

Portuguese Urbanism: Structural and Formal Contact Sheet*

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‘The whole is greater than the sum of its parts’ is the Aristotelian principle on which the author bases this text on Portuguese urbanism. The geographical scope is that of the regions of the world with Portuguese cultural influence and, in chronological terms, it focuses on the 1st Empire (Modern Age, from the Pearl River in China to the River Plate in South America), without ruling out medieval antecedents and extensions in the 2nd Empire (from the Age of Revolutions to decolonisation in 1975, focusing on the African colonies).

Beginning with a brief but critical overview of the rich evolution of Portuguese urban historiography, with a special focus on urban planning, the author concluded that its development had slowed down, with works centred on traditional urban morphology, i.e., focused on little more than the two-dimensionality of the urban plan.

In an attempt to overcome this impasse, the author formulates a question that, because it demands knowledge that extends far beyond the characteristics of Portuguese and Portuguese-influenced city plan patterns, requires a change in method and focus. Although the cases and even the sources are necessarily the same, the tools are not. Next, according to a mosaic of seven components that he so suggestively and ambiguously considers ‘evidence of contact,’ he attempts to begin answering, clearly leaving open the challenge of its development and expansion in subsequent works.

Keywords: Portuguese Influence, Urbanistics and Landscape, the City as Discourse, Structure and Form, Invariants and Types.

1. Portuguese urbanism: from its origins to the pertinence of the question that arises

Portuguese urban history emerged in Portugal and Brazil in the 1950s and gained prominence in the following decade¹. But it was only after the

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1. For a more detailed overview of this initial production, see, for a focus on the history

democratisation of Portugal, triggered by the Revolution of 25 April 1974, and the subsequent decolonisation of its empire, that it gained the momentum necessary to develop in the multifaceted way it presents itself today. This synchrony was not concerted, with regular collaborations between experts on both sides of the Atlantic, mostly architects, only being established in the late 1990s. Only a few years earlier, Portuguese historiography had begun to concern itself with the urban phenomena resulting from “overseas expansion” and colonialism, realising that without a view of the whole, it would not be able to evolve in its understanding of what is now Portugal’s urban heritage.

However, in addition to historiography of local interest and scale, whose origins are complex to discern, Portuguese urban history had its great driving forces in geographers and historians, with medievalists deserving credit for building, from the 1980s onwards, a somewhat systematised network of knowledge, centred on the teachings of A. H. de Oliveira Marques and Iria Gonçalves² and which, in the domain of urbanistics, would culminate in Luísa Trindade’s doctoral thesis in 2010³. They were preceded by geographers such as Orlando Ribeiro, Jorge Gaspar, Pereira de Oliveira, Ilídio do Amaral and Clara Mendes, the latter two in the African colonial context⁴. It is curious to note that, in all cases, the works focused on the Middle Ages (the formation of the country and its basic urban network) and the Contemporary period (between Brazil’s independence and the decolonisation resulting from the Revolution of 25 April 1974). In fact, with the dynamics of overseas expansion and colonisation that began in the 15th century and imperial development in the following centuries, urban processes in the European Portuguese space remained relatively incipient until the Enlightenment, arousing interest only more recently.

In this slow historiographical evolution, the history of urbanism, with its methodological basis in morphology, although never neglecting programmes, soon took its place within urban history, which is inseparable from the development, precisely in the last decades of the 20th century, of an awareness of the loss of cultural values in urban, rural and natural landscapes. Portugal did not suffer the destruction that Spain experienced with the Civil War (1936-1939) and the rest of Europe with the Second World War (1939-1945). Thus, in the middle decades of the 20th century, there was no reconstruction, but rather the decline of a country that was increasingly isolated internationally,

of urbanism, W. Rossa, *Le città nuove dell’universo urbanistico portoghese: invariabilità ed evoluzione* in A. Casamento (ed.), *Fondazioni urbane. Città nuove europee dal medioevo al Novecento*, Edizioni Kappa, Roma 2012, pp. 245-264.

2. J. Mattoso (dir.), *The Historiography of Medieval Portugal c. 1950-2010*, Instituto de Estudos Medievais, Lisboa 2011, the entries by Maria Helena da Cruz Coelho, Amélia Aguiar Andrade and Adelaide Millán da Costa.

3. L. Trindade, *Urbanismo na composição de Portugal*, Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, Coimbra 2013.

4. For a complete overview: M.G. Fernandes, *O estudo da forma urbana em Portugal, entre os geógrafos*, in V. Oliveira, T. Marat-Mendes and P. Pinho, *O estudo da forma urbana em Portugal*, University of Porto, Porto 2015, pp. 55-64.

demographically bled dry by emigration and exhausted by the Colonial War (1961-1974). In other words, while Europe was rebuilding itself, the Portuguese urban network was being deformed without public policies for organisation and planning.

Furthermore, we must cross-reference this Portuguese context with international trends, starting with developments in the social sciences known as the “Spatial Turn”⁵. Put simply, during this same period, space and place began to play a crucial role in the interpretation of social phenomena, which is not unrelated to technological developments such as geographic information systems and the ability to collect and process enormous amounts of data and their relationships.

Returning to Portugal, the explosive volume of investment resulting from integration into the then European Economic Community in 1985 had enormous impacts, not always controlled or positive, on the landscape, reigniting awareness of the large-scale loss of cultural heritage, which, together with freedom of research, ultimately forced a deeper understanding of this issue. This converged with the *European Campaign for Urban Renaissance* promoted by the Council of Europe between 1980 and 1982. On the other hand, decolonisation, which was one of the pillars of the democratic revolution of 1974, opened the door to a global reflection on the legacies of the empire, for which the cycle of celebrations of the half-millennium of Portuguese discoveries (1986-2002) was a privileged catalyst, due to the multiplicity of actions and funding⁶.

In sync with developments in Europe, this surge in studies on colonial cities was preceded by a significant interest in the country’s urban history, marked between 1985 and 1993 by four interdisciplinary events and their respective publications⁷. It was inevitable that this momentum would lead to

5. From an Anglo-Saxon perspective, the website of the University of Virginia’s *Spatial Humanities* project – <https://spatial.scholarslab.org/spatial-turn/> (last accessed on 30 September 2025) – provides a comprehensive overview of the movement, but for a more Europe-centred perspective: Y. Gouchan, *The spatial turn*, in R. Baleiro, G. Capecci, J. Arcos-Pumarola (eds.), *E-Dictionary of Literary Tourism*, University for Foreigners of Perugia, 2023 – <https://www.unistrapg.it/it/spatial-turn> (last accessed on 30 September 2025). To mention only historians who have had a major influence on Portuguese historiography, Fernand Braudel, Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre played a key role in this change.

6. In our field, we should highlight the project *A Cidade de como civilização: universo urbanístico português 1415-1822* (*The City as Civilisation: The Portuguese Urban Universe 1415-1822*), curated by Walter Rossa, Renata de Araujo and Hélder Carita, which resulted in publications such as H. Carita, R. Araujo (org.), *Colectânea de Estudos: Universo Urbanístico Português 1415-1822*. Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, Lisboa 1998; W. Rossa, R. Araujo, H. Carita (org.), *Atas do Colóquio Internacional Universo Urbanístico Português 1415-1822*. Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, Lisboa 2001, and several scientific meetings were held, bringing together for the first time around a hundred researchers from all parts of the former colonial empire.

7. A.T. Matos, C.L. Medeiros (dir.), *A cidade em Portugal: onde se vive* (dossier), in

more in-depth research, such as the doctoral theses of Teresa Barata Salgueiro⁸, in Geography, and Margarida Souza Lobo⁹, in Architecture, which I highlight among others for their national rather than monographic focus¹⁰.

The result of a very diverse thematic and working line established in 1962 by José Augusto França's PhD thesis *Lisboa Pombalina e o Iluminismo*¹¹ – the first in-depth work on the history of Portuguese urbanism – in 1984, Art History saw Horta Correia complete his PhD thesis on Vila Real de Santo António¹² and catalyse the emergence of a series of disciples whose master's and doctoral theses in the history of urbanism constituted a considerable increase in knowledge of the subject¹³. In 1995, one of them produced, as a chapter in a *History of Portuguese Art*, the only text that to date provides a comprehensive overview of Portuguese urbanism from its origins to the end of the Old Regime, from the Pearl River to the River Plate¹⁴. From another lineage, another comprehensive work was published in 1999, albeit restricted to the Portugal-Brazil axis¹⁵.

Well before that, the emergence and development of similar studies on Spanish urbanism and its former empire¹⁶, as well as the parallels between the different contexts – the geographical proximity of Portugal and Spain and their

«Povos e Culturas», 2 (1987); M.M.A. Perdigão, *O Imaginário da Cidade*. Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisboa 1989; A.N. Gusmão (ed.), *Cidades e História, ciclo de conferências*, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisboa 1992; M.J.F. Tavares, *A Cidade: jornadas inter e pluridisciplinares*, Universidade Aberta, Lisboa 1993, 2 voll. In the first of these publications, José Manuel Fernandes, in the text *O lugar da cidade portuguesa* (pp. 79-112), made the first attempt at a synthesis of Portuguese urbanism, which he later replicated, see chapter 7 of J.M. Fernandes, *Arquitectura Portuguesa: uma síntese*, INCM, Lisboa 1991.

8. T.B. Salgueiro, *A Cidade em Portugal: uma Geografia Urbana*, Afrontamento, Porto 1992.

9. M.S. Lobo, *Planos de Urbanização: a época de Duarte Pacheco*, FAUP and DGOTDU, Porto 1995.

10. The thesis by B.J. Ferrão, *Projecto e transformação urbana do Porto na época dos Almadás: 1758/1813*, FAUP, Porto 1989, deserves a mention, however, because in order to contextualise his theme, the author produced a synthesis – innovative and extraordinary at the time of its writing in 1985 – on the history of Portuguese urbanism.

11. J.A. França, *Lisboa Pombalina e o Iluminismo*, Livros Horizonte, Lisboa 1965; French edition, J.A. França, *Une ville des Lumières: la Lisbonne de Pombal*, SEVPEN, Paris 1965; Italian edition, J.A. França, *Una città dell'illuminismo: la Lisbona del marchese di Pombal*, Officina, Roma 1972.

12. J.E.H. Correia, *Vila Real de Santo António: urbanismo e poder na política pombalina*, FAUP, Porto 1998.

13. It was part of this group of disciples of Horta Correia that promoted the project described in note 5.

14. W. Rossa, *A cidade portuguesa*, in P. Pereira (ed.), *História da Arte Portuguesa*, III, Círculo de Leitores, Lisboa 1995, pp. 233-323.

15. M.C. Teixeira, M. Valla, *O Urbanismo Português: séculos XIII-XVIII Portugal-Brasil*, Livros Horizonte, Lisboa 1999.

16. Note the seminal A. Garcia Bellido *et al.*, *Resumen Histórico del Urbanismo en España*, Instituto de Estudios de Administración Local, Madrid 1954.

colonies in America; they built the first global empires synchronously; and they moved from dictatorships to democracy and joined the European Economic Community at practically the same time – determined a systematic methodological and thematic comparison in the field of urban history, with a special focus on urbanism. In the Spanish case, too, the history of urban planning was fundamental to the development of urban history, and the cycle of events commemorating the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America, in 1992, gave it considerable impetus¹⁷.

The structural difference between the urban centres founded by Portuguese and Spanish colonisers in America was the focus of this vast initial production. Philip II's imposition of the famous "damero" (checkerboard) on the new cities of the Spanish Empire in the *Leyes de Indias* of 1573, confirmed a considerably rigid choice for the geometric basis of the colonisation models of Classical Antiquity. Instead, the cities founded by the Portuguese in Brazil emerged with a more flexible expression, which, in a succession of works, eventually affiliated with the medieval new cities of the various Iberian kingdoms, before and after Spanish unification¹⁸. In short, while the Spanish adopted the Hippodamian model, which has as its compositional module the square block with identical streets that intersect at right angles, the Portuguese continued and developed the medieval European model, which is based on narrow and deep plots that determine a hierarchy between streets and cross streets and allow greater permeability to the influence of the terrain¹⁹.

Within the scope of what we can call a historiography of Portuguese urbanism, which necessarily includes the colonial sphere and a traditional morphological and chronological focus, we can say that today we have a considerable number of monographs and case studies, varying in depth, and that their number continues to grow. On the other hand, the compilation, systematisation, and publication of collections of cartographic and iconographic sources, plans, and projects²⁰ have provided an invaluable boost

17. Among many others: F. Terán (ed.), *La Ciudad Hispanoamericana: el sueño de un orden*, CEHOPU, Madrid 1989.

18. N.G. Reis, *Contribuição ao Estudo da Evolução Urbana do Brasil (1500/1720)*, Pioneira, São Paulo 1964; R.M. Delson, *New Towns for Colonial Brazil: spatial and social planning of the eighteenth century*, Department of Geography of Syracuse University and University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor 1979; P.O. Azevedo, *Urbanismo de trazo regular en los primeros siglos de la colonización brasileña*, in *Estudos sobre urbanismo Iberoamericano, siglos XVI al XVIII*, Consejería de Cultura de la Junta de Andalucía, Sevilla 1990, pp. 306-322; W. Rossa, *A cidade portuguesa...*, cit.; L. Trindade, *Urbanismo na composição de Portugal...*, cit.

19. W. Rossa, *Stone Raft, Allegory on the Spread of European Urbanistics in Early Modern Times*, in «Joelho», 6 (2015), pp. 78–93.

20. L. Silveira, *Ensaio de Iconografia das cidades portuguesas do*, Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, Lisboa 1956, 4 voll., was a very important early phenomenon, which would only have repercussions decades later, particularly in Brazil: I. Adonias, B. Furrer, *Mapa: Imagens da Formação Territorial Brasileira*, Odebrecht Foundation, Rio de Janeiro 1993; N.G. Reis, *Imagens de Vilas e Cidades do Brasil Colonial*, University of São

to research. If this disciplinary evolution was triggered by the comparison between the urbanism of the Portuguese and Spanish empires, at least the study of their Iberian roots imposed the search for other formal and methodological references in Europe, notably Italian and French, through contact with their vast bibliographic production and interaction with their respective authors.

It was also then that we confirmed the relevance and convergence of other disciplinary areas to the development of the history of urbanism, and how much the scientific nature of our work depends on the rigour of research design and historical analysis²¹. We also confirmed that while the study of cases in Brazil yields results in this comparison, the same is not true in Asia²². This is because, while in the Atlantic space of the former empire, cities are the result of a long process of colonisation beyond the coastline and, thus, of foundations, in the Indian Ocean, processes of occupation and adaptation of pre-existing coastal structures essentially took place, with few cases of new cities and, even then, always in long-term processes, without prior planning. Their structure and form, when viewed traditionally, are different.

Until this clarification of models was consolidated, the prevailing interpretation of the flexibility expressed by Brazilian colonial cities gave way to elaborate explanations which, based on the principle of their lack of planning and thus their organic nature, were based on a more tolerant and gradual colonialism, which contributed to the development of a myth of exceptionality – not specificity, as would be acceptable – of what then came to be known as the “Portuguese city”²³.

Paulo, Official State Press and Fapesp, São Paulo 2000; A.M.M. Belluzzo, *O Brasil dos Viajantes*, Odebrecht Foundation, São Paulo 2000; J.C. Garcia, *A mais dilatada vista do mundo: inventário da colecção cartográfica da Casa da Índia*, Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, Lisboa 2002.

21. L. Trindade, *História do Urbanismo: investigação, fontes e instrumentos*, in A.A. Andrade et al (eds.), *Espaços e poderes nas cidades da Europa Medieval*, Instituto de Estudos Medievais e Câmara Municipal de Castelo de Vide, Lisboa 2018.

22. W. Rossa, *Indo-Portuguese Cities: a Contribution to the Study of Portuguese Urbanism in Western Hindustan* (bilingual), National Commission for the Commemoration of Portuguese Discoveries, Lisboa 1997; W. Rossa, *Chaul: Historical Background and Urbanism; Daman: Historical Background and Urbanism; Diu: Historical Background and Urbanism* (with Nuno Grancho); *Mumbai: Historical Background and Urbanism; Vasai Fort: Historical Background and Urbanism; Goa: Historical Background and Urbanism; Kochi: Historical Background and Urbanism; Mylapor: Historical Background and Urbanism*, in J. Mattoso (coord.), W. Rossa (ed.), *World Heritage Around the World: Architecture and Urbanism. Asia and Oceania*, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisboa 2011.

23. The main author on this concept-theme is José Manuel Fernandes (see note 7). I also began my scientific work based on this perception, but after coming into direct contact with colonial legacies and their historiography, I have been deconstructing and interpreting the same data, realities, and phenomena in light of concepts such as cultural influence and the reciprocity implicit therein.

It is not possible to dissociate this interpretation from a new “Luso-tropicalism“, a revisiting of the concept produced by some sectors of the Portuguese elites²⁴ after decolonisation, which allowed the discomfort of the unenviable realities of Portuguese colonialism to be mitigated, accommodated or even numbed. Under the impetus of postcolonial studies, but essentially because, half a century later, it is now possible to write history, it is a way of thinking that is in the process of being abandoned.

With all this in mind, and in particular with the need to evolve from morphological research to an integrated view of the various characteristics of urban landscapes, the cities left behind by Portuguese colonialism – the overwhelming majority of which are not “Portuguese cities“ – should be studied in terms of their specificity and the results of the formal interaction of their components, rather than through a forced interpretation of myths of exceptionality and generalities deeply rooted in adages such as the famous but erroneous “those who have seen Goa need not see Lisbon”, and a list of preconceived ideas about characteristics that are common to many other urbanistic cultures.

Focusing on what seems essential – overcoming the thematic and methodological stagnation of Portuguese urban history – the question that imposes itself on me today is as simple as it is difficult to answer: if we identify similarities between the urban landscapes of Portugal, Madeira and the Azores and places as diverse as the traditional neighbourhoods of Macau, Goa, Mozambique, Angola, São Tomé and Príncipe, Cabe Verde and Brazil, why not try to identify and characterise what determines them? The implicit geography imposes the chronology of the former empire, that is, until the decolonisation resulting from the Revolution of 25 April 1974, but with greater emphasis on Brazil’s independence. After that, the dynamics of transformation intensified and took on different meanings. This question must necessarily focus on the “centres of identity” of these urban centres, some of which are among the most populous and densely populated metropolises on the planet.

The answer will not only be important in terms of knowledge, but also as an operational tool for safeguarding actions, as it is necessary to distinguish between what can change without losing its identity and cultural value, and

24. “Lusotropicalism” was a concept coined by the highly celebrated Brazilian intellectual Gilberto Freyre, which the Portuguese fascist regime known as the Estado Novo (1928/33-1974) used as a fundamental argument for maintaining the empire after the decolonisation promoted by other European colonial systems. It pointed to the exceptional nature, rather than the specificity, of the Portuguese colonial system, creating a theoretical basis for a myth of racial harmony, fair miscegenation, empathy, interculturality, etc. It was, as the regime’s propaganda managed to instil in common thinking, a vocation, “the Portuguese way of being in the world”. C. Castelo, *«O modo português de estar no mundo», o luso-tropicalismo e a ideologia colonial portuguesa (1933-1961)*, Afrontamento, Porto 1998, and C. Castelo, *O luso-tropicalismo e o colonialismo português tardio* in «Buala», 5 March 2013, <https://www.buala.org/pt/a-ler/o-luso-tropicalismo-e-o-colonialismo-portugues-tardio> (last accessed on 15 August 2025).

what must therefore be preserved. It also has the potential to help non-specialists distinguish what is at stake, because, as has been understood until now, the morphological patterns of an urban centre – essentially the structure of its landscape and not its form, as one might etymologically expect – are immaterial, an abstraction that is difficult to glimpse and, therefore, to valorise.

2. *About the method*

To progress in this direction, it is necessary to change the method, or rather, to simultaneously broaden the horizons and the focus. To this end, it is essential to admit that, since morphology is, by etymological definition, the study of form, we are still far from exploring its full potential. In other words, we must move from the study of two-dimensionality to that of three-dimensionality in the morphological expressions of Portuguese urbanistics, introducing landscape as an operator and focus. In line with what I have just expressed in the previous paragraph, it is a question of moving from the almost exclusive study of the abstraction of the urban design structure – or, if we prefer, the plan or the “ground plan” with the identification and location of the programmes – to the materiality of their urban form, their relationships, in short, their landscape expression. Let us therefore focus on what is fundamental – the structure and the form – freeing ourselves from the illusory seduction of what is immediate and accessory, that is, the image.

Over the last decade, I developed some methodological reflections along these lines, and I now intend to test their application to my usual cases, those of Portuguese urbanism. I highlight the attempt to understand the discursive mechanisms of urbanistics – its “grammars” – in light of the methodological codification of linguistics²⁵. If we drew on the operational concepts of syntax and morphology – which refer precisely to structure and form – we could also resort to phonology and semantics for the image, if that were the focus. Pragmatics, on the other hand, is helpful to us because it leads to the integrated relationship between the site and the territory, that is, to contexts.

However, it is impossible to study form without context and syntax, syntax without semantics and form, and so on, in a thorough and productive way, just as it is impossible to ignore the history and external examples that each case invokes, that is, its hypertextual dimension²⁶, or, more precisely, hyperdesign²⁷.

25. W. Rossa, *Urbanismo ou o discurso da cidade*, in W. Rossa, M.C. Ribeiro (eds.), *Patrimónios de Influência Portuguesa: modos de olhar*, Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian and Editora da Universidade Federal Fluminense, Coimbra, Lisboa and Niterói 2015, pp. 477-519. Hereinafter, I will freely use the proposals and conclusions I have recorded there, thus dispensing with the need to repeat the arguments that support them.

26. A. Corboz, *Le Territoire comme palimpseste et autres essais*, L’Imprimeur, Paris 2001.

27. W. Rossa, *(Alguns) Lugares da morfologia urbana na urbanística contemporânea*, in W. Rossa, *Fomos condenados à cidade: uma década de estudos sobre património urbanístico*, Coimbra University Press, Coimbra 2015, pp. 81-95.

In reality, more than a palimpsest (which refers to an archaeological reading), cities are “discourses in blue characters” that refer us from one to another with all time condensed into contemporaneity. Urbanism thus also emerges as a system of signs, in which the structural ones are more perennial and immutable. In contrast, the image ones are ephemeral and volatile, falling into the intermediate degrees, those of a formal character, simultaneously stable and plastic.

If, instead of structure, form is not abstraction, and the use of drawing as a research tool was the fundamental contribution made by architects to the studies that unravelled the planimetric specificities of medieval and modern Portuguese urbanistics – such as, for example, having the narrow and deep plot as a compositional module; or the tendency to use proportional systems based on the square (1) and its evolution $\sqrt{2} > \sqrt{3} > 2^{28}$ – it will also be through the use of architectural tools that another level of analysis and knowledge can be achieved. It is strangely reductive that, until now, the focus has remained on two-dimensionality, on the plane that, in essence, is not form, but structure – the abstraction already mentioned above. Form, however, is not an abstraction. Form materialises all the vectors present, from the impositions of structure to the specificity of the urban interactions of the formal components of the city, from the square to the plaza, passing, without being exhaustive, through the streets and plots and blocks, buildings, parks, gardens and monuments.

3. *Answers under the motto “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”*

In Portuguese urbanism, the choice of locations does not follow a single pattern. However, the paradoxical relationship between concerns with defence and the search for specific and relevant moments of open interaction with the aquatic environment is recurrent. Flexibility in adapting to the terrain is evident in settlements built from scratch – new cities or neighbourhoods – with the deformation of regular matrices in their functions, facilitated by the use of narrow, deep plots as modules. Where they exist or have existed, the layout of the walls follows equivalent principles, i.e., it is articulated with the characteristics of the territory and not with the urban layout, whether or not this preceded them. In short, there are no cases of walled perimeters according to pure geometric shapes. All of this suggests that the formation processes occurred over a prolonged period, resulting in the anachronism of expressions and a chronic lack of demographic and financial resources, which became a

28. W. Rossa, A.R. Leite, I. Coelho, N. Simões, P. Barão, *Recensando as invariantes: alinhamento de alguns casos de morfologia urbana portuguesa de padrão geométrico*, Actas do V Colóquio Luso-Brasileiro de História da Arte (Faro 2001), University of Algarve, Faro 2002, pp. 61-80; W. Rossa, *Património urbanístico: (re)fazer cidade parcela a parcela*, in W. Rossa, *Fomos condenados à cidade: uma década de estudos sobre património urbanístico*, Coimbra University Press, Coimbra 2015, pp. 97-131.

structuring condition. Even at the height of its empires, Portugal never became a wealthy country, nor did it cease to be a peripheral part of Europe.

We must bear all this in mind when we begin to examine recurring patterns – invariants²⁹ – that justify the “family resemblance” we intuitively sense when experiencing multiple sites. We will primarily follow the chronology of the First Empire, which is not a choice, but rather a result of the analysis itself. However, the Second Empire, the African one, will also emerge, and its medieval antecedents are fundamental to understanding the whole. Let us then proceed to the exercise through some portraits, as an exhaustive investigation would require time, resources, and space.

CONTACT SHEET 1:

SCALE

The chronic lack of demographic and financial resources, mentioned above, had an inevitable impact on the scale of spaces and buildings, with rare cases of monumentality common to other European urban cultures, particularly those of Spain, both in Europe and America. The Praça do Comércio system, planned as part of the reconstruction after the 1755 Lisbon earthquake, is an exception that the rest of the area covered by the same plan – Baixa-Chiado – immediately behind it confirms. However, even this is an explosion in relation to what existed there before and what remains in the neighbourhoods that surround it to the east and west (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 – Terreiro do Paço/ Praça do Comércio, Lisbon. Above: D.V. Serrão (drawing), H. Schorkens (engraving), Landing of Philip III in 1619. (Source: J.B. Lavanha, Viagem da Catholica Real Magestade del Rey D. Filipe II. N. S. ao reyno de Portugal, Thomas Iunti, Madrid 1622). Below: Praça do Comércio today, with Baixa in the background.

29. *Idem.*

In the urban landscape of Lisbon, the exception in terms of volume and monumentality of S. Vicente de Fora is proof of this characteristic of Portuguese urbanism, as it was commissioned and built by the first monarch of the period of the union of the Iberian crowns, Philip II (r. 1581-1598). In fact, like the Torreão do Paço da Ribeira, which disappeared in that catastrophe but nevertheless directly inspired the two that were later erected in that square, and those of the Palácio-Convento de Mafra (1717-1730), an exception in the Portuguese landscape, made possible by the discovery of gold and diamonds in Brazil, which, in his youth, led João V to want to emulate Rome, bringing models, architects and monumentality from there³⁰.

There are, of course, other exceptions, starting with Goa, which, more than just the capital of the Indian state, has become the main Catholic sanctuary in Asia, rivalling the monumental shrines of other religions on the Indian subcontinent. A city where, among all the non-religious buildings, only structures with antecedents in the small Islamic city conquered and occupied in 1510 stood out. Apart from some of the most notable Catholic buildings, nothing else remained in a landscape that has since become a coconut grove and is now being redeveloped in a neoliberal manner³¹.

Still on the subject of scale, we find further evidence in the contrast between the 18th-century plans for the cities founded in the Brazilian hinterland, which structured large plots and squares, and wide streets, and what was realised by the architecture (Fig. 2).

If the grandeur or majesty of the Amazon or Mato Grosso landscapes influenced the plans, it had no impact on the architecture³². In other words, the monumentality induced by the ground plan was translated into stunted growth by the forms that responded to it. Its limited material and architectural relevance resulted in its replacement or abandonment, leaving us with only the records of the time. In Minas Gerais, at the height of the Gold Cycle, the only church built on royal initiative, the Cathedral of Mariana, is modest in contrast to the exuberance demanded by the patronage of the mining brotherhoods, which, however, is met through formal and artistic devices, never through monumentality.

30. W. Rossa, *L'anello mancante: Juvarra, sogno e realtà di un'urbanistica delle capitali nella Lisbona settecentesca*, in A. Cornaglia, A. Merlotti, C. Roggero, E. Kieven (eds.), *Filipo Juvarra, 1678-1736, architetto dei Savoia, architetto in Europa*, Il Campisano, Roma 2014, pp. 183-196; G. Raggi, *O projeto de D. João V: Lisboa ocidental, Mafra e o urbanismo cenográfico de Filipo Juvarra*, Caleidoscópio, Lisboa 2021.

31. W. Rossa, *Goa: From Short-Lived Capital City to Mythical Capital*, in S. Chaudhuri, N. Das, I. Jackson, I. H. Magedera (eds.), *Envisioning the Indian City. Spaces of Encounter in Goa, Calcutta, Pondicherry, and Chandigarh*, Jadavpur University Press, Kolkata 2025, pp. 63-87.

32. R. Araujo, *As Cidades da Amazônia no século XVIII: Belém, Macapá e Mazagão*, FAUP, Porto 1998; R. Araujo, *A urbanização do Mato Grosso no século XVIII: discurso e método*, 2 voll., PhD thesis in History of Art, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, supervised by J. E. Horta Correia, 2000.

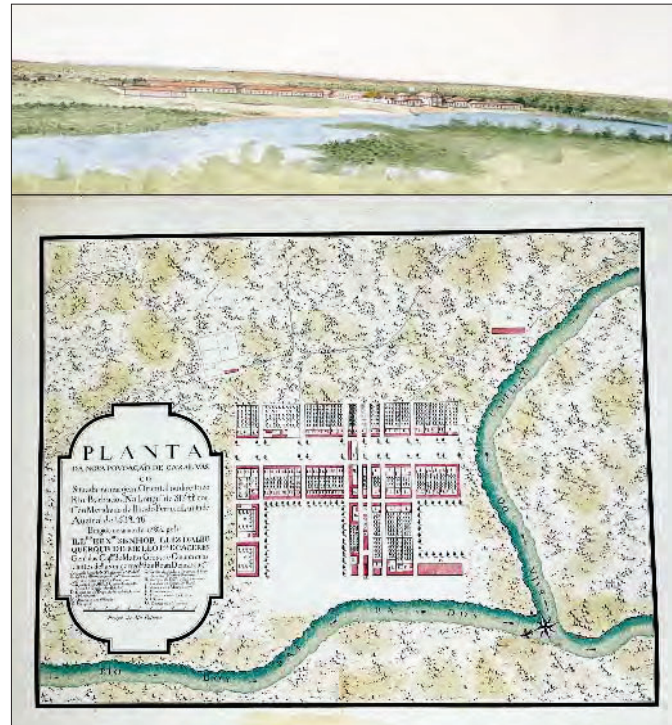


Fig. 2 – Casal Vasco. Above: Plan of the new settlement of Casal Vasco [...] erected in the year 1782. (Source: J.C. Garcia, *A mais dilatada vista do mundo: inventário da colecção cartográfica da Casa da Índia, Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses*, Lisboa 2002, p. 306. Original from the Casa da Índia, Penvalva do Castelo). Below: Prospectus of the village of Casal Vasco (c. 1790). (Source: N.G. Reis, *Imagens de Vilas e Cidades do Brasil Colonial*, University of São Paulo, Official State Press and Fapesp, São Paulo 2000: pp. 264 and 396. Original from the Bocage Museum, University of Lisbon).

CONTACT SHEET 2:

SQUARES OPEN TO THE AQUATIC ENVIRONMENT

The aforementioned search for a connection with the aquatic environment (rivers, lakes, coves, bays, and the sea) is not unique to Portuguese urban planning. Still, the way it takes shape is. To understand this, it is necessary to take into account that the contact zones between cities and these natural elements changed radically during the Industrial Revolution, as the explosive increase in the capacity, draught and manoeuvrability of ships led to the construction, usually on reclaimed land, of large port fronts, which in turn required the convergence of land transport, primarily the railway. What was left buried or behind rarely had mooring jetties for long-distance ships, but rather quays or even slipways for small transfer vessels. Today's port warehouses and container parks represent an exponential expansion of warehouses that once blended in with the surrounding buildings, and together with shipyard and arsenal complexes, limited the urban landscape. In this entire area dedicated to nautical activity, which the Portuguese call “Ribeira”, the exception to the direct relationship between public space and the aquatic environment was,

and in some cases continues to be, its squares, one side of which was, or had been, the waterfront with its quays.

Praça do Comércio in Lisbon, already mentioned (Fig. 1), is the greatest example, with a more common case nearby: Praça da Ribeira. The former is a reinterpretation, following the 1755 Lisbon earthquake, of the old Terreiro do Paço (Palace Courtyard), a space of reverence for the Royal Palace, which Manuel had launched. This established itself as the centre of power for the empire that was then beginning to take shape. It is no coincidence that the palatial complex included, among other more common features, the colonial administration and trade agencies and had, on either side, the arsenal, the shipyards and the customs house, the latter closing off the square to the east. It was formed through land reclamation, alongside the establishment of the 1st Empire, in the same dynamic and chronological context. Its image was defined by Philip II's aforementioned commission for a turret over the river and the concomitant renovation of the wing that connected it to the original core. This was the entrance for royalty and distinguished visitors. A century and a half later, John V made significant renovations to the palace itself, adding, among other features, a patriarchal basilica, the palace of the respective dignitary, and a clock tower. His successor, Joseph I, would also inaugurate an opera house shortly before the catastrophe that would destroy everything.

Typologically a "Place Royale", Praça do Comércio no longer has the palace and now offers considerably more space to the central state apparatus. Centred on an equestrian statue of the king, it extended over the river and mirrored, to the east, the wing-tower system, with a triumphal arch on the north wing axis through which one enters the city itself. Until the end of the empire, it was the seat of power par excellence, but since then it has undergone transformations that began with the loss of its state offices and the concession to the logic of mass tourism. Formally, however, it remains the head of a typological series that characterises Portuguese urbanism.

In fact, former colonial capitals established at very different times, such as Goa (India), Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), Dili (East Timor) and Maputo (Mozambique), have or had their symbolic centres of power in similarly arranged squares. As vice-royal capitals of the 1st Empire (Asia-Brazil/Indian Ocean-Atlantic), the first two even had, like Lisbon, a palace. In two other capitals with strong functional ties between them, Salvador (Brazil) and Luanda (Angola), the choice of an elevated position for the city's layout did not prevent their centres of power (government palaces, town halls or customs houses) from forming squares on open platforms along a cliff overlooking the respective bays between them and the Atlantic. When the capital of Cape Verde was moved to Praia in the 19th century, the same approach was adopted for the square where the Governor's Palace was built. Later and regional cases, such as Bolama (a city founded to be the capital of Guinea-Bissau) or Lobito (Angola), have their centres of power at low altitudes in squares open to the channels that connect them to the ocean. In all these squares, the regularity of the three fronts and the architectural solemnity imposed by the

programmes present them as spaces for the formal reception of the city, as a whole, and as points of connection for an empire and a colonial system linked by the sea.

Close to where the Tagus River flows into the sea, Belém, on the western edge of Lisbon, is structured around two squares representing power, where this programme reached its peak. Today's Afonso de Albuquerque Garden is the result of the evolution of the old square, or courtyard, formed in the early 18th century, opposite the Royal Palace of Belém, which is now the official residence of the President of the Republic. This was the location of the quay from which the court travelled to and from Terreiro do Paço. The plan for the installation of the Portuguese World Exhibition, held in 1940, transformed it into a garden and built another square, overwhelmingly larger and admittedly monumental, in front of the Jerónimos Monastery, which was significantly named Praça do Império (Empire Square). It is the place in Portugal with the most iconographic and symbolic significance linked to Portuguese colonialism – although no longer with a primary focus on Brazil – which is now the subject of heated ideological debates. Not even the railway line that crosses between these squares and the river – and which has long been intended to be replaced by an underground tunnel – can break the umbilical connection between the powers that be, the river and the sea.

However, Portuguese urban planning has a second type of square open to the water, consisting of those that are, in essence, genuine “Praças da Ribeira” (riverfront squares), i.e., where it is not the representation of power that generates them, but commerce, the port quay and social interaction. The aforementioned case in Lisbon, parallel to Terreiro do Paço-Praça do Comércio, is less visible today than, for example, that of Porto. Smaller coastal towns and villages, such as Aveiro, Setúbal, Lagos, Tavira, Ponta Delgada, and Angra still preserve these spaces, which no longer perform their original functions, because in the 19th century market buildings were built, to which daily trade and butchers' shops were transferred. However, in everyday language the Portuguese continue to say that they are “going to the square” when in fact they are going to the market. The truth is that, even before the formation of squares in Portuguese towns and cities in the 15th century, the “square” was essentially the area where the market was held, often located along a street. The urban square with these functions also appeared in the colonies, but it is not possible to list them here.

As a kind of symbolic synthesis of this striking feature of Portuguese urbanism, I draw attention to Fig. 2, in which the 1782 plan for the foundation of Casal Vasco (in Mato Grosso, near the border between Brazil and Bolivia) advocated the foundation of the sparse city around two squares, each of them open to one of the two rivers that converge there. The larger one, Praça da Vitória, would be framed by dwellings for indigenous people, barracks for the military, a hospital and a house for the governor. The other was intended for the residents. As we saw in the previous contact sheet, the solemnity of the plan was not matched by the architecture.

CONTACT SHEET 3:

LANDSCAPE AND PUBLIC SPACE AS AN ARCHITECTURAL PROGRAMME

The previous proof leads us to another observation: how some architectural objects have been manipulated to create an effect that exceeds the expectations of their basic functions, or, in other words, how their program includes the creation of scenarios with an urban or landscape impact. I will refer to the most expressive cases, which, although not numerous, indicate a technique that is less evident in other smaller-scale examples. It is something intrinsically modern, arising when the façade takes on, or rather, is reborn with its own value within the architectural composition.

The Jerónimos Monastery in Belém (Lisbon) is probably the easiest to understand. Construction began in 1502 on Restelo beach, where the fleets made a final stop for water and a last religious ceremony before setting sail. Intrinsically linked to Portuguese “overseas expansion”, Manuel I desired it as a ceremonial work of art for his pantheon and that of his family. It consists of a monastic structure with a functional layout based on three common elements: the church, the dormitory, and the cloister, which integrate fundamental aspects of monastic life, such as the chapter house and the refectory.

What stands there today is a romantic revivalist reconstruction from the 19th century, prompted by the destruction caused by the 1755 earthquake. It considerably altered the architectural expression of the dormitory and the top of the tower, as well as the depth of the building, which is the only relevant aspect for our purposes here, as there was no other volume behind the dormitory aisle before. This makes evident the formal choice to build a long, narrow volume parallel to the beach, increasing the monastery’s presence over the river landscape at the entrance to Lisbon, an effect that was synchronically and triangulately complemented by the construction on the river of the festive tower-bastion known as the Belém Tower and, on an overlooking hill, the Chapel of St. Jerome. This is something that has lost part of its tremendous impact with the construction within this triangle and its surroundings.

The landscape effect of the monastery dormitory was enhanced by its installation on a hollow gallery at ground level, which fishermen’s warehouses later occupied and, in the renovated version, by the Museum of Archaeology. The final expedient appears in the layout of the church, in line with the dormitory, and not, as usual, at right angle to it, which imposed the extreme enhancement of the side door on the Gospel side, as it is on the main facade of the complex, without, however, eliminating the entrance at the foot of the nave, as the monastery was male. In short, with the inevitable exception of the cloister, everything has been done to ensure that the complex faced the river and, through it, the world, with the maximum possible expression-extension (about 290 metres), without wasting space in depth.

That dormitory above the open gallery evokes another one built at the same time: the “bridge” that gave rise to the west wing of Terreiro do Paço. The establishment by Manuel I of his primary royal residence on the banks of the

Tagus in Lisbon is often referred to as a symbol of the Crown's commitment to the commercial component of "overseas expansion". The palace itself was built on dry land, requiring private access with a quay on the riverbank. Hence, the bridge gallery, measuring around 100 Portuguese sticks (110 metres), which also served as a kind of breakwater to consolidate the ongoing land reclamation that would eventually form the *terreiro*. The almost simultaneous construction of the Customs House on its eastern side would contribute to this consolidation³³. While behind it there was a landfill for Praça da Ribeira, behind the "bridge" was the palace garden, which separated it from the arsenal and shipyards. The lower floor was used for various purposes, first directly linked to maritime activity, then to the growth of the state apparatus.

The evolution of the bridge, as we have already seen, was commissioned by Philip II, who topped the main wing of the palace with an imposing tower over the river, a complex process that took place over approximately seven decades. Inevitably, in this evolution, it moved from a late medieval or Manueline style to a classical one. This established one of the two typical views of Terreiro do Paço – from the east, looking at the façade of this wing projecting over the square – the other being from the south, with a bird's-eye view and the city as a backdrop. But what is most interesting is how a programme that, as a rule, would be resolved in a volume with proportions close to a square, a rectangle with golden ratio or $\sqrt{2}$ proportions, or even around courtyards, appears stretched to a length something like ten times its width. Perhaps it was to ensure private access to the river or to help consolidate the embankment of the *terreiro* under construction. However, it seems that, in addition to all this, as in the contemporary case of the Jerónimos Monastery, they did not want to miss the opportunity to build a public space of reverence for the palace without accentuating its presence to the limit. In other words, the construction of the courtyard cannot be dissociated from the construction of this bridge, which, in a few decades, would become the most prominent wing of the palace.

The last example is closely related to the Lisbon case. It is the palace and grounds of Vila Viçosa, seat of the Ducal House of Bragança, following that of the Avis Dynasty (1385 to 1580), the main Portuguese noble house, which it eventually succeeded in the Restoration of Independence in 1640. During the intervening Philippine (or Habsburg) Dynasty, the town and its palace were known, expressively, as the "court in the village". Here too, it all began with a small, discreetly landscaped palace, contemporary with the founding nucleus of the Paço da Ribeira in Lisbon, from which a narrow, long wing was built to the south, forming the western boundary of its *terreiro*/ courtyard. The length is the same (100 Portuguese sticks). However, the construction took place in two stages, one beginning in 1533 and the second in 1559, a chronology that justifies the adoption of a classical compositional grammar,

33. N. Senos, *O Paço da Ribeira 1501-1581*, Notícias, Lisboa 2002; H. Carita, *Lisboa Manuelina e a formação de modelos urbanísticos da época moderna (1495-1521)*, Livros Horizonte, Lisboa 1999.

which can be traced back to Fra Giocondo's edition of Vitruvius' *De Architectura* (1511)³⁴. The third floor was likely to be completed in the second half of the following century, but this may have been planned from the outset.

The façade facing the courtyard, monumentally clad in white and grey marble, contrasts with the rear, where only the simple window frames add some detail to the extensive whitewashed surface. Were it not for the careful design of the composition and the treatment of some interior spaces, one could say that all the compositional and financial investment was devoted to the construction of an imposing façade that defined a courtyard, all in an attempt to emulate the royal complex in Lisbon. I am led to believe that the idea for this façade, probably inspired by the two cases I mentioned earlier, arose well before the start of its long construction, because when Duke Jaime I began construction of the palace in 1501 on what became the north-west corner of the courtyard, he turned the façade of the Augustinian convent church located on the opposite corner, i.e. the south-east, to the west, and in 1514 he ordered the construction of the Convento das Chagas on the south-west corner. This would be established as the pantheon of the duchesses, and the other as that of the dukes. In other words, two decades before the construction of the palace's grand façade began, the grounds had been marked out.

These are three cases that are as special as they are arduous, which means we cannot now move on to those of lesser significance, as scattered as the empire itself. However, I can add to them the one in which the submission of the architecture of buildings to public space, including the street, is taken to the extreme: the so-called "Pombaline" urbanism, systematised in the reconstruction of the centre of Lisbon after the 1755 earthquake³⁵. In addition to the plan adopted in 1758, dozens of drawings demonstrate this, for example, in the rarity of interior designs and in the dozens of elevations, the overwhelming majority of which are of streets rather than buildings. Alongside this, strict rules were imposed to ensure uniformity in these repetitive street façades, such as the admission of a simple coat of arms to identify the building of a noble family among the others, the creation of a specific type of church inserted into a block, where the main façade is the only one different from the others and the bell tower is placed inside the block. Churches which, like public buildings, were designed by those who conceived the plan and drew all the street elevations. In other words, the urban ensemble was assumed to be an architectural object. This attitude would be replicated in other cases, notably in Vila Real de Santo António, founded in 1773 in the extreme south-east of Portugal³⁶.

34. N. Senos, *A ampliação do Paço de Vila Viçosa*, in *De todas as partes do Mundo: o património do 5º duque de Bragança D. Teodósio I*, J. Hallett, N. Senos (coord.), Tinta da China, Lisboa 2018, pp. 109-131.

35. W. Rossa, *On the First Plan*, in A. Tostões, W. Rossa (eds.), *Lisbon 1758: the Baixa Plan Today*, exhibition catalogue, Lisbon City Council, Lisboa 2008, pp. 24-81.

36. J.E.H. Correia, *Vila Real de Santo António...*, cit.; W. Rossa, *Cidades da Razão: Vila Real de Santo António e arredores*, in «Monumentos», 30 (2010), pp. 16-31.

CONTACT SHEET 4:

CHURCHES WITH TWO TOWERS ON THE FAÇADE

In the previous contact sheet, we noted the exclusion of towers from the façades of churches in the centre of Lisbon after the 1755 earthquake, which interrupted a long tradition, an almost invariable feature of Portuguese architecture.

Church façades with two towers arrived in Portugal after the Council of Burgos, which, in 1080, abolished the Iberian or Mozarabic rite and imposed the Roman liturgy on the peninsula. With the pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela and the Frankish knights who drove the Christian conquest, bishops, liturgy, models, and master masons arrived, and with them, the Romanesque style for the cathedrals of Braga, Porto, Coimbra, and Lisbon. Only in Coimbra was the two-tower façade not adopted, a style that would be continued by two Gothic cathedrals, Guarda and Évora.

As in Spain, contrary to the almost universal European trend, except Leiria, the cathedrals built in the Modern Age (Miranda, Portalegre, Angra, Ribeira Grande, Salvador and Goa) adopted this façade formula. However, what matters most here is how religious congregations adopted it for multiple renovations and for newly built churches, and how this influenced the urban and rural landscapes of the colonies, particularly in Goa, Macau, and Brazil.

The Jesuits were primarily responsible for this, resulting in a departure from the model of the mother house, the Gesù in Rome. Ingeniously, in cases such as Coimbra and Porto, they experimented with merging the models in the metropolis, finding a solution that they then developed at length in the colonies according to multiple variants and scales and with a recurring tendency not to raise the towers above the pediment of the central body, that is, adopting an expression that, if we do not want to consider it squat, is at least massive (Fig. 3).

What makes the Portuguese solution more challenging than that adopted in the rest of Europe and by the Spanish in America is the fact that, like medieval cathedrals, the towers are located at the foot of the church nave(s), merging with its façade, rather than being set apart to the sides, so that the façade of the church body stands independently from them.

Contrary to what is most common throughout Europe, the use of exposed stonework is limited to the frames of openings, pilasters, friezes, and finishes, which delimit large whitewashed panels. In cases where the available stone is of lower quality, everything is whitewashed.

Essentially, the use of two towers in the structure and autonomous composition of church façades is not exclusive to Portuguese urban landscapes or those under Portuguese influence, but rather its profusion and massive, squat expression. With many examples in the Middle Ages and some experiments in the early decades of the 16th century, among which I highlight those in Cochin (India), the solution of a single tower in the centre of the façade fell by the wayside, with a single side tower being a recurring option in parish churches. However, in more festive situations, even when the design skills and labour available are not the most sophisticated, the two towers are the distinctive

feature. Good examples of this are the pairs of rival third brotherhoods in Minas Gerais (Brazil), where there are cases of cylindrical towers. Not to mention cases with pairs of towers rotated at 45°, such as Conceição da Praia in Salvador, Piedade in Elvas, and Graça in Atouguia da Baleia.



Fig. 3 – Churches with two two-tower façade (Source: photograph by the author).

*Porto
Salvador
Atouguia
Talaulim
Serro*

*Lisboa
Coimbra
Porto
Ouro Preto
Macau*

*Guarda
Angra
Angra
Calangute
Belém*

CONTACT SHEET 5:
TOWN HALL (AND JAIL)

Municipalities have always played a fundamental role in balancing powers, representing and exercising the interests of urban communities – the citizens – in relation to the nobility and the clergy, as well as in the management and development of cities. Despite countless abuses, they were also a bastion of democracy. Initially, the citizens met in assembly, but a system of governance by representatives, the councillors, was soon established. They met in council in whatever places were available, such as churches, porches, narthexes, or galleries, in a tower of the wall, or simply under a tree. By royal order of 1340, they were to have their own place, a reserved space, the chamber where they not only met but also kept the chest with the symbols and the archive³⁷.

These chambers formed the heart of an urban building known as the “Casa da Câmara” (Chamber House) or “Paço do Concelho” (Council Palace), in English, the Town Hall. It also became customary, though not mandatory, for justice to be administered there, preferably in a separate courtroom. In the Middle Ages, they often incorporated the municipal butcher’s shop, which had a monopoly on trade, into ground-floor arcades, a kind of market hub, not least because this was also where standard measures were kept, the place to “check the weight”. In the Modern Age, the ground floors began to be enclosed, which allowed them to house the criminal component of the municipalities. Thus was born the Casa da Câmara e Cadeia (jail), which, with the advent of liberalism and the autonomization of a new programme and type of jails, returned to being solely the Casa da Câmara or Paços do Conselho.

Inevitably, a distinction was sought for this type of building, both in terms of its location and layout, as well as its architecture. From its initial position in the circle of the cathedral or parish church, it soon came to play a central role in a square or plaza, the formation of which it often determined, and which, in turn, defined itself as a new centre of the town (Fig. 4).

From the analysis of the many cases that have been preserved or for which there is reliable data, it can be said that, with some adaptations, they followed the evolution of noble houses. In examples from the Middle Ages, it is common to find two-storey parallelepipeds, topped with merlons, with the lower storey open to the street, in keeping with their commercial vocation. In the Early Modern Age, the staircase (not always external) and, often, the bell tower of the municipality became a kind of compositional fulcrum, the latter clearly differentiating it from other civil buildings in the urban landscape. With the enormous changes resulting from the Age of Revolutions, a new type emerged that was autonomous from the noble house. The staircase became the centre of the internal composition, but it remained a block that was clearly identifiable in squares or in the urbanistic novelty of avenues.

37. L. Trindade, *Casas da Câmara ou Paços do Concelho: espaços e poder na cidade tardo-medieval portuguesa*, in M.C. Ribeiro, A.S. Melo (eds.) *Evolution of the Urban Landscape: Society And Economy*, CITCEM, Braga 2012, pp. 209–225.

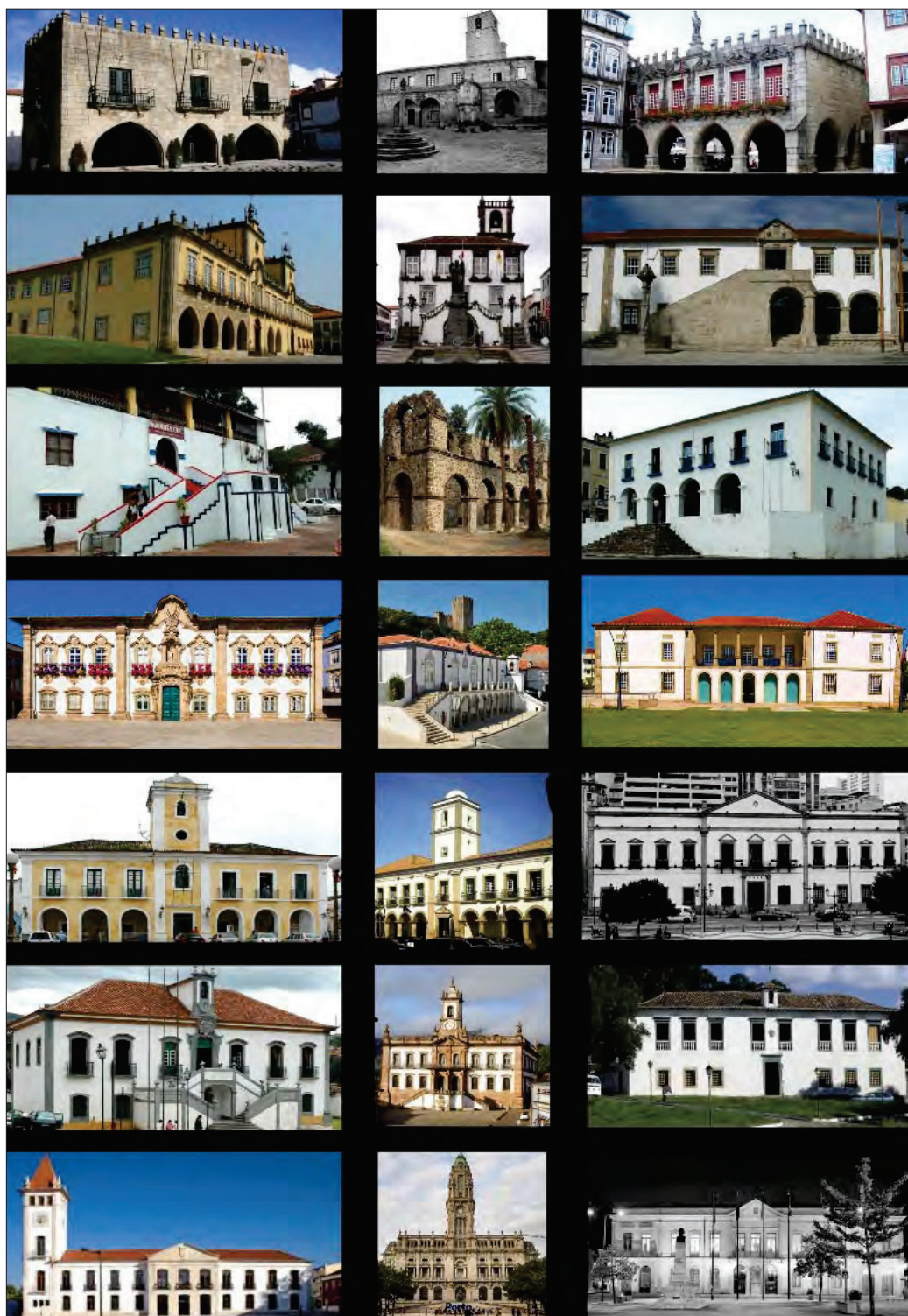


Fig. 4 – Casas da Câmara (Source: photograph by the author)

*Viana
Barcelos
Damão (Índia)
Braga
Santo Amaro
Mariana
Cantanhede*

*C.º Novo
P. Delgada
Bassein
Palmela
Salvador
Ouro Preto
Porto*

*Guimarães
Póvoa Varzim
Cachoeira
Castelo Branco
Macau
Goiás
Anadia*

Many followed this evolution, and countless others were lost; however, numerous examples of all types remain in the most diverse geographical centres of the former empire³⁸, constituting unmistakable examples of the formal Portuguese expression of a power that determined the specificity of Portuguese urban landscapes or those under Portuguese influence.

CONTACT SHEET 6:

PILLORY OF THE NEW CENTRALITY

Previous evidence has already highlighted the fact that justice is currently administered at the municipal level, and this usually has repercussions on the council building itself, not only because of the existence of a courtroom, but also due to the integration of the prison. However, punishment did not always consist of detention, but could take the form of public exposure, with or without physical punishment, a practice that liberalism ultimately put an end to. To this end, a pillory was erected in a busy public space in the city, which, in the Iberian Peninsula, took the form of a column or pillar, made of wood (initially) or stone³⁹.

With urban development and growing attention to the quality of its buildings and public spaces, the emergence of squares and town halls in the late Middle Ages, the establishment of this “new centrality”⁴⁰ meant that the pillory was installed in a prominent position in this complex, thus taking on the role of a monument to the power of the council, which would gradually become that of the king⁴¹. Inevitably, artistic investment emerged and developed in various forms, from restrained to effusive, adopting the artistic languages of the time, with less expression in the careful design of the pedestal, as a rule, a set of concentric steps that accentuate the centrality.

Centrality is, in fact, the keyword evoked by this urban equipment (Fig. 5).

The hundreds of examples that remain in Portugal and in Brazil⁴² are proof that the weight of their symbolism far exceeds the memory of their initial function.

38. For cases in Brazil: P.T. Barreto, *Town Halls and Prisons*, in «Revista do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional», 26 (1947), pp. 362-445.

39. The great grantees, bishops, chapters and monasteries, as owners of estates and honours, also had the right to a pillory. It should also be noted that the term *pelourinho* is relatively recent, having gradually replaced *picota*, which is still used in Spain.

40. W. Rossa, *A cidade portuguesa...*, cit.

41. I am referring to the slow installation of judges appointed by the Crown, the “juízes de fora” (outside judges), which began in 1327 under Afonso IV and was consolidated by D. João III in 1532, but even then it was not universally applied, as resistance from the councils – the best examples of which were in Brazil – persisted until the 18th century.

42. L. Chaves, *Os Pelourinhos Portugueses*, Apolino, Gaia 1930; V.C. Salema, *Pelourinhos do Brasil*, Sociedade Histórica da Independência de Portugal, Lisboa 1992; E. A. Malafaia, *Pelourinhos portugueses: tentâmen de inventário geral*, Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda, Lisboa 1997.



Fig. 5 – Vasco Casquilho, *Windows and doors from Lisbon and Porto* (Source: the artist).

CONTACT SHEET 7:

THE CURRENT HOUSE

The overwhelming majority of the forms that appear in the landscape of any city are used for housing, and their impact ranges from structural to (seemingly) insignificant. In the first group, we have dwellings that were originally confused with centres of power, as well as complexes that stand out for their distinctive impact, resulting, for example, from their volume, texture, colour, or brightness, or the specificity of their location. Ordinary housing is precisely that which does not stand out, which does not attract attention, but which ultimately forms the backdrop to these landscapes. Characterising the urban impact of the first group requires case-by-case studies, whereas characterising the second has given rise to a myriad of projects and publications, employing a wide range of approaches, too numerous to list, even by sampling. The variables are also countless. However, all this prevents minimally credible and debatable syntheses from being made, which contribute to the answer(s) to the question that is the motto of this text.

At a glance, I am constantly reminded of construction systems in stone masonry, adobe or brick, turrets and external staircases, an obsession with framing openings, marking plinths and cornices, even if only with a small protrusion in the plaster accentuated by a colour other than white, which is always the base, unless the masonry stone has been left exposed, probably due to a lack of resources... In short, I am therefore unable to outline this crucial evidence of contact. Still, for that very reason, it was important to note this impossibility, which will be temporary.

And so, I suspend the compilation of the small and brief mosaic of evidence that I propose to compose in response to the question that emerged from the first part of this text. Much more remains to be done in this effort to renew the lines of research on Portuguese urbanism, its characteristics and invariants.