

Squares of the empire in portuguese colonial space of the new state: The rule and the model

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Abstract

In this article, urban structures of the “New State” and its representation of political power are identified by analysing the so-called *praças do Império* (squares of the empire), which were spread by Portuguese colonisation through African cities. The process takes place from the beginning of the Second World War. It starts with the idea that its configuration comes from the Urbanisation Plan of Luanda City's Periphery by Etienne Groër and David Moreira da Silva (1943), which establishes a unitary pattern in the architecture of buildings and ground design, moving towards the enunciation of an ideal paradigm.

One of the general arguments for the implementation of these structures is the qualification of the built environment of African cities, bringing them a degree of urbanity from their metropolitan counterparts. The similarity between urban interventions in Portugal and overseas territories under Portuguese administration shows the proximity of stylistic and ideological options. The fact that the architects work interchangeably for Africa and Portugal also ensures their similitude.

The urban practices of the New State reached maturity after the end of World War II and lasted for a decade (Lobo, 1995). This phase of intense production in the urban metropolis also represents an important activity in Portuguese colonial space. It is the moment that the Colonial Urbanisation Office starts, launched by Marcelo Caetano in 1944 to optimise Portuguese efforts in the field of urbanism and tropical architecture, providing qualified technical teams made up of architects, engineers as well as specialists in tropical medicine and climatology. João António Aguiar, an author highlighted for the urban plans of several metropolitan cities, also emerges as a main mentor of this body, following its director, the mining engineer Rogério Cavaca.

Aguiar is also the designer of several overseas urban plans. Of particular interest in this study are the plans for Luanda (1952) and New Lisbon (now Huambo, end of the 1940s), as well as some Guineans cities like Teixeira Pinto (Canchungo since 1951). These plans adopt rationalist principles that manifest themselves in the sectoral demarcation of various urban functions, combined with a predilection for axial and monumental compositions of a Western urban tradition. The low density assigned to residential areas suggests its subscription to the tradition of the Garden City movement. This study proves that many of these cities find their contemporary layout in the First Portuguese Republic. It is in this context of urban intervention that the squares of the empire, whose imagery is based on the Pombalinian Praça do Comércio (Commerce Square) in Lisbon, emerges strengthened.

We analyse some case studies in Guinea-Bissau and Angola of a "classic" perspective from the rule and model stated by Françoise Choay in 1980. The adoption of the classification proposed by Choay is seen as the introduction of a stable pattern of interpretative analysis.

In 1946, on the occasion of the celebrations of the 5th centenary of Portuguese arrival to the region, the reading of the rule part of a series of urban interventions was carried out in Guinea. It sought to establish a relationship between the urban structure of Bissau, the high capital of Guinea in 1941, and the system introduced in certain Guinean cities located in the north and northeast of the country.

In order to illustrate the model, a group of implanted Angolan squares are referred to, which are also from the second half of the 1940s. The old Largo Diogo Cão (currently Largo de 17 Setembro) functions as the original reference. An identical model is featured in other Angolan cities, which will be compared with the cases of Lobito and New Lisbon (Huambo).

Generally, these squares have retained their importance in the organisation and experience of contemporary African cities, and it can be said that their qualities of "representation" have been leveraged in the new historical and political context of the post-independence period*.

The images and layouts that accompany this text are essential to understand the meaning intended to be presented.

* The research integrates the project *Colonial Urbanisation Office: Architectural Culture and Practice*, where the author works as a Researcher (Reference FCT: PTDC/AURAI/104964/2008). The Angolan cities cited in this study (with the exception of Huambo) were visited in August 2009. A brief itinerary of Bissau and some Guinean cities in the north of the country was also completed in October 2011.

Background

Following the analysis of Margarida Souza Lobo (1995: 145-216), the urban practices of the "New State" reach a high point of development in the period following the outcome of World War II and lasted for a decade. This phase of intense urban production in the metropolis also corresponds to the enunciation of new plans for Portuguese colonial space. This also corresponds to the start of the Colonial Urbanisation Office (CUO) launched by Marcelo Caetano in late 1944¹ to optimise Portuguese efforts in the field of urbanism and tropical architecture, providing qualified technical teams of architects, engineers and specialists in tropical medicine and climatology². João António Aguiar is an important figure and author of urban plans for several metropolitan cities, and also



emerged as the second most important figure in the Office after the mining engineer Rogério Cavaca, its first director.

The authorship of Aguiar was fully established through many overseas urban plans proposed between 1946 and 1954. Among those of interest to this text are Luanda (1952) and New Lisbon (now Huambo), as well as Teixeira Pinto (Canchungo since 1951) and Bubaque (1952) for Guinea. His association to the majority of plans produced in the CUO makes him the main ideologue of the practised urban culture.

Until around 1959, however, the architects of the CUO (first under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Colonies, and after 1951 the Overseas Ministry) were responsible for most of the urban plans applied in (or at least intended for) overseas provinces. It was only in the 1960s that some colonial capitals, such as Luanda, Lourenço Marques (now Maputo) and medium-sized cities, gained autonomy in designing their own plans, a situation arising from the ability to attract qualified professionals, whose work competed with technicians based in Lisbon. Added to this, being given their own overseas municipalities means hiring professionals and/or private companies for the execution of such projects. It is still within the context of the CUO – however, transformed into the Department of Urbanism and Housing Services of the Directorate-General of Public Works and Communications at the Overseas Ministry – where a new generation of master plans (already outside of the framework of this study) appears at the start of the 1970s.

Generally, the plans designed in the CUO from the late 1940s adopted rationalist principles, manifested in the sectoral demarcation of the various urban functions, coupled with a predilection for radial and axial compositions of a Western urban tradition. Low density residential areas are associated with the plans of the Garden City tradition. However, it is recognised that the principles proposed by Sir Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928) in the late nineteenth century overlap with urbanism and the reception of the ideals of the City Beautiful movement, which were already present in the colonial plans of the First Republic (1910-1926). This juxtaposition of designs fully serves the representative objectives of the intervened cities during the New State (1933-1974), both in the metropolis as well as in colonial territories. It is also in the context of these plans that the squares of the empire are outlined, whose original design stems from the eighteenth century Praça do Comércio in Lisbon.

As already suggested, some colonial cities are outlined in the plans prior to the work of the architects of the CUO, and correspond to the first definition of the modern African city. It is in the context of the First Republic (after the end of the monarchy) that we can find the roots of this just consolidated post-Second World War urbanism. In the current state of investigation, however, they have not yet located the documentary sources that allow (for now) one to determine with greater certainty the origin of this historiographical design. However, a closer look at post-colonial urban studies points (in our opinion) to a reading that puts the First Republic at the centre of generation of modern colonial Portuguese urbanism. Unrealised plans close to the ideals of the City Beautiful proposal for cities such as Beira in Mozambique by Carlos Rebelo de Andrade were published in 1932 in the magazine *Arquitetura*, and suggest exactly this possibility³. In Guinea, the town of Bolama seems, in this period, to be the object of an urban proposal inspired by the same principles. It is in this context that one can frame the plan to keep Bissau's City Hall (that was probably intended for Bolama, the then capital of the colony), which was attributed to the mining engineer José Guedes Quinhones (though was undated and

never built), whose completion approaches the 1920s⁴. In this plan, monumental avenues drawn from radial points seem to anticipate the design of the open Avenida da República in Bissau. The same engineer is the author of the implemented project for the new city of Bissau (1919), where a great road axis is drawn (Silveira, [1956]: 149) that, after, constitutes the origin of urban development in other cities of the Guinean territory.

The rule: Bissau and other Guinean cities

The idea of the application of a *rule* – freely following the reasoning of Françoise Choay – is based on a set of urban operating principles, capable of generating a unitary structure without the obligatory application of a *closed* design (mainly in volumes of the plan of the building). The approach was one of *acting pragmatically*, as opposed to the utopian foundation that the idea of the *model* assumes. The concept serves to carry out a series of urban interventions triggered in current Guinea-Bissau (around 1946) for the occasion of the 5th centenary celebrations of Portuguese arrival to the region. The main road axis of Bissau – formerly Avenida da República, now Avenida Amílcar Cabral – works as a grid, which was then replicated in Guinea agglomerations of smaller dimensions. It is based on the evidence of this statement in five cities located in the region to the north and northeast of Bissau: Bafatá, Cacheu, Canchungo, Mansoa and Gabu.



Fig. 1: Bissau, Praça dos Heróis Nacionais (formerly Empire Square), view from the Government Palace. Photograph: Ana Vaz Milheiro, 2011



Fig. 2: Canchungo (formerly Teixeira Pinto), the main avenue. Photograph: Ana Vaz Milheiro, 2011

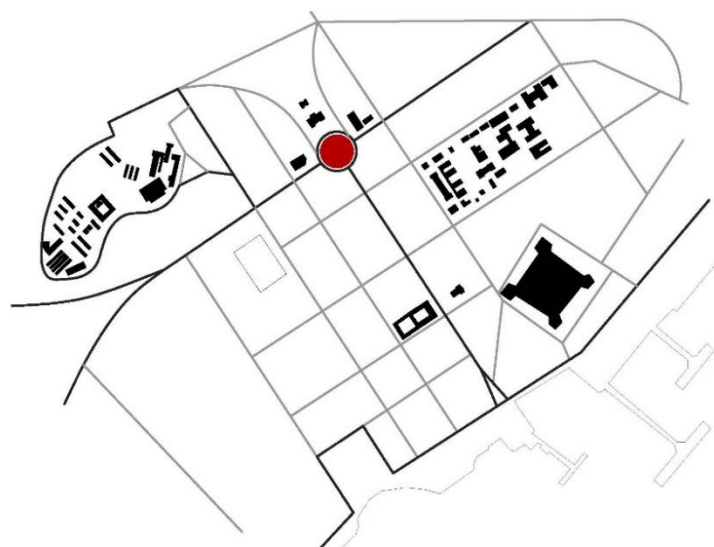


Fig. 3: Bissau, design of the main avenue (currently Avenida Amílcar Cabral, formerly Avenida da República). Redesign: Débora Félix and Bruno Macedo Ferreira, 2012/PTDC/AURAI/104964/2008

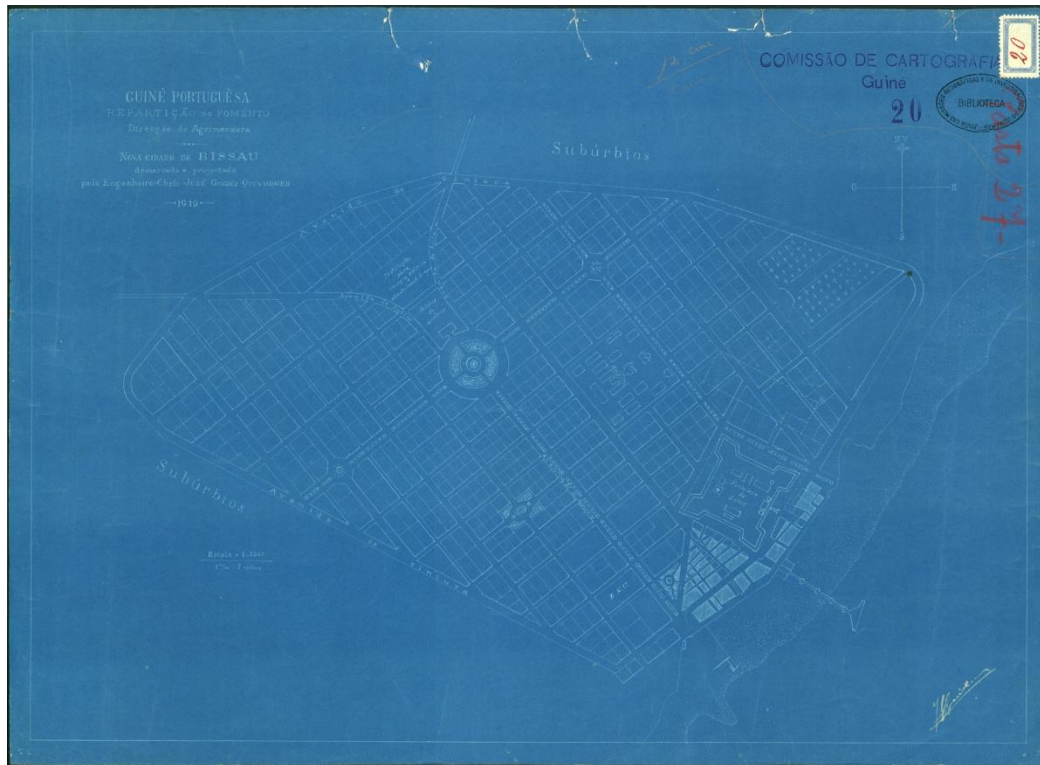


Fig. 4: New city of Bissau, defined and designed by Chief Engineer José Guedes Quinhones, Portuguese Guinea, Office of Development, Land and Surveying, 1919 [Overseas History Archive, quota: CEHCAP27C020]

Contemporary Bissau starts being planned, probably following the military events of 1913 that started João Teixeira Pinto's efforts (1876-1917) to stabilise Portuguese presence in the territory (Barreto, 1938: 380; Pélissier, Vol. 2, 2001: 123 *et seq*). The Republic also brings a feeling of "proto-nationalist" to a colonial elite with emancipatory pretensions, which can possibly justify the existence of evidence in order to "beautify" the city, even before its path to become the capital. The 1919 plan by Guedes Quinhones (carried out under the remit of the Department of Development – Land Surveying Directorate) not only initiates the monumentalisation process for urban space, but also corresponds to its expansion outside the original perimeter of São José Square in Bissau (founded at the end of sixteen hundreds) and the urban agglomeration, which was already represented in the cartography by the nineteenth century ([Valdés], "layout of Praça de Bissau" [c. 1864] in Silveira, est. 191 [1956] 146). The central avenue is then Avenida 31 de Janeiro, and the city limits are ensured by Avenida de Cintura, which forms the boundary along with the "suburbs". Power and water facilities, the Government Palace, the New Hospital and the National Overseas Bank were essential programmes for the proper functioning of the new city. These formed the first basic facilities (the primary school was jointed in 1922), which were applied by the Republic and continued and expanded by the New State.

In 1941, the city is the high provincial capital. A new plan in 1942 is attributed to the engineer Eduardo José Pereira da Silva, Head of the Guinean Central Geographic and Cartographic Services Department. Around 1945, the CUO along with the Lisbon headquarters, begun work that led to the development of the first master plan of the city.

The General Plan for Urbanisation was approved on 12 June 1948, during the government of Manuel Sarmiento Rodrigues (1899-1979). The implementation of two new avenues parallel to Avenida da República (Avenida 31 de Janeiro in Quinhones's plan), perpendicular to the banks of the river Geba (ending in roundabouts) and demarcated by public buildings (one of which is enough to provide an episcopal palace) were proposed. The urban mesh is organised in a grid from the direction imposed by a set of three avenues designed as boulevards, with a central tree-lined island. In the expansion zone, the blocks increase area, fulfilling one of the requirements of Sarmiento Rodrigues. Indication of the location of the old and new structures that equip the city are given: a cemetery, hospital, stadium, residential neighbourhoods and industrial, economic and commercial zones – and very specific buildings are marked: the Government Palace, the Commercial Association (which is then moved to another area), Sé Cathedral, the City Hall, the new market (the latter two remain unconstructed), the power station and the museum. The implementation trend of the main facilities is accentuated close to the Avenida da República, confirming its vocation as a representative structure.

The two new avenues are not implemented and the city maintains the structure designed by Quinhones in 1919. The *Report on the Investigation of Bissau City and Other Population Centres of the Colony of Guinea* prepared by engineer José António dos Santos (the surname is illegible) in the CUO mission, executed in the company of the architect José Manuel Gallardo Zilhão (s.d., probably carried out between 1945 and 1946), describes the precarious nature of the contemporary city to Sarmiento Rodrigues (population and its characteristics, the state of sanitation, street lighting, major facilities, etc.). The document is illustrated with a city survey plan. Empire Square, now Praça dos Heróis Nacionais, which ends at Avenida da República, is placed on the upper plateau of the city (taking advantage of the higher elevation, providing the Government Palace (whose original construction is also attributed to Jose Quinhones Guedes from the description of Rolando Ferreira Barros in 1937) with a all-seeing location (the built version is signed by João Aguiar and Gallardo Zilhão from the CUO in 1945⁵). As suggested by the 1948 plan, the main buildings are a representation of political, economic and religious power, which are implanted along this square and the main avenue. A museum and study centre (CUO?, 1948?) were installed on the land originally intended for the empire square. The Commercial, Industry and Agriculture Association of Guinea – currently the headquarters of the PAIGC (Jorge Chaves, 1949-1952) – was moved from the avenue to the same square. In the 1970s, following José Pinto da Cunha's work⁶, the delegation of TAP is added to this remarkable group. Along the avenue, Sé Cathedral (renovated by João Simões/CUO, 1945, with the original 1942 design of Vasco Regaleira) and the post and telegraph headquarters (Lucínio Cruz/OUO, 1950-1955) were located on the first plot assigned to the City Hall and court (1941?). From there, Casa Gouveia and the football club, União Desportiva Internacional, were due to private initiatives.

The strategy of the New State was therefore to reinforce the overall configuration of the republican city and its representative aspects, qualifying the design of public, administrative and religious buildings, and implementing an iconographic programme of celebration of colonial presence by placing public art and sculptures on pivotal points (for example, the Nuno Tristão monument at the start of the avenue). Thus a historical and monumental setting was completed, which was already in existence from the fort São José de Amura (a project from Frei Manuel de Vinhais Sarmiento, 1766, and restored by

Luis Benavente in the New State policy of recovering historical overseas monuments) and the founding core (in old Bissau, some preliminary reports advise demolishing it, given the poor sanitary conditions in the neighbourhood in the second half of the 1940s).

Subsequent approaches to the Bissau plan were successively elaborated at a time close to Guinean independence. They had the objective of enhancing its capital status, with the following aspects being accentuated: the monumental role of the main axis road and the character of zoning that defines specific areas of the city (residential, hospital, sports and school areas). With the colonial war beginning in 1963, the military zone became strategic, dominating most plans. In these proposals, the city maintains its configuration and residential scale. The possibility of building for height was discarded (this trend appears very late in projects in the colonial context and therefore was not implemented), preferring to work with low densities, especially in residential neighbourhoods (an orthogonal grid from the old Avenida da Republic).

The low density option also had repercussions on the definition of "indigenous neighbourhoods", called "people's neighbourhoods" from 1959, which occupied the margins of the formal city. For the Urbanisation Plan of the people's neighbourhoods of Bissau (1959), Mário de Oliveira envisioned a change in the urban and architectural thinking of the architects of the newly-formed Department of Urbanism and Housing Services of the Directorate-General of Public Works and Communications at the Overseas Ministry. The project proposes self-construction (technically assisted and made from designs provided by architects) and a return to implementation inspired by the Garden City movement, regularising the native settlements with more organic and less geometric layouts, such as the earlier people's neighbourhood of Santa Luzia (1948) and da Ajuda.

The formal city unfolds in other places from a smaller urban expression than the squares of the empire, almost always marked with commemorative monuments (Alfândega Square, with monument of Diogo Gomes and Honório Barreto Square, which will be the subject of a proposal adjoining buildings designed by Eurico Pinto Lopes, No. 582, s.d, from the *ground* design provided by João Aguiar).

It is also during the time of Sarmiento Rodrigues that the celebrations of the 5th centenary are held. The date is marked with a series of urban interventions in several settlements like Varela, Cacheu, Teixeira Pinto (now Canchungo), Mansoa, Farim, Bafatá and New Lamego (now Gabu). They follow a territorial vision that positions Bissau at the centre of a road network (paving up old roads and constructing new bridges like in Ensalma), in a region characterised by a complex hydrographic basin.

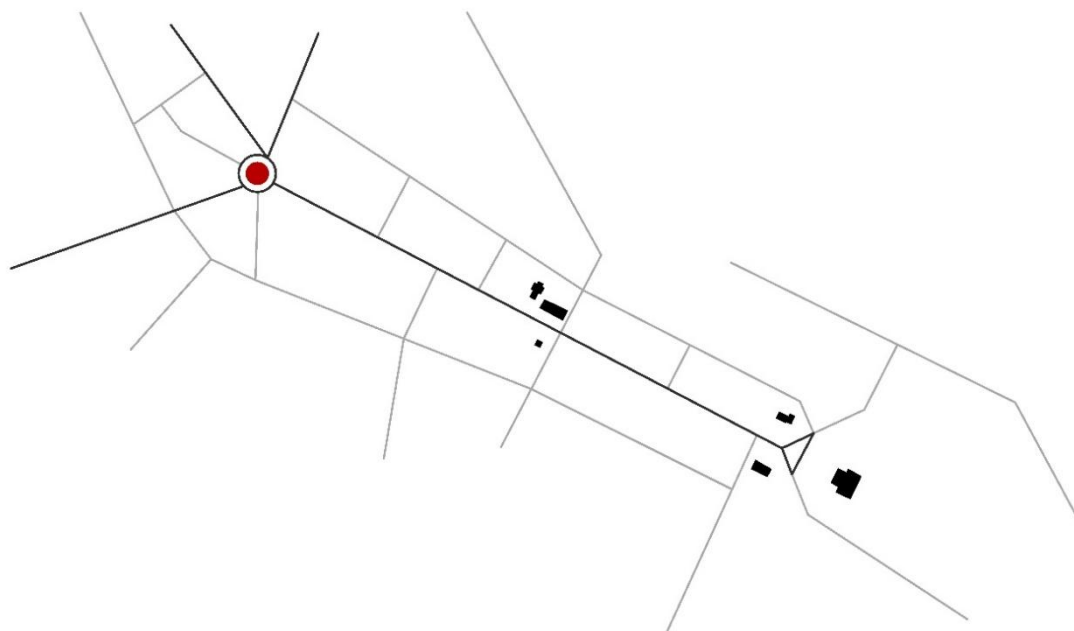


Fig. 5: Canchungo (formerly Teixeira Pinto), layout of the main avenue, c. 1946-1951. Redesign: Débora Félix and Bruno Macedo Ferreira, 2012/PTDC/ AURAQI/104964/2008



Fig. 6: Canchungo (formerly Teixeira Pinto), the main avenue. Photograph: Ana Vaz Milheiro, 2011



In each of these settlements, the design introduced part of a public square (almost always of a rounded kind) that delivers a tree-lined avenue with a central island and streetlights. An "urban scenography" is founded from the ground design, independent from architecture that appears to be relegated to a secondary role. Interventions appear to be designed by the Guinean Central Office of Geographic and Cartographic Services, being published in *Boletim Cultural da Guiné* in the volumes of 1948 with the signature of Eduardo José Pereira da Silva. Tendentiously, this new avenue configures a monumental axis that supports the main public facilities that become recurrent: the primary school (it is possible to identify a set of schools that follow the same project type, all completed around 1948, with a pavilion-based structure, hipped roof, two classrooms, sanitary facilities, residences for teachers, porches with arches), health post (which in Canchungo and Bafatá reach the scale of hospital structures, with the same being true for military areas), post office and telegraph buildings (a corner lot project), a military and sports club, a water tower and a community granary (a pavilion with a gabled roof). The house of the administrator and the administration headquarters are almost always on the axis of the avenue. The residences of officials, teachers and doctors distributed throughout the avenue confer some urbanity. The church serves as an element of representation of colonising religion, given that most of these local people are of Islamic or animist religions. Rarely is the object of an axial view positioned laterally.

The same rule is applied to different scales with minor variations. Orthogonal layouts become the most complex structures and include small tree-lined public squares equipped with recreational facilities and playgrounds. The intervention focused on a new avenue (like that in Bafatá), connecting the lower zone of the pre-existing town to expansion areas (along this axis is a market, garden, post office, administrative buildings, a church, school and a hospital), setting a expansion like that found in Mansoa, which extends the existing grid and the new avenue function as a new type of boulevard centre. This houses the power station, school, health post, two water towers and two administrative residences, and corresponds to a new foundation, altering the toponymy of other metropolitan inspirations: Gabu becomes New Lamego and Canchungo becomes Teixeira Pinto.

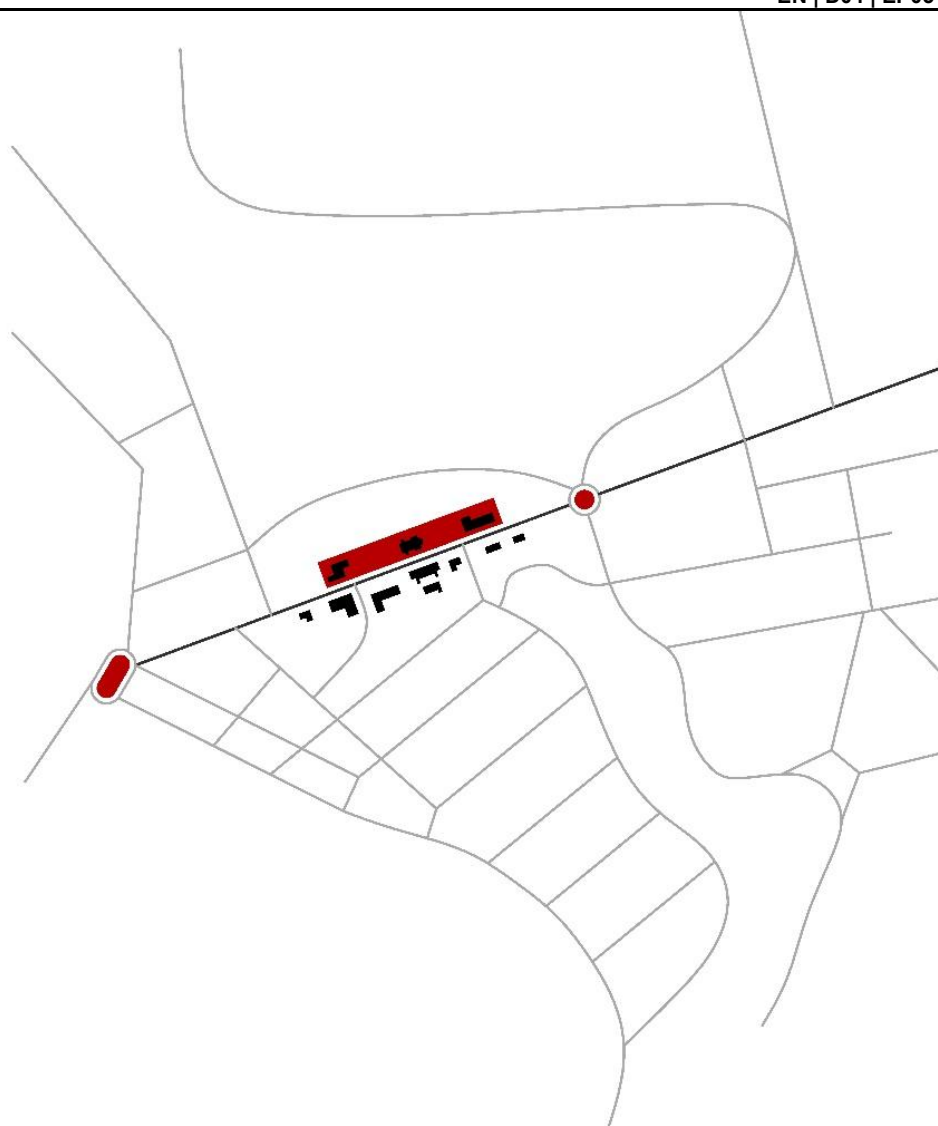


Fig. 7: Bafatá layout of the main avenue. Redesign: Débora Félix and Bruno Macedo Ferreira, 2012/PTDC/AURAQI/104964/2008



Fig. 8: Bafatá, the main avenue with the church reformulated by Eurico Pinto Lopes/CUO, 1950. Photograph: Ana Vaz Milheiro, 2011

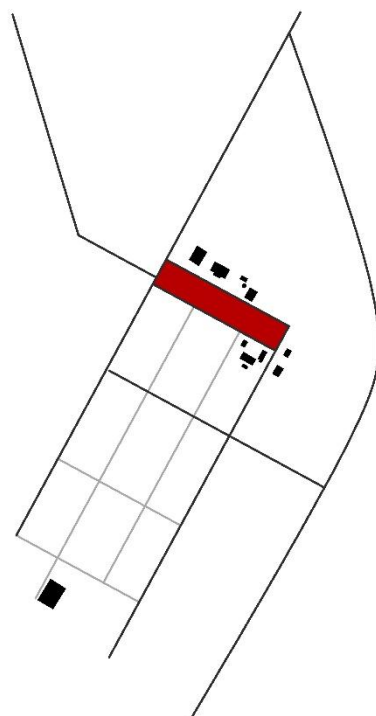


Fig. 9: Mansoa, s.d. Redesign: Débora Félix and Bruno Macedo Ferreira, 2012/PTDC/AURAQI/104964/2008



Fig. 10: Mansoa, meeting the existing path with the expansion by the New State (left: headquarters of the post office; bottom: one of the employee housings and water tank). Photograph: Ana Vaz Milheiro, 2011

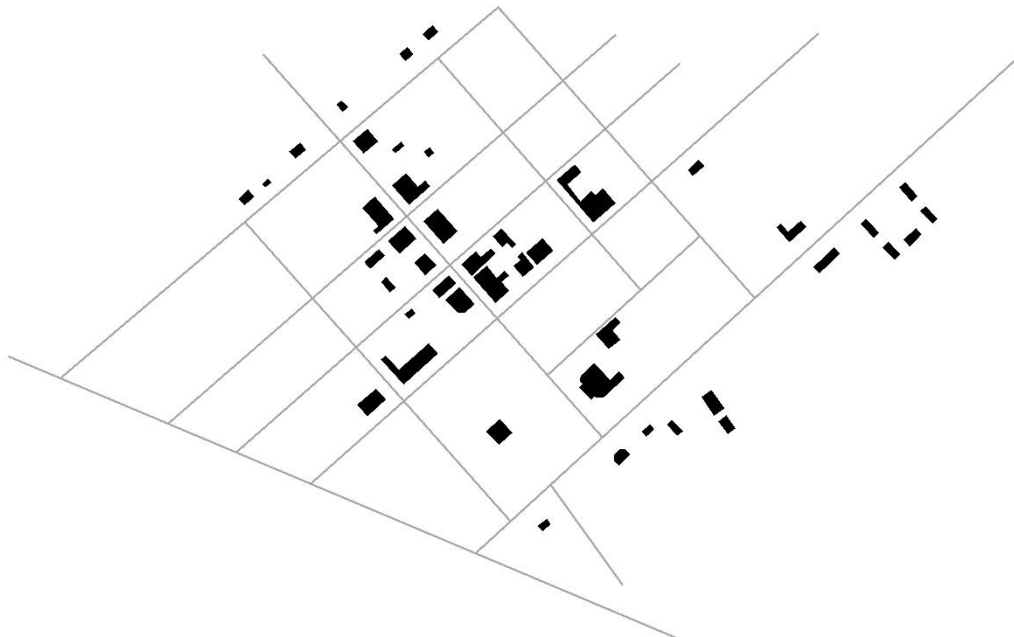


Fig. 11: Gabu (formerly New Lamego), Eduardo José Pereira da Silva?, c. 1946. From *Boletim Cultural da Guiné*. Redesign: Débora Félix and Bruno Macedo Ferreira, 2012/PTDC/AURAQI/104964/2008



Fig. 12: Gabu, one of the avenues with a central plaque and streetlights. Photograph: Ana Vaz Milheiro, 2011

In Gabu, the city grid lends itself to a further spread of the main functions (administration, official residences, school, sports club, post office, church and granary, etc.). In Canchungo, the avenue centralises assets, such as the official residences, administration building and the post office, which formalise the "public square" of representation; the school, water tanks, church and health structures are distributed along the axis.

Guinea thus assists the spread of a developmental pattern based on an urban model. The option is open to two interpretations: On the one hand, it reflects the "non-realistic" dimension of the project (or urban design), given the reality (represented by the ability to perform the architecture); on the other, it is no more than mounting an adequate backdrop to the festivities and celebrations of the colonial power. The two hypotheses, however, do not contradict the fact that they seek and spread an image of urbanity. The case of Cacheu, the first capital before Bolama and Bissau, is exemplary. The original nucleus, c. 1588 (Silveira [1956]: 146) declines during the nineteenth century. In the sequence of urban operations that transformed several Guinean towns, Avenida do 5º Centenário is open, lateral to the historical core and the fort. The new avenue ends in a largo/square onto the Cacheu River, which in 1960 received a pattern of Henriquinian celebrations (common in other former overseas Portuguese provinces). The scale of the avenue is distanced to both pre-existing and new constructions. Employee housing, the church and government headquarters maintain a modest appearance. The fact that increases the expectant character that the city communicates is also reflected in the use of the rule. The structure, however, is an element waiting to be occupied.

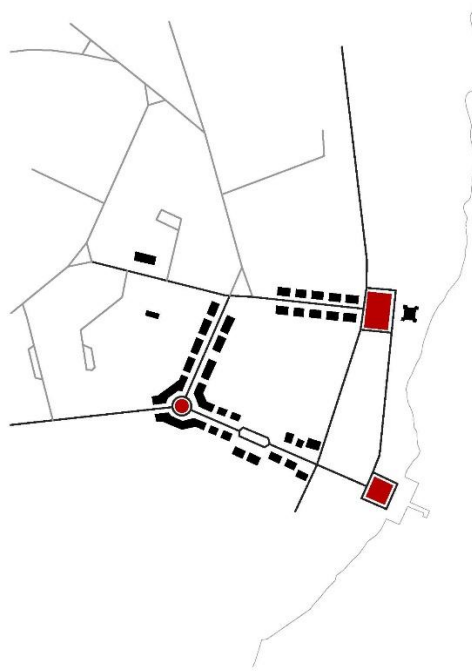


Fig. 13: Cacheu 13 [Spinola, Anthony of (Governor) (1973)] *Ordenamento Rural e Urbano na Guiné Portuguesa*, Edition from the Overseas Agency-General, Lisbon. Redesign: Débora Félix and Bruno Macedo Ferreira, 2012/ PTDC/AURAI/104964/2008



Fig. 14: Cacheu, overlooking Avenida 5º Centenário from the largo with a commemorative pattern of Henriquinian celebrations. Photograph: Ana Vaz Milheiro, 2011

The *model*: empire squares in Angola

To illustrate the idea of the *model* enunciated by Choay as an expression of a utopia for its paradigmatic dimension, we view a set of Angolan public squares (also drawn from the second half of the 1940s). The sixteenth century foundation of Luanda's São Paulo is in the expansion areas of the city, which the New State's interventions focused on from the twentieth century onwards. Largo Diogo Cão (currently Largo 17 de Setembro) set out in the Urbanisation Plan of Luanda City's Periphery by Etienne de Groër and David Moreira da Silva in 1943 as an empire square, functions as the first reference to the resource model. The document itself suggests that buildings of this square obey the hierarchical logic of classical composition. Architecture and *ground* design were defined as a closed unit that aimed to conceive an ideal. Referring to monumental Lisbon, particularly to the idea of a *square of representation* written in the eighteenth century Pombaline plan with the fulfilment of Praça do Comércio. An identical model was taken up in other Angolan cities in the same period, such as Lobito or New Lisbon (today Huambo).

Empire squares in Angola, which here are introduced as case studies, present uniqueness for the fact that their layout is associated with a specific architectural design, which allows them to be addressed within the perspective of the *model*. This architecture reproduces a pattern of public administration buildings that the CUO architects developed from the end of the 1940s, in order to fix a representation of architectural typology. Eurico Pinto Lopes was commissioned in 1948 to design the buildings that were most likely the first examples of this "style". These are the buildings of Alfândega Square and port administration in "contiguous land" located "in the open, rectangular square above the bay and in direct contact with the port area" (Lopes, No. 158, 1948: 2), currently Largo 17 de Setembro. Alfândega determines the approach adopted by the two volumes: "arcades open to the public on the first floor, with the eaves visible from the pavement" (Lopes, No. 158 1948: 2).

Architectural provisions for the construction of this place in Luanda therefore exist since Groër and Moreira da Silva's plan. This proposal, made up of an architecture of classic affiliation for this empire square, is a style that Eurico Pinto Lopes seeks to meet with his project. Strengthening the framework of the monumental assembly, the bell tower is located laterally "in order to face the avenue" (Lopes, No. 158 1948: 2), formerly Avenida Paulo Dias de Novais and currently Avenida 4 de Fevereiro. Eurico Pinto Lopes further clarifies that "light cream" is the "colour used on the outside wall" of buildings, which use "local materials" (Lopes, n. 158 1948: 6), and that "the cornice, pillars, pilasters, steps and sills are cavansite coated" (Lopes, n. 158, 1948: 7), determining a palette of common

materials for other analogous achievements.



Fig. 15: Square of the empire, Urbanisation Plan of Luanda City's Periphery, Etienne Groër and David Moreira da Silva, 1943. Photograph: Hugo Coelho [quota: IPAD 15909]



Fig. 16: Facilities of the port of Luanda, Eurico Pinto Lopes/CUO 1948. Photograph: Ana Vaz Milheiro, 2009

The strategic importance of the assembly is reflected in the need to provide it with "an official character". The goal is achieved within the pragmatic logic that defines the project practice of the CUO. Each structure has a "U" shape and arcade on the ground floor, retrieving a design of classic inspiration and tiered according to the three basic levels: basement, main body and crown. The upper floors are indented, and the facades are protected by advancing coverage and a portico of squared section columns (the buildings were however linked together⁷). Projects executed within the classical tradition are usual in the deep colonial architectural culture until the end of World War II. For example, Vasco Regaleira, one of the authors who creates an architecture "of distinctly colonial characteristics" from the adaptation of "Traditionalist Portuguese Architecture" (Regaleira in source, 2007: 513), built a series of buildings in Angola that tests this possibility, from the Ermida de Nossa Senhora da Arrábida (Lobito, 1927) of a more traditionalist profile, to the Commercial Association of the Plateau of Benguela, now the Government Palace (Huambo, 1945), designed by the CUO with a notoriously historicist layout.

With this proposal for the periphery of Luanda, the professionals of the CUO created the first truly autonomous model of the metropolis for the colonial buildings of an administrative profile, within the stylistic perspective of New State architecture. They allied this design of facades to an urban setting, implanting them preferably in largos or squares. An appropriate architectural composition for the Tropics was set up, suiting the functions of representation, which simultaneously harmonised with the ground plan of the city: arcades on the ground floor and galleries on the upper floors being introduced along the indented facades and roof cover.

The combination is also featured in other parts of the city. This is the case for the Finance and Accounting Services (1953), currently the Ministry of Finance, where a work supervised by João António Aguiar in the previous year was drawn up in the *Study Review of Luanda's Urbanisation Plan*. The building takes advantage of its panoramic implantation in the Largo da Mutamba. Architecturally, it is an evolution of an earlier version attributed to the architect António Ribeiro Martins of the Colony of Angola's Directorate of Public Works Services, which involved close collaboration with Aguiar (Source, 2007: 520). The initial project detected the same inner-organisation and introduced an outdoor gallery and colossal portico. Roofing is still flat, in accordance with the deco language featured in African public facilities of the 1930s, beginning in the following decade. However, the constructed building corresponds to a simplification of the historicist idiom, abdicating "pointless decorative details" (Aguiar, No. 385, 1953: 3). This option of figurative austerity became the hallmark of the CUO's administrative buildings (it was remodelled in 2003 with Chinese cooperation). The opinion on the adoption admits "that it can perhaps come to be changed, in the sense of enriching the facade", reinforcing the idea that a certain ornamental containment is not consensual practice.



Fig. 17: Largos 17 de Setembro and da Mutamba, Luanda. Redesign: Débora Félix and Bruno Macedo Ferreira, 2012/ PTDC/AURAI/104964/2008



Fig. 18: Ministry of Finance, the former building of the Finance and Accounting Services of Luanda, João António Aguiar /OUO, 1953 Largo da Mutamba. Photograph: Ana Vaz Milheiro, 2009

An identical architectural/urban configuration became widespread over much of Angola's territory. The relationship of Lobito's City Hall (Lucínio Cruz/CUO, 1948, and expansion by Francisco Castro Rodrigues in 1953) with the old square, Paços do Concelho, is exemplary. The city underwent an urban plan developed by the (OUO), which the local architect Francisco Castro Rodrigues corrected. Lobito Square opens to the sea, repeating the regular "U" shape plan of the squares in Lisbon and Luanda. The finalisation was defined by the Portas de Mar (whose landscaping and design of the sidewalk was also done by Castro Rodrigues), which is a reference to the Cais das Colunas of Praça do Comércio. The facades of the City Hall also follow the tropicalist design principles established before.



Fig. 19: Restinga, Lobito. Redesign: Débora Félix and Bruno Macedo Ferreira, 2012/PTDC/AURAQI/104964/2008



Fig. 20: Lobito City Hall, Lucínio Cruz/CUO, 1948/1953 [remodelling by Francisco Castro Rodrigues]. Photograph: Ana Vaz Milheiro, 2009

In Huambo (formerly New Lisbon), Agostinho Neto Square (previously Manuel Arriaga Square) is bordered by buildings with a similar stylistic treatment, where the scenography and monumental capacity of the system is purposely exploited. It is a "new" city. The foundation and design of Huambo (New Lisbon as a place name was introduced in 1928) dates back to the governance period of José Norton de Matos (1912-1915), who aimed to make it a provincial capital. In its radial structure (that is similar to the Empire Square), which is what the former Square of Manuel Arriaga evoked, its main generating hub predates the urbanist output of the CUO/OUO. New Lisbon's General Plan of Urbanisation that John Aguiar publishes in his book *L'Habitation Dans les Pays Tropicaux* (1952) enhances this expansion dynamic, as well as the spirit of zoning and the monumental character that had been inscribed on the city since the preliminary study of the military engineer Carlos Roma Machado (1910-1912), which is expanded four years later through the proposals of the architect José Cabral da Costa and da Silva (Source, 2007: 249). The city also knows an intermediate level of consolidation, approved in 1928 by António Vicente Ferreira (in the post of High Commissioner of Angola), Pereira da Silva and Dias Antunes (Fernandes 2011: 419). Aguiar's plan stresses functional areas, including the school and hospital perimeters, which gain a true campus scale given the size of the city. Through its programmatic vocation, this area of Huambo becomes one of the preferred places of New State architecture produced within the CUO from the second half of the 1950s, exploring representative premises based on different principles and starting a new phase of public promotion of Luso-African architecture.

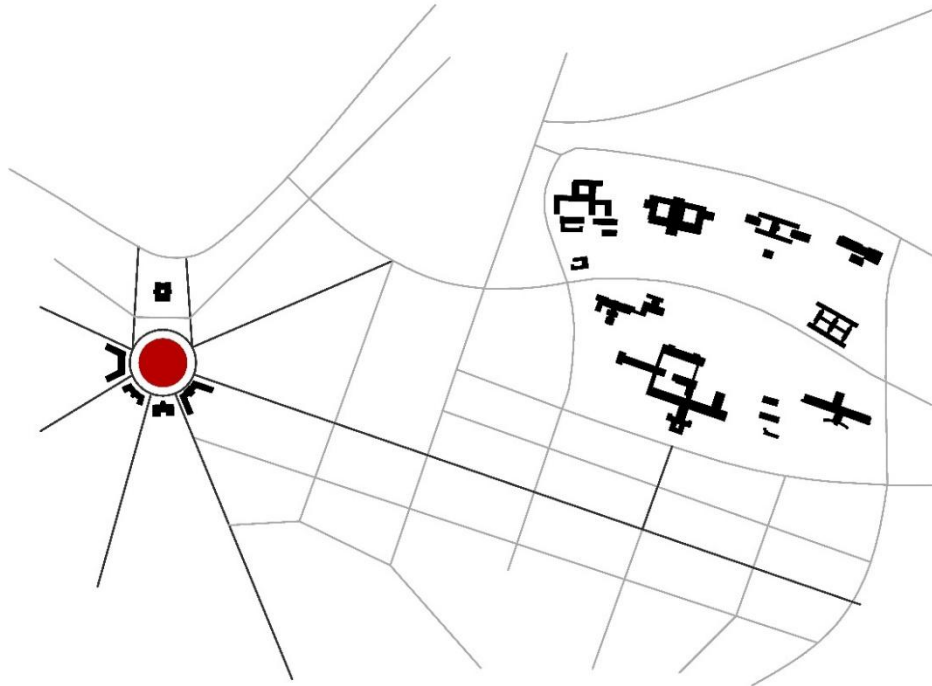


Fig. 21: Huambo (formerly New Lisbon), from the plan of João António Aguiar. Redesign: Débora Félix and Bruno Macedo Ferreira, 2012/ PTDC/AURAQI/104964/2008



Fig. 22: headquarters of the post office, Agostinho Neto Square (formerly Manuel Arriaga Square), Huambo. http://lh4.ggpht.com/_Z5wls_sUGpA/SeqeTSu8q3I/AAAAAAAAAL4/-DvwIntwb_g_/087.JPG

Final considerations

Empire squares are a confabulation of New State urbanism that were extended to African territories under Portuguese colonial administration. The cases here reflect different strategies in urban approaches. If the Guinean towns intervened for the celebrations of the 5th centenary reproduce a relatively rigid structure that nevertheless admits varied architectural expressions (configuring a *rule*), then the aforementioned Angolan squares are projected as *planimetric and volumetrically* designed units, outlining a principle *to be modelled on*.

In the first case, urban planning created a strong structure, receptive to various architectural occupations. Often, the achievements seem maladjusted to urban scale, making these Guinean cities expectant places. In the case of Angola, the performance reached between architecture and urban space is responsible for a unified standard that promotes a sense of greater stability and built a more obvious asset value. Different case studies, however, compared the built environments of other neighbouring countries through the originality of the implemented solutions, which were transformed into important civic centres and symbols of struggle for independence. It is proven, therefore, that the New State respected and reinforced the urban origins present in the colonial plans of the Republic. Its strategy was based on infrastructure efforts in colonial territory, which are reflected in the progressive urbanisation of the physical environment of the African city.

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¹ Cf. Decree No. 34: 173 Ministry of the Colonies: Creates, with the headquarter in Lisbon, the Colonial Urbanisation Office, a body common to all African colonies that defines their duties. *Diário do Governo*, Series I, No. 269, 6 December 1944 p.1167-1168.

² The body later assumes the name Overseas Urbanisation Office (OUO, 1951-1957) and the Department of Urbanism and Housing Services of the Directorate-General of Public Works and Communications at the Overseas Ministry (1958-1974).

³ [Andrade, Carlos Rebelo de]. Enlargement and beautification of the city of Beira, “*Arquitectura: Revista de Arte e Construção*”, No. 24, April 1932, p.134-135.

⁴ The document is a copy containing the following hand-written text: "This plan was offered to me in Portugal by Engineer Quinhones, its author. I am donating it to the National Bank of Guiné Bissau, in my view the only entity that does all it can for Guinea Bissau, 18/4/1979, Artur Augusto da Silva".

⁵ It was soon reformed in a Chinese cooperation project, apparently elaborated from the original CUO.

⁶ This was written to me by the architect António Matos Veloso (07/05/2012).

⁷ José Manuel Fernandes attributes the tower to Gallardo Zilhão and the current adaptation to Lucínio Cruz (Fernandes in Mattoso, 2011: 451). This information is confirmed by Francisco Castro Rodrigues in a training article of the CUO in the early 1950s (Azenhas do Mar, 23/09/2011), but does not match the documentary information gathered so far. Other studies point to António Ribeiro Martins as the author of the port of Luanda, without specifying the authorship of the buildings (Martins, 2010: 123-125).