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Traditional Dwellings and Settlements

Working Paper Series

INDIA IN-BETWEEN ARCHITECTURAL IDENTITIES: VIDHANA SOUDHA VERSUS THE NEW SECRETARIAT BUILDING

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The ideological principles that surfaced toward post-independent India's identity gave rise to rival factions adopting divergent paths to emerge from the stigma of colonization. These philosophies, ranging from traditionalism to modernism, were visible in the built environment, and debates on architectural style were at the forefront. This paper examines conflicting architectural ideologies through the revivalist style Vidhana Soudha (1957) in Bangalore by B R Manickam and the modern New Secretariat Building (1954) in Calcutta by Habib Rahman. Additionally, the paper explores arguments presented in the 'Seminar on Architecture' held in 1959 in Delhi that reveal tensions between traditional and modern groups, attesting to the dynamism of 1950s India. This dynamism added layers of cosmopolitanism on an urban scale and promoted heterogeneity, supporting an evolving tradition of modernism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern and traditional are binary concepts. In the Indian subcontinent, this binary is viewed through a colonial lens, where modernity was imported from the West and the traditional was considered as indigenous. The debate between modern versus traditional has long engaged both progressives and traditionalists dating back to colonial times,[1] manifesting in styles as diverse as the European/Indian Revivalist to the radical Art Deco during the British Raj era.

Independence in 1947 marked the triumph of a new nation and the anguish of a bitterly partitioned one, which witnessed a chaotic social and humanitarian upheaval in the first few years. The most pressing need was to accommodate a nationwide building program for political and public buildings, industrial facilities, scientific institutions for the new nation, and housing for the population displaced by the partition. The Central and State Public Works Departments (P.W.D.) shouldered this responsibility The Central P.W.D., (C.P.W.D.) as a "major builder,"[2] tackled urgent building demands from infrastructure projects to almost all building typologies within limited resources and short timelines. Against this backdrop, the quest for an Indian identity reignited the rivalries between the modern and traditional camps. On one hand, there were ambitions for a new India that embraced progress and modernity. Modernists adopted the theories of early twentieth-century architecture, emphasizing that architecture should be relevant to the times and adhere to modern architectural principles.[3] Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's (1889 – 1964) vision of a modern India dominated the national narrative. Nehru, while profoundly aware of India's pluralist religious heritage, did not want an identity based on the past, whether colonial or indigenous.[4] His idea of India was that of a modern, progressive, secular, and democratic state. Conversely, India's ancient buildings and traditions inspired revivalist sentiments. The revivalists drew on historical stylistic elements—such as *chajjas*, brackets, and

motifs—and building practices to create Indian architecture. They studied ancient building treatises and manuscripts, incorporating these principles into the planning and design of buildings whose appearance was distinctly traditional. Many influential political figures supported the revivalist style, rejecting all foreign influences, despite Nehru's modernist agenda.[5]

The Chief Minister of the South Indian state of Mysore, Kengal Hanumanthiah (1908–1980), favored a revivalist style of architecture based on South Indian temples for government buildings. Meanwhile, the Chief Minister of Orissa, Hare Krishna Mahtab (1899–1987), a traditionalist, desired that the new state capital, Bhubaneswar, be planned along the lines of a "temple city"[6] (Fig.1). Perhaps the most influential advocate of traditional architecture within the architectural fraternity was the British architect Claude Batley (1879–1956). Batley, who established the firm Gregson Batley and King in 1917 in Bombay,[7] later became the principal of *Sir J.J. School of Art* and president of the Indian Institute of Architects. He was a champion of an architectural style that was symbolically appropriate to India, its culture, and its climate. Batley's work and teachings incorporated traditional Indian elements into modern buildings.[8]

2. MODERN VS. TRADITIONAL

Debates among the architectural intelligentsia in formal settings attest to the conspicuous divide in the field. The Seminar on Architecture, organized by the *Lalit Kala Akademi* in March 1959 in New Delhi, contemplated an appropriate architectural expression for the nation. Inaugurated by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, the delegates in attendance included architects and literary figures whose contributions to the architecture of post-independent India are noteworthy. With two factions on opposite ends, the modern versus traditional debate resumed.

The conundrum that consumed the gathering was the dichotomy presented by the idea of a new India as a modern, progressive, democratic state, against an India with indigenous heritage dating back thousands of years. This contradiction had manifested in an architecture that was, at present, in a chaotic state. The post-independence explosion in the building sector disturbed architectural sensibilities due to the profligate imitation and inappropriate forms for the functions of modern-day buildings. The seminar's convener, Achyut Kanvinde (1916–2002), a modern architect who trained under Walter Gropius (1883–1969), lamented the lack of thought and ideology, which led well-known architects to "decorating their cement concrete buildings with plaster copies of stone trimmings of temple and mosque architecture in the name of tradition and nationalism."[9] Imitation was not necessarily one-sided. Kanvinde also criticized the tendency of architects to mindlessly copy Northern Europe's modern buildings. Habib Rahman (1915–1995) was aghast at the

introduction of poorly proportioned, flat-roofed houses in a gridiron pattern in rural areas. Professor Humayun Kabir, the Union Minister for Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, said in his address:

> "Imitation, whether it is [an] imitation of our own past, or of contemporary Europe—all imitation is bad…there is no greater condemnation than to say that [art]… is mere imitation."[10]

Post Independent-India embarked on national planning and development programs known as the Five-Year Plans that demanded unprecedented building needs for a society transitioning from feudalistic notions to ideals of modernity. Architect T.R. Chibber commented that the Buddhist and Mughal eras are far removed from the present times, just as traditional tectonics differ from modern materiality. Transitional challenges do not justify mental inertia, and clinging to imitation is a "fatal habit,"[11] indicating the stasis of tradition, when, in truth, tradition is dynamic. The gathering unanimously acknowledged India's diverse architectural and cultural heritage. While many favored drawing inspirations from it, they were vehement in their desire for an architecture, as Kanvinde proclaimed, that would "establish the mark of our time."[12]

For Modernity. Those who argued for an architectural expression for the present questioned the technological and material limitations of the past, which trespassed on the creative opportunities for new expressions offered by modern materials and methods emerging from advances in science, technology, and industrialization. T.S. Gill argued:

> "Machines have occupied an indispensable position in the organization of building program…methods of prefabrication, as well as means of mass production, challenge architectural ingenuity and imagination. [The] Architectural expression must and will change under such influences."[13]

"We would not prefer our cars shaped like mythological chariots; howsoever we may revere them,"[14] reasoned M R Warerkar. They also highlighted the changing functional needs of the present, requiring different architectural forms. They argued that if the new functions of the modern era had no historical precedent, the logic of architectural forms referencing the past was moot. Accusing the so-called progressive political thinkers of intellectual infringement on architectural thought, T.R. Chibber questioned the insistence on "Buddhist arches and domes and Red Fort architecture in the [modern] buildings of this era of atomic reactors."[15] As Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru tersely commented:

> "The past was good when it was the present, but you cannot bring it forward when the world has changed into a technological period and put a Gothic cathedral and call it a railway terminus. It is ridiculous."[16]

Ultimately, for the progressives, the modern notion of democracy was an ideological propellant toward modern architecture. The political change from imperial and colonial domination to a welfare state, which placed ordinary people at its core, was central to rejecting imperialist and autocratic forms. The architectural aesthetic of public buildings, meant for the public's welfare, was to be rooted in the present social dimension. "You cannot isolate architecture from the age, from the social conditions, from the thinking, from the objectives and ideals of that particular age,"[17] said the Prime Minister. Endorsing Le Corbusier's modern concept for Chandigarh, Nehru urged that intellectual freedom was essential for the nation's progress.

For Tradition. S.K. Joglekar, Central P.W.D.'s Chief Architect and Town Planner, wondered about the architectural fraternity's attempts to adopt universal influences while disregarding their own architectural inheritance.

> "The universal approach in architecture is the cry of the day, but an architectural Esperanto is a far cry. The alphabet of Indian architecture is so unique and perfect that it should need no further Esperanto treatment. Nevertheless, our job is to create the new language which will speak the freedom of India and can be read throughout the world."

> – S.K. Joglekar [18]

In the quest for this language, the architect who resorts to "faithful interpretations…of classic tradition"[19] is denigrated, and the efforts dismissed as "uncouth sermons of the psyche."[20] The psyche's blind faith in function garbed in a contemporary cast is exalted as "new thought."[21] Joglekar cautions that importing ideas from elsewhere signifies a dearth of originality, and creations of new thought should not be so perplexing as to repulse the people, causing "neurosis of the soul."[22] The solution to the new architectural language of India lies within its own region and not abroad.

Joglekar was not alone in his concern of the populace's misunderstanding of modern architecture. Architect Ajaya Bharadwaj analyses the public's "allergic"[23] reaction to the poor imitations of modern buildings when viewed against the backdrop of magnificent and familiar indigenous architecture.

> "It is understandable that the Indian people do not easily take to the seemingly bare, soul-less and austere architecture which is being put to them as modern architecture, and which leaves much to be desired."[24]

Public acceptance is contingent upon its confidence in the new style of architecture and "forcing our ideas…down the throat of the public,"[25] is not in the interest of a democratic society.

While the debates naturally centered on style and material, Satish Gujral (1925–2020), an acclaimed artist who later began a career in architecture, deliberated on the emotion—or lack thereof—in modern architecture. "The architecture of reason has separated the thought from feeling"[26] he said. While modern architecture has

erected notable buildings universally admired for their purity of lines and airy elegance, it fails to rouse emotion. The technical power of modern architecture is undisputed, and if buildings are designed only with logic and precision, resembling machines, "architecture will cease to be art, and the architect will be replaced by the engineer."[27] Gujral argues that only with art can habitats be humanized and urges the interrelation of art and architecture, as witnessed in all the epic epochs of history. Amarnath Sehgal (1922 – 2007), another Indian modernist artist, echoed Gujral's sentiment. He denounced architecture devoid of visual arts and disagreed with the claims that modern architecture *is* visual art. "Let us not categorize visual arts as mere ornamentation,"[28] he concluded.

Notwithstanding the polarity in the debates, a cautious stance toward the synthesis of tradition and modernity was visible. The blending of the virtues of traditional building practices and value systems with the scientific knowledge and demands of the modern era had merits. While the emergence of a pastiche style of architecture due to the synthesis was an imminent danger, there was hope for the evolution of architectural functions and forms relevant to the Indian context. As Charles Correa passionately advocated, architecture should resonate with its surroundings.

Nonetheless, the diametrically conflicting architectural ideologies manifested in two exemplary public buildings constructed in the 1950s: the revivalist-style *Vidhana Soudha* (1951–1957) in Bangalore, State of Mysore[29], and the modern New Secretariat Building (1950–1954) in Calcutta, State of West Bengal[30] (Fig. 1). Both buildings, dedicated to democracy and materialized by the State-controlled Public Works Department, were driven by the differing ideals and visions of their political patrons. They reveal significant tensions in the architectural and political doctrines prevalent in the nation.

Fig. 1. Map of India after 1947. The two large pins indicate the location of the New Secretariat Building, Calcutta, and Vidhana Soudha, Bangalore.

3.   THE NEW SECRETARIAT BUILDING, CALCUTTA, WEST BENGAL 1950 – 1954

Historical Context of Calcutta, West Bengal. Although twentieth-century Calcutta experimented with varied architectural styles, ranging from Art Deco buildings to the modern *Lighthouse Cinema* (1936) by Willem Marinus Dudok (1884–1974)[31], it retained a "classical tradition"[32] due to its status as the capital of the British Raj in India. As late as 1921, Viceroy Lord Curzon (1859 – 1925) commissioned the *Victoria Memorial*, which was built by architects William Emerson (1843-1924) and Vincent Esch (1876-1950) in the Western classical style. The Indo-Saracenic architecture, a synthesis of Indian and European design elements promoted by the British, was also prevalent. After the Bengal division in 1905, Calcutta fomented nationalist (*Swadeshi*) sentiments among the Indian population that influenced architectural expressions. Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) and his disciples began experimenting from 1919 with architecture suitable for India in *Shantiniketan* that drew on the folk architecture of the region. Sris Chandra Chatterjee (1873–1966) instrumental in forming the *Modern Indian Architectural Movement* of the 1930s and the *All India League of Indian Architecture* (1940), championed a new revivalist style for modern buildings based on the ancient planning and building principles of Hindu architecture found in texts of *Vedas / Shilpa Shastras*. Ernest. B. Havell (1861–1934) Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877–1947), and the Bengal School of Art supported application of Indian arts, crafts, and indigenous techniques in building design.[33] The contrast and the contest between modernity and tradition existed before independence and continued in post-independence years.

Against this complex architectural backdrop, a new typology and style took hold in the *New Secretariat Building*. The Secretariat typically houses the administrative offices of various government departments and ministries. The Secretariat of the Government of West Bengal, located in the colonial *Writers' Building*, could not accommodate the expanding government departments.[34] The rented premises for these departments amounted to "40 offices in different parts of the city"[35] costing the government Rupees 500,000 annually. In the early 1950s, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy (1882–1962), the Chief Minister of West Bengal with progressive visions for its development[36], met with Habib Rahman, the government architect in the West Bengal P.W.D., to commission "an office building of 100,000 to 200,000 square feet of floor area,"[37] and a tall structure that would represent the democratic order of the new nation.[38] From this vague requirement, the modern 13-story steel-framed skyscraper costing Rupees 8.5 million[39] emerged on the Calcutta skyline.

Architect Habib Rahman. Habib Rahman (1915-1995) was the chief architect of the C.P.W.D. Delhi, in independent India. Born in Bengal in 1915, he graduated with a mechanical engineering degree from the *Bengal College of Engineering* in 1939. He received a Bengal Government Scholarship that placed him at the *Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.)*, where he finally transitioned from engineering to architecture. He was conferred the degree of Bachelor of Architecture in 1943, followed by Master of Architecture in 1944.

He worked with illustrious modern architects in America, including Walter Gropius, founder of the modern design school Bauhaus in Germany (1919). Rahman began his career in the P.W.D. after he returned to colonial Bengal in 1946. Rahman's introduction to the Prime Minister of independent India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in Barrackpore in 1949 resulted in his move to the C.P.W.D. Delhi, which became his professional platform from 1953 onwards. He was promoted to chief architect of C.P.W.D. in 1974 and, after retirement, was appointed the first Secretary of the Delhi Urban Arts Commission (D.U.A.C.) from 1974-1977. His significant contribution to architecture and nation-building earned him the title "*The Architect of Modern India.*"[40] Rahman was awarded India's civilian honors, Padma Shree (1955) and Padma Bhushan (1974), and passed away in 1995.

The New Secretariat Building. Situated on a corner lot on the banks of the Hooghly River and overlooking the adjacent colonial *Calcutta High Court*, the *New Secretariat Building* takes full advantage of the views of the river. The *New Secretariat Building* is designed in 3 blocks of varying heights, each connected to the others and encompassing a central courtyard (Fig. 2 & 3). The building's relation to the street is immediate lacking a formal frontage and merging the realms of the street and the building.
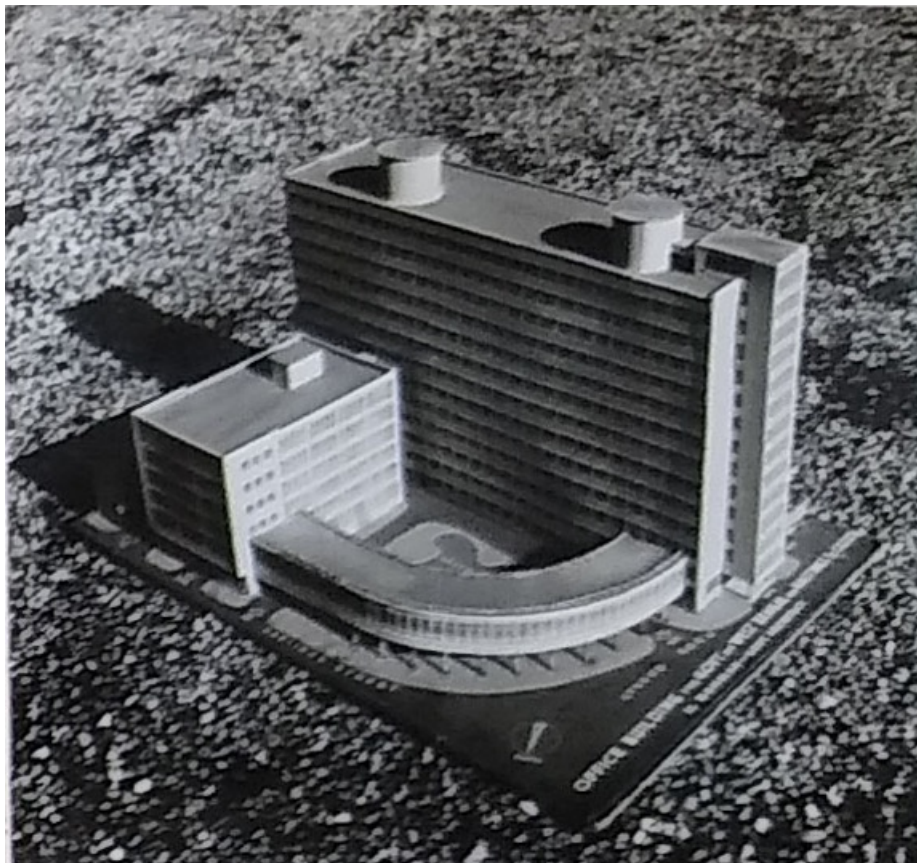

Fig. 2. Model of the New Secretariat Building, Calcutta. Circa 1950. (Source: Habib Rahman Archives).

Fig. 3. The New Secretariat Building, Calcutta, now with additions. Photograph by author.

The South and the East blocks are rectilinear, with a central corridor opening into offices, while the curved Northwest block, connecting the South and East blocks includes a basement for utilitarian functions. The modern planning principle of a service core and peripheral workspaces which enhances spatial efficiency, is evident in the design. The floor plates are restricted to 60 feet in width, and continuous windows are incorporated into the walls[41] to maximize daylighting (Fig. 4). While the *New Secretariat Building* accommodates the needs of government offices, Rahman also designed a "modern cafeteria, a separate officer's lunchroom, a small lecture theater and parking space for over hundred cars."[42] Additionally, the design includes a caretaker's residence on the 13th floor.

THE NEW SECRETARIAT BUILDING | KOLKATA
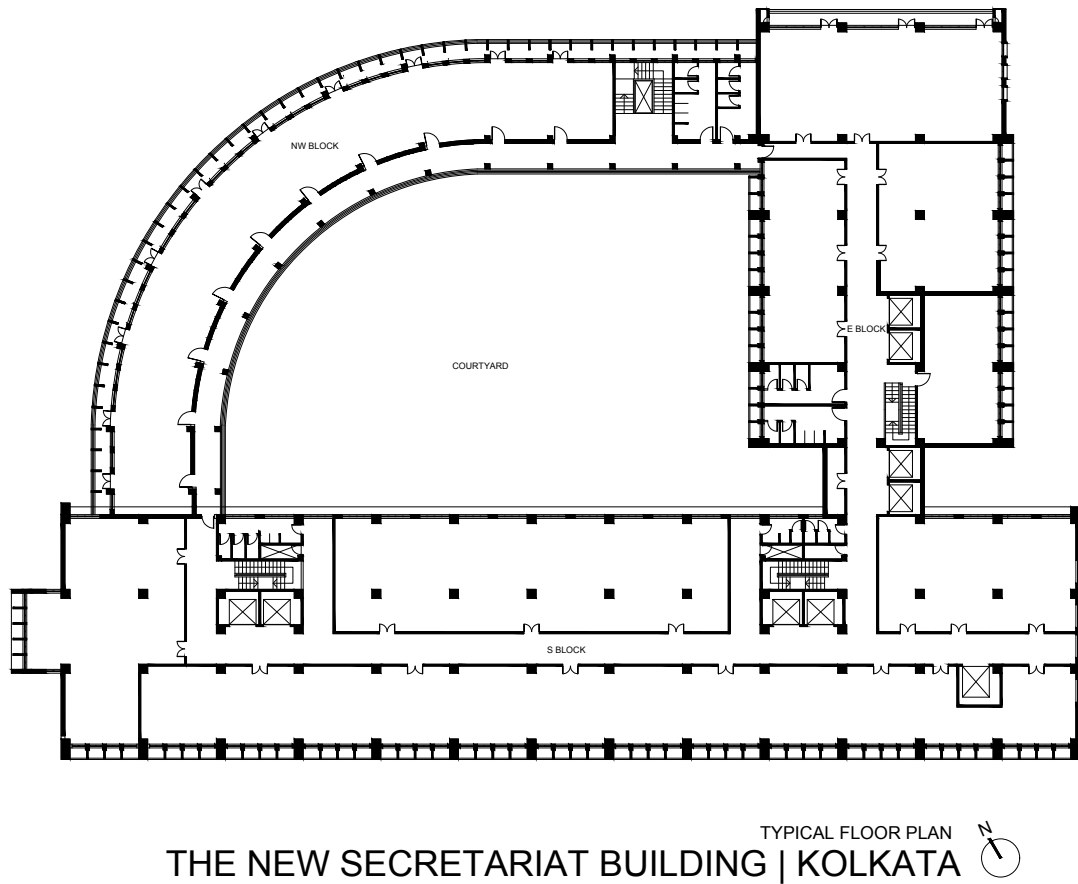
TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN

Fig. 4. Plan of the New Secretariat Building, Calcutta. Source: Drawn by author.

The massing of the building is a composition of vertical and horizontal blocks, created by the varying heights of the three sections: the South block with 13 stories, the East block with 6 stories, and the Northwest block with 2 stories. This stepped massing allows for views of the river or the courtyard and provides unobstructed access to light and air. The entire façade on the East, South, and West is equipped with vertical and horizontal projecting *brise soleil* to protect the windows from glare. Compositional contrasts of blank walls and windows accentuate the façade treatments, breaking the monotony of the *brise soleil*. The building's proximity to the river necessitated the use of "Franki Pile"[43] foundations, a cast in situ pile foundation driven 65M below ground level. Over this base, steel stanchions and joists in bays of 20 feet square supported the two-way reinforced cement concrete slabs.[44] The walls were then filled in with brickwork and windows. The design also incorporated modern technologies, including high-speed passenger lifts and a private branch telephone exchange. Fire safety measures consisting of fire-resistant doors and fire hydrant lines within the building were an innovation for the *New Secretariat Building*. Ducts for services and a mail chute connecting the upper

floors to the ground floor post office were designed to ensure the building's efficient functioning. The terrace of the south block features circular towers with glass windows designed as smoke nuisance observatories.

The description of the *New Secretariat Building* is crucial to understanding its adherence to modern architecture in planning, construction, and aesthetics. Rahman mentions the influence of Oscar Niemeyer's *Ministry of Education and Health* in Rio de Janeiro and the *United Nations Headquarters* in New York in the design of this building. Despite some striking similarities, especially with Niemeyer's work, the *New Secretariat Building* epitomizes the modern type introduced in Calcutta – an "efficient, rational building with an honest structural and architectural expression.[45] At 195 feet in height, it was claimed to be the tallest building in India at the time.[46]

For Rahman, the building represented both a professional triumph and a battle against bureaucrats and his peers in the P.W.D. Although the Chief Minister and the Cabinet had approved Rahman's design for the *New Secretariat Building*, the Chief Engineer of the P.W.D. withheld permission to proceed with the construction for several months doubting "the competence of their architect to design a building of such magnitude." Once the project was underway, "complete disinterest was shown in what was termed the *American design*,"[47] (the italics are mine). While the disinterest was fortunate as it allowed Rahman to work without interference, it indicated the alien nature of the new design ideology within the P.W.D. It is significant that architectural details were altered or disregarded without Rahman's consent. For example, the sun breakers on the façade "were considered structurally unstable and superfluous."[48] Rahman was asked to redesign the façades, which he refused, taking responsibility for the stability of the original design. Concealed plumbing and electrical wiring were not implemented as per design, nor were the interiors finished as specified due to the diversion of funds to unnecessarily strengthen the superstructure. While the challenges on site can be attributed to the P.W.D.'s ingrained ideas of style and familiar construction methods, the demands of the Ministers and heads of various departments for exclusive elevators and private washrooms attached to their offices reflect entrenched cultural customs. These challenges indicate the frictions that arose in introducing a new architectural language.

4.   THE VIDHANA SOUDHA BANGALORE, KARNATAKA (1951-57)

Historical Context of Mysore State and Bangalore. The British defeated Tipu Sultan in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War of 1799 and restored the Kingdom of Mysore to the Wodeyar dynasty under the British Empire's aegis. Subsequently, the Cantonment — an administrative, military, and civil district — was established in Bangalore. The British commissioned numerous civic buildings in Bangalore, such as the *Old Public Offices* or the *Attara Kacheri* (1864) and *Saint Andrew's Church* (1866) in the classical European style.

Mysore city, where the royals resided, adopted the classical style as well, with the Indo-Saracenic style gradually gaining prominence, as seen in the *Amba Vilas Palace* (1912). Edwin Lutyens's (1869-1944) New Delhi (1912-1931) indirectly influenced the *New Public Offices* (1921) and *Municipal Corporation Building* (1933), which display an amalgamation of Eastern and Western architectural styles. While the German Otto Koenigsberger (1908 – 1999), appointed as architect and town planner by the Government of Mysore in 1938, designed the modern *Dining Hall* (1946) at the *Indian Institute of Science*, he was otherwise constrained to design conventional buildings in both cities.[49] With this legacy of a prevalent syncretic architecture[50], it is not surprising that *Vidhana Soudha* followed established norms.

The legislature of the Mysore State (later known as Karnataka State), which consisted of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council, initially operated out of temporary premises in Bangalore. In democratic parlance, a legislature is a body of elected representatives responsible for making laws. As the legislature expanded in member strength, a necessity similar to the West Bengal Secretariat arose – the requirement of a new, larger building – for the government to function effectively.

The State P.W.D. architect, B.R. Manickam, graduated in 1948 from *Illinois Institute of Technology's (IIT Chicago)* architecture school,[51] which was then under the leadership of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886 –1969). After emigrating to the United States of America, Mies van der Rohe was appointed the Dean of the architecture program (1938 –1958) at *Armour Institute of Technology*, Chicago[52] which was later renamed to *Illinois Institute of Technology*. Manickam, true to his training, had initially proposed a modern two-story building that would include the assembly auditorium, a Council Hall, a library, lobbies, lounges, and meeting rooms for political parties, private chambers, office spaces, covered lounges in outdoor courtyards, dining and retiring facilities, and necessary services. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru laid the foundation stone on July 13, 1951, for this building, which was estimated at a reasonable cost of Rupees 3.3 million and was to cover an area of 109,800 square feet. However, it transformed "into a leviathan in granite"[53] due to the tumultuous events that unfolded when Kengal Hanumanthiah took charge as the Chief Minister of Mysore State. Hanumanthaiah directed the construction of the legislature complex in the revivalist architectural style inspired by the Dravidian temple architecture of South India (Fig. 4), which came to be known as the *Vidhana Soudha*.

Fig. 4. The Vidhana Soudha, Bangalore. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

The Architect B R Manickam. B.R. Manickam (1909 – 1964) graduated with an engineering degree from the *Government Engineering College* in Bangalore in 1930. He obtained an MS degree in 1948 in Architecture and Town Planning from the *Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT)* in Chicago. On his return to Bangalore in 1949, he joined the Mysore State P.W.D. and was promoted to Chief Government Architect and later Superintendent Engineer. In addition to designing the *Vidhana Soudha*, Manickam was responsible for the *Karnataka Medical College* (1959 - 61) and *Ravindra Kalakshetra* (1963), among others.[54]

The Vidhana Soudha. Intriguingly, *Vidhana Soudha* was a physical manifestation of Nehru's metaphorical speech during the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone intended for the modern design on July 13, 1951. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru exhorted thus about democratic faith, which may have motivated Kengal Hanumanthiah, who had been the President of the Provincial Congress Committee at the time.[55]

> "We build huge Government offices or business offices or skyscrapers, no doubt enduring evidence of the advance of engineering but somehow missing that beauty and that timelessness which those old buildings represent. And when you put up a structure like this of which you have asked me to lay the foundation stone today, what exactly does that convey to you? It is just a place [where] you will conveniently hold your debates and pass your legislative enactments or something more, something in the nature of a temple or a mosque or a cathedral, devoted to the public service and the concept of democratic working. We have to draw inspiration from the great things of our past and great things of today from

whatever country we may draw that inspiration[from]. Above all, we have to develop some kind of faith in ourselves. I have no doubt that you will pay attention to the artistry of what you will build here. But the question is whether within those walls of stone or brick or mortar, there is going to be also that living spirit of pulling together, of united working, of give and take of selflessness and sacrifice for the common good. If so, then you are not building merely a house for your debates, but a temple dedicated to the nation."

– Jawaharlal Nehru[56]

While ostensibly inspired by the government houses he visited in European cities and New Delhi, the Chief Minister' s vision for the *Vidhana Soudha* was to "surpass the majesty and grandeur of the Mysore Maharaja's palace" and celebrate the "transfer of power from the palaces to the people and the subjugation of tyrannies of royalty, British as the Indian."[57] Janaki Nair writes of Hanumanthaiah's desire to erect a building that would rise above the colonial *Attara Kacheri* offices, symbolizing the defeat of imperialism. He also sought to avenge Winston Churchill's derisive remark of Mahatma Gandhi when he climbed up the steps of the *Viceroy's House* in New Delhi by constructing stairs more majestic for the *Vidhana Soudha*. Hanumanthaiah issued a government order rejecting the *American architecture* (emphasis is mine) of the initial proposal and endorsed a "style being Indian, particularly of Mysore and not purely Western,"[58] as the power of the government now rested with the people. While this stance may have stemmed from the Chief Minister's pride in his land's architectural and cultural heritage, it may have been a response to a visiting Russian dignitary's comment on the lack of indigenous architecture in Bangalore[59]. Despite constituting a committee to oversee the design and construction of the *Vidhana Soudha*, the chief minister dictated the Dravidian style and selected features from various temples, including the *Subramanya temple*, the *Basavanandeeshwara temple*, and the *Somanathapura temple*.[60] He also chose the dome of a Dravidian temple in Chennapatna to be replicated for the central dome of *Vidhana Soudha*.

The massive revivalist monument of 487,800 square feet in area with a cost of more than Rupees 18 million is rectangular in plan, measuring 700 x 350. It contains two open courts and three main porticoes. The five-story edifice made of local granite includes a basement with the central dome rising to a towering height of 175 ft from the ground (Fig.5). The eclectic architectural features draw not only from South Indian temples and North Indian mansions but even from a drama theatre.[61] These include domes, porches, columns, brackets, *chajjas, jharokhas*, parapets, railings, and wide ambulatory passages. Ornate carvings and embellishments are seen in the bases and capitals of pillars, friezes, cornices, arches, pediments, and finials. The interiors include decorative sandalwood and ivory work, ornamental ceiling plasters, mosaic flooring, teak wood paneling, etched glass, and red porphyry for other decorations. Black stone and granite of different hues – grey, pink, yellow – were sourced from around Bangalore, while marble was obtained from Rajasthan.[62]

Fig. 5. Vidhana Soudha (top left corner) and colonial Attara Kacheri (bottom right corner) (Source: Google Maps).

These ostentations more suited to a royal *durbar* were deployed in a public building, administering the functions of a modern democratic state. The contradiction between the traditional façade to modern spatial planning – including a legislative assembly hall, council hall, banquet hall, treasury, offices, library, archives, conference hall, and meeting rooms – is glaring. The assembly halls are equipped with modern communication of bilingual sound system with microphones and earphones, evaporative cooling for ventilation, and acoustic treatment for sound modulation. Reliance on modern construction of reinforced cement concrete (R.C.C) columns to support the central dome and the double-layered roof over the steel trusses in the assembly hall, is evident. It is significant to note that despite the *Vidhana Soudha's* emphatically traditional façade, the symmetrical plan that encloses two large courts, the composition of a grand central

stairway, colonnaded portico, and central dome with two smaller adjacent domes, are typical of the neo-classical,[63] and the later Indo-Saracenic style, which the British introduced and practiced assiduously during empire building. The conflation of Indian and European architectural features in producing an Indian revivalist style unveils the influence of Western imperial traditions. While the incongruity of imperial ideals in a building dedicated to the people's sovereignty was criticized extensively, it reflects the tensions within a transitioning social and political order that had embraced modern democracy.

Immediately after its inauguration, the *Vidhana Soudha* was mired in controversies. An inquiry committee was set up to scrutinize the expenditures, and the Chief Minister was held responsible for the misuse of public money and power. The initial estimate of Rupees 3.3 million had ballooned into 18.5 million since the Chief Minister had disregarded due protocols. Taking charge of the *Vidhana Soudha* from the Minister of Public Works, the Chief Minister appointed himself the final authority on its design and construction. Standard procedures of appointing building contractors and sanctioning estimates were ignored, as were the recommendations from the government architects and engineers. The inquiry committee observed that in a democratic republic, "the sovereignty of the people is not to be depicted in the House of Legislature…with ostentatious architectural embellishments reminiscent of the Princely order."[64] Within the architectural profession, this stylistic display was not well received by many, including the architect of *Vidhana Soudha*. When B. R. Manickam suggested that the architecture of the Houses of Legislature should be more suitable to its functions and not look like a temple, he was overridden by the Chief Minister.[65] Achyut Kanvinde deplores it as "a fancy dictated by some political leader,"[66] while Habib Rahman was highly critical.

> "[Vidhana Soudha] is an expression of the urge to cling to the past by imposing Applied Archeology on a reinforced concrete building. There are quite a number of monumental buildings commissioned since independence that have a similar archeological inspiration. They have resulted from thoughtlessness to [the]fundamental questions and misguided nationalist sentiments."

> – Habib Rahman [67]

5. CONCLUSION

An attitude of sympathy towards modern architecture facilitated the 13-storey high-rise modernist *New Secretariat Building* in Calcutta. In contrast, antipathy to the modern style resulted in the revivalist *Vidhana Soudha* in Bangalore. Modern architecture was not readily accepted and faced considerable challenges. While Habib Rahman's colleagues and superiors doubted his competency in executing the new style of architecture and disregarded his instructions in favor of established building practices, B.R. Manickam faced frequent

interference from the Chief Minister, especially in the stylistic design of the edifice, whose architectural appearance ultimately shifted towards the traditional.

Nonetheless, the impact of both buildings is undeniable. Peter Scriver and Amit Srivastava uphold the *New Secretariat Building* as the "most iconic example in the new India of an unfettered modernist approach to the design of public architecture."[68] Despite the controversies, the *Vidhana Soudha* "became the cynosure of the eyes of the State and the nation."[69] Janaki Nair writes that *Vidhana Soudha* is a widely admired city landmark that subsequently garnered praise in literary prose. These buildings also paved the way for the development of public architecture in the subcontinent. Many central and State government buildings were constructed in the modern style, including Habib Rahman's *Central Revenue Offices* and *Auditor General Offices* across Indian cities.[70] *Vidhana Soudha* inspired the numerous reproductions called *Mini Vidhana Soudha* – smaller district government offices, especially throughout the state of Karnataka.[71]

The quest for a national style took on contrasting forms. The challenges, negotiations, and controversies animated the public and professional bodies to explore the past, present, and future of the nation's development. The debates presented in the Seminar of Architecture, while indicative of a democratic society, unanimously rejected a static national policy on architecture that could stifle India's intellectual progress in the global architectural arena. Advocating for dynamic architecture, the participants called for designs that reflected the industrial age and were relevant to social, economic, and geographical contexts. Democratic India, in the decade after independence, provided fertile ground for expressing global ideas about spatial and technological advancements in architecture, merging with explorations of indigenous architectural knowledge systems. The resulting architectural developments and synthesis fostered an evolving tradition of modernism, promoting a cosmopolitan heterogeneity in India's urban landscape.

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ON COSMOPOLITAN SPACE: THE TELEVISED ARCHITECTURE OF THE PORTUGUESE PAVILION AT EXPO'92

Alexandra Areia

ON COSMOPOLITAN SPACE: THE TELEVISED ARCHITECTURE OF THE PORTUGUESE PAVILION AT EXPO'92

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This paper traces the design process of the Portuguese Pavilion for EXPO'92, the first built in democracy, in order to examine the ways in which architecture was used to project a refreshed image of Portugal as an emerging EU state member in the post-colonial era. Drawing upon cosmopolitanism's slogan of "universality plus difference"[1], this paper argues that the design for the pavilion epitomizes the concept of "cosmopolitan" space, in the balance it makes between local traditions and international aspirations, erudition and popular culture, national identity and universal values. This paper also appropriates the medium of television as a conceptual apparatus to reflect on the "televised" quality of the pavilion and the media impact it generated back home.

1. INTRODUCTION

Cosmopolitanism begins with a simple idea, argues K. A. Appiah: "in the human community, as in national communities, we need to develop habits of coexistence". In an age of global networks of telecommunication and information exchange, the practice of coexistence, of living together as fellow citizens in an interconnected but culturally diverse world, can be as elementary as the making of a 'conversation', he adds. Borrowing from the philosophic principles of the cynic philosopher Diogenes of Sinope (fourth century BC), and the notion of the 'cosmopolitan' as "citizen of the cosmos" in contrast to the citizen of a particular *polis* to which owed loyalty, Appiah highlights two intertwined ideals of cosmopolitanism: the "universal concern" for others and the "respect for legitimate difference"[2]. In managing these often conflicting poles, cosmopolitanism then becomes more of a challenge rather than a solution, a practice of something "yet to come", a project "awaiting realization"[3]; and a kind of orientation, a state of mind, "a willingness to engage with the Other"[4], which in its cultural dimension assumes "a happy face, enjoying new sights and tastes, new people"[5]. From a post-colonial perspective, cosmopolitanism also represents the "Western engagement with the rest of the world", being this engagement colonial in its nature. In that sense, the conversation with the Other becomes synonymous of cultural translation and the cosmopolitan person is seen not only as a translator, but also "a spy who commands more languages than the people he spies upon"[6]. Nevertheless, at the root of the concept of cosmopolitanism always appears to be "a process of interaction based on the principle of openness"[7]. Based on these assertions, this paper reflects on the concept of cosmopolitanism within an aesthetic and cultural framework, through the analysis of the architectural practice of Manuel Graça Dias (MGD, 1953-2019), using as a main case study the project he co-authored with Egas José Vieira (EJV, 1962-) for the Portuguese Pavilion at the 1992 Seville International Exposition, EXPO'92.

The 1990s was a decade of general optimism and enthusiasm for the future in Portugal, a far cry from the oppressive and narrow-minded mentality that dominated the country during the 48 years of dictatorship (1926-1974). The opening up of society to new lifestyles and consumer habits introduced by foreign television series and advertising, the emergence of the middle class as a strong result of the democratization process, and the promise of structural modernization and economic growth that accompanied the country's entry into the EU in 1986, all called for a redefinition of the country's collective image and identity. MGD+EJV design for the national pavilion aimed to project an image of a country still under construction and uncertain about the future: a dismountable structure with a large curved façade, asymmetrical and incomplete at the top, covered with iconographic lettering in which the letters P-O-R-T-U-G-A-L mimicked everyday structures on top of common buildings, such as TV antennas and drying racks (Fig.1). In their search for an architectural language that could translate the essence of being "Portuguese" in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, MGD and EJV analyzed the "architecture without architects"[8] of informal neighborhoods of illegal origin that could be found around the Lisbon metropolitan area at the time, a fairly common and widespread phenomenon of unregulated suburban sprawl in the late 1980s in Portugal (Fig.2). These clandestine and often self-built houses were usually aesthetically disregarded by the bourgeois society at large, which considered them ugly or even grotesque. For the two architects, however, they represented an honest materialization of the desires and aspirations of their own owners and builders, revealing a spontaneity and authenticity of construction that they found increasingly difficult to find in the strictly functional architecture of most European cities. Some of the aesthetic qualities and inventiveness of these informal and clandestine settlements, which also reflected the impact on architecture of the global consumerism and standardization of construction that followed the Carnation Revolution of 1974, provided reference material that would strongly influence the overall design of the EXPO'92 pavilion.

The EXPO'92 in Seville was the first international exposition in which Portugal participated as a democratic state (its previous participation had been the EXPO'70 in Osaka, 1970), and it was also the first to receive extensive television coverage, so public expectations at home were high. MGD+EJV's pavilion was designed to appeal to the international visitors to the world's fair, competing with the architecture of many other pavilions of different nationalities, while at the same time trying to evoke an intense reaction from the Portuguese people watching the event on their televisions at home. This paper defines the pavilion as "televised architecture", adding to its media reception the fact that it was also a building designed to integrate a strong audiovisual component: screens and moving images were incorporated into the building's design not only as a display device for the exhibition project, but also as a fundamental structural element of the overall architectural experience of the pavilion. Ultimately, this paper argues that MGD+EJV's project for EXPO'92 epitomizes the concept of "cosmopolitan" space because it embodies an architectural 'conversation' between

different visions and narratives of "being" Portuguese, balancing local traditions and international aspirations, erudition and popular culture, national identity and universal values.
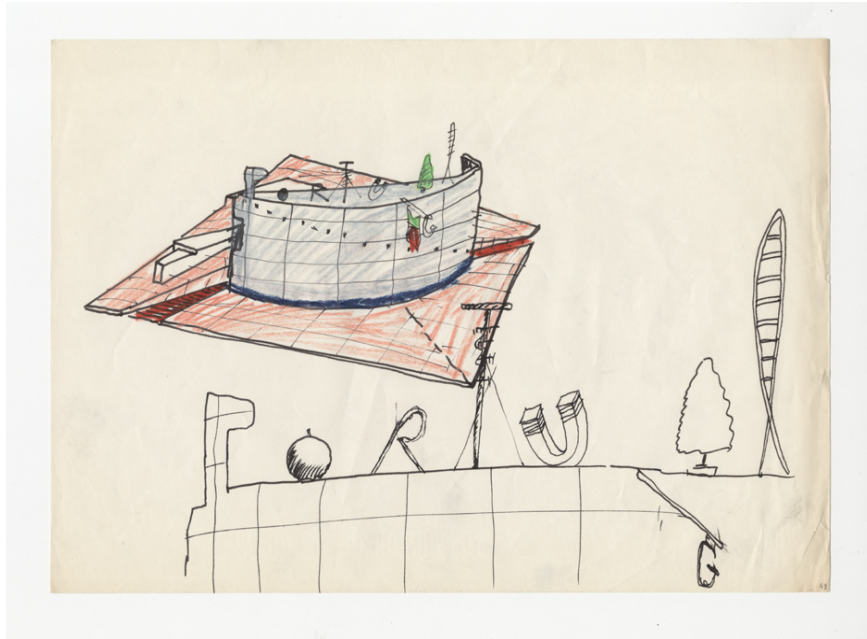

Fig. 1: Early sketch for the project of the Portuguese Pavilion at Expo'92, Universal Exhibition in Seville [Source: FIMS_MGD_0112-02-0049].

Fig. 2: Photographic slides of clandestine settlements. Dias, Manuel Graça; Vieira, Egas José; n.d. [Source: courtesy Egas José Vieira]

2. COSMOPOLITANISM AS (ARCHITECTURAL) PRACTICE

From the very beginning of MGD's professional practice, the older of the two architects of the EXPO'92 pavilion had been reflecting on a methodology and approach to architecture that could be rooted in contemporary (Portuguese) "popular" culture. This reflection includes the report he submitted to the university for his architecture degree, *Arquitectura Pop, Há?* [Pop architecture is there?, 1977][9], and even later for his teaching qualification, with the report *O Acaso e a vontade, vocábulos clandestinos* [Chance and will, Clandestine Vocabularies, 1989][10]. After graduating in the late 1970s, MGD went to Macau to join his most respected professor, Manuel Vicente, who had the ambition to publish a survey of the city's architectural heritage in a "Learning from Las Vegas" kind of approach – not as an exhaustive academic study, but rather as a way of thinking "affectionately" about the city and to uncover the "contemporary vernacular" that was "yet to be deciphered" in Macau's recent constructions (Fig.3)[11].
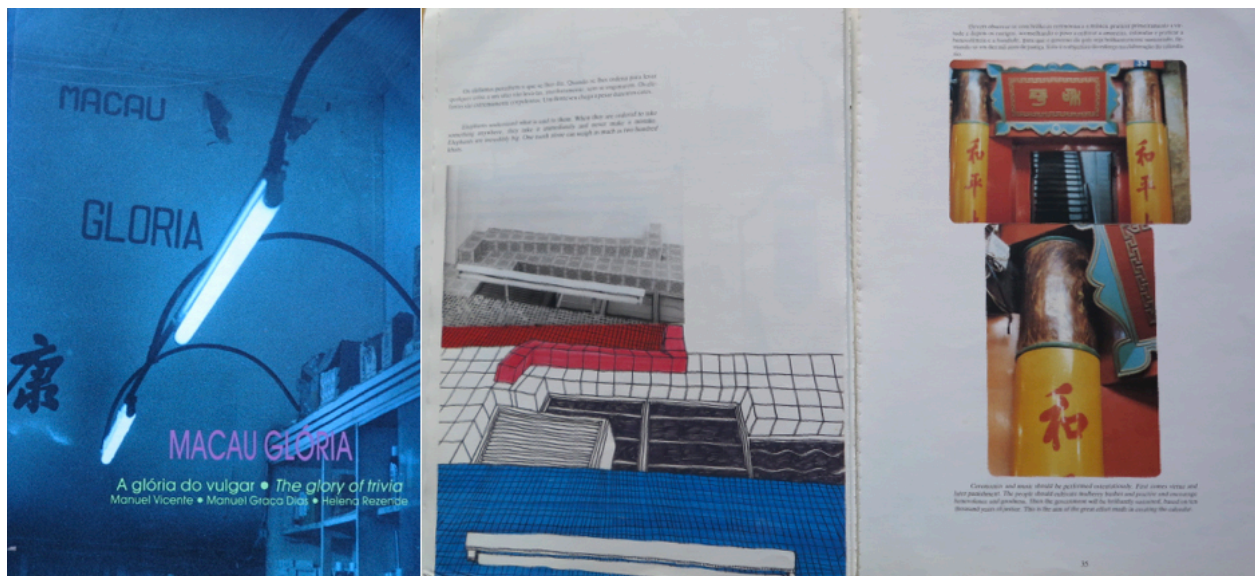

Fig. 3: Cover and pages of the publication *Macau Glória, The Glory of Trivia* (work developed in 1979, book published in 1991) [Source: photographed by the author]

Upon his return to Portugal and throughout the 1980s, MGD began designing several projects in small towns in the northern interior of the country, such as the city of Chaves, where the architect left his mark with the construction of several residential and commercial buildings, namely *O Golfinho* [The Dolphin, 1985]. These projects reveal an openness to work within the realities of the local construction industry, negotiating with profit-driven real estate developers and using current standard building materials, in order to bring a degree of qualified urbanity and architectural joy to rapidly growing peripheries. During this period, MGD also regularly wrote chronicles for large-circulation newspapers and some specialized architectural magazines, reflecting on

the informality of unregulated construction, especially on two phenomena that were profoundly changing the Portuguese landscape: the "urban clandestines" on the outskirts of Lisbon and the "emigrant house" in small rural villages. In the early 1990s, shortly after the opening of the Expo'92's pavilion, MGD also debuted his own television program on architecture and urbanism (which would run for four seasons and a total of 83 episodes, broadcast regularly between 1992 and 1996), in which he visited several neighborhoods of illegal genesis to present to the viewers at home an objective architectural analysis of these dwellings, not shying away from highlighting some of their vibrant, colorful, albeit irregular constructions (Fig.4).

Fig. 4: "Architecture without architects, urban clandestines". *Ver Artes/ Desenho Urbano*. Lisboa: RTP2; Produções Zebra, June 6, July 4, 1996 [Source: Stills, Arquivos RTP. Accessed, March 2025, https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/clandestinos-urbanos-parte-i/]

> "I like the promiscuity and the clandestine [settlements] at the beaches, of people who hold the sand in place by laying down stakes and planks. I like a country that is being built and cities-shipyards in movement; cities that are new and aren't fixed like Brussels; cities that, being old like Brussels, are torn apart, are third-worldists and mulatto and arrogant; cities where the will is not of the domain of reason but of emotion."
>
> Manuel Graça Dias[12]

MGD wrote these words on the very last days of the year 1989, in a column was entitled *Bom gosto, adeus 80s* [Good taste, goodbye 80s]*,* just a few months after winning the competition to design the National Pavilion that would represent Portugal at EXPO'92. As with MGD's other newspaper articles, this particular column consisted of a literary personal reflection on matters of aesthetic taste and freedom of visual expression in the built environment. It oscillated between both his disdain for prejudiced notions of dominant taste and his explicit admiration for some of the ingenuity of the clandestine, self-built constructions. For MGD, these houses made of "shiny textured blocks of sharp geometry and traversed by varied tiles, incomprehensible staircases, crooked roofs" represented at the end of the XXth century the **"true Portuguese popular architecture"***,* as he highlighted in bold on another of his newspaper columns[13]. With this statement, MGD

was clearly albeit indirectly referencing the highly influential and "subversive survey"[14] of the *Inquérito à Arquitetura Regional Portuguesa* [Inquiry into Regional Architecture], carried out by the National Union of Architects (SNA) between 1955 and 1960. At the height of Salazar's dictatorship, the expectation of the 'New State 'regime that financed the 'Inquiry' was that it would produce a "figurative formulary" that could defined the "right" architecture to be built in each Portuguese province[15]. For the (modern) architects involved, the 'Inquiry' represented an uncensored opportunity to exercise a hidden agenda: that of silently undermine the regime's manufactured myth of a "national style", highlighting instead the importance of "relations between man and his environment" and contribute to an understanding of "popular architecture" as a "sequence of long-duration building processes that have to do with well-defined concrete situations"[16]. The 'Inquiry 'was also instrumental in exposing the harsh living conditions of the inhabitants of the more remote villages of Portuguese territory.

In the thirty years between the first edition of the 'Inquiry' (1961) and the design of the national pavilion for EXPO'92 by MGD and EJV, Portugal underwent massive social and territorial transformations. Since the 'Inquiry', "euphoric winds of change and progress, dominated by an individualistic and disorganized logic", have swept over the Portuguese land, eager to erase the traces of "a past that should be buried forever", as if to shake off the country from the "weight of an ancestral misery" – Nuno Teotónio Pereira wrote in 1987, for the preface to the publication of the 3rd edition of the 'Inquiry'. The revolution of the April 25, 1974, which ended almost five decades of fascist regime, exposed the dramatic reality of the country, where a quarter of the population lived in uninhabitable conditions. With the dissolution of the "empire", about half a million Portuguese citizens were repatriated from the former African colonies (the *retornados*), some of them without any real ties to the "metropole". With Portugal's late transition to democracy, the construction of the welfare state took place at a time when new liberalism was already moving to the center of the political stage in the core group of EU nations. At the turn of the 1980s, the Portuguese state's response to the extreme housing shortage was mainly through private support measures for individual acquisition or construction of home ownership, namely through subsidized credit (which lasted until 2002). These are broad generalizations, but they serve to illustrate the rampant and unqualified construction activity that Portugal witnessed in the first two decades of its democracy.

At the time of the Seville Universal Exposition of 1992 - EXPO'92, Spain and Portugal were experiencing similar political trajectories and shared almost the same cultural, economic and social characteristics. The democratic transition processes of the two countries were almost chronologically coincident, although they began very differently: the Portuguese transition was a military coup that quickly became a cultural, economic

and social revolution; the Spanish transition was a negotiated settlement between elements of the authoritarian and the liberalization elites. Nevertheless, both made successful transitions to full-fledged democracies, joining the European Economic Union (EEC, now the European Union) at the same time in 1986. Access to the structural funds, investments in infrastructure and vocational training, led to an intense process of modernization that was transversal to most sectors of both the Portuguese and Spanish society. A prevailing sense of optimism and enthusiastic anticipation for the future characterized the two countries as they entered the 1990s. EXPO'92 and the MGD+EJV's Portuguese Pavilion were a crystalline manifestation of this collective mood.

3.   ANATOMY OF A NATIONAL IDENTITY

In commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus, the Seville Universal Exposition of 1992 - EXPO'92 was organized around the general theme of "The Age of Discoveries". The place chosen for its development was the *Isla de La Cartuja,* on the western area of Seville, on a 400ha open field situated between the branches of the Guadalquivir River, where the navigator is said to have lived before his journey. EXPO'92 followed the pattern of other World Expos, whose origins go back to the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London and that are officially described as "global gathering of nations" dedicated to find solutions to the pressing challenges of its own time[17]. Seville was considered to be an economically poor city, with a degraded urban core and a deficit in all types of urban services and facilities. As a state project of the Spanish government, the official political message associated with EXPO'92 was that the mega-event would serve as "a powerful platform to raise a future of progress", providing the territory with new spaces and infrastructures that would put the region of Andalusia on a path of continuous growth and development[18]. Locally, however, not everyone shared the same enthusiasm towards the Universal Exposition as politicians were trying to convey. On the eve of its inauguration, the gates of EXPO92 were the scene of a demonstration against colonialism and the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Spanish Empire, which was violently repressed by the police, resulting in several people being injured, detained and extradited[19]. "In Europe, Eurocentrism is not yet a bad thing", wrote Kurt Andersen in a TIME magazine review of EXPO'92, commenting that the official theme (The Age of Discoveries) "pretty much means European colonization, featuring full-scale replicas of Columbus 'ships"[20].

The Portuguese presence in the Seville Universal Exposition was organized by the *Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses* [National Commission for the Commemoration of the Portuguese Discoveries - CNCDP), formed in 1988 with similar political aims than those of Spain for the Seville's Exposition: to organize the commemorations of the 500th anniversary of the voyages of Vasco da Gama

(1498) and Pedro Álvares Cabral (1500), which would later culminate in the Lisbon's International Exposition of 1998 - EXPO'98. The cultural policy of the incumbent liberal Social-Democratic government, which appointed the intellectual Vasco Graça Moura (VGM) as General Commissioner of the CNCDP, tended towards a "heroic" and "sacralizing" version of Portuguese history, adopting points of view close to the 'Lusotropicalism', embodied in the ambiguous expression of "Encounter of Cultures"[21]. One of the first initiatives of CNCDP was precisely to organize a design competition to select the architectural project for the National Pavilion in EXPO'92, which should represent Portugal as a "universalist nation and pioneer in the meeting of civilizations"[22]. Held in 1989, the design competition was highly competitive, with 55 proposals submitted in the first phase (Ideas), resulting in a pre-selection of 5 projects on the second phase (Previous Study). All the architectural designs submitted to the competition were later displayed in a public exhibition, which revealed a general tendency in the majority of the proposals to perpetuate the old symbols historically associated with the Portuguese nationality, including those repeatedly used by the fascist regime of the 'New State' (crosses of Christ, armillary spheres, caravels, etc). As the renowned historian and architectural critic Paulo Varela Gomes noted after visiting this exhibition: "Nothing could be more in line with the 50th anniversary of the 1940 Portuguese World Exhibition"[23], known as the greatest event of nationalist propaganda of the Salazar regime. This description shows that, unlike Spain, where the general theme of EXPO'92 was opposed by civil protests, Portugal was still generally uncritical of old colonial symbols of national identity. In terms of collective memory and questioning official narratives, there seemed to be little progress since, for example, the Portuguese pavilion also built in Seville for the Ibero-American Exposition of 1929 (the same year of the Mies van der Rohe Pavilion for the Barcelona International Exhibition), designed by the brother architects Carlos Rebelo de Andrade (1887-1971) and Guilherme Rebelo de Andrade (1891-1969) in neo-Manueline style, and described in the media of the time as "a project that reflects the old national architecture from the centuries of Portuguese colonization"[24] (Fig.5).

The winner proposal for the Portuguese pavilion at EXPO'92 was designed by the two young architects MGD and EJV, which used architecture with a great communicative effort to produce a strong statement about Portugal's collective image. The authors defined their project as an "architecture of abstract symbolism, with pretexts and points of departure based on History, gaining autonomy and depuration through the idea of modernity and the experimental will of which we [Portuguese] were the first" (Fig.6)[25]. As MGD colloquially told the mainstream media: "We don't need to take the Tower of Belém to Seville, to show that we are great. We are great. I believe in Portugal, but not in the processes used to sell its image. A bad national conscience leads people to give the world a gaudy image of the country."[26]

Fig. 5: Model of the Portuguese Pavilion for the 1929 Ibero-American Exposition in Seville [Source: PT-TT-EPJS-SF-001-001-0012-1787C].

Fig. 6: Model of the Portuguese Pavilion at Expo'92, Universal Exhibition in Seville, 1992. [Source: courtesy Egas

Portugal was the first country to be invited to participate in EXPO'92, which came with the privilege of being the first to choose the location for its national pavilion, which ended up being right next to its Iberian neighbor and host of the fair, Spain. In contrast to and somewhat in competition with the neighboring Spanish Pavilion, which occupied a central position in the fair and presented itself as a massive structure of closed, static geometry and large blind facades of white marble, MGD+EJV envisioned a more dynamic, striking and slightly "aggressive" architecture for the Portuguese Pavilion. With a large curved blind facade that "proudly" turned its back on Spain, MGD+EJV's pavilion also stood out as one of the highest points of the fair (reaching 25m height, the maximum allowed by the regulations). The five-story building, with its complex morphology and intricate cladding, was closed off from the main arteries of the fair, instead opening up to the interior of the site. Its implantation was also based on a bold design gesture that began by marking the designated site of 55x50m with a strong diagonal (NW-SE) that divided it in half, as if Portugal was "cutting corners" [*Portugal corta-caminho*] between Route of Discoveries, the main transversal avenue of the Expo complex, and its perpendicular, Avenue of Europe (Fig.7). This architectural choice could be read as a metaphorical statement: no longer tied to its imperialist past, nor constrained by a predetermined future as a member of the EU, Portugal was forging its own new path. It should be noted, however, that this option of crossing the site with a diagonal was also present in the other three of the five semi-finalist proposals in the competition, namely the project by Manuel Taínha. Crossing the interior of the site, at the center of the diagonal, MGD+EJV created an elliptical plaza covered by a metallic cubic structure with wooden slats, which served as a meeting point to welcome visitors, providing shade and leading them to the main entrance of the pavilion.

Fig. 7: Plan of the entrance level, Portuguese Pavilion at Expo'92. Preliminary study, October 1989. [Source: FIMS-MGD-0112-pd0086].

Under the motto "Portugal: an adventure of centuries to invent the future", the exhibition that filled the pavilion sought to present an overview of the history of country and publicize its contemporary cultural and economic capabilities. Coordinated by Francisco Faria Paulino, the exhibition was divided into four sections or themes:" Portugal, the Formation of a Country" (entrance level, -1,00m), "Portugal and the Discoveries – the Meeting of Cultures" (level +4,00m and +8,50m), "Portugal, Language and Culture" (level +13,00m and +17,50m) and finally "Contemporary Portugal" (level +22,00). MGD+EJV's design was very attentive to the

curatorial project and the message of each section, trying to integrate and complement them as if they were all part of a single discursive entity, while at the same time keeping it flexible as an open space, able to easily adapt to the needs of the four exhibitions. The five floors of the building were all connected by escalators with bold red sides, giving the whole experience of visiting the pavilion a cinematic feel, like a vertical "travelling" crossing through the chronological history of Portugal. The entrance to the Portuguese Pavilion was made through a hall, under the "barroque periscope", which was a tower with white interior and a square base of 5x5m and a height of 21m. It had a large window at the top, facing the south, which strongly but indirectly illuminated the whole periscope, turning it into a light conductor that crossed all the floors of the pavilion. The floor of the entrance level (-1,00m) was dedicated to the Foundation and Independence of Portugal. Representing the origins of the country, this floor was conceived as a kind of labyrinth on the concrete foundations and iron pillars that support the building, an "archaeological 'promenade' where, under the weight of the floors hovers the past of pasts hangs". It was also where the map of *Condado Portucalense* [First County of Portugal, 868-1139] was figuratively drawn in the pavement, with its rivers marked in concrete notches with water flowing through them.

From the entrance level, going up the escalator to the floor above (+4m), where there was an Auditory with maximum capacity for 85 people, thought to be continuously transmitting high-definition television programs (HDTV) in conjunction with only the other eleven countries of the European Community, as it was a broadcasting technology that was still in an experimental stage in Europe. These broadcasts could be live or pre-recorded and could include the coverage of other mega-events such as the Barcelona Olympics, which took place at the same time as the Seville Fair, as well as other programs produced specifically for this purpose in collaboration with *Rádio e Televisão de Portugal* [Radio and Television of Portugal, RTP]. This floor (+4.00m) and the next one (+8.5m) were dedicated to the Portuguese Discoveries, centered in the historical period of the XIV and XV centuries, and was the one that was given more emphasis, since it was the one most closely related to the general theme of Expo'92. On these two floors, MGD+EJV opened a few sparse windows to neighboring Spain, while keeping them closed to the rest of the fair, "as an illustration of the fixing of borders, the building of castles, the assertion and surveillance of independence". The next two floors (+13,00m and +17,50m) were dedicated to the Portuguese Language, and in them the architecture of the pavilion begins to "little by little, open up to the New World (Brazil and Portuguese-speaking Countries in Africa)", whose national pavilions were also located nearby, to the south. The highlight of this section was the "Corridor of the Language", which consisted of 60 television monitors arranged in a metal shelf structure, set up to simultaneously transmit video images of people speaking Portuguese of different nationalities, with the intention of "bombarding" the visitor with a plurality of different tongues, dialects and pronunciations, earning the nickname of "Babel of the Portuguese Language".

Finally, the last floor (+22,00m) was dedicated to the Contemporary Portugal and was described by the authors as an "unfinished" floor. Unlike the other floors, most of which were closed to the surrounding area, this floor was completely open to the entire fairgrounds, offering a panoramic view of all the other nations and companies represented at EXPO'92, through "multiple windows, cracks, notches and slits engraved in the pavilion's skin". Here, the sense of incompleteness in the architecture of the pavilion was marked by "expectant pillars, swaying beams, hesitating claddings" and of the unfinished quality of the building skyline with the eight letters [P-O-R-T-U-G-A-L] seemingly suspended precariously on cables. According to the authors, this "unfinished" floor signified the construction of the future, which in the case of a democratic society should be an "incomplete picture", with windows scattered in all directions to represent how the future in democracy is "exposed and shown, observed and seen, turning the eye in a circularly gaze, never stopping to find relevant interlocutors". As stated in the media by VGM, the commissioner of the Portuguese representation, the exhibition of this top floor, as well as the entire external morphology of the pavilion, "signifies the desire for dialogue with the world in an anti-war era". The key word of the official message was 'cooperation', meaning a new, close and plural relationship of contemporary Portugal "with the people with whom we have been in contact for centuries and who are now independent"[27].
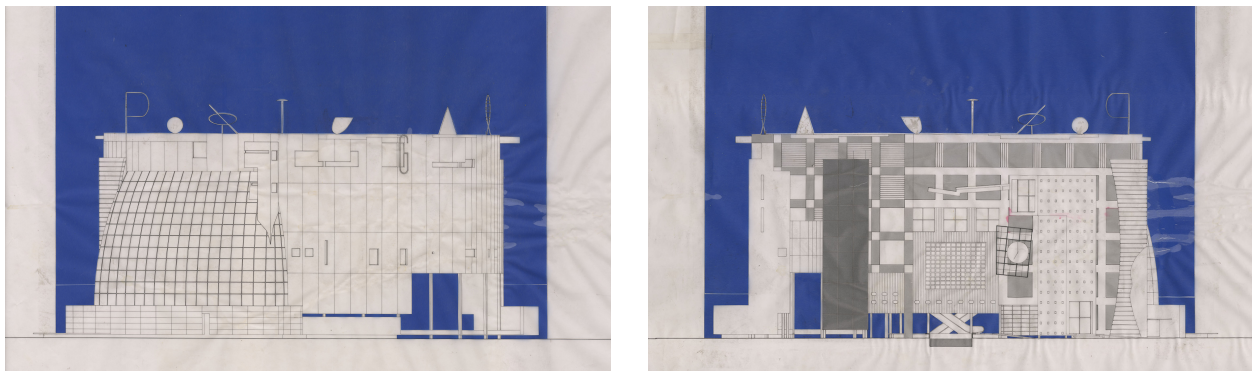

Fig. 8, 9: Front (NE) and rear façade (SW, facing interior plaza) of the Portuguese Pavilion at Expo'92. Preliminary study, October 1989. [Source: FIMS-MGD-0112-pd0064/65].

4. TELEVISED ARCHITECTURE

The interior façade of the pavilion (SW), facing the elliptical plaza, was vibrant and colorful, with a wide range of different textures and colors, from shock magenta to bright cyan (Fig.8,9). This façade, "covered with juxtaposed accidents to construct a distant mimesis of a city"[28], is the moment in the entire architectural design of the pavilion where the influence of the clandestine constructions that so deeply impressed MGD and EJV was most evident, offering a very different experience from the smooth and neutrally colored curved façade overlooking the main avenues of the Expo. The typical maritime themes associated with the

Discoveries were also evoked, albeit subtly and never literally: the granite wedge reminiscent of a keel boat, the large periscope tower, and the giant twisted clock with the Lisbon-Greenwich time zone vaguely resembling a compass. However, all these animated architectural elements were not intended to be the main attraction of this façade: in the center of the wall facing the plaza, in the place of the large trivision billboard with rotating images of the St. Vincent Panels (a famous polyptych painting depicting different social groups in 15th century Portugal), it was planned to install a jumbo television screen, which was not realized for budgetary reasons. This original intention was so essential to the overall architectural concept of the pavilion that MGD and EJV urged the General Commissioner of the Portuguese Representation, VGM, to invest in this feature, as is evidenced by a letter dated April 30, 1990, in which:

> "Having reached this point [close to the delivery of the Execution Project], it is urgent in our view that the Commission, which Your Excellency presides over, continue and support the assumptions that were the basis of our initial idea and which are based, as you will well remember, on a 'cultural node' of great media proportions: an enormous 'vidiwall' or 'liquid crystal' wall to be installed at the back of the building in order to create a very strong point of attraction to cross the lot as well as to stay in *Praça Portugal.*

> We continue to insist (forgive us) that the center of our presence in Seville be constituted by the 'biggest video clip ever', lasting between 12 and 24 hours. A similar task, the construction of which could be made from a lot of existing material (documentaries, reports, recorded shows, old and contemporary films) and any additional material that was considered indispensable, could be entrusted to a sub-commissioner (preferably a filmmaker) solely in charge of the construction of this enormous 'video clip', in close collaboration with other filmmakers, with RTP [*Rádio e Televisão de Portugal*] and with the Portuguese Cinemateca, who could later come to reuse it in their respective media."

<div align="right">Manuel Graça Dias, Egas José Vieira[29]</div>

The Jumbotron™ was first introduced at EXPO'85 in Tsukuba (Japan), where the Japanese company *Sony* unveiled the world's first 45m outdoor video screen, which was considered the biggest attraction of the fair. It would have been an innovative proposal by Portuguese standards at the time, but it was not unprecedented at EXPO'92, as many of the national pavilions also invested in audiovisual features – the Norwegian pavilion, designed by Pål Henry Engh (LPO arkitekter), consisted of a 'tube' 6,6m in diameter and 46m long, on the walls of which a multimedia show was projected using one 115 projectors and 10,000 photographs of the country's history and relationship with water (navigation, fishing, oil and hydroelectric power). Although the general theme of the EXPO'92 focused on past eras and in the achievements of the 'Discoveries', the ubiquitous presence of television screens and video images throughout the fair (also a constant feature of the Portuguese pavilion's exhibition project), immediately catapulted the visitor into the future, representing a celebration of progress and of human ingenuity that is the quintessence of any World's Expo. As Umberto

Eco wrote on "A Theory of Expositions", reflecting on the EXPO'67 in Montreal (Quebec, Canada), the World's Expos "seem to be a final recapitulation in the face of a hypothetical end of the world":

> "At first contact and first reaction, exhibitions assume the form of an inventory, an enormous gathering of evidence from Stone to Space Age, an accumulation of objects useless and precious, an immense catalogue of things produced by man in all countries over the past ten thousand years, displayed so that humanity will not forget them."

> "Expositions as Inventories Spires, geodesic domes, molecular structures enlarged millions of times, cathedrals, shacks, monorails, space frames, astronauts 'suits and helmets, moon rocks, rare minerals, the King of Bohemia's crown, Etruscan vases, Pompeiian corpses, a Magdeburg sphere, incense burners from Thailand, Persian rugs, Giuseppe Verdi's cravat, cars, TV sets, tractors, jewelry, transistors, wooden statues from the Renaissance, panoramic views of fairytale landscapes, electronic computers, boomerangs, an Ethiopian lion, an Australian kangaroo, Donatello's David, a photo of Marilyn Monroe, a mirror-labyrinth, a few hundred prefabricated dwellings, a plastic human brain, three parachutes, ten carousels."

Umberto Eco[30]

According to Eco's theory, the basic ideology of these world expositions is that what is shown is not the objects but the exposition itself: "the packaging is more important than the product, meaning that the building and the objects in it should communicate the value of a culture, the image of a civilization." Given that "architecture is an act of communication, a message", and when "architecture communicates something, it does so in the form of a symbol", the product of architecture is "simply like a mechanism that suggests a function and acts on the user only as a stimulus that requires a behavioral response". In an exposition, Eco concludes," architecture proves to be message first, then utility; meaning first, then stimulus".

In a curious episode at some point in the design process, in order to compensate for the lack of technology capable of reaching a larger audience in the Portuguese pavilion (such as a jumbo television screen) and to attract spectators less interested in cultural events to the theme of the 'Discoveries', the commissioner VGM pushed the idea of having a 'dolphin show' in the pavilion, in a direct (and very literal) reference to the theme of the oceans. This solution would require the additional construction of two tanks of 400m2, excluding the necessary zone for spectators, and the dolphins would have to come from Miami, since Portuguese law prohibits the capture of this species and its use in spectacles. For the media, the architects gave a diplomatic answer saying they were considering the idea. But in a professional document, MGD drew up a 12-note explanation of why the 'dolphin show' should not be introduced in the Portuguese pavilion, defending their design and arguing: "The radical nature of the architectural choices thus suggests a situation of expectant joy based on media values that are completely antagonistic to those that inform the spectacle with animals."[31]

The 'dolphin show', like the Western movie and the Broadway musical, is what Eco defined as a universally recognized connotation of 'Americanism', a direct symbol of the American myth. Even though the 'dolphin show 'didn't make it into the pavilion (surely for reasons of common sense), it is quite revealing of the kind of cultural policies and aspirational collective image that the Portuguese state was striving for at the time. With the same vehemence with which MGD and EJV discarded the old (colonial) symbols of national identity, they also rejected any imported figurative imagery merely to (uncritically) convey an image of progress and modernity. Through the architectural design of the Portuguese Pavilion, MGD and EJV sought to project a refreshed image of Portugal as a country open to the future and in dialogue with other nations and cultures, a vivid embodiment of tolerance, innovation, and cosmopolitanism. They used the means of architecture itself to communicate that message:

> "Not boats, nor caravels, nor *padrões* [stone pillars]. We appeal to the intelligence of the cuts of shadow and light: to the senses; to the very hands that we believe must pass from marble to the lacquer of light panels, from the strength of iron to wood, from the crystalline of glass to the dull rubber bites, to the curtains of water."
>
> Manuel Graça Dias, Egas José Vieira[32]

The Portuguese pavilion at EXPO'92 received a lot of media coverage, and while there was a general sense of excitement and curiosity, the reception of the building was also met with some criticism. Mainly because of the many setbacks and complications in the construction process: lawsuits, the unfortunate death of a worker on the site, several delays, cost increases, and a problem with overheating in the interior spaces. In addition, the original intention for the pavilion, as stated in the competition rules, was that it should be a dismountable structure that would later be returned to Portugal. The choice of a steel frame structure and standardized materials was primarily dictated by this. However, the cost of dismantling the pavilion would have been so high that this idea was abandoned and in 1996 the pavilion was donated by the Portuguese state to the Andalusia Development Institute for the symbolic value of 1 peseta. It was integrated into the Science and Technology Park of the Cartuxa Island and subjected to extensive works of adaption to its current administrative function, without the original project's authors consultation[33]. The building still stands today and is currently the headquarters of the Andalusian Energy Agency.

5.   CONCLUSION

The analysis of the design process of the Portuguese Pavilion at the 1992 Seville International Exposition - EXPO'92 reveals the underlying narratives associated with national identity and the collective image of a country coming to terms with its post-colonial heritage and the remnants of a fascist regime, while embracing

the cultural pluralism of an emerging democracy (after 1974) and the opening up to globalization and the supranational values of the European Union (which Portugal joined in 1986). As the first national pavilion built in the Portuguese democracy, the design by Manuel Graça Dias and Egas José Vieira reflects an embodiment of the concept of 'cosmopolitanism ' as an active architectural process, in the way it acknowledges cultural diversity and engagement with the 'other '(symbolized by references to 'clandestine' constructions in a state endeavor). The strong presence of a television screen at the center of the original concept for the pavilion emphasizes the dual effect of the global media landscape: the capacity to acquire knowledge about 'others', while also having the ability to influence them. In the balance it seeks in combining the 'universal 'with 'difference '(the double-standard tradition of 'cosmopolitanism', according to K.A. Appiah), the MGD+EJV pavilion is seen here as the architectural epitome of a 'cosmopolitan 'space. Albeit an imperfect one, since it did not succeed in breaking away from the state cultural policies of both the national representation it represented and the World's Fair that hosted it, which were very much in line with outdated colonial ideologies related to the theme of 'Discoveries' and its obvious Eurocentric bias. Nonetheless, MGD and EJV use the medium of architecture itself (amplified by its media exposure, especially on television) to widely communicate a message of universal concern and cooperation, respect for legitimate differences, and a general sense of 'openness 'for Portugal's democratic future.

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COSMOPOLITANISM AND THE NOTION OF BELONGING: ANTÓNIO MENÉRES AND THE PHOTOGRAPHIC CONNECTION

Larissa Ribeiro Cunha, Luís Martinho Urbano

COSMOPOLITANISM AND THE NOTION OF BELONGING: ANTÓNIO MENÉRES AND THE PHOTOGRAPHIC CONNECTION

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Through studies on the architect-photographer António Sérgio Maciel Menéres, it was noted that the relationship developed between Architecture and Photography influenced his trajectory both as a Liberal Professional, as well as a Professor and Researcher. Along with his travels around the world, Menéres developed a strong connection between Portugal and Brazil, based *on the concept of Topophilia, according to the theory of Yi-Fu Tuan. His participation in the 'Survey of Portuguese Regional Architecture' (1955-1961) was crucial for the beginning of his relationship with Photography according to the understanding of Portuguese popular architecture.*

Here it is intended to develop an understanding of the relationship colonialism x cosmopolitanism, through the construction of a thought that relates the central figure of the architect-photographer as a cosmopolitan being, added to the dialogue of his gaze through photography, about the modes of construction and traditional knowledge. It is of interest to perceive how photography awakens and becomes an object of derivation and testimony of a cosmopolitan being. Thus, it is up to the authors to discuss the place of photography as a form of knowledge production, an experiment, resulting from cosmopolitan experiences.

1. INTRODUCTION

"It is from this territory, travelled with some frequency, that I have been collecting images of the mark of Man, clinging to his sense of survival and subsistence. In this changing world and where much of the cultural values are being erased, with almost no record of the authenticity of their presence, I was still able to look at the shape, texture, colour and knowledge of the old generations who bequeathed us this immense built heritage."

(António Menéres, 2017a, p. 9-10)

The relationship between Photography and Architecture dates to a distant time in which photographic experimentation related to long exposures began to be established, because the central object of photography (in this case, Architecture) should be something static that at the end of the experimentation, would obtain clearer results, without possible blurs, arising from any movements.

Specifically on this case, Nicéphore Niépce (1756-1833) was a photographer, inventor and scientific pioneer responsible for one of the great revolutions in photography: heliography. This photographer, in his family's home in Burgundy, set up a scientific research laboratory that allowed him to develop both the heliography method and the Phytotype method, developed together with Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre (1787-1851), the 'father' of the daguerreotype. In this way, the famous image 'View from the window in Le Gras' (Fig. 1) emerged, in which we can observe a view of a courtyard and annex buildings seen from the upstairs window

of the residence, estimated between the years 1826-1827.[1] Photography, then, exposes Architecture, its robustness and staticness.
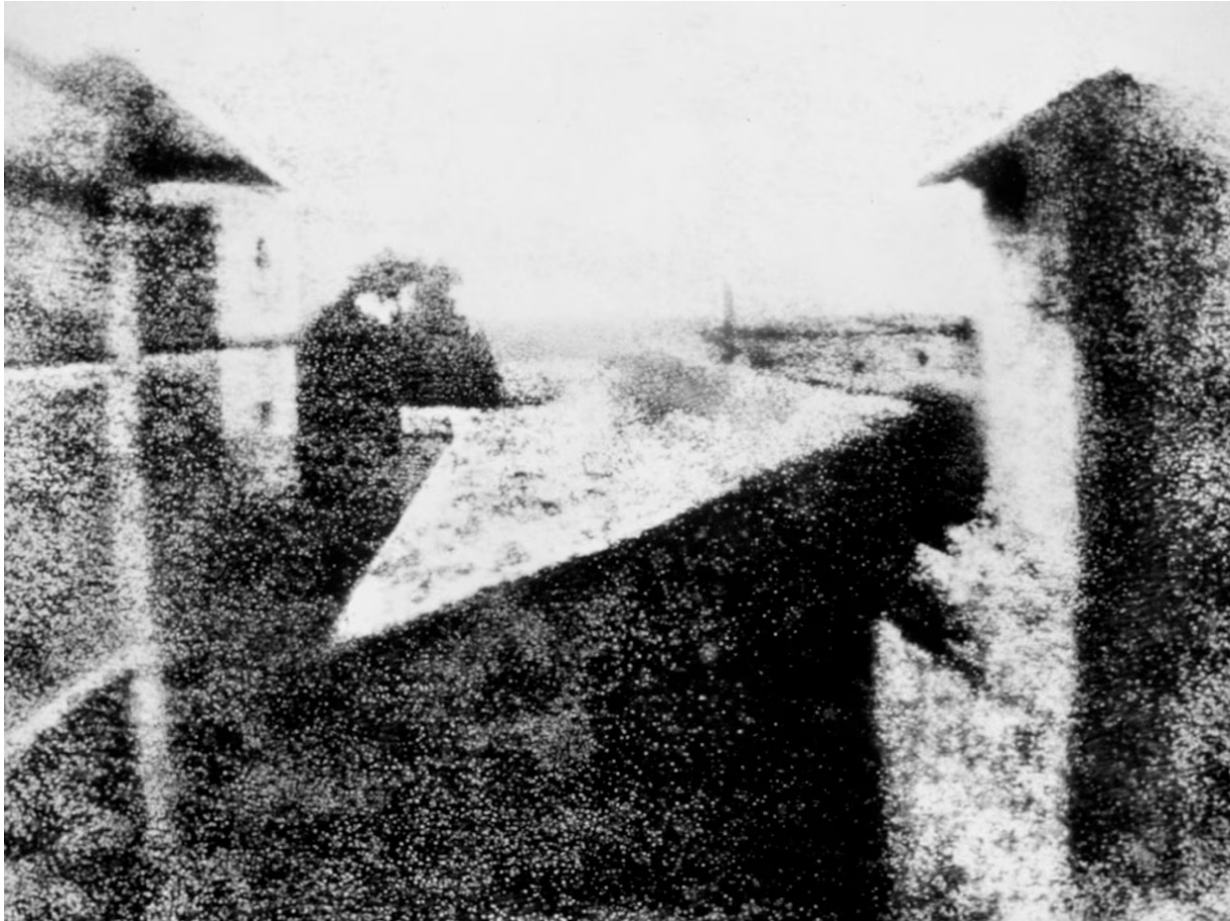

Fig. 1: Window View at Le Gras, photography by ©Nicéphore Niépce, 1826-1827, heliograph, 16,5 x 20 cm. (Source: National Geographic, 2024).[2]

Thus, with its power to 'freeze' and mark the slow passage of time, photography - allied also to industrial and technological transformations - developed rapidly like no other visual art and fragmented into complex and multiple approaches, movements, currents, styles and genres, to convey its place of mirroring the world. Architecture, according to this, could not be an indifferent theme. It has unfolded as a recurring subject, since now and then it has been or will be a 'backdrop', when it is not playing the 'main role' in the compositions.

In relation to the propagation of Architecture, its local and international diffusion was greatly enhanced by publications - these, in newspapers, specialized magazines, books - which demanded the connection and establishment of relationships and partnerships between photographers and architects.

This expanded field of Architecture provided historiography with the production of currents and/or clippings, namely: Urban Photography, developed in the late nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century; Photography related to the Modern Movement in Architecture, to highlight the relationship between influential architects and photographers, with the aim of recording and propagating their modern works; and Architecture inserted in Artistic Photography, a visual field that situates architecture and the built space as the main theme. [3]

Fig. 2: New York, NY, photography by ©Vivian Maier, undated, digital archive (Source: Vivian Maier, 2025).

Urban Photography - totally linked to the constant city activity (Fig. 2) - was possible thanks to the portability of the cameras and the non-immediatism spirit of the photographers who carried them. In addition to other great photographers who also worked brilliantly in the theme of '*Street Photography',* it is worth highlighting the exquisite work of photographer Vivian Maier[4] (1926-2009), an American street photographer born in New York City, who was a Babysitter and in her leisure time, as well as a *flâneuse*, walked through the streets of cities capturing unique everyday moments, in addition to his famous self-portraits on mirrored surfaces.

Fig. 3: Water Towers, photography by ©Bernd Becher and ©Hilla Becher, 1988, gelatine silver prints, digital archive, 172 × 140 cm. (Source: ArchDaily, 2025).

Architecture inserted in Artistic Photography enabled this current to take a different approach, inevitably associating the conceptual theme with the design practice or the insertion of a dialogue as a manifesto, differently from how photography was in relation to the Modern Movement in Architecture. Endowed with a plastic-formal freedom, artistic photography unveils a place of experimentation and debates concerning the confrontation of architecture and photography as visual art. The work of the German photographer couple Hilla Becher (1934-2015) and Bernd Becher (1931-2007) becomes pertinent for an example of how

architectural composition confronts art, at a time when the authors relentlessly choose to capture specific architectural objects (industrial typologies) and organize them in a similar way (black and white grids, see Fig. 3).

Photography related to the Modern Movement in Architecture is especially important, as it was the imagery materialization of a conjuncture of progressive thoughts, linked to techniques and the use of new construction materials, combined with a new mentality of the ways of living, uses and occupations in cities. A trend that emerged and boosted the launch of articles in international specialized magazines, such as '*L'Architecture D'Aujourd' Hui*', '*Architectural Review*', exhibitions and derivations of books such as '*Brazil Builds*', by the Museum of Modern Art in New York - MoMA, with photographs by George Everard Kidder Smith (1913-1997), among others.

The perception of the potential of photography allied to New Architecture, therefore, was apprehended and practiced, not only by peers such as Frank Lloyd Wright with photographers Henry Fuermann and Pedro E. Guerrero, Richard Neutra with photographer Julius Shulman, but also Le Corbusier and photographer Lucien Hervé and Oscar Niemeyer and photographer Marcel Gautherot. (Fig. 4)

The internationalized image guided the voice of a discourse and the outpouring of the various manifestations of Modern Architecture worldwide, consecrated especially by the thoughts of the architect Le Corbusier (1887-1965) and greatly denoted by himself, and, among others, in artistic and formal expression by architects and urban planners such as Lúcio Costa (1902-1998) and Oscar Niemeyer (1907-2012). Constantly recognized by the Historiography of Architecture about the construction of the city of Brasília-DF, the capital of Brazil, these architects were part of the imagination not only of many young architecture students but also of architects around the world.

António Sérgio Maciel Menéres, a Portuguese architect-photographer, was just a young undergraduate student when he first came across the teachings of the Modern Movement in Architecture from the perspective of Brazil. If the country in question, for him, had already become a feeling with great affective potential, given his parental history intertwined with the other curiosities that he was able to acquire both during his childhood and adolescent journey and in adulthood until that given moment, how would it be to imagine visiting the iconic city of Brasília and having the opportunity, for the first time, to visit the country that is also part of your family roots?

Some circumstances would make him make his first international trip precisely to Brazil to get to know the newly inaugurated city of Brasilia, in 1960. And from there, for another 18 times, António Menéres would visit this country especially, through the construction of affective bonds connected by the intersection

between Architecture, Photography and Teaching. And, in addition, he would also make other trips that gave him the opportunity to visit countries on three more continents, including, especially, the independent nations of Portuguese heritage.

Fig. 4: Metropolitan Cathedral of Nossa Senhora Aparecida, with the Esplanade of Ministries in the background, photography by ©Marcel Gautherot, 1960, digital archive (Source: IMS, 2025).[5]

It is important to note that, even before his trip to Brazil, the architect António Menéres began the creation of a specific photographic collection that would accompany him, in the future, to prepare traveling exhibitions in various cities of Portugal – from north to south – as well as to overcome the Atlantic barrier and show his look at popular architecture and the Portuguese built heritage. All this was only possible from

two facts of interest, both related to Photography and Architecture, at different stages of his life: the first, for having won a drawing contest at the age of 7 and as a prize having acquired his first camera, and the second, his participation in the Survey of Portuguese Regional Architecture (1955-1961)[6].

In this way, it is pertinent to discuss, from many circumstances, how - having as a starting point the photographic collection and related documents acquired over the years by António Menéres - the architect builds a cosmopolitan look and how is the role of Topophilia (as a sentimental connection) perceived during his life and photographic work?

It is of interest to perceive how photography awakens and becomes an object of derivation and testimony of a cosmopolitan being, supported by the idea that Architecture, both elaborated by well-known or little-known architects and by 'anonymous' architects of History, is an object that can be recorded and the materialization and testimony of a historical-cultural memory. Thus, it is up to the authors to discuss the place of photography as a form of knowledge production, an experiment, resulting from cosmopolitan experiences.

That said, regarding the methodology - analyses from the photographic collection and related documents of the Architect António Menéres - and the proposed objectives of this article, namely the construction of a cosmopolitan look through photography and the role of Topophilia as a mediator of preferences and circumstances in the life of the Architect, this article will be structured in topics that permeate the issues of Photography as a document and memory, the meanings regarding Topophilia, Cosmopolitanism and Colonialism; as well as the life and work of the Architect and the relationship established between Brazil and Portugal.

2.   PHOTOGRAPHY, TOPOPHILIA, COLONIALISM AND COSMOPOLITANISM

2.1. Photography as Document and Memory

> "The strength of a photograph consists in keeping available instants that the normal flow of time immediately replaces. This freezing of time – the insolent moving stasis of every photograph – has produced new and more comprehensive canons of beauty. But the truths that can be reported to an isolated moment, however significant or decisive, have a very limited relation to the demands of understanding. Contrary to what the humanist arguments in favor of photography suggest, the camera's ability to transform reality into beauty derives from its relative insufficiency to convey truth."

(Susan Sontag, 2012, p. 3)[7]

When talking about the history-memory binomial, photography is decisively a utilitarian apparatus for the affirmation/denial of a fact, context, a time, a place - it is a sequence of visual stories, a non-verbal grammar capable of making a human being collect the world, just like the experiences of a cosmopolitan being.

Sontag (2020) places photography as an object with the power to teach a new visual code, transforming and amplifying human notions about what is worth looking at and what can be observed. In addition, he states that "To photograph is to improve ourselves from the photographed thing. It means engaging in a certain relationship with the world that resembles knowledge and, therefore, power."[8]

This 'power' linked to photography really occurs through the involvement of the photographer with the chosen photographed reality. The more an artist gets involved with themes that become recurrent in his testimonies, in his gaze; concomitantly in his reflections, texts and sharing, more will be able to ascertain this power and become notorious of related subjects.

Furthermore, this recurrence in themes will make the photographer increasingly fall in love with the nature of the images, building the ability to establish affective relationships with the places photographed, as well as increasingly improved knowledge, which gives consistency to the photographed environment and makes the memory alive, because "a photograph is not only the result of an encounter between the photographer and an event; Photographing is in itself an event, with more and more rights: that of interfering, occupying or ignoring everything that happens around you." [9]

The very capture of the image is an environmental interference endowed with choice, waiting for the fruitful moment. The occupation of spaces – marginalized or not by previous looks – is also a choice, which entails the acquisition of a unique style in the career of a photographic artist. In a world in which photographic themes are increasingly expanding, being able to choose a niche is also to work on authorial self-awareness, in the certainty that a very specific collection can one day be built.

Barthes (2012), in his path through the 'ontological desire' of the image, raises the search for knowledge that goes beyond mere representation, called by Kossoy (2016) as the '*second reality*' of Photography. Thus, "because an essential trait is distinguished from the community of images"[10]? Despite attempts at approximation, in the search for classifications, it can be said that Photography is, therefore, unclassifiable or "what Photography reproduces to infinity has only occurred once: it mechanically repeats what can never be existentially repeated again." [11]

Therefore, if the '*second reality*' of photography for Kossoy (2016) refers to the reality of the subject represented, namely defined by the two-dimensional limits of the photograph and immutable visual document of the aspect of the selected subject; the '*first reality*' is "the past itself, it is the reality of the subject itself in the dimension of the past life, it concerns the particular history of the subject independent of the representation." [12]

It is this nature of an image, supported by the '*first reality'* that one wishes to deepen, as the look and ideology of the author who reifies it, through his process of creation/construction, together with the technical, aesthetic, ideological and cultural elaboration. It is the path that makes photography detach itself from the process of representation and reach the level of materialization in documents, collections, estates, living memory.

The constitution of photographic collections admits the perpetuation of memory, whose liveliness can only be recognized from the moment they are worked on to make themselves known. For example, through digital public access, exhibitions, printings of books/catalogues, among others. An important point highlighted by Sontag (2020) is the impact on public opinion, from the moment that images can mobilize awareness of a given historical situation. So, finding a favorable feeling and attitudes in the context of what is photographed, being able to lead to a sense of belonging, awakening consciences and generating knowledge is crucial for the memory of a certain subject, a certain time, to remain alive. As Jodelet (2002) said, "The memory of places does not play its score alone; it needs the voices and the work of those who seek it, find themselves in it or build it."[13]

Thus, it becomes important to treat the collections not as a dead archive, but as a tangible photographic heritage with memorable appreciation, as it contains the food that will fascinate researchers and historians. There will be the rescue of the documentary substance of the past. It will be the activation of memory for posterity. It will bring light to the well-known or little-known characters of photographic historiography.

Therefore, we still must agree with Kossoy (2016) once again when he refers to images and archives: they serve "so that we do not lose the references of our past, our values, our history, our dreams; (...) so that we don't forget." [14]

2.2. The Perception of Space: The Spirit of Place and Topophilia

Based on the issue of the power linked to photography – the involvement of the photographer with the photographed object and the knowledge acquired – and its unfolding about the interrelation of memory, a unique concept to be considered in this web of relationships is the feeling of belonging together with the affective bonds, then developed by the photographer/artist.

Jodelet (2002) considers that "the style and history of an era are expressed through the forms of architecture and urban organization. The spirit of a time thus becomes that spirit of the places where it has developed its aesthetic, functional, and social order."[15] In the same way, the author defends the appreciation of the phenomena of memory as a mechanism for the defense of identities, as well as the memory of customs, way

of life, and techniques. Photography, thus seen as a phenomenon of memory, manages to encompass all these mechanisms and, in addition, has the power to re-signification time and space. To remember what was once built, modified, conserved or demolished. Of transporting the receiver of the image to different eras: "Photography is memory and is confused with it."[16]

The reference to the 'spirit of place' takes up the Roman concept of *genius loci*, treated - in a contemporary view - by the architect and theorist Christian Norberg-Schulz (1926-2000), when he made use of the concept of 'inhabiting' of the philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and transposed it to Architecture, in order to define a phenomenological approach to the environment, of the integration between the notion of place and identity. It is a concept that encompasses a set of characteristics to make known the 'character' of a place, as this place becomes full of meanings. Reis (2017) reiterates that "The plasticity and immateriality of a place in itself is as mobile as time itself, varying with individuals, peoples, times and, mainly, with the dominant points of view and ideas.[17]

In 1974, geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1930-2022) published the concept of 'Topophilia', which signals a connection between people and the world around them, based on the triggering of the relationship between the perception of the environment, along with attitudes, environmental values, and worldviews. The author explores human perception based on attributes of the perceptive apparatus and its physical potentiality, as well as through determinations in the individual social and mental context, which, in such a way, make the individual able to perceive, register or reject information. This is how Topophilia is built, that is, "it is the affective link between the person and the place or physical environment. Diffuse as a concept, vivid and concrete as a personal experience."[18]

This feeling arises from human attitudes and values about the physical environment experienced, together with the worldview contextualized from the experience. According to the author, this is partly a personal dimension and largely a social one. The worldview includes the belief system that comes from cultural accumulation added to personal experiences.

In chapter 8, entitled 'Topophilia and the Environment', Tuan focuses on the specific manifestations of human love for place or topophilia. He lists three main topics in which his approach will guide the reader:

> "1. the means by which human beings respond to the environment and which can vary, from visual and aesthetic appreciation to bodily contact; 2. the relations of health, familiarity and knowledge of the past with topophilia; 3. The impact of urbanization on the appreciation of the countryside and the wild. This conglomeration of themes reflects the complexity of the idea of topophilia."[19]

In this way, it is understood that affective bonds differ profoundly in intensity, subtlety and mode of expression. Thus, the response to the environment can be aesthetic, insofar as it is based either on an ephemeral pleasure, on the sensation of beauty; or tactile: the delight of feeling the physical elements of the environment, such as earth, air, and water. It is thus noted that sensations can be introduced, when the receiver receives them through imagination, or they can in effect be experienced, from the moment in which the space is physically experienced. Once again, in the analogy that is intended to be addressed with Photography, how it has the power to cultivate affective bonds, namely of a memory felt or that will be built, based on experience.

It is important to realize that, since the creation of the concept of Topophilia to the present day, the relationship between the human being and the environment has been significantly transformed, mainly in an analysis based on the process of globalization, the constant exchange of information networks and the facilitation of mobility, profoundly modified through new technologies.

It is understood that the understanding of 'space' and 'place' as geographical categories that perform with users, capable of being experienced and recorded, is one of the paths that leads to the feeling of belonging and cosmopolitanism. Once again, Tuan (1983), in his book "Space and Place - the perspective of experience" discusses and reflects that "Place is security and space is freedom: we are connected to the first and we desire the other".[20] Desire motivates knowing, exploring, spent time discovering, acts and feelings pertinent to a cosmopolitan being. And to the cosmopolitan-photographer, "When the event is over, photography will still exist, which gives the event a kind of immortality (and importance) that it would otherwise never have."[21]

2.3. Cosmopolitanism and Colonialism

The term 'cosmopolitan', in its etymology, comes from the ancient Greek - *kosmopolítes* - with the junction of two words and their respective meanings: *kosmos*, 'world', and *polis*, 'city', thus designating a 'citizen of the world'.[22] However, it is a term whose meaning has been transmuted over time and has acquired other meanings, ranging from a local to a global scale.

Regarding the confrontation between cosmopolitanism and culture, the theorist Homi Bhabha addresses such themes in a global context, in defense of cultural hybridization; Edward Said (1935-2003), a Palestinian historian and activist, was a cosmopolitan intellectual who criticized nationalism and ideological representations that defend the superiority of one culture over another.

Gomes (2014) argues that authors such as Kwame Anthony Appiah, Walter Mignolo, Silviano Santiago discuss the contemporary notion of cosmopolitanism supported not only by individualism, universalism and

multiculturalism, but also in a current situation that is also marked by globalization and the expansion of new communication technologies. Also, according to Gomes (2014), for the philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah,

> "In the notion of cosmopolitanism, two aspects are intertwined: One is the idea that we have obligations that extend beyond those to whom we are bound by kinship ties, including the more formal ties of shared citizenship. The other is to take seriously the value not only of human life but also of particular human lives, which implies taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that give them meaning."

(Gomes, 2014, p.16) [23]

While it is understood that the idea of cosmopolitanism encompasses several meanings, the notion that we intend to detail here starts from the beginnings of such meaning: a human being who, for passionate and/or circumstantial reasons, is led to explore continents - to the extent that he has the possibility of linking this experience through photographic records - as a citizen of the world. The notion of cosmopolitanism, therefore, based on the dialectic between knowing, experiencing, re-signification and recording, expands with the modernization of the media and allows the cosmopolitan being - here identified as cosmopolitan architect-photographer - to share his range of experiences through the exchange of knowledge made possible by his travels.

However, in the relationship between colonialism x cosmopolitanism, the premise is also based on relating the figure of the architect-photographer António Menéres as a cosmopolitan being, added to the dialogue of his gaze through photography, on the modes of construction and traditional knowledge experienced both under Portuguese territory and rediscovered in independent nations of Portuguese heritage. It is about the photographic result as a process of production of meaning, taken by the feeling of belonging, values; about topophilia and the spirit of the place. A look at colonialism based on the production of an architecture with Portuguese technical-constructive influences, notably outside Portugal.

 Regarding colonialism, the authors are aware of the historical issues arising from the maritime expansions made by the Portuguese colonizers in the current nations independent of the Portuguese heritage, and the sensitive points that all this touches them. However, the focus of this discussion refers to the issues of the architectural heritage of a Portuguese way of building and stylistics, the formation of a style, the transmission of knowledge by master builders, which also differ from north to south of Portugal. Therefore, under this segment of interpretation, in how the eyes of the architect-photographer António Menéres sought this historical-family-cultural identification in his travels, intentionally or as a *flâneur*.

In this way, it is hoped that both cosmopolitanism and colonialism, about the relationship between architecture and photography - as means of producing knowledge about a certain past and testimonies of a cosmopolitan being - can be subject to resignification and reflection, so that they act as principles for the construction of new ways of disseminating identities and memory. Furthermore, it is understood that certain characteristics of the cosmopolitan architect-photographer invite us to rethink the opposition – in this case in particular – between cosmopolitanism and colonialism regarding the question of a cultural heritage unfolded in built architectural reality. The apparent opposition of these terms is an interpretative key to unveil the complexities of the identities and cultural memory of a given territory, its possible origins of construction that go beyond a single way of making a 'Portuguese architecture' outside the territory of Portugal - in an understanding that the country itself had and still has several masters of construction with construction techniques and architectures that differ from north to south, proven to be elucidated by the publication of the book 'Popular Architecture in Portugal', in 1961, the derivation of the Survey of Portuguese Regional Architecture.

3.   ANTÓNIO MENÉRES: BETWEEN LIFE, ARCHITECTURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY

For António Sérgio Maciel Menéres (Fig. 5) - a Portuguese architect-photographer with a Brazilian soul[24] - photography was the means of expression whose way of visually interpreting architecture and territories manifested itself most eloquently. Through his captured images, he was able to trace comparative possibilities between places, decode and collaborate with History, make the memory alive of structures that no longer exist, along with the transformations of the passage of time. He eternalized an era, whose archaeological remains of popular constructions could also become indelible through his photographs.

Born in the city of Matosinhos - PT on April 26, 1930, from a traditional Portuguese family, however, with a maternal grandmother of Brazilian nationality, he grew up listening to the stories of Brazil told with affection. Also, to come across and get to know the green-yellow flag long before the Portuguese green-red flag, which landed on the piano in his grandmother's house as a present reminder of his roots. At the table, to eat black beans on Saturdays, to know about his relatives who lived in the State of Rio de Janeiro, to grow up and learn more and more about Brazilian culture, and in the future, about the developments of the Modern Movement in Architecture in that country. Affection and the notion of belonging, therefore, were constructed by the family and the imaginary, long before the physical experience of being there.

From a very early age, at the age of 7, the architect began his contact with the world of Photography. He was graced with his first camera - a *Zeeis Ikon Box Tengor* - nicknamed by him as 'the box', which supported the first photographic glances around him. Through a contest organized by the Portuguese newspaper 'O

Primeiro de Janeiro', whose challenge was to encourage participants from 7 to 11 years old to make a handmade drawing of 'Praça da Liberdade', located in Porto-PT, of which he was the winner. Nevertheless, it was with the box that he spent some time of his life, since then, photographing unpretentiously. For example, moments of outings with the family, with their parents and siblings. At a certain point, as adults, in the Portuguese village of Veiga near the city of Bragança, he photographed two twin children who were accommodated in a wheelbarrow, built from soap wood boxes (1953). It was this photography that legitimized him to participate in what was the experience that would mark his relationship between Architecture and Photography in a unique way: the Survey of Portuguese Regional Architecture (1955-1961).

An initiative launched by the National Union of Architects of Portugal in 1955, the Survey delimited a group of architects whose mission would be to map the Portuguese territory and its marks over time, along the different regions that make up mainland Portugal. Also, to document the intrinsic relationship of architecture, with the landscape and the local population: the genuine roots of Portuguese architecture. António Menéres, together with his master Fernando Távora (1923-2005) and colleague Rui Pimentel (1924-2005), dedicated themselves to Zone 1 - of Minho, the Douro Litoral and Beira Litoral. This report - written, and figured with drawings, maps and photographs - together with other colleagues from the other 5 established zones, culminated in the publication of the book 'Arquitectura Popular em Portugal' (1961). Currently, the architect is one of the few living witnesses of the epic Survey of Portuguese Regional Architecture.

Here, precisely, the beginning of a common thread is identified in the construction of a sentimental look, of belonging and nevertheless, photographic, focused on Portuguese popular architecture and on construction techniques and regional knowledge, by the architect António Menéres. Such an experience - investigative, photographic, pioneering; provided *a priori* by the Inquiry - was fundamental for this blossoming. In addition, the experimentation of research in architecture as a contribution to the living testimony of a traditional way of life, in the representation of the cultural identity of a people through the territory also built by the 'anonymous architects'.

In this second moment of contact with Photography – then as an official member of the Inquiry – Menéres acquired a *Leica IIIb* camera, a long-time companion that would testify, at first, to Portuguese popular architecture and later to his travels both through mainland Portugal and its islands, as well as other trips around the world – especially the 19 times he was in Brazil – in order to shape his view of the relationship between the territory and architecture, the built forms and the construction techniques.

The first trip to Brazil was at the invitation of the then Brazilian Ambassador to Portugal, in those current years of 1960, Francisco Negrão de Lima, when Menéres met him on a visit to an exhibition of Brazilian paintings at the Palácio da Foz, in Lisbon-PT. It was through Professor Thiers Martins Moreira - director of

the Institute of Brazilian Culture of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Lisbon - that the presentation of both took place and later the architect received an official letter confirming that his tickets would be made available for the friendship flight between Portugal and Brazil, by the Portuguese Air Transport Company-TAP, to take place that same year, also in December. The conversation around the invitation took place because the ambassador, when talking to Menéres, knowing about his profession as an architect and realizing his interest in Brazilian culture, also asked what his opinion was about the recently inaugurated modernist city of Brasília-DF (21-04-1960). When he had a positive response and curiosity about the work of architects Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer, by a happy circumstance, he received the invitation that would seal the first of many visits to Brazil.

Since then, the architect has had the opportunity to visit several countries in the world, which make up the subjects of interest of his photographic collection, mainly focused on architecture and territories, namely cities in Portugal, Brazil, Spain, France, Greece, Turkey, Angola, Mozambique, China and Russia - covering four different continents.

During his graduation as an architect from the former School of Fine Arts of Porto - ESBAP (now the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto - FAUP), he did an internship with the architects Fernando Távora (1923-2005) and João Andresen (1920-1967), and soon after graduation (1962), he worked as a liberal professional in his office, called 'António Menéres - Planeamento e Arquitectura Lda.', based in Porto-PT.

As an architect, he prepared and executed architectural projects of his own authorship in Portugal. In addition to his liberal profession, Menéres was a lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto – FAUP (since its former name, former School of Fine Arts of Porto – ESBAP) and at the Lusíada University. His first photographic exhibition related to the photographs taken during the Survey took place between 1957-1965 in various areas of Minho and Trás-os-Montes -PT. Through an initiative of FAUP, in 2004, Menéres, in conjunction with the architect Mário João Mesquita, promoted the exhibition that would give great notoriety to the architect-photographer, entitled 'António Menéres. The years of the Survey of Portuguese Popular Architecture'. This exhibition acquired an itinerant format, unfolded and presented in different locations in Portugal, as well as in Brazil, until mid-2021. Since then, the architect has occasionally held continuous exhibitions on the same theme.

After 70 years since the course of the Inquiry, an entire photographic collection, of a personal, affective and documentary nature, has been generated. Exhibitions were held to perpetuate what was a remarkable moment in Portuguese architecture, which still influences new generations of architects today.

Currently, according to Menéres, he is unable to measure the breadth of his photographic collection, which is estimated at more than 10,000 negatives/photographs. From the years of the Survey of Portuguese Regional Architecture (1955-1961), after 7 decades, it is estimated that this collection has multiplied, as well as the architectures, landscapes and territories visited by the architect have undergone transformations over time.

Fig. 5: Architect António Menéres, photography by ©Larissa Ribeiro, 2024, digital archive (Source: Author, 2024).

4. ARCHITECTURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY: A DOCUMENTARY APPROACH

Both the trips made through the Portuguese territory and those made abroad, led the architect António Menéres to the elaboration of an expressive photographic collection of architectures, territories, people, travels, etc. Such themes, which over the years have been manually organized and catalogued by the architect himself, occupy a significant part of the material in his personal collection, which still maintains him as the sole holder. It is thus composed of both developed photographs, negatives in 35 mm format, in 6x9 format, as well as transformed into individual slides.

In addition, there is a significant number of architectural projects, magazines, newspapers, books, letters, catalogues, posters, airline tickets, among others (Fig.6). The collection referring to Brazil allowed access to an unpublished photographic set, which documents the cities travelled in this long journey that comprises the 19 trips and which constitutes a rich source for the interpretation of the reports, through the interviews that have been made to the architect. However, so far, negatives/slides/photographs of only 9 of the 19 trips have been made available.

There is also a different imprint of the stylistic form of the conceptualization of the images of the collection of Brazil in relation to the collection of photographs conceived in the Inquiry. While the photographs that emerge from it are imbued with a unique, historical photographic style (in the sense that some constructions no longer exist), enhanced by the technique in black and white analogue film (it is believed that these photographs have a timeless style, much due to the drama of the contrasts between light and shadow and that always denote the receiver a potential imaginability), The images in the Brazilian collection are in color, and there is something disruptive, which gives a particular sentimental aggregate: the photography of people, however, of the friendships built along this particular path. Of the affective bonds built. Notably sources of an emotional nature.

The displacement of the gaze from the national to the international sphere, by the establishment of a transatlantic and topophilic connection through circumstances related to the nuances that intertwine between Architecture, Photography and Teaching - is corroborated by the identification of documents that signal this sense, to the extent that the material made available by the architect was accessed. It is of interest to point out the affective bonds established, arising from the friendship relationships he wove throughout this journey. This becomes more evident in the exchange of letters, e-mails, and visits by Brazilian architects to Porto, namely liberal professionals and university institutions in Brazil.

Once consulted, the potential of the material is concentrated in the dialogue of the architect-photographer with peers and interlocutors in the states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Goiás, Bahia, Maranhão,

Fortaleza, Natal, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul. In these states, the mapping of contacts and the proposition of university exchange networks were established, in addition to friendship visits. Such circumstances also gave António Menéres the opportunity to meet great names in Brazilian architecture and culture and, from some, to obtain autographs, to mention: Juscelino Kubitschek (former president of Brazil and promoter of the construction of the city of Brasília-DF-BR), architects Lúcio Costa[25], Oscar Niemeyer and the sculptor Alfredo Ceschiatti.

However, the number of documents consulted so far has also made it possible to understand that this network of contacts has enhanced a type of *networking* constituted outside Portugal by the trajectory of António Menéres, in the midst of a cosmopolitan and topophilic effort to participate in an international route of the architectural environment and thus provide exchanges of knowledge, a true architectural 'internationalism' of the legacies of traditional Portuguese architecture in the face of modern and colonial Brazilian architecture. Thus, international alliances and networks, whose center is the architectural-professional exchanges, provided by Photography.
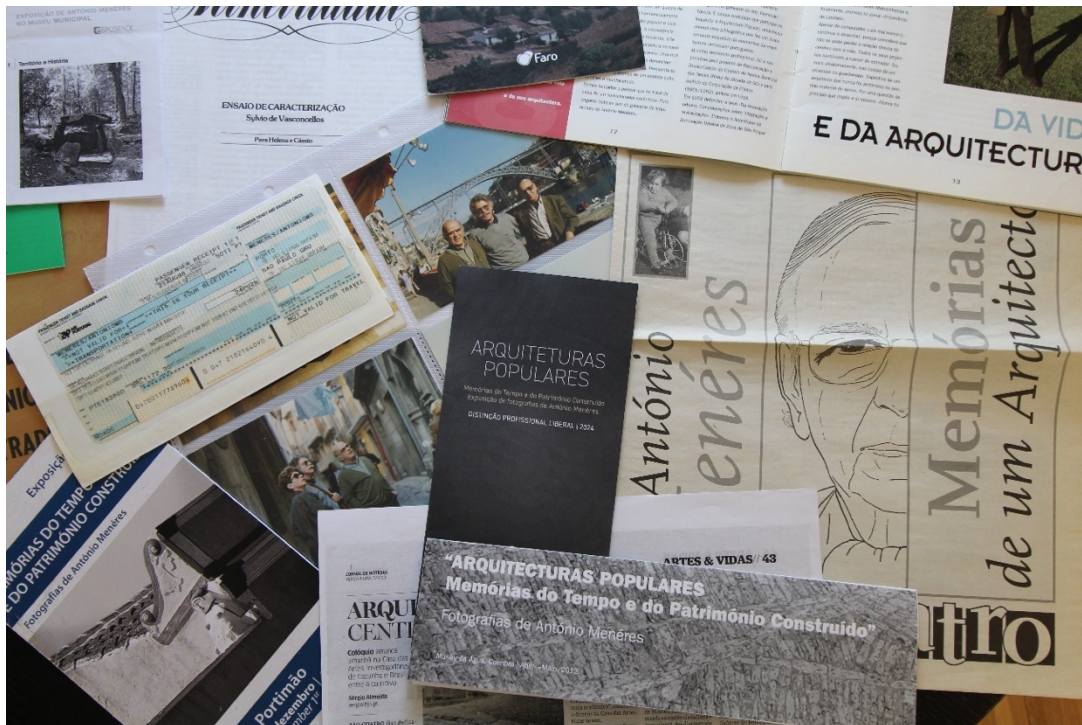

Fig. 6: Mosaic of documents from the collection of Architect António Menéres, photography by ©Larissa Ribeiro, 2025, digital archive (Source: Author, 2025).

As already mentioned in the introduction, there are three lines of meaning articulated by the relationship topophilia x belonging / cosmopolitanism x colonialism, by António Menéres: through Photography, Architecture and Teaching, in this case in particular, in Lusophone contexts (Brazil-Portugal). When Appiah,

according to Gomes (2014) talks about the intertwining of two aspects of the notion of cosmopolitanism, the reflection regarding the figure of the architect-photographer António Menéres is seen in this concept both through the records of the architecture of the 'anonymous' architects and the people on the margins of society who inhabited them, as well as in calling himself a 'Portuguese with a Brazilian soul' and knowing his roots, in addition to having effectively had so many exchanges made possible once again by Architecture, Photography and Teaching.

5. BETWEEN THE REFLECTION OF TRANSATLANTIC CONNECTIONS, THE SENSE OF BELONGING, THE ARCHIVE, MEMORY AND KNOWLEDGE: CONCLUSIVE NOTES

"Awareness of the past is an important element in the love of place."

(Yi-Fu Tuan, 1980, p. 114)[26]

Analogous to the observation of a photograph of distant relatives, in the search for traces that might offer some similarities, was also the look of the cosmopolitan architect-photographer António Menéres for the 'heritage' of Portuguese architecture outside Portugal. To look for the similarities that could bring a familiar idea, a sense of belonging, topophilic, to the extent that the experience and knowledge were built on trips to the independent nations of Portuguese heritage. This, especially about Brazil, justified by the numerous times that the architect travelled to that country, between the years 1960 and 2000, according to documentary evidence.

Such similarity to this feeling of belonging can be considered in comparison to the visits of the architect Lúcio Costa to Portugal, (1948 and 1952) in search of nexuses and continuities referring to the Brazilian architectural past, at the time when he was collaborator and president of the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Service - SPHAN (current Institute of National Historical and Artistic Heritage - IPHAN), specifically in relation to Brazilian colonial architecture. His first step, before going to Portugal, was to look for an architectural identity in some historic cities of the State of Minas Gerais-BR, as these have a strong heritage and identification in relation to the aspects of what is said to be colonial architecture (originating from Portugal).

From Costa's travels to the Lusitanian lands, reports were prepared that later became publications, namely the 'Bloquinhos de Portugal', considered "one of the most important products of this fundamental exchange between the two countries, for the understanding, both of Brazilians and Portuguese, of the cultural and affective ties that unite us."[27]

Lúcio Costa identifies, after experiencing and getting to know Portuguese cities from north to south, that the two countries share a common denominator: a Portuguese architectural vocabulary that was developed in the face of colonial architecture. However, both parties are autonomous, even in the face of shared transatlantic relations. Coincidentally, on one of the architect's visits to Portugal (1961), António Menéres accompanied him, along with other Portuguese architects, including his master Fernando Távora, through the city of Bragança. And he made his own photographic records.

In 'Arquitetura Popular Brasileira', Weimer (2005) points out that the term 'popular' has received a wide range of meanings, from positive and negative spheres. However, without clinging to extremes, he confers on the terminology 'Popular Architecture' as being "that which is proper to the people and is made by them. By the way, this is the current terminology in the most diverse languages - especially the Iberian countries."[28]

Machado (2012) argues that "The term popular is never fully satisfactory, although it is, in our view, the most appropriate to designate a set of works in which a predominantly collective dimension of know-how is present" [...][29](Machado, 2012, p. 31)

Fig. 7: Colonial architecture mansion in the city of Paraty-RJ-Brazil, personal collection of Architect António Menéres, photography by ©António Menéres, 1995, digital archive (Source: Author, 2023).

The presence of traces of Portuguese architecture in various locations in Brazil is indisputable (Fig. 7), erected by slave origins, sown by Portuguese masters with artisanal training qualified as erudite architects, according to Weimer (2005).

Through the studies established so far, it can be seen that there was a transatlantic crossing and identification between Portugal and Brazil, from the photographic gaze of António Menéres, which permeates, *a priori*, parental and sentimental proximity. It was built gradually and sedimented, as the travels and investigative exchanges between Brazilian and Portuguese universities and architects took place. In this way, the architect was able to establish topophilic relationships also a *posteriori*, through experiencing, as well as through *networking*, alliances and international networks established with people, at the center of which are the architectural-professional exchanges, provided by Photography.

Such interchangeability enabled António Menéres to build a network of contacts between architects from different regions of Brazil, who later became his long-time friends. For example, names such as Carlos Lemos, João Toscano and Júlio Katinsky, from the State of São Paulo; José Liberal de Castro, from Ceará; Cyro Lyra, from Rio de Janeiro and Paulo Ormindo de Azevedo, from Bahia.

With each trip, with each recognition of the historic centers of the cities of the southeast, northeast and south of Brazil, the architect perceived a similar view of the ways of building, of how different cultural habits were taken to these territorialities and, consequently, the increase in his sense of belonging to the place, as he felt that that architecture was familiar to him. According to this, a set of negatives and photographs were added that would make up the specific collection of António Menéres on the 19 trips to Brazil.

Regarding Menéres' global photographic collection - which began in a notorious way from his participation in the Survey of Popular Architecture (Fig. 8) - it became especially peculiar, as it led him to direct his photographic gaze to themes that involve not only architecture, but also territories, people, ways of working, constructive details, the little details.

In this way, he created a singular look that was also repeated in the capture of images in other locations and became a repetitive identity model in his exhibition catalogues. The relationship of 'power' as an improvement of the photographed thing combined with the deep knowledge acquired, previously described by Sontag (2020), can thus be corroborated, to the extent that, over time, the photographer architect was able to add more and more images of the architectures and built territories that he began to travel, know and recognize.

Fig. 8: The photograph that legitimized António Menéres participation in the Popular Architecture Survey, Veiga|Bragança - PT, personal collection of Architect António Menéres, photography by ©António Menéres, 1953, digital archive (Source: Author, 2021).

In this way, the hypothesis is developed that the photographic archives related to Brazil allow us to unveil a transatlantic historiography, based on the notion of Cosmopolitanism and Topophilia, represented in the figure of the architect-photographer António Menéres. It is evidenced, from a series of circumstances and opportunities, in parallel to the web of relationships established by the architect through Photography, Architecture and Teaching, with the recognition of peers abroad, as well as academic, editorial and curatorial agents who, under the impact of public opinion, prolong the importance of his collection and legacy regarding Architecture, Photography and Territories. In addition, in the circulation of ideas at the international level, supported by the notion of cosmopolitanism. It is also sought to highlight the contribution of António Menéres to the Historiography of Portuguese Photography Architecture, in a still internationalist slant, when the production of knowledge generated from the transversality of his personal collection is ascertained.

It is necessary, therefore, to make known the breadth of both his personal collection, as well as the connections and trajectory lived until then by the cosmopolitan architect-photographer António Sérgio

Maciel Menéres - in a national and international plot - unfolding of the circumstances, of the long-term social relations established by him, in the midst of continuities and discontinuities, displacements and deepening in this process of internationalization of Portuguese Photography and Architecture through his gaze and his presence.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND SUPPORT

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BASTIDES' REGULARITY: ARCHAEOLOGY OF A HIGH-MODERNIST MYTH

Vincent Peu Duvallon

BASTIDES' REGULARITY: ARCHAEOLOGY OF A HIGH-MODERNIST MYTH

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This paper examines how the Bastides, these medieval new towns founded in southern France between the 13th and 14th centuries, have contributed to the broader mythology of the modernist grid-pattern city. Frequently cited as prototypes of rational urban planning, Bastides have come to symbolize spatial clarity and order since the emergence of Urbanism as a discipline in the 19th Century. Rather than treating them solely as historical objects, this study explores how the Bastides were retrospectively constructed as modernist mythology, following Roland Barthes' definition of myths as cultural constructs that transform contingent history into timeless form. Focusing on the works of Félix de Verneilh, Viollet-le-Duc, and Le Corbusier, the analysis traces how these towns were recoded as rational precedents within architectural discourse. Beyond these figures, the discourse surrounding Bastides contributed to the mythology of what James C. Scott calls High-Modernism: "the rational design of social order commensurate with the scientific understanding of natural laws."

1.   INTRODUCTION

The concepts of regularity and standardization in the planning of the Bastides, these medieval new towns of southwestern France, have long held a privileged position in the historiography of Urbanism. Often portrayed as proto-modern cities organized around a perfect grid, Bastides have been celebrated as early expressions of rational urban order, seemingly anticipating Enlightenment ideals, colonial planning, and modernist abstraction. Their spatial clarity has lent them symbolic weight far beyond their medieval specificity. The recent historiography has already unraveled this constructed mythology of the Bastides and the inconsistencies with the actual historical and archeological traces.[1] This study explores this mythology as part of a larger modernist discourse following Roland Barthes's definition of the myth: "a second-order semiological system that transforms contingent history into natural form, turning ideological constructs into self-evident truths."[2] Georges Dumézil's structuralist comparative mythology emphasizes that myths are not merely stories but symbolic frameworks that encode and legitimize systems of power. [3] Paul Veyne, meanwhile, suggests that myths do not depend on literal belief to function; they are narratives that societies act upon, regardless of their truth value, stories that are institutionally supported and collectively enacted, shaping historical memory and practice.[4] From these perspectives, the myth of the Bastides emerges not simply as a misreading of medieval urbanism but as a cultural construct that has performed significant ideological work within architectural discourse. To interrogate this myth is not simply to revise a historical narrative but to engage in what Bruno Latour has described as "The Recall of Modernity."[5] Latour's project proposes a critical reexamination of modernity, not to abandon or reject it but to identify its malfunctions and restore its integrity. He likens this to a product recall: inspecting what has gone wrong, not to discredit the product but to regain trust and responsibility in its use. As he writes, recalling modernity is "not to damage the product, nor, of course, to lose market share," but to demonstrate "initiative, rebuild media confidence,

and, if possible, recommence the production that was too quickly halted."[6] Urban form plays a crucial role in this system, materializing the symbolic codes of modernity. In his essay "Qu'est-ce qu'un style non-moderne?", Latour cites Adolf Max Vogt's *Le Corbusier, the Noble Savage as an archaeology of modernism*—an inquiry that uncovers how modernist architecture constructs its own lineage through selective appropriation.[7] This essay aligns with that approach: it does not seek the origin of modernist planning in the Bastides but instead asks how the Bastides were retrospectively framed as such an origin by modernist discourse itself. This is a key methodological distinction. The objective is not to pursue a diffusionist reading[8] that traces a direct evolutionary line from medieval grids to modern ones, as often done in the histories of the grid-planning.[9][10][11] Such a narrative would reassert the myth it claims to critique. Instead, following Nietzsche and Foucault's understanding of genealogy, the aim is not a search for pure origins but a critical unraveling of how truths are produced, myths stabilized, and forms instrumentalized. As Michel Foucault wrote, genealogy aims to disturb what appears self-evident, to expose "the play of subjugation" beneath what is commonly accepted as natural or rational.[12] From this perspective, the Bastide is not the ancestor of the modern grid but one of modernism's symbolic inventions.

Recent historiography has addressed the genealogy of this object with precision, recognizing its blend of historical fact and myth. In addition to Florence Pujol, cited precedingly, who explicitly explored the symbolic dimension of the Bastides in the context of their commodification in the 1980s,[13] we can mention the historiographies of Jean Cursente,[14] Wim Boerefijn,[15] Gilles Bernard,[16] and, more recently, Jean-Loup Abbé,[17] who have revealed the empirical diversity and contingency of these towns. However, what remains less examined is how the Bastide became an ideological precedent within architectural modernism: a model that naturalized the grid not only as a technical solution but as a historical necessity.

This modernist recoding of the Bastide is echoed in James C. Scott's critique of high modernism: an epistemological program driven by the belief that society can be rationally ordered through abstraction, simplification, and legibility.[18] In *Seeing Like a State*, Scott identifies the grid as a spatial technology that imposes order while erasing complexity. The Bastide, through this lens, is appropriated not for what it was but for what it represents: a usable past for a future of control.

Rosalind Krauss, writing from within the field of art and architecture, describes the grid as modernism's foundational structure—both a compositional technique and a metaphysical claim. In her essay "Grids," she argues that the grid is both a myth of origin and a symbol of aesthetic autonomy. It suppresses narrative and historicity in favor of formal purity.[19] The Bastide, inserted into this lineage, becomes part of modernism's symbolic repertoire, emptied of its complex medieval context and elevated into an emblem of timeless order.

Our approach is to read the Bastide not as a precursor to modernity but as a discursive construction produced by modernity. Following Michel Serres, we can think of the myth as an *interference*, a zone where knowledge systems (historical, political, and scientific) collide and entangle.[20] The Bastide becomes such a zone: shaped as much by Félix de Verneilh and Le Corbusier as by the lords and settlers who built it.

This essay is structured in three parts: the first revisits the political, economic, and territorial foundations of the Bastides in their historical context, emphasizing the diversity of their spatial logics and the pragmatism behind their formation; the second examines how, in the 19th Century, figures such as Félix de Verneilh and Viollet-le-Duc reinvented the Bastide as a formal archetype in contrast to the perceived irregularity of medieval towns; the third analyzes how this ideal was appropriated within high-modernist discourse, most notably by Le Corbusier, and later critiqued by thinkers such as James C. Scott and how 20th-century morphological analysis, based on the work of Pierre Lavedan and developed Philippe Panerai, challenged this modernist narrative by revealing more significant spatial variation.

Through this critical archaeology, we aim to understand the Bastide's role not only in its medieval context but also in the planning and architectural canon and show how its modernist reception reveals more about the ideological needs of the 19th and 20th centuries than the realities of medieval town-making. In conclusion, we will return to the present to consider the current state of Bastide research and reflect on the model's ongoing relevance in facing contemporary urban and territorial issues—particularly as planners, historians, and designers grapple with questions of heritage, sustainability, and the politics of spatial form in a postmodern condition.

2.   NEW TOWNS IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE

The Bastides are central to one of the most prolific experiments in medieval urbanization. While often remembered for their apparent spatial regularity and rational planning, these settlements were grounded in particular geopolitical and legal contexts. Their creation was not the result of formal ideals but a response to complex shifts in territorial control, economic strategy, and royal power. The historiography has evolved to reflect this complexity, mainly through the work of scholars such as Charles Higounet[21], Jean Cursente[22], Wim Boerefijn[23], and others who have re-situated the Bastides within broader European urban history.

2.1. The European Context and Early Precedents

The Bastides emerged alongside a wave of new town foundations across Europe, motivated by demographic expansion, commercial growth, and political centralization. Town planning initiatives appeared in Italy, Spain, England, and the Low Countries, where rulers and ecclesiastical authorities used urban foundations to

consolidate power, extract revenue, and regulate territorial frontiers. In England, for example, Maurice Beresford has documented the creation of "planted towns" across Wales under English authority parallel to those in Gascony (the English naming of what the French called "Guyenne")[24]. Wim Boerefijn, in his landmark doctoral dissertation, broadened the scholarly understanding of medieval new town planning across Europe.[25] Similarly, Keith Lilley has interpreted medieval Urbanism through the lens of territorial order, showing how space was used to enact systems of rule.[26]

The Bastide phenomenon in southern France followed earlier urban precedents such as the *Sauveté* and the *Castelnau*. The Sauveté, often established by monasteries, offered legal sanctuary and freedom to settlers within a delimited sacred space, while the Castelnau was a settlement developed around an existing lord's castle, often without a clear plan but centered on feudal authority. These forms foreshadowed the Bastide, which formalized urban privileges and gave shape to a new legal and spatial model.

2.2. The Albigensian Crusade and the Treaty of Paris (1229)

The explosive catalyst for the Bastide movement in the southwest was the Albigensian Crusade (1209–1229), a papally sanctioned military campaign against the Cathar heresy. The conflict profoundly altered the political landscape of Occitania. The defeat of the Count of Toulouse, Raymond VII, led to the Treaty of Paris (also known as the Treaty of Abbeville, 1229), in which he retained limited power under heavy conditions. One notable clause granted him the right to found non-fortified towns (*villas non muratas*) to encourage settlement in the damaged region without threatening royal authority.

This clause opened the door for a new phase of urban development. Rather than build walled, militarized towns, which could be perceived as rebellious or autonomous, the counts and their successors focused on open, gridded Bastides with economic and administrative functions. The actual project of New Towns of settlement was initiated even before the Treaty of Paris by Count Raymond VII of Toulouse, with towns such as Cordes or Castelnau-de-Montmiral, but most of them were established after the signing of the Treaty following the *paréage* agreement.[27] The Settlers were attracted by the promise of personal liberties and land allotments, while lords expanded their taxable base and reinforced their presence in contested zones. The regional concentration of Bastides finds its roots in both this historical sequence, the geopolitics of the 13th Century south of France, and in the natural geographical setting of Aquitaine: an uncultivated yet fertile land corresponding to the Adour-Garonne drainage basin.[28]

2.3. The Role of Alphonse de Poitiers and English Succession

Following Raymond VII's death in 1249, and according to the terms of the Treaty of Paris, his territories, including the County of Toulouse, passed to his son-in-law Alphonse de Poitiers, brother of King Louis IX of France. Alphonse de Poitiers continued the program of Bastides creation with unprecedented vigor, founding or co-founding over sixty Bastides during his tenure, including Villefranche-de-Belves (1250), Villeneuve-sur-Lot (1253), and Sainte-Foy-la-Grande (1255), founded with the abbot of Sainte-Foy of Conques and the local lord of Pineuil. [29]

Alphonse de Poitier expanded royal influence and systematized the urban model, combining legal regularity with spatial order. Upon his death without heirs in 1271, his lands reverted to the crown, but some were inherited through complex dynastic arrangements by Edward I, King of England, particularly in the Duchy of Aquitaine. Edward I continued the Bastide program in his territories, including prominent examples such as Libourne (1270), Domme (1281), and the most famous and most regular of them, Monpazier (1284). These Anglo-Gascon Bastides served as colonial consolidation instruments and economic anchors in English-controlled regions.

2.4. The Paréage System: Legal and Economic Foundations

Central to the creation of most Bastides was the legal instrument known as the paréage. A paréage was a bilateral agreement between two authorities: a central one, typically the king, a count, or a duke on one side, and a local lord or ecclesiastical institution on the other to jointly establish and manage a new town. These agreements defined the respective shares of justice, taxation, and governance and were carefully negotiated to balance political advantage and local cooperation.

From the perspective of the higher authority (the crown, duke, or count), the paréage offered a way to expand territorial control and revenue without direct military occupation. By partnering with local stakeholders, the sovereign gained access to land exploitation and workforce while projecting authority into peripheral zones. For the local lord or monastery, the agreement promised additional revenue, increased security, and the social prestige of an urban foundation. The main attraction for the settlers themselves was the "Chartes de Coutumes," which included a standardized grid plan with equal lots (often 10 to 12 meters wide), a central square for commerce, and provisions for personal liberty, exemption from certain taxes, and legal autonomy under the town's jurisdiction. These privileges made Bastides attractive to migrants and fostered rapid population growth, which in turn benefited both founding parties through rents, market tolls, and jurisdictional fees.[30]

The paréage also often specified who would appoint town officials, how disputes would be resolved, and how profits from markets or fairs would be divided. While these documents varied widely, their underlying function was establishing a mutually beneficial partnership under a legal framework that guaranteed investment, cooperation and shared sovereignty.

2.5. The Myth of Uniformity and the Historical Reality

Although Bastides are often idealized for their orthogonal layouts and apparent regularity, a closer reading of their foundation documents and urban forms reveals significant variation. Factors such as local topography, pre-existing routes, and military considerations frequently led to adaptations of the ideal grid.[31] In some cases, such as Cordes-sur-Ciel or Domme, the geometric structure had to be bent or modified to accommodate steep terrain or defensive requirements. Historians such as Charles Higounet[32] and Jean Cursente[33] have emphasized that while the ideology of rational order was present, the execution was consistently mediated by material and political constraints. Higounet, in particular, argued that Bastides should be understood not as abstract models but as contingent negotiations—hybrid instruments of law, power, and settlement. By the early 14th Century, the Bastide model had spread across France, leaving a dense network of urban foundations that reshaped the social and economic landscape of the southwest. This diversity, in form and function, contrasts the later modernist appropriation of the Bastide as a pure geometric prototype—a mythos that this essay seeks to interrogate in the following sections.

3.   THE BASTIDES: A 19th CENTURY CONSTRUCTION

The Bastide's symbolic invention as a rational Urbanism model began in the 19th Century, during a period marked by the emergence of archaeology, historicism, and the professionalization of architectural history. [34] Within this intellectual and visual culture, the Bastide shifted from a regional historical phenomenon to an idealized urban form. A central figure in this transformation was Félix de Verneilh, a native of the Dordogne region in Aquitaine, an area known for its high concentration of Bastides. De Verneilh was a pioneering figure in French archaeology and an early contributor to the *Annales Archéologiques*.[35] In addition to his study of Byzantine architecture in France, most of his scholarly output focused on civil architecture during the Middle Ages, with a strong emphasis on the regular new towns of the 13th Century. His key publications include *Architecture Civile au Moyen Âge dans le Périgord et le Limousin*,[36] *Architecture Civile au Moyen Âge: Villes Neuves du XIIIe Siècle*,[37] and *Architecture Civile du Moyen Âge: Villes Neuves du XIIIe Siècle et des Temps Modernes*.[38] De Verneilh approached Bastides not only as historical artifacts but as objects of reconstruction. His method, rooted in a tradition of historical drawing that can be traced back to Renaissance architectural practices and antiquarianism, relied heavily on restituting the plan to an imagined state of completion. More interpretative

than documentary, this methodology led to a vision of the Bastide as a perfectly regular and geometric town, a reading that would profoundly shape later scholarship.

Equally influential was the graphic language employed in de Verneilh's work. These plans abstracted the urban form by isolating built masses against a blank field, reminiscent of Giambattista Nolli's 1748 figure-ground map of Rome, emphasized the legibility and order of the built environment while suppressing the irregularities and social and geographical complexities of the actual towns. The Nolli-like plan would become a powerful analytic and pedagogical tool, reinforcing the view of the Bastide as a prototype of rational planning. De Verneilh's 1847 article in *Annales Archéologiques* marked the first archaeological analysis explicitly dedicated to the Bastides. While it briefly references the historical context drawn from De Gourgues' *Des Communes en Périgord*, the article primarily focuses on a detailed examination of two case studies: Monpazier and Beaumont. The plans of these towns, partial in the case of this first article, were drawn by de Verneilh himself, representing what he considered their original, ideal states. Two additional engraved perspective views, created by his brother Jules de Verneilh, complemented the plans. Despite the graphic regularity of Monpazier's reconstructed plan, Verneilh notes: "As published, the Montpazier plan does not reflect the perfect idea of Jean de Grailly's plan. What a regularity!"[39]
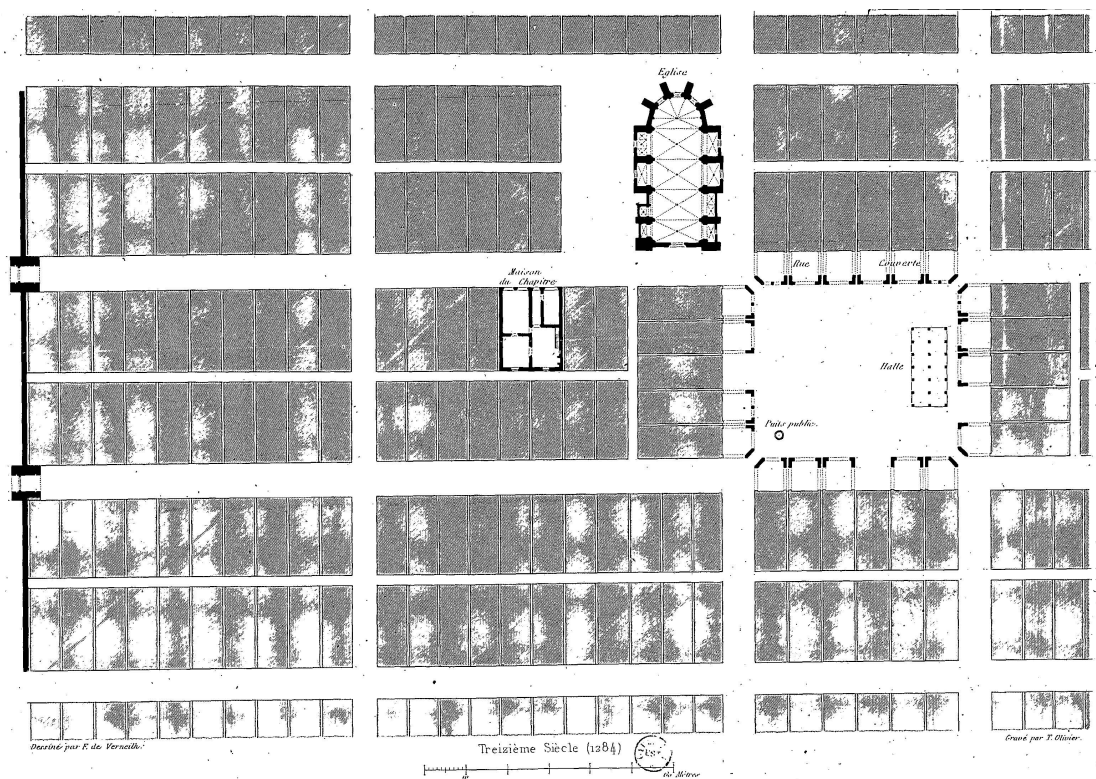

Fig. 1 : Partial Figure-ground drawing of Monpazier, by Félix de Verneilh (Source : Félix de Verneilh, " Architecture Civile au Moyen Âge dans le Périgord et le Limousin.")

In the case of Beaumont, de Verneilh acknowledges the site's constraints and explains the resulting irregularities as deviations from an otherwise rational plan. This candid recognition underscores the tension between the reconstructive ideal and the material reality. In a subsequent 1850 article,[40] Verneilh broadened his scope by relating Bastide's plans to a classical lineage originating in Vitruvius, thereby inserting them into a transhistorical genealogy of rational urban form. His analysis of Sainte-Foy-la-Grande, from second-hand, was based on the work and plan by Castelnau d'Essenault and praised this town's design, seen as an evolution of the earlier one: "How wide are its streets! What a perfect design compared to Montpazier and Beaumont."[41]
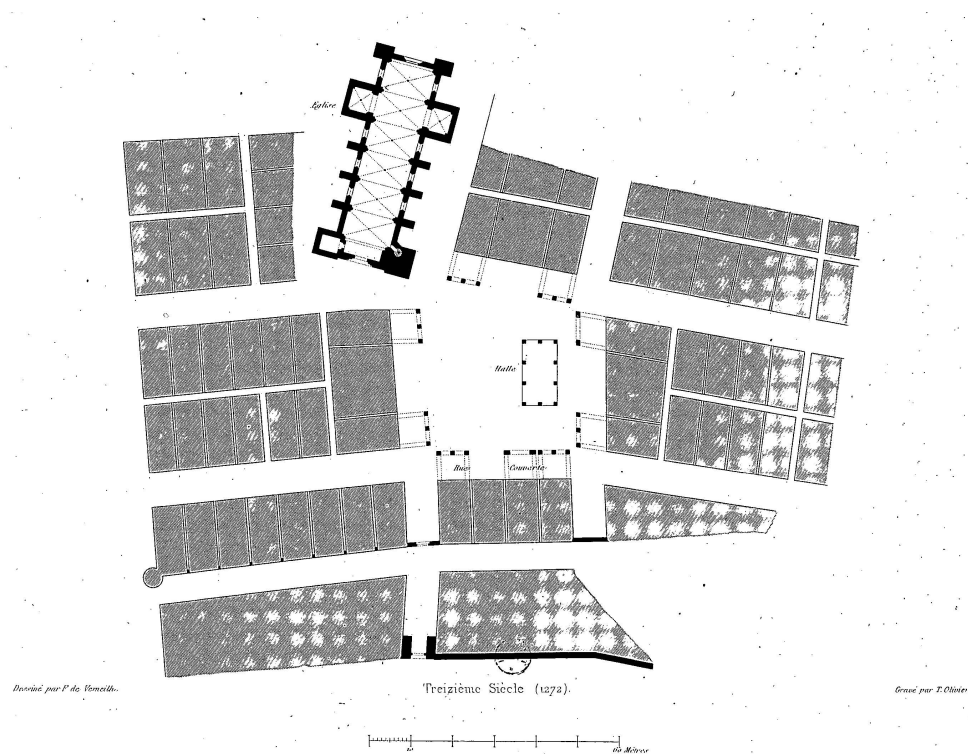

Fig. 2 : Figure-ground drawing of Beaumont, by Félix de Verneilh (Source : Félix de Verneilh, " Architecture Civile au Moyen Âge dans le Périgord et le Limousin.")

In his third article, de Verneilh moved beyond descriptive archaeology and positioned the Bastide as an ideal urban type worthy of emulation. The plan he produced for this article, representing the entirety of Monpazier in its reconstituted state, would become the canonical image of the Bastide and be reproduced extensively in later scholarship and visual discourse as the archetype of regular medieval planning. He explicitly compared the medieval Bastides, exemplified here with Monpazier, with both the classical tradition of Versailles and the contemporary experiment of Napoléon-Vendée (now La Roche-sur-Yon), a planned town established under Napoléon. Although he acknowledged that the Napoleonic example came closer to the Bastide model, he ultimately argued for the superiority of the 13th-century form. As he wrote:

"The ideal of regularity, order, planning, and wise economy cannot be observed at Napoléon-Vendée nor Versailles; we would rather find it in the humblest yet most perfect of 13th century new towns: Monpazier. That is why we have put its plan at the top of our article."

De Verneilh.

In de Verneilh's work, the Bastide emerged not only as a product of medieval politics and economy but as a project of formal coherence. This reading aligned with the broader rationalist tendencies of 19th-century historicism, which often sought to recover an architectural essence from historical complexity. As such, the Bastide became an alternative both to the romanticized image of the medieval city as organic, labyrinthine, and picturesque and the aesthetics of the classical tradition and was instead framed as a medieval precursor to modern urban order. This argument must also be understood in the context of a growing national interest in France's medieval heritage during the 19th Century. His reconstructions participated in a broader discourse that sought to reclaim the Middle Ages not as a dark and obscure epoch but as a rational and creative era of state formation, spatial clarity, and civic architecture. In doing so, Verneilh helped bring scholarly attention to the Bastides and lent them symbolic and historiographical legitimacy within the developing fields of architectural history and archaeology.
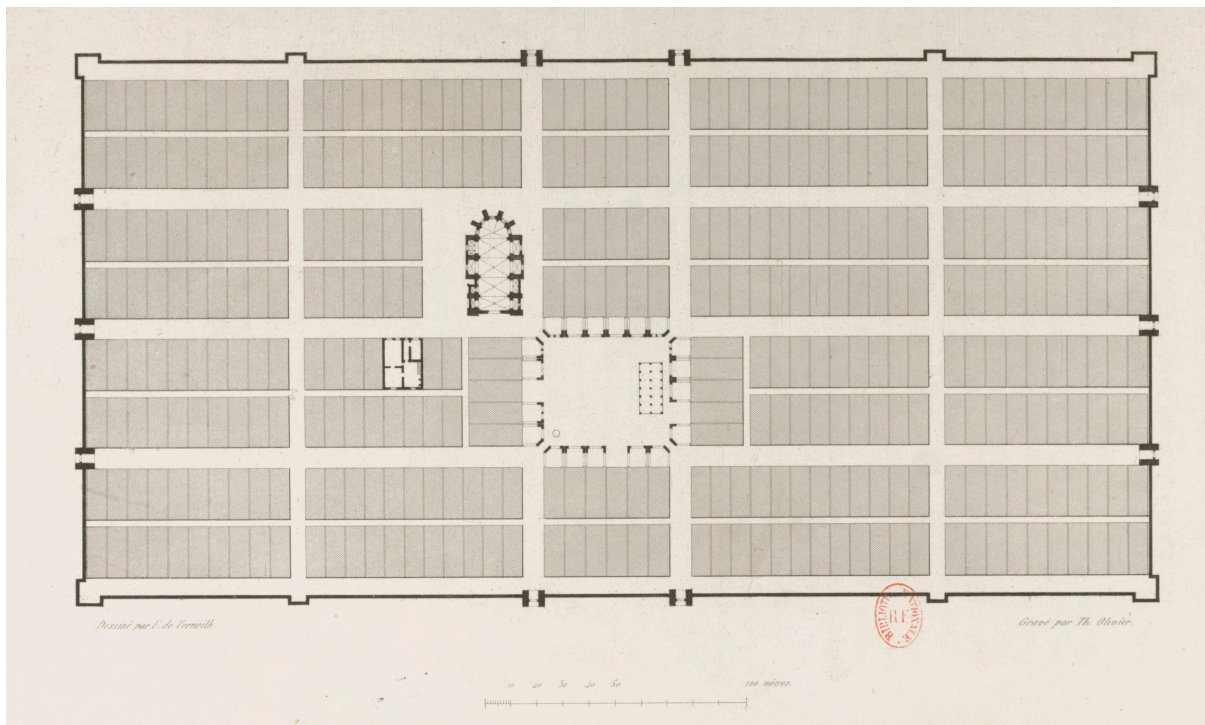

Fig. 3: Figure-ground drawing of Monpazier, drawn by Félix de Verneilh (Source: Félix de Verneilh, "Architecture Civile du Moyen-Age. Villes Neuves du XIIIe Siècle et des Temps Modernes")

Following the precursor work of de Verneilh, Curie Seimbres, who published the first full-length book on the Bastides in 1881, following an extended essay from 1872–73 titled *Essai sur les villes fondées dans le sud-ouest de la France au XIIIe et au XIVe siècle et connues sous le nom de Bastides.*[42] Although his work was criticized for its lack of historical rigor, most notably by Arthur Giry,[43] who accused him of arbitrarily assembling features from various new towns to create a composite Bastide that never existed, Curi-Séimbres nevertheless played a significant role in cementing the Bastide's image as a generic and idealized urban type.[44] He described Bastides as being built "on an identical and perfectly regular plan, demonstrating their unique origin," and interpreted this form as the rational solution to a simple problem: "how to enclose as many houses as possible in a minimum surface."[45] Despite the methodological flaws in his work, this framing helped advance the idea of the Bastide as a forerunner of urban rationalism and an early model of efficient, planned urbanism, contributing to the mid-19th century reevaluation of medieval urbanism.
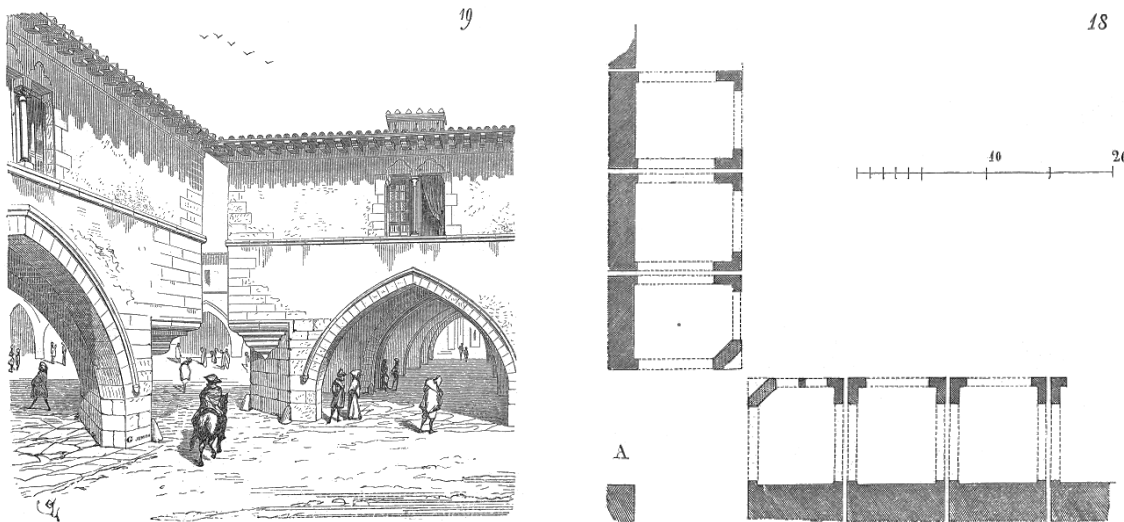

Fig. 4: Engraving and plan of Monpazier's Cornières, by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (Source: Viollet-le-Duc, Eugène-Emmanuel, "Maison," in Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XIème au XVIème siècle. Tome 6)

This idealized image would later be reinforced by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, a central figure in the renewed 19th-century interest in medieval architecture and a key proponent of rationalist architectural theory, an outlook that would become part of the modernist canon. In his *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle*, Viollet-le-Duc refers to the Bastides at three significant points. The entry « Bastide »[46] does not mention the new towns but fortified construction. In the entry on "Alignments,"[47] he reproduces Monpazier's plan, most likely based directly on de Verneilh's version (although mirrored), as the sole urban plan illustrating the concept. In the entry on "Maison" (Houses),[48] he extensively cites Verneilh's observations, particularly the rational logic of Bastide house construction, such as the width of lots determined by the maximum span of timber rafters available. Viollet-le-Duc echoes this rationalism,

paraphrasing Verneilh's comparison between Bastides and modern cities: *"Certainly, the regularity observed in modern cities such as Napoléon-Vendée, or some cities in Algeria, is nothing but disorder in comparison with the absolute symmetry [of the Bastides],"*[49] and he explicitly attributes the design of Bastides to the hand of engineers. In doing so, he reinforces the image of the Bastide as a manifestation of structural and spatial intelligence and medieval anticipation of modern urban order. Although focused primarily on buildings, Viollet-le-Duc's restoration ethos and formalist historiography helped entrench the idea of the Middle Ages as an era of order rather than obscurity, a vision in which the Bastide found a natural place.
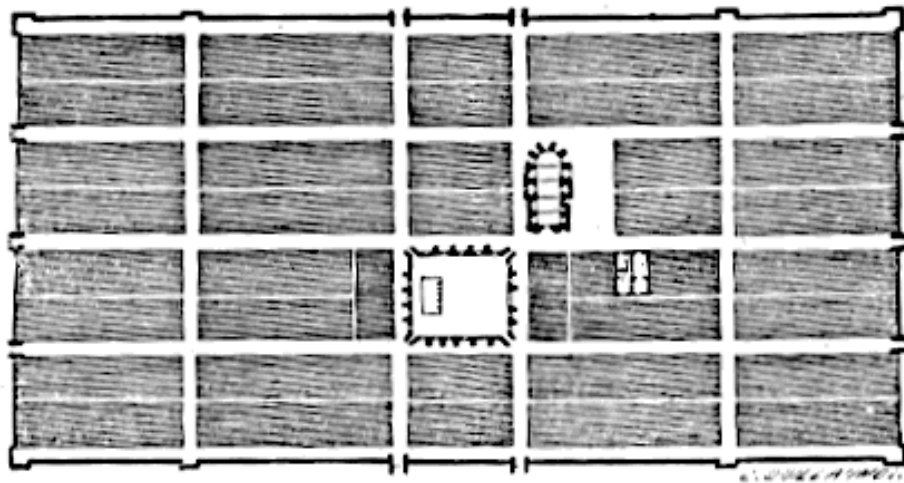

Fig. 5: Mirrored Reproduction of de Verneilh's Monpazier, by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (Source: Viollet-le-Duc, Eugène-Emmanuel, "Allignement," in Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XIème au XVIème siècle. Tome 1)

This 19th-century reinvention of the Bastide thus laid the groundwork for its modernist appropriation in the 20th Century. Notably, the emphasis on spatial regularity in Bastides stood in stark contrast to the spontaneity and irregularity often associated with the medieval city in architectural discourse. [50] As a countermodel to classical and organic urban traditions, the Bastide challenged the dominant narrative, reinforced since the Renaissance, that viewed the Middle Ages as a period of aesthetic chaos and disordered growth. This opposition was further crystallized in the work of Camillo Sitte, whose influential treatise *The Art of Building Cities: City Building According to Its Artistic Fundamentals* (1889) [51] critiqued the sterility of geometric planning and celebrated the picturesque, historically evolved city. Sitte's advocacy for irregularity, monumentality, and experiential space positioned the Bastide as an exception to the presumed disorder of the medieval townscape. As urban historian Françoise Choay later argued in *The Modern City: Planning in the 19th Century* (1969),[52] this split echoed the broader 19th-century intellectual divide between what she called the "progressive" and the "culturalist" paradigms of Urbanism, Sitte being emblematic of the latter. Within this framework, the Bastide occupied an ambiguous position: regular yet medieval, planned yet ancient, simultaneously reinforcing and challenging both sides of the emerging urbanist dichotomy.

4.   THE BASTIDE IN THE 20TH CENTURY

The 20th Century saw the Bastide reimagined again, this time not as a cultural artifact of the medieval past but as a formal precedent and prototype within the narratives of modernist planning. The visual and ideological foundations laid by 19th-century scholars such as Verneilh and Viollet-le-Duc allowed the Bastide to be integrated into a modernist grammar of rationality, clarity, and order.

4.1. Le Corbusier and the Historical Precedent

In his influential book *Urbanisme* (1924),[53] Le Corbusier introduces his somehow fallacious argument with the famous opposition: "Chemin des Ânes, Chemin des Hommes" (the path of donkeys, the path of men). This rhetorical contrast distinguishes between the wandering, instinctual movement of the irrational (the donkey) and the purposeful, linear trajectory of the rational human, a figure we might describe as *Homo Architectura*. For Le Corbusier, straight lines signify clarity of thought, efficiency, and civilization.

From this premise, he constructs a narrative in which the grid becomes the timeless expression of reason and order, tracing its lineage from Roman centuriation through the absolutist planning of Louis XIV, the colonial cities of America, and the medieval Bastides. In the chapter "La Grande Ville" (The Great City), he lists Babylon, Beijing, and Monpazier as key precedents for modern urban form. The plan he reproduces, which is taken from Viollet-le-Duc's *Dictionnaire*, serves not as documentation but as ideological reinforcement. Though historically inaccurate, the image provides a visual and conceptual bridge between the Middle Ages and the modernist city, allowing Le Corbusier to position his vision within a mythic continuity of rational planning. By framing Monpazier as a rational and enduring form, he integrated it into his broader vision of order against chaos, echoing the dichotomy that animated 19th-century historiography. The Bastide's apparent regularity thus offered modernism a rare historical ally—a point of origin that could legitimate the modern project by locating its roots deep in Western history.

4.2. High Modernism and the Grid as State Apparatus

In his critique of Le Corbusier's *Radiant City*, James C. Scott sees in the grid the spatial apparatus of High Modernism, a concept he defines in *Seeing Like a State* (1998) as:

> "a strong, one might even say muscle-bound, version of the self-confidence about scientific and technical progress, the expansion of production, the growing satisfaction of human needs, the mastery of nature (including human nature), and, above all, the rational design of social order commensurate with the scientific understanding of natural laws."

<div align="right">James C. Scott [54]</div>

Although Scott focuses primarily on 20th-century projects like Le Corbusier's Plan Voisin and the Soviet collectivist city, his critique can be retroactively applied to the Bastide as a pre-modern form of legibility and state spatialization. The Bastide embodies, in its origins, many of the characteristics Scott associates with modernist planning: the imposition of a rational grid, the erasure of organic settlement patterns, and the creation of a landscape easily administered and taxed by centralized authority. In this sense, the grid functions not merely as a neutral spatial device but as a tool of governance and surveillance.[55]

Extending this discussion into the broader context of 20th-century urban planning, scholars such as Jill Grant[56] have highlighted how the grid's apparent neutrality conceals mechanisms of exclusion, inequality, and socio-political control. Similarly, Nicholas Blomley[57] examines the convergence of property law and spatial organization in producing violence and dispossession. From a more explicitly Marxist perspective, Peter Marcuse[58] emphasizes how the rationalized grid has served the interests of laissez-faire capitalism by facilitating commodification and speculative development. These perspectives invite us to read the Bastide not only as a technical achievement but also as an early instance of the grid's dual legacy: a form that facilitates both state control and market exploitation. Recasting the Bastide within this broader history of spatial abstraction invites a more nuanced interpretation: one that sees its geometric clarity not simply as a feat of medieval planning but as an early manifestation of a form that would come to mediate the relationship between space, power, and capital throughout modernity. In this sense, the Bastide becomes not just a historical precedent for High Modernist urbanism but a genealogical node in the enduring and contested legacy of the grid.

4.3. Pier Vitorio Aureli and the Bastide as Abstraction

The Bastide has reappeared recently in the work of Pier Vittorio Aureli, who, in the book *Architecture and Abstraction*,[59] situates the Bastide within a broader genealogy of geometric abstraction as a political form. The part of the Bastides is illustrated by Félix de Verneilh's idealized second plan of Monpazier, redrawn by Maria Shéhérazade Giudici. Aureli explicitly includes the Bastide in "The Political History of the Urban Grid," drawing a line from ancient spatial regimes to modernist planning. Drawing from a neo-Marxist perspective, Aureli reads the grid not merely as a spatial diagram but as an ideological device: a mechanism for dividing, organizing, and exploiting land and people. As seen by the scholars mentioned previously, the grid is not a neutral form but an apparatus of political and economic abstraction that enables the transformation of the landscape into a governable, commodified territory.

In this light, the Bastide is part of the *longue durée* of architectural abstraction stretching from Roman centuriation to colonial grid towns and modernist plans. Aureli emphasizes that the history of the urban grid is also a history of exploitation and colonization. The grid, he argues, facilitates the abstraction of space,

rendering it legible and divisible for administrative and economic ends. This reading is echoed by Bastide scholars[60] who highlight these towns' foundational role in the political and economic strategies of territorial expansion, control, and resource harnessing. Aurelli goes further, assuming that the primary rationale behind the Bastide was economic, speculating on the continual history from the Bastides to colonial urbanism in America and Asia and its similarities to contemporary suburban land division.[61] In this light, the Bastide's parceling system prefigures the rationalized land markets of suburban development while resonating with the geopolitical logic of territorial settlement seen in colonial contexts. Aureli builds on historical geographers like John W. Reps, who, in *The Making of Urban America*,[62] explicitly mentions the Bastides in his book, going as far as to reproduce de Verneilh's partial plan of Monpazier. While Reps initially downplays this influence, suggesting that "the relative unimportance of most European Bastides and the remoteness of their founding suggest that functional requirements rather than historical imitation were largely responsible for the use of this plan in America,"[63] he later supposed that "these Bastides communities were so numerous and so located on strategic land routes that it is difficult to believe that they were unknown to the Spanish."[64]

The grid is more than a technical or historical device in this context. It is a signifier of modernity itself. As Jacques Lucan argued in his composition study, the grid offers a countermodel to the hierarchical principles of classical composition, embodying neutrality, isotropy, and repetition instead.[65] These attributes are celebrated in the work of modernist architects from Mies van der Rohe to Superstudio and Archizoom, where the grid becomes a spatial expression of universality, neutrality, and sitelessness. Similarly, in the visual arts, Rosalind Krauss has famously described the grid as one of the myths of modernism. In her essay *Grids*, Krauss sees the grid as a formal mechanism that both resists narrative and affirms modernity's pursuit of autonomy, logic, and aesthetic purity while acknowledging its capacity for ideological containment.[66]

Through these readings, the Bastide has entered the modernist canon as a historical curiosity and a prototype of spatial order. Its plans are reproduced in architectural pedagogy, urban design manuals, and exhibitions that trace the genealogy of the grid. However, this modernist appropriation has tended to reinforce the idealized image developed in the 19th Century, obscuring the contingent, negotiated, and often irregular realities of historical Bastide towns.

As we will see in the following sections, the persistence of this myth raises critical questions about the historiographical function of the Bastide: not only what it was but what it has been made to mean.

4.4. From Myth to Morphology: The Typo-Morphological Turn

In the latter half of the 20th Century, scholarly focus shifted from ideological idealization to the detailed study of built form. This transition was significantly shaped by Pierre Lavedan, a key figure of the French School of

Geography, whose early morphological analyses of medieval urbanism, from the first volume of his *History of Urbanism* to his *Urbanism during the Middle Ages*, [67]   he offered a systematic reading of Bastides based on street grids, lot structures, and public spaces. Lavedan treated the Bastide as a physical artifact shaped by social, political, and geographical contexts rather than a timeless model.

Lavedan's influence extended to a new generation of architects and theorists, including Bernard Huet, Jean Castex, and Philippe Panerai. As Michael Darin has shown,[68] there is a clear continuity between the geographical tradition from Raoul Blanchard and Lavedan to the emergence of typo-morphological studies in late 20th-century French architectural schools. Their 1977 *Formes Urbaines: de l'Ilot à la Barre*[69] marked a turning point in French urban studies. These architects built upon Lavedan's historical rigor, merging it with architectural analysis to uncover how urban form emerges from regulatory frameworks and practical constraints. Among the key contributions to this field was the book *Les Bastides d'Aquitaine, du Bas-Lanquedoc et du Béarn, Essai sur la Régularité*,[70] co-authored by Philippe Panerai, Jean-Paul Divorne, Alain Gendre, and François Lavergne.   Their work focused on the built form of Bastides, analyzing their layout, block structure, and the regulation of plot divisions. The book positioned Bastides as a key site for understanding the application of regularity in medieval planning, offering a detailed typo-morphological reading challenging earlier idealized reconstructions. While aiming to document the actual condition of Bastides and their adaptation to local constraints, the authors also sought to uncover the underlying logic behind these forms. Their typological approach attempted to reveal a systematic order or "regularity" behind the observed differences, suggesting that the diversity of Bastide plans could be interpreted as variations on a coherent planning principle.

This approach was not without criticism. Charles Higounet,[71] one of the most respected historians of the Bastides, reviewed *Les Bastides* within the broader context of the 1980s revival of Bastide studies, which included the establishment of the *Centre d'Étude des Bastides*. While Higounet acknowledged the authors' analytical contribution, particularly their critique of the idealized model and their fine-grained plot analysis, he also pointed out numerous historical inaccuracies and a general lack of engagement with archival sources. Ultimately, Higounet dismissed the work as that of architectural amateurs who, though insightful in their formal analysis, lacked the methodological rigor and historical grounding required for serious scholarly treatment of the subject.

While the French typo-morphological tradition developed through figures such as Pierre Lavedan, a parallel evolution occurred in the Anglo-Saxon context, shaped by the pioneering work of M.R.G. Conzen. Unlike Lavedan, who engaged directly with Bastide towns, Conzen did not study the French Bastides in-depth, mentioning only in passing the so-called Edwardian Bastides established by Edward I in Wales and northern

England.[72] Nevertheless, his methodological framework for urban morphology, emphasizing plot structure, street networks, and the evolution of town plans, provided a robust foundation for later studies of medieval planned towns.

This tradition would influence scholars such as Keith Lilley,[73] Wim Boerefijn,[74] and Adrian Randolph,[75] who applied Conzenian analysis to both English and continental European cases. Their work brought renewed attention to the Bastides, not as idealized models, but as historically contingent and materially grounded spatial formations.

Together, these diverse twentieth-century interpretations reveal the Bastide as a malleable figure, shaped as much by disciplinary agendas and political imaginaries as by the material and historical realities of the towns themselves. The Bastide's symbolic value within modernist narratives of order and control highlights its central role in shaping the High Modernist imaginary, as a historical precedent for rational planning, and as a conceptual foundation for broader spatial ideologies of governance, abstraction, and design.
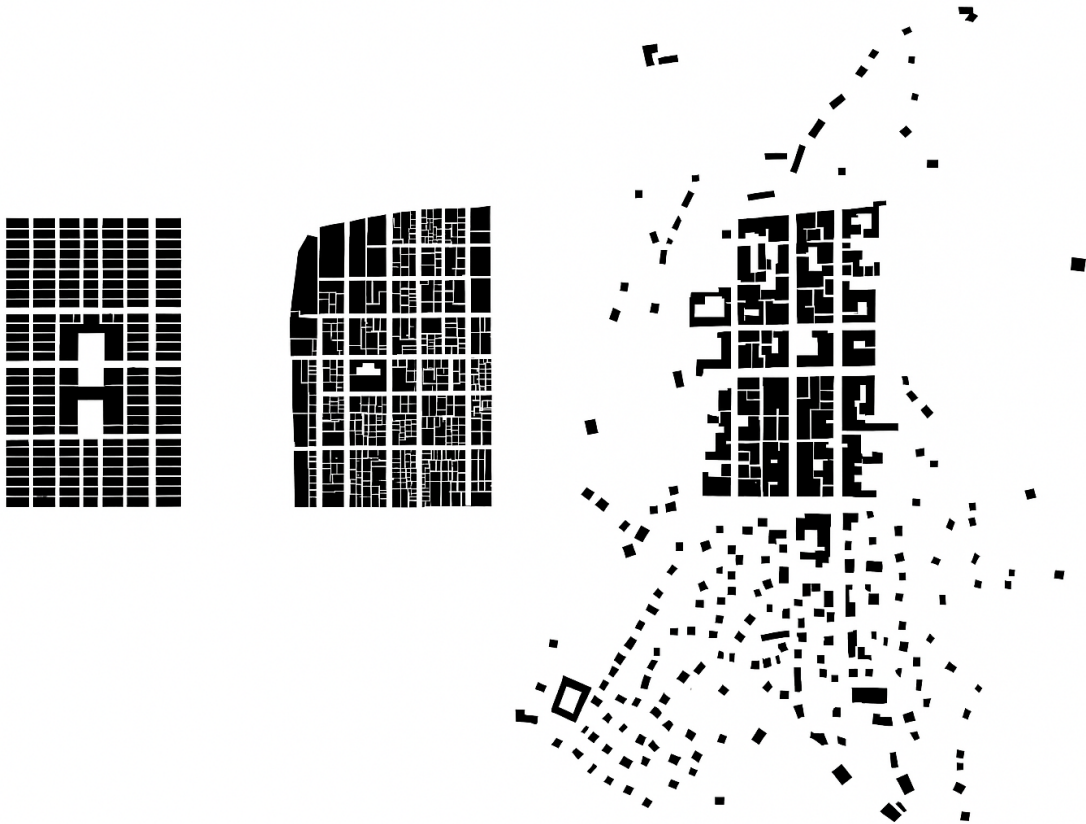

Fig. 6: Figure-ground drawing of de Verneilh's ideal (left), Divorne et al.'s plot plan, and actual conditions, based on Klaus Schäfer, *Plan und Bild von Monpazier*, 2003 (Source: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Beispiel_Monpazier.jpg)

5. CONCLUSION

This paper set out to interrogate the myth of regularity associated with the Bastides, defined by Barthes, Veyne, Dumézil, and Serres as narratives that naturalize historical constructs and present ideological forms as self-evident truths. Without aiming to offer an exhaustive historiography, given the extensive literature on the subject, it sought instead to critically examine the historical and political genealogies embedded in the spatial imaginaries of the Bastide, positioning this inquiry within Bruno Latour's critical archeology of modernity.

We traced how the Bastide was successively reimagined: from a medieval tool of territorial control to a romanticized precedent in the 19th Century and ultimately to a prototype within the modernist canon. Historians, geographers, and architects such as Félix de Verneilh, Viollet-le-Duc, Le Corbusier, and Aureli contributed to this evolving narrative, turning the Bastide into a symbol of legibility, spatial abstraction, and centralized authority. Nevertheless, as both typo-morphological and historical analyses have shown, actual Bastide towns diverge markedly from these idealized representations, revealing forms shaped by topography, local negotiation, and historical contingency instead.

This duality between abstraction and materiality has made the Bastide a particularly rich object of contemporary scholarship. Recent studies by Bernard Gauthiez, Élisabeth Zadora-Rio, and Henri Galinié have advanced the study of medieval urbanism, drawing on the morphological legacy of Lavedan and Conzen while adopting new interdisciplinary approaches.[76] While Spiro Kostof did not study Bastides directly, his reflections on the grid as a primary pragmatic answer, borrowed from Lavedan, offer further context for understanding their spatial logic.

Finally, if the Bastide is to be reclaimed today as a model for rural revitalization, such as in Lucy Pritchard's thesis,[77] it is essential to remember its historical foundations. The Bastides emerged not from scarcity or resilience but from demographic growth and agricultural exploitation. Their origins lie in asserting control over fertile but underutilized lands, reminding us that even the most rational forms can serve ambitions of domination.

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FERNANDO TÁVORA'S INDEPENDENT AND UNIVERSAL APPROACH TO URBAN DESIGN: THE URBAN PROJECT FOR GUIMARÃES

Fernanda Vierno de Moura

FERNANDO TÁVORA'S INDEPENDENT AND UNIVERSAL APPROACH TO URBAN DESIGN: THE URBAN PROJECT FOR GUIMARÃES

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This paper examines Fernando Távora's unique approach to urban design, significantly shaped by the last CIAM debates and influences from Italian architects like Ernesto Rogers and Aldo Rossi, as well as Kevin Lynch's theories. His work on Guimarães' Historic Center reflects Integrated Conservation principles and Manuel de Solà-Morales' Urban Project concept, showcasing that modern architecture involves a reinterpretation of the past rather than a break from it. As a pivotal figure in 20th-century Portuguese architecture, Távora evolved from early modernism to a timeless, site-specific architecture, demonstrating that local design can achieve universal appeal by addressing social and spatial contexts.

Keywords: *Fernando Távora; Guimarães; urban project; integrated urban rehabilitation; universal architecture*

1.   INTRODUCTION

Fernando Távora was a central figure in 20th-century Portuguese architecture, renowned for his role in modernizing the discipline while maintaining a deep connection to historical and cultural contexts. Beginning his architectural practice in the late 1940s, he worked within a period of Portuguese cultural isolation, shaped by authoritarian political regimes that restricted exposure to international architectural developments. Confronted with intellectual challenges as a student, Távora undertook extensive travels across Europe and beyond - a practice he maintained throughout his career. These journeys, along with his participation in international congresses such as CIAM, allowed him to engage with contemporary architectural discourse and incorporate global influences into his work. He wrote that "To know who we are, we have to know who the others are", thus emphasizing the value of cross-cultural understanding in architectural practice.

Between 1947 and 1964, Távora visited Italy five times, where he encountered the theoretical and practical contributions of the Milanese school of the 1950s and 1960s. These experiences provided a critical counterpoint to the bucolic and vernacular aesthetics promoted by the Salazar regime, offering an alternative approach for addressing Portugal's architectural challenges. Another formative moment was his 1960 journey around the world, particularly his observations and records of architectural practices in the United States and Japan, which further enriched his design philosophy.

This article examines the application of Távora's architectural principles in urban design. Our analysis situates his work within the evolving discourse of the late CIAM congresses and the broader revision of the Modern Movement.

Rather than adhering to the tabula rasa approach characteristic of modernist urban utopias, Távora emphasized the importance of designing in continuity with historical structures and urban sectors. He viewed cities as collective, layered constructs shaped by successive historical moments and collaborative efforts, rather than as isolated, static entities.

To substantiate this argument, we will explore a case study that exemplify his unique design methodology: the plans and projects that integrate the Urban Rehabilitation of the Historic Center of Guimarães. This case study reveals how his work was consistently tailored to the spatial and social realities of the context within the Portuguese environment. While some of his early projects exhibited some characteristics of the International Method[1] of the Modern Movement, his later work demonstrates a departure from rigid stylistic affiliations. Instead of aligning his practice with international architectural dogmas, Távora pursued a timeless architecture rooted in place, integrating harmoniously with both the physical and social dimensions of each site. As he asserted: "The more local architecture is, the more universal it becomes".

2.   EARLY INFLUENCES

The 1940s marked the emergence of modern architecture in Portugal. Duarte Pacheco, then Minister of Public Works under Salazar's government, promoted the development of urban plans to regulate territorial expansion. Among these initiatives were the plans for the "Bairro de Alvalade" in Lisbon and Avenida da Ponte in Porto, which were included in the Lisbon Urbanization Plan (1938) and the Porto Urbanization Plan (1939), respectively.

The "Bairro de Alvalade" project, developed by urban planner João Faria da Costa in 1945, represented a milestone in the application of new principles in urban planning. Unlike the working-class neighborhoods and traditional areas of Lisbon, Alvalade introduced innovative architectural and urban planning solutions, adopting a garden-city approach structured into well-defined urban cells.

A key feature of this plan was the typological diversity of residential buildings, incorporating both multifamily housing blocks and single-family homes, fostering a socially diverse urban environment. The plan also separated vehicular and pedestrian traffic, aligning with some modern urban planning principles. Additionally, the integration of green spaces and collective facilities enhanced the quality of life for its residents.

Some buildings within the complex were designed on pilotis, as seen in Bairro das Estacas (1949–1954), which allowed for greater spatial fluidity. According to Ana Tostões, this housing complex, designed by Ruy D'Athougia and Formosinho Sanches, radically transformed the basic layout of two blocks within Cell 8, skillfully adapting the modern principles of the Athens Charter. The urban block concept was replaced with

an expansive green space, structured by buildings set perpendicular to the main road axis, creating a vast landscaped platform extending beneath the elevated structures on pilotis[2].

Although conceived within a conservative political context, the project marked a significant advancement in applying modernist ideas, particularly in urban planning and the functional organization of space. It remains a landmark in Portuguese modernism and collective housing in Lisbon.

In Porto, the plans for Avenida da Ponte, initially commissioned to Italian architect Marcello Piacentini (1938–1939) and later to Giovanni Muzio (1940–1943), emerged as part of the Estado Novo's broader effort to modernize the city. These proposals aimed to create an urban axis with strong visual and civic impact, linking the Luís I Bridge area to Porto's historic center. The plans proposed the creation of large open spaces framed by new constructions, often at the expense of the existing urban fabric. The government sought solutions that balanced monumentality, vehicular circulation, and integration with the existing cityscape, emphasizing an image of an organized and disciplined nation. The area near the Luís I Bridge was considered strategic, as it connected the upper city to the riverside and the Douro River.

Although never executed, these plans illustrate the tension between monumental classicism and modern architecture in Portugal. They reflect the Estado Novo's attempt to reconcile modernist principles, such as the functional organization of urban space, with an aesthetic of monumentality inspired by European totalitarian regimes.

Fernando Távora began his architectural and urban planning career shortly after these proposals. Between 1952 and 1960, as an architect at the Porto City Council, he designed the Ramalde Urbanization Plan. This project embodied the principles of the Modern Movement, replacing the traditional concept of urban blocks by sets of independent residential buildings, while introducing wide open spaces to facilitate free pedestrian circulation. Similar to the Bairro de Alvalade, the Ramalde Plan aimed to structure roadways and collective spaces hierarchically while promoting typological diversity to foster social inclusivity. Moreover, it emphasized the natural context and local topography, incorporating green areas and high-quality public spaces while avoiding a rigid, imposed layout. The plan sought a rational organization of space, ensuring a balanced distribution of housing, with some commerce and public facilities.

However, despite starting from identical modern concepts, such as "functional zoning" or "neighborhood unit," unlike Alvalade, whose "plan starts from the idea of a city concentrated and organized into 'cells,' where the street remains as a space for circulation and block organization, in Ramalde, the morphological unity of the block is broken, moving towards a garden city model, similar to the one defined by the CIAM"[3] (Fig. 1).

Additionally, beyond applying modern urban planning principles, Távora incorporated some elements of traditional Portuguese architecture. Examples include the use of local materials and techniques, such as white plastered walls, granite foundations, and wooden frames, evoking Portuguese vernacular architecture, and the typological diversity, where some buildings featured patios, courtyards, and balconies reminiscent of traditional popular housing, reinforcing the human scale of the environment (Fig. 2). This approach established a dialogue between modernity and local identity and rendered the project distinctive within the Portuguese architectural context.
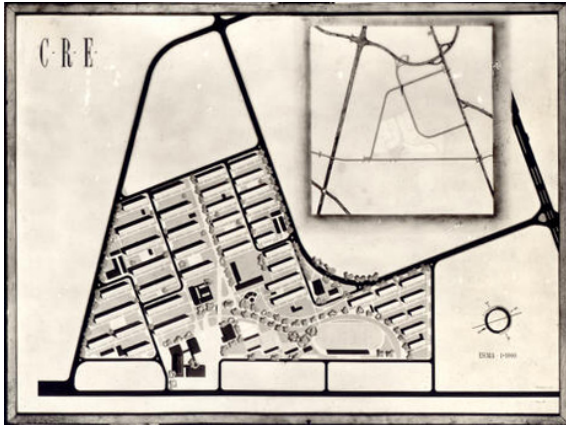

Fig. 1: Ramalde Site Plan

Fig. 2 Ramalde buildings (Source: Fundação Instituto Marques da Silva - FIMS)

In 1955, also as an architect for the Porto City Council, Távora presented a revised proposal for Avenida da Ponte (Fig. 3), this time with a more context-sensitive approach. His proposal sought to enhance the city's historical memory by transforming the vacant spaces left by previous demolitions into landscaped areas that highlighted the existing urban fabric. Additionally, he addressed the road network, considered the "entrance to the city," by reorganizing circulation and strategically inserting new buildings.

Fig. 3: Fernando Távora's Urban Project for Avenida da Ponte (Source: Fundação Instituto Marques da Silva - FIMS)

3.   CULTURAL EXCHANGE WITH THE INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL SCENE

Beyond influences within the Portuguese architectural environment, Távora engaged early on with the international discourse of modern architecture through his participation in international congresses such as CIAM[4].

At CIAM VIII (Hoddesdon, 1951), which focused on "The Heart of the City," modern architecture discussions began shifting away from rigid functionalist urbanism toward reintegrating new projects within historical city centers. Távora's engagement with these debates enriched his understanding of city's identity and the role of public spaces.

At CIAM IX (Aix-en-Provence, 1953), organic and empirical architectural approaches gained prominence. Young architects such as Peter and Alison Smithson challenged the rigid principles of the Functional City, advocating for a "hierarchy of human associations" in urban planning. These discussions influenced Távora's perspective, reinforcing his view of architecture as a discipline deeply intertwined with social and cultural dynamics.

CIAM XI (Otterlo, 1959) further highlighted the diversity of modern architectural perspectives. Despite differing viewpoints, a common thread emerged among architects: the revitalization of urban life, the valorization of local traditions, and an emphasis on architecture's social role. Italian architects such as Giancarlo De Carlo, Ernesto Rogers, and Ignazio Gardella championed a renewed appreciation for historic city centers, emphasizing continuity and cultural assimilation rather than rigid modernist dogma. Távora's architectural philosophy aligned closely with these ideas, advocating for a reinterpretation of tradition rather than adherence to predetermined modernist formulas.

Távora also maintained close connections with key figures in Italian architecture. He met Ernesto Rogers, author of *L'architettura della continuità*, at several CIAM meetings (1951, 1953, 1956, 1959) and maintained a strong personal relationship with him ever since. Moreover, Bruno Zevi's teachings on organic architecture, along with the growing critique of CIAM's rationalist approach, were frequently referenced in Távora's classes and design studio. His book *Verso un'architettura organica* emphasized the need for a more humanized and context-sensitive modern architecture.

Another important Italian reference was the work of the architect Carlos Scarpa. The restoration of the Castelvecchio Museum in Verona was a project that the renowned Italian architect led from 1957 to 1975, resulting in an intervention that harmonized the historic architecture of the castle with modern elements, creating an exhibition space that balances the ancient and the contemporary. This principle aligns closely with

Távora's attitude towards interventions in historic buildings, such as the one he carried out for the Convent of Santa Marinha da Costa in Guimarães.

Furthermore, there were influential Italian writings in the 1960's, like Aldo Rossi's *L'Architettura della Città*, and Vittorio Gregotti's *Il territorio dell'architettura*. Rossi's text challenged 20th-century urban concepts, particularly the idea of a perfectly planned city. Instead, he advocated for the city as a product of its long historical evolution, continuously transformed and rebuilt, emphasizing the importance of preservation through processes that ensure continuity. Gregotti's work proposes an approach to architecture that takes into account the territory as a fundamental element of the project, an architecture that dialogues with history, geography and social needs, criticizing the indifference of modern architecture in relation to the urban and landscape context.

Examples of Italian urban renewal plans also influenced his later projects, as was the case of the Recovery Plan for the Historic Center of Bologna (1969), led by Pier Luigi Cervellati, paralleled Távora's Study for the Urban Renewal of Barredo (ERUB) in Porto. Both initiatives advocated for the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings rather than their demolition, contrasting with the dominant modernist urban renewal strategies of the time. Additionally, their principles were similar in terms of focusing not only on the physical framework, but also on social, economic, and cultural aspects of the urban complex.

Finally, Távora's 1960 world trip, particularly his observations in the United States and Japan, shaped his architectural thought. His admiration for Frank Lloyd Wright reflected his divergence from the formal purism of Mies van der Rohe. His seminal 1962 text *Da Organização do Espaço* echoes these experiences, emphasizing spatial organization and volumetric relationships in cities as diverse as Washington, Boston, Giza, and Kyoto.

Additionally, Kevin Lynch's The Image of the City (1960) profoundly impacted Távora's urban projects, particularly his work in Aveiro. His engagement with Lynch at MIT further reinforced his commitment to understanding the urban landscape as a dynamic and evolving entity rather than a rigidly designed structure.

4.   TÁVORA'S URBAN PROJECT FOR THE HISTORICAL CENTRE OF GUIMARÃES

Fernando Távora developed numerous architectural projects and participated in more complex urban-scale initiatives throughout his career. In his design methodology, the city and architecture are understood as a continuous experience. Among his urban projects, the following stand out: the proposal for the "Avenida da Ponte" in Porto (1955), the New Civic Center of the Central Zone of Aveiro (1963-68), the Urban Renewal Study of Barredo in Porto (1968-69 and 1974-75), the plans and projects that comprised the Rehabilitation of the Historic Center of Guimarães (1979-92), the General Plan for downtown Coimbra (1993), the

Rehabilitation of the Convent of São Francisco and its riverside area, also in Coimbra (1998), and the project for the "Casa dos 24" in Porto (2004).

The focus here will be on the case of Guimarães. This intervention stands out for operating at three distinct scales in an integrated manner. Unlike other urban projects, it is not a formal plan but rather a set of strategies for rehabilitating the city's historic center.

The work under analysis was developed over 16 years, corresponding to the period when Távora was involved in drafting the PGU – General Urbanization Plan of the city and later serving as a consultant for the Local Technical Office of the Guimarães City Council. During this time, a working methodology was consolidated, maturing into an urban management plan. This model enabled the continuity of rehabilitation efforts for years after his initial involvement, supported by joint investments from public management and private property owners.

The PGU was commissioned in 1979 by Guimarães' first democratic City Council and took three years to complete, with a multidisciplinary team conducting an in-depth analysis of the territory's geography and history. Surveys and maps illustrating the evolution of the city's urban form were produced, serving as the basis for formulating guidelines aimed at orderly growth. These guidelines covered the urban core of Guimarães, the Veiga de Creixomil, Pevidém, and future expansions in Vizela, Taipas, and São Torcato.

Beyond regulating growth, the PGU sought to establish measures for landscape and environmental protection, ensuring a better quality of life for the population and preserving its heritage. It proposed improvements to the road system, including the creation of an external circular road to ease traffic in the city center and enhance connectivity between urban areas, as well as the restructuring of the city's main road access. Additionally, 12 detailed plans were designed for specific areas, setting urban planning restrictions without defining architectural styles but determining construction areas and volumes. These measures aimed to guide the preservation of the correct perception of pre-existing structures while maintaining order and harmony within an ongoing modernization process.

For Távora, this was a "General Plan" because it constituted "above all, a synthesis plan, in which an effort was made to reconcile unity and variety, the general and the particular, function and design, reality and imagination, past and future"[5]. However, completed in 1982, the PGU was not implemented due to changes in the government's territorial policy, which prioritized drafting provisional norms for the Municipal Master Plan, with measures intended to cover the entire municipality. As a result, Távora was invited to contribute in another capacity, advising the Historic Center Office, where he worked alongside architect Alexandra Gesta. Established in 1983 and later converted into the Local Technical Office (GTL, *Gabinete Técnico Local*) in 1985,

this institution developed projects for the historic center, including the rehabilitation of squares and public spaces. Among its key projects were the restoration of the Casa da Rua Nova (1984) and the revitalization of Praça do Município (1985), the project for Praça de Santiago (1990), and proposals for Largo João Franco (1994) and Largo da Condessa de Juncal (1995) (Fig. 4). Some squares were designed within the GTL, while others were developed at Távora's studio after he left the office in 1989.
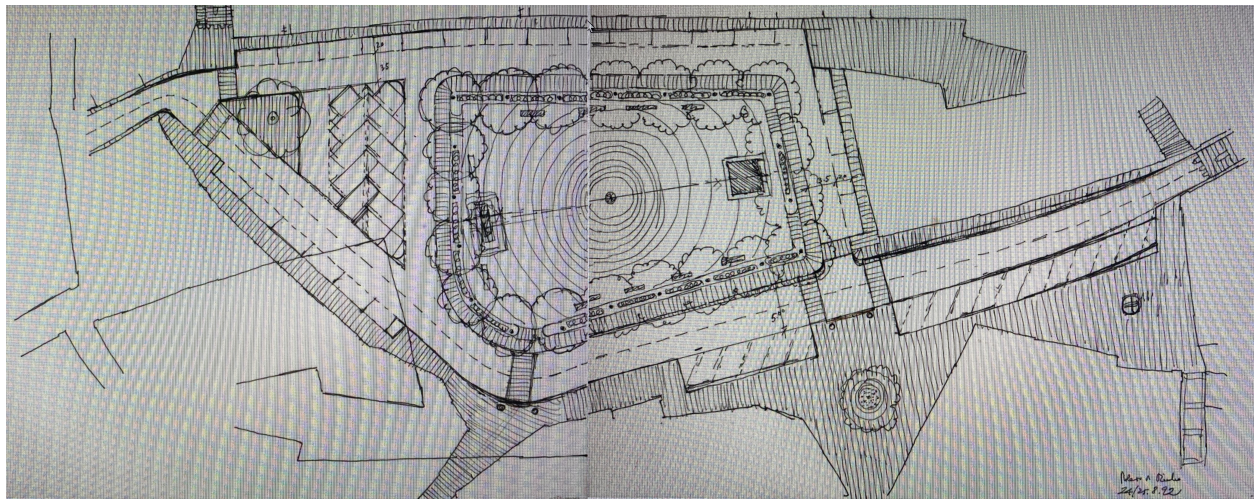

Fig. 4: Sketch for Largo da Condessa do Juncal (Source: Fundação Instituto Marques da Silva - FIMS).

The rehabilitation of these spaces aimed to give back squares and streets - previously turned into parking areas - to the city, promoting spatial connections between revitalized sectors. Távora adapted the projects to the historical specificities of each location, reflecting various architectural periods, such as the Baroque, Renaissance, Medieval, and Romantic. Thus, his approach went beyond physical rehabilitation, integrating historical memory and redefining the concept of public space. Furthermore, the intervention was not limited to façades or urban surfaces but also encompassed the interiors of buildings.

The interconnected development of the General Urbanization Plan and of architectural projects can be considered the true recovery plan for the historic center developed by Távora. The alternation between the general and the specific was one of the core principles of this urban project, reflecting a methodology frequently present in his works. Initially, urban planning guidelines were established for different areas of the city, followed by detailed plans defining building volumes, and finally, specific architectural interventions.

Fernandes highlights that Távora developed various urban rehabilitation projects as part of an Integrated Plan for the Rehabilitation and Revitalization of the Historic Center of Guimarães[6], based on the same principles that guided the General Urbanization Plan[7]. The strategic actions of the GTL in public spaces within the historic center aimed not only at its requalification but also at encouraging private investment in the region.

As Aguiar points out, to achieve this goal, model interventions under municipal responsibility were implemented. The strategy was based on the premise that the State and the City Council should set an example, ensuring that public works became references of the highest quality[8]. According to Portas, the strategy followed an inductive action logic, prioritizing road infrastructure works and square redesigns to strengthen the cultural function of the medieval core, thus encouraging property owners to invest in rehabilitation[9].

The intervention process extended over time, granting the GTL comprehensive control over the architecture developed at each phase of the project. This control was exercised through urban management, including licensing supervision and providing a public service focused on rehabilitating private buildings within the historic center. The interventions, characterized mainly by the principle of minimal intervention, prioritized adapting homes to ensure comfort and functionality, such as installing sanitary facilities in residences that previously lacked adequate standards. To facilitate these improvements, the institution worked on identifying and securing national funding programs, enabling subsidy allocations and offering technical assistance throughout all stages, from project conception to execution.

The intervention proposal for the historic center developed by Távora established that the safeguarding and rehabilitation of this area should be integrated into a broader urban project encompassing the entire city. This concept was implemented by the GTL - Local Technical Office, under the direction of architect Alexandra Gesta, based on the premise that, despite the functional and typological differences between the walled city and its surrounding areas, the rehabilitation of the historic center should not isolate it or turn it into a disproportionately privileged sector. As Alexandra Gesta argues, the Historic Center of Guimarães should be integrated smoothly into the city, preventing rehabilitation from selectively benefiting certain areas based on criteria such as antiquity or cultural significance. Such a practice could lead to the enhancement of monumental and central areas, while more degraded or peripheral zones would remain marginalized, deepening urban imbalances[10].

Távora's urban project for Guimarães has implications both upstream and downstream, constituting an urban strategy based on a logic of spatial sequence and integration among the various agents involved. In this context, the architect's participation was not continuous but rather occasional, as required by the office. Miguel Frazão, an architect who collaborated with Távora in the early years of the GTL, emphasizes: "This office had the mission of recovering the historic center. But it was Távora, regarding the General Urbanization Plan, who set this entire process in motion"[11].

5. CONCLUSION

Fernando Távora's trajectory highlights the breadth of his architectural approach, based on a balanced synthesis between tradition and innovation. From his earliest influences, there is a constant concern with the relationship between the local and the global, articulating Portuguese cultural identity with the modernist principles he assimilated during his education. His contact with the work of modern architects and his participation in the debates of the Revision of the Modern Movement in the final CIAM debates were fundamental in shaping his understanding of architecture as a discipline rooted in historical and territorial context while embracing the technical and functional advances of modernism.

The urban rehabilitation project in Guimarães exemplifies his ability to integrate different scales of intervention. Over more than a decade, Távora structured urban strategies that respected the city's historic character while also promoting tangible improvements in the population's quality of life.

This set of actions aligns with the concept of "Urban Project" defined by Manuel de Solà-Morales, which characterizes this type of intervention by its complexity, surpassing the rigidity of uses, users, and design elements such as squares, roads, and building typologies. Moreover, the urban project operates at an intermediate scale between architecture and planning, establishing a continuous relationship between the urban and the architectural. In this sense, its approach is not limited to defining the architecture of buildings but rather to constructing an urban architecture. Another essential feature of this concept is its feasibility within a relatively short period, with impacts that go beyond the directly affected area. Additionally, its implementation usually involves significant public investments aimed at multifunctional programs of collective interest[12].

The principles formulated by Mnuel de Solà-Morales stem from an analysis of the works of modern architects who intervened in existing cities, differing from approaches that proposed new cities or were based on the idea of the *tabula rasa*. Although Solà-Morales did not directly cite Fernando Távora, the latter's work can be fully inserted into this "other modern tradition," as demonstrated by his interventions in complex urban contexts. Examples of this include earlier projects such as the proposal for Avenida da Ponte in Porto, the New Civic Center of the Central Zone of Aveiro, and the Urban Renewal Study of Barredo.

Távora's universality is manifested in the way he moves between different scales and contexts, formulating solutions that integrate the new with the preexisting without ruptures. His work extended beyond design practice to include knowledge transmission, shaping generations of architects who carried forward his principles and methodology. Thus, Fernando Távora is established as a universal architect, not by seeking a homogeneous and globalized language, but through his ability to interpret and intervene in the built space in

an integrated manner, respecting the specificity of contexts and promoting an architecture that dialogues with different times and scales. His work reaffirms that modernity in architecture does not need to imply rupture but can represent a continuous process of reinterpreting the past in favor of the future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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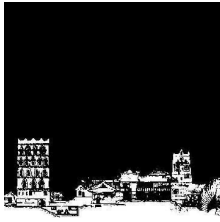
ARCHITECTURE, MEDIA, REPRESENTATION, AND COSMOPOLITANISM

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