38



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Fig. 40

Ruy Jervis d'Athouguia, Pousada da Nazaré, 1959–1969



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Fig. 41

Eduardo Souto Moura, Department of Geosciences, Aveiro, 1989–94



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Fig. 42

Carlo Scarpa's Giardino delle sculture Venice; Gino Valle, Francesco Dal Co and Manfredo Tafuri, Francesco Venezia

Fig. 43

Alberto Galardi, Marxer Pharmaceutical Laboratory, 1962

Fig. 44

Alberto Galardi, *Architettura italiana contemporanea*, 1967

Fig. 45

Patrizia Bonifazio, *Olivetti costruisce, Architettura moderna a Ivrea*, 2001

Fig. 46

Gabetti and Isola with Luciano Re, West Residential Unit, Ivrea, 1968–71

Fig. 47

Francesco Dal Co "Il diritto all'infedeltà: l'architettura e il farsi di una città. John Wood il Vecchio, Stonehenge e la città di Bath", *Casabella*, no. 902, 2019

Fig. 48

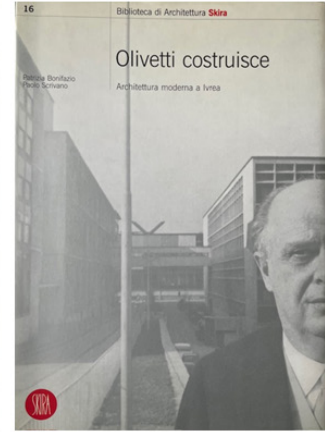
Eero Saarinen, IBM Research Center, Yorktown Heights NY, 1961



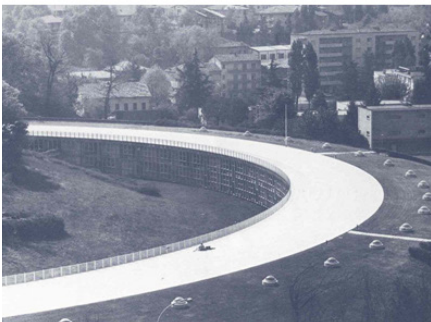
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Il diritto all'infedeltà: l'architettura e il farsi di una città di Bath

Francesco Dal Co
Una grande domanda del 1960 Bath, città sin dall'epoca romana per la sua storia di luogo di passaggio da un'epoca all'altra, è per lo meno, come per tutte le città, una grande domanda di futuro. In un momento di crisi, come quello che stiamo vivendo, è importante che il futuro di una città sia deciso non solo in base a un'idea di sviluppo, ma anche in base a un'idea di vita. In un momento di crisi, come quello che stiamo vivendo, è importante che il futuro di una città sia deciso non solo in base a un'idea di sviluppo, ma anche in base a un'idea di vita.



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brilliant articles such as the one establishing John Wood's fruitful relationship with Stonehenge, proving once again that it is impossible to break with the past. [Fig. 47]

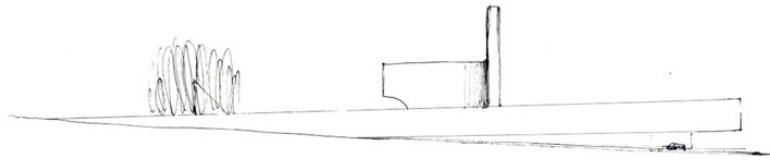
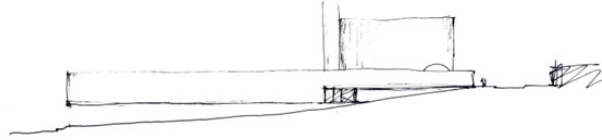
Then, of course, we put together our physical and mental journeys with our chosen cast, above all finding opportunities to learn from what we visit. And eventually, yes, everything will have to do with what we do in a logic where the past, present, and future are irrelevant; what matters is only what is useful to us



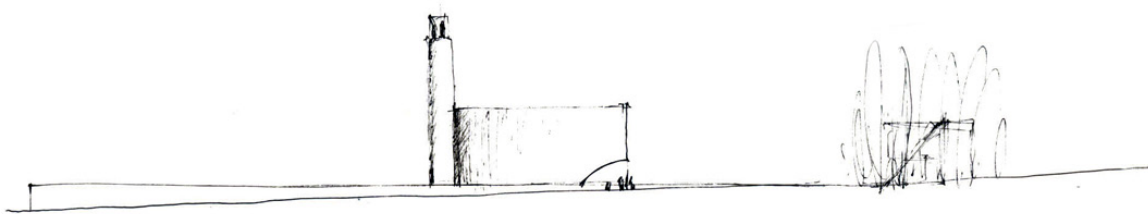
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in these times; that is, how the works of others, even if distant, can help us solve today's problems. So, it is also interesting to talk about how Italy enters our office and moves us, helping us to work. This is well illustrated by the Meinedo Church Project (2016-ongoing), and although many say that its entrance or that encounter between the parish center and the church has a lot of Carlo Scarpa in it, this was never a conscious influence. However, we were always very aware of the need to build a place in that location, – which we found absolutely terrible; the truth is that when we hear about a competition for ideas to build a church and we see warehouses and a characterless environment, full of roundabouts and elevated roads – we thought of the wonderful places where a church actually builds a place. So that was the big problem with the project, and we did a trip to see how [Lorenzo] Bernini did it in his place, with the same problems in building a wonderful place in Ariccia, which is the one surrounding the Church of the Collegiata di S. Maria Assunta from 1663-1665. We believe that, much more than the church itself, it was the whole problem of resolving differences in elevations and building something that would shape that place that Bernini helped us to solve. [Fig. 49, Fig. 50, Fig. 51]

Similarly, the difficult adjustment of the east-west orientation that was mandatory for the church, which nevertheless had to be large enough to accommodate 500 people, on a plot of land where the east-west orientation made it difficult to fit the volume, this made Bramante's very practical study in the articulation of geometries incredibly useful. [Fig. 53]

The requirement to have a bell tower also reminded us of all those trips we had taken where we realized the importance of bell towers in churches and other places. The same action takes us to Portugal to redesign a door, or back to Italy to design the altar; or even to think about Sophia [de Mello Breyner Andresen] or, once again, to design a small window behind the altar, taking us to Spain, or back to Portugal. What is really important, as Eduardo says, influenced by Siza or Gardella, is to forget, digest, and then, as problems arise, look for ways to solve them. [Fig. 39, Fig. 40, Fig. 41]

To build Casa do Gerês, the person who gave us the courage to take action in that place – that made us want to run away and do nothing – with modesty being a requirement for intervening there, was Adalberto Libera. Not only did Libera manage to build the house in that already magical place, he also painted it red, and we thought: well, perhaps the most important thing is that the house and the place enhance each other. At least if we design it consciously. This does not mean that a work cannot be created simply by seeing good architecture, and since no one in my generation could have remained indifferent to Nanni Moretti, it would be natural to take a Vespa, go for a ride around the cities and discover this Mausoleo delle Fosse Ardeatine, which is one of my favourite works on the outskirts of Rome, and then arrive at the office and design a house for a German client in the Algarve that may not even be built, but which is nonetheless a tribute to this extraordinary work.

Fig. 47

Engraving depicting a view of the Church and Square in Ariccia

Fig. 48

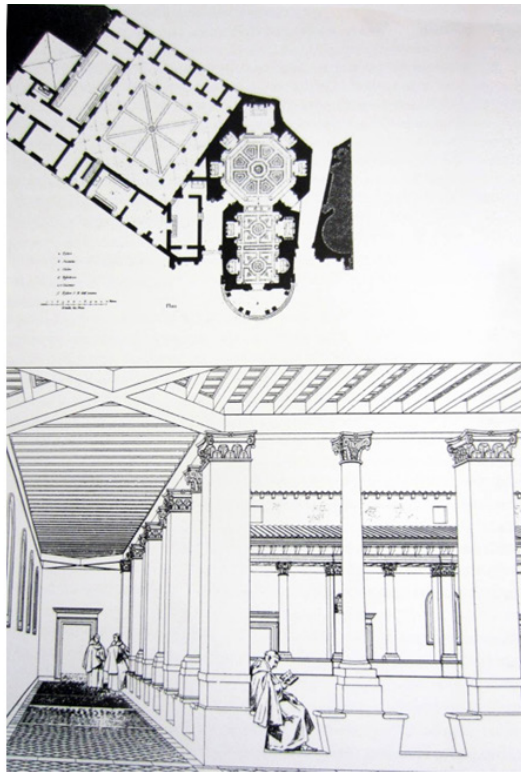
Lorenzo Bernini: Church of the Collegiate Church of St. Mary Assumed into Heaven, Ariccia 1663-1665

Fig. 49

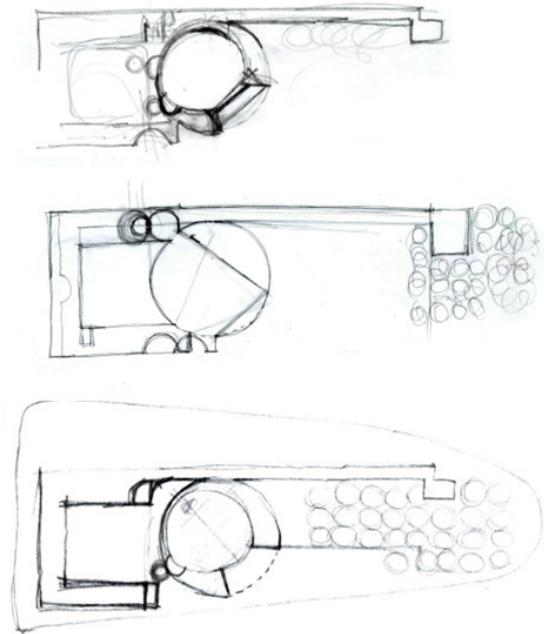
The urban space and the topography of the territory: photographic survey of Church of the Collegiate Church of St. Mary Assumed into Heaven and sketches for Meinedo Church Project

Fig. 50

Complex Profile: the Church Entrance, the bell tower, and the Oak Grove of Mambré with the Mortuary Chapel. Series of travel sketches: Lucca Italy, Florence Italy, Cadaqués, Spain



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In a biographical reading, we return once again to the beginning, and to that house that we had to renovate sooner or later, by coincidence in the parish where the first king of Portugal grew up. The same one that married an Italian woman. To our aid came help from Portugal/Italy through Eduardo [Souto Moura], who gave us this “dangerous” book that spoke of the patina, of the importance of places as they are... In short – with the same boldness that led us to create the *Páginas Brancas* – we felt we had to do something, because there was no electricity or water in the house. [Fig. 61-62]

And one of the most difficult issues in the house, which was the difference between the angle of a pillar and the erudition of the design on the main façade and the opposite angle, where you couldn’t even tell where the plaster ended and the stone began. The solution to this problem also came from Italy, because we were watching *Il gattopardo*, in a screening organized by José Miguel Rodrigues, during Covid at a FAUP event, when we, with this problem on our minds, saw José Miguel end his speech with this extraordinary phrase: “something has to change so that everything can continue to be done in the same way,” and we realized that there was the solution to the problem, with the naturalness of the angle shown to us by Luchino Visconti. [Fig. 63]

This is perhaps the best synthesis that Correia/Ragazzi could exhibit, in the relationship we have here. Truly Portuguese-Italian, in which we believe that architecture is exactly this process of synthesis. A process that culminates in a material good, but where material and immaterial factors intervene that are precisely the result of the complicity and complementarity, and of the restlessness

Fig. 53

Plan and engraving perspective of Santa Maria della Pace, Bramante Cloister, Rome, 1500–1504. Series of studies of the relationship between the cloister proposed in the Parish Complex and the bell tower, the Church (east/west) and the Mortuary Chapel

Fig. 54

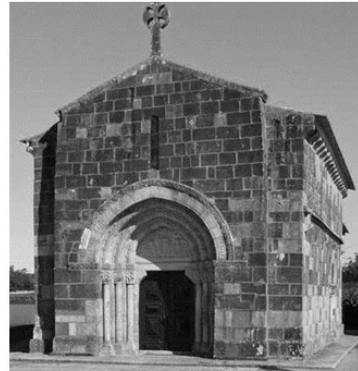
Studies of the relationship between the cloister proposed in the Parish Complex and the bell tower, the Church (east/west) and the Mortuary Chapel



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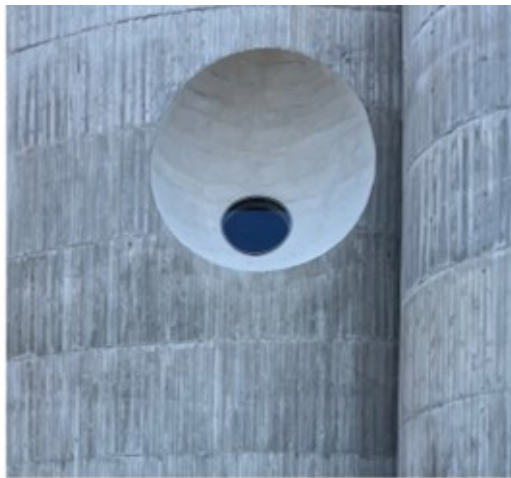
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Fig. 55

Correia, Ragazzi, Meinedo Church, 2015 - (...).

Fig. 52

Paço de Sousa Monastery 10th-13th century

Fig. 57

Church of São Cristóvão de Rio Mau, Vila do Conde 11th century

Fig.58

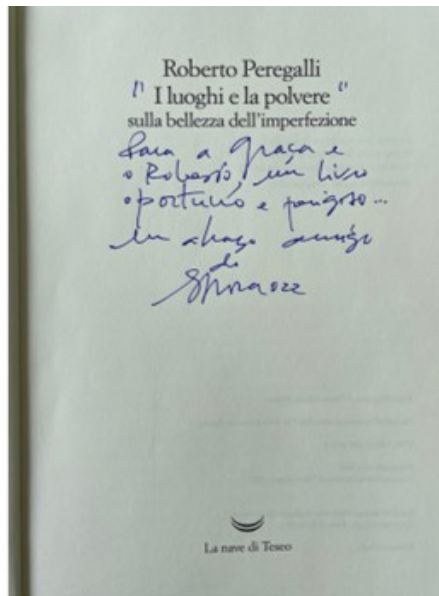
Church of Our Lady of the Assumption, Linhares da Beira, 12th-18th centuries

Fig. 59

Correia, Ragazzi, Façade detail, Meinedo Church

Fig. 60

Collegiate Church of Santa Maria, Arbás del Puerto, 12th-18th centuries



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Fig. 61

Roberto Peregalli, *I luoghi e la polvere, sulla bellezza dell'imperfezione*, "For Graça and Roberto, a timely and dangerous book... A friendly hug from Eduardo Souto de Moura" 2022

Fig. 62

Correia, Ragazzi, Quinta de Velude, 2017-2022



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63



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Fig. 63

Il Gattopardo, filmed by Luchino Visconti. 1963. *Il Gattopardo* addresses the theme of the end of one era and the birth of another. Hence the famous phrase "of course something has to change so that everything can continue to be done in the same way".

Fig. 64

Multiple photos of Quinta de Velude by Correia, Ragazzi.