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The City, The Suburb and The Rest. The Earth

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It has always seemed difficult to speak about the city in the sense of a transforming project, once all of the reforming urban intervention, as the name suggests, never enters into structural rupture with the system that manages it as a representation of the domination, or in other words of the social imperfection, that does not even research it, so beguiling has it become to build the veil hiding the varnish of seduction with which we help it to impose and reproduce itself.

There are questions that one could and maybe should place before all project actions. I do not do this with easy alibis, but I cannot avoid that the strategic vision becomes imposing when I deal with the urban problem, carting me off, at times, with a temptation of totalitarian visions. This leftism becomes more acute when faced with my *compagnons de route* entangled in the tactics of the possible intervention, the commitment, the technocratic / humanistic discourse.

This is said in a self-critical manner, because I do not feel untouched by the crisis of ideologies. The absence of serious debate leads me frequently, in the despair of solitude, either to History or to Poetry, and to increasingly valuing in my readings the former poetic values of and less the operatives that I still have to discover with clarity unless they are those continuing to guarantee the construction or maintenance of survival identities. And, being unviable for Order, and on guard in relation to nostalgia and even nationalism, the consideration of Freedom as a supreme value has been a guarantee of the justness of the paths of thinking. Without Order and with Freedom it is the conscience of the urgent necessity for an Ethic that should mark the difference. Until I can speak of our Moral and that of others with the same conviction of Trotsky or Breton. Being accused of being utopian or poetic I thus refuse the pragmatism in my readings of the transforming hypotheses of contemporariness with which, finally, all are satisfied or unsatisfied. Pure satisfaction can be found amongst the new barons of the regime, the dynamic executives of liberalism, without past or future, living the timeless circle of the present for which they are the holders of office. The others, young or old, go between unemployment and memory, recovering some dissatisfaction.

Except for the dissatisfied militant of the opposing political parties, the dissatisfied person is not so much subject to the stages of age as it is one who has that more or less spontaneous critical sense where hope dwells. Because I find myself in that group, I have pushed away the pragmatism and strict rationalism of those aligned with power who have done no more than sectorially reutilize the same global criteria that launched the foundations of modernity. Their objective, in reproducing infinitesimally pure satisfaction, is, as José Mattoso said the other day in Oporto, to give form to what they demagogically and caringly call the global village, a concept forged to hide the genocide, racism, chauvinism, hunger, social and sexual differences, or those between north and south, Africa or Asia, the destruction of the environment and the state of siege of the cities.

Frontispiece Vale do Ave.
Photo: Álvaro Domingues.

Having explained my difficulties before this theme, I will just give you some clues that will surely be academic. I will use in my text some segments of others, in order to better say what I intend, and not because I wish to impose their authority. For this reason I will not name them at every opportunity. I will re-use fragments of Italo Calvino's *The Invisible Cities*, of Douglas Coupland's *Generation X* and of Carlos Morais's *A Library for Gaia*.

The city was man's greatest creation, from spontaneous and defensive gregariousness to the Ideal City, still closed, a world inside a world. Following the destruction of the walls, there emerged large baroque, infinite and overwhelming perspectives, a totalitarian design of the world completely from the centre. It was the beginning of the end for cities. There remained the conviction of the possibility of design, still in the regular, rationalist and democratic urban fabric. Equality became regulated and, without limits, since then the center is missing. The growth was faster than the hesitations of the design; degradation grew and impiously portrayed the conflicts of class, divided on the open terrain.

Le Corbusier declared his aversion to the laws of the city and, doubtlessly, to all contextual groupings along many generations. Modern architecture really began to destroy the city. *Unité* is the mythical heroic antagonist, not just of the comfortable city life, but also of nature. One feels its attraction and its destructive character, the impatience and the violence.

The suburb grew at the same time as the new-cities were failing for being cities, and the non-cities for being still half-cities. Brasilia is a remaining-city, in spite of having been conceived as a suburb, trying to recover the lost centre and limit. It was surrounded by the spontaneity of authentically suburban growth. This growth itself confers the real character of a remaining-city upon it today. The error it represents is the paradigm of the conceptual fragility of the Modern.

In the time of the cities, objects on the land, one could say: The man who rides long through wild lands feels the wish for a city. Try walking for days between trees and stones. Rarely will the eye come to rest upon something. Trees and stones are only what they are. Finally the journey leads us to the city. Outside of it the empty land stretches to the horizon.

In the time of the countryside, the negative or opposite of the city, a shepherd could say to me:

– Sometimes I happen to cross cities, but I cannot tell them from one another. Ask me the names of the pastures: I know them all. Cities for me do not have names: they are places without leaves that separate one pasture from another. I travelled, visited cities and continents. One day being lost among houses and buildings I asked a passer-by where I was. It was the shepherd of other times.

– *It's not possible, I shouted. I don't know how long ago I entered a city and since then I have continued to increasingly penetrate its streets. How can I be where you say if I was in another, far removed from this one? – The places mix with one another. This city is everywhere. This should have been the Green Slope. My goats recognise their grass in the islands separating the traffic lanes (Calvino, 1993).*

How will our 21st century be, after all?

To speak to you about Oporto I would have to start by describing the entrance to the city. Certainly we imagine seeing a walled enclosure rising from the dusty plain, and, step by step, we approach the gate guarded by the controllers. As long as we do not enter, we remain outside of it.

If you believe this, you are wrong: in Oporto it will be different. We advance hours and hours and it is not yet clear whether we are in the city or still outside of it. From time to time on the sides of the road there is an increased density of houses with thin facades rising, either very high or very low, that appears to indicate that from then on the city fabric will become tighter. But as we continue we find more empty plots, and then a rusty agglomeration of workshops and warehouses, a cemetery, a funfair with carrousel, a slaughterhouse, a street of emaciated shops.

Some people will say: we come here to work every day; others will say: we return here to sleep. But in the city, where does one live? We proceed, passing from one periphery to another. Finally we ask the way to leave the city. Once again we pass through a string of scattered suburbs. Night falls. What we abdicate to understand is whether there exists an Oporto, obscured in some hidden place, recognizable and memorable to those who have been there, or whether Oporto is just a periphery of itself and its center is everywhere.

The question that begins to cause us anguish is different; is there an outside, outside of Oporto? Or is it that the more we distance ourselves from the city, we limit ourselves to passing from a limbo to another limbo and will never again manage to leave?

The greatest creation of our time, before the 21st century, is the suburb. It tends to spread its uniform model over all of the territory. At the beginning it leans against what we called the city, and then it advances upon it, destroying it to construct itself and in another sense to follow the various profit-earning structures that the market commands. The suburb has no site; it defined itself when man stopped making cities, in the doubt that remained in him when the countryside stopped defining itself as the city's opponent. The suburb has no inventors because it was never accepted as a non-city, it is something else that nobody ever wanted to programme. And when Le Corbusier designed the non-city, his interpreters and followers used

his project in the city. We began loosing the city without replacing it, neither creating city nor something new. That is how the suburb was born, by spontaneous generation, where it has been possible to continue living, integrating, even, some advantages of progress. This new habitat, designed by speculation, cannot but be one of the programmatic models of the future. Its great quality is the mixing of people, professions and memories that could cause a new culture, one we can provisionally call suburban, to flourish, if freedom gives origin to an ethic that transforms violence into solidarity, that works the jungle so that new grain fields can be sown. There, there is no collective memory; one lives in the construction of the circumstantial consensus. The only possibility is to give form to this consensus, the provisional forms of a new desirably ephemeral architecture. And no group need be forced to have memories that in reality they do not have, nor do they need to be told that the only time in which living was worthwhile is the past and that the only time that might become interesting is the future.

Yes, but what future? I, one of the unsatisfied but not a militant, feel that I should leave some signs of hope that the Oporto of the 21st century should not be the limbo I imagined earlier. As an architect and without overcoming the atavisms of my neo-realist education, I leave you three moralistic notes on three themes I am thinking of developing in future academic lectures and on various utopian or science fiction projects: the city, the suburb and the rest.

The city

The city should have a rigorously limited area and should constitute a space closed upon itself. It should be carefully restored, preserving all the indications of its historical journey as a city. All the elements that provoke rupture on the tranquil reading of its process, that is to say that break with its urban lifestyle should be mercilessly demolished. The city is a monument inhabited by people that like it and like to tell it. A place of memory, of roots taking hold and authenticity, the city should be the object of a cultural and artistic operation of suggestive, aesthetic and critical high potential: University, pure research, small commerce, culture and leisure, the little remaining industrial production, the local administration, the commemoration, the festivity, the parade, the tourism, the regional gastronomy, the hospitality. The collective transports will be underground and individual mechanical transport will be discouraged. The stations for transporting people out of the city will be carefully hidden, in order to reaffirm through every possible means the concentrating power of the urban space. How was it possible in Brasilia to imagine the centre as an ostensive bus terminal?

Whenever its inhabitants feel attacked by tiredness and no longer can put up with their jobs, their relatives, the house and the street, the debts, the people one should greet, they will decide to transfer to another city, where each one of them will take another job, another wife, will see another landscape outside of the window, will spend the

night with other gossip or other friends. In this way life renews itself from change to change, between cities that present themselves each with something different from the others. This is the only pact existing between cities, the exchange. Associations such as “metropolitan area” should be avoided at all costs, in order to prevent the risk of planning that might diminish the city’s identity or that might rank its respective importances. Master plans of all types are not admissible. All is resolved in the City Office of History that produces BP’s and IP’s, respectively Beautification Plans and Improvement Plans.

The suburb

The suburb will deserve our special affection since it consists of the first constructed manifestation of the supersession of the traditional city and an unsubstitutable document of contemporaneity, the greatest monument of the 20th century.

Building licences for construction are definitively suspended.

Only demolition projects are allowed or in very special cases those of restitution. On the rare situations of unconcluded sub-urbanisation it will still be possible to construct with maximum profit-earning criteria. The objective is to clarify the discontinuity, the fragmentation, it is to give modern architects the possibility of realising what they always desired: to destroy History and create added value.

Public transport and suburban stations should dominate the landscape. Routes should not be hierarchized, privileging high speed routes that cross the space in all directions. The underground passages and viaducts will help to resolve the circulation whenever possible, increasing its complexity. Care should be taken so that the empty spaces existing or resulting from demolitions should not be not paved and even less planted with trees. The dwellers will receive incentives to abandon the suburb, and are only to be substituted by non-Europeans. Sectorial plans to increase value will be elaborated by the various district management committees to improve living conditions for the suburbanites who wish to maintain their category, clearly defining the special zones to be demolished. Flat roofs will substitute all the tiled roofs, nor will it be permissible to use natural materials such as stone or wood or paint with lime. This is the place for the market, street peddlers, exotic restaurants, Nick Cave concerts, experimental and vanguard shows, applied research, polytechnic education, the luna park, trendy bars, headquarters of ethnic or sexual minorities’ associations, which comprise the whole population. The popular idea that shopping malls only matter on the inside should be maintained, their exterior should be kept irrelevant. This will sustain the pretence that the volumes of large hypermarkets thrown onto the land do not in fact exist. Along their walls will be slogans of the kind “to buy is to create”, “stop History”, “fly by jet while you still can”, “re-invent the middle class”, “less is a possibility”.

In the suburb the people wandering through the streets do not know one another. When they see one another they imagine a thousand

things of one another, the encounters that might take place between themselves, the conversations, the caresses. But nobody greets anybody, looks are exchanged for a second and are then diverted, seeking new looks, they do not stop. A vibration of lust continually moves the suburb, the most chaste of places. Campaigns should be launched so that men and women begin to live their dreams. Thus all the ghosts will become people with whom one could begin a story of pursuits, misunderstandings, shocks and oppressions and end decisively with what remains of the atavistic fantasy.

The rest

The dwellers of the suburb are the inhabitants of the present. At times they think of the future and what reminds them of the future is the next city. Sometimes they go to it to think and once in a while they go to the desert, the name they give to the rest because they have yet to understand it.

Some of these people have made depositions:

– We live our lives of periphery; we are marginalised and there are many things in which we prefer not to participate. We wanted silence and now we have silence. We arrived here covered in wounds and sores. Our system had stopped working, broken down with the smell of copy machines, letter paper and the interminable stress of jobs with no objective in which one works unwillingly and nobody thanks us. We suffered conditioning that led us to confuse going shopping with creativity, to take anti-depressants and to think that renting a video on a Saturday night is enough. But now things are going a lot better.

– Either our lives have history, or we have no way of fulfilling them.

– I agree. We know that that was why we left the lives we were living behind us and that we came to the desert – in order to tell stories and thus turn our lives into novels worth telling (Morais, 1994).

The new centurionisation of the territory, without Imperial Rome, will have to hear many stories to be designed. Sometimes a little interval in the midst of an incongruent landscape will be enough, a flourishing of lights in the mist, the dialogue of two passers-by meeting in the middle of their wanderings, to think that from there we can join piece by piece, fragments mixed with the rest, instants separated by intervals. Even after interviewing Artur Soria y Mata and Milyutin, it is risky and demands a continuous attention and apprenticeship: to try and know how to recognise, in the midst of hell, whom and what is not hell, and to make it live and give it a place. That is what I called hope.

The Earth or the virtual city

The large scale planning intervention (the largest of which will be the Earth itself), done with rigidity and precision, will be terrible. The

complexity of Earth, the entanglement of its balances, some subtle and imperceptible, others tectonic and colossal, allied to the chronic foolishness of man, lead one to push away the hypothesis of traditional planning systems for the large scale intervention.

A system of planning presupposes a strong rational system of management. The Earth is not manageable as a whole by man, but on the contrary, it evolves with balances and re-balances that transcend it like an isolated species. Its self-regulation is induced by its conservation.

If the contrary were true it would be an inert object piloted by man, a space ship on its way to other distances.

This is the story that should be told to the first children of the rest, so that they might understand that they should free themselves from the images that until now have advertised the things they wanted.

After the successive failure of mega-projects requiring high levels of concentration and homogenisation, that is reduced diversity, it would be nice to romantically return to the concept of the attractive, intelligent and incomplete concept of “small is beautiful”. The turbulence and mutation of the environment, the growth and demand for our intelligent capacity to understand the world, presents us, in the meantime, with new problems that affect the individual and small groups, that demand synergies that might mobilise and demobilise themselves within the scope of more extensive groups, or vaster problems that demand an understanding of everything.

If I tell you that the rest is discontinuous in time and space, either more dispersed or denser, do not believe that we can stop searching for it. What will unite us men from diverse places and crazy characters? Probably the 21st century will be one of a reticulated planet or of the planning of virtual space.

Perhaps the electronic highways represent an indispensable technological infrastructure in order to achieve the great aspiration to connect what can not and should not be objectively connected.

We will leave, certainly, many virgin lands, reserves, no man’s lands, indispensable hotbeds for the creation of diversity. It will be between the systems and the chaos that humanity will have to engender the indispensable equation for understanding the third millennium.

CODA

The first part of this article (including the sections “the City”, “the Suburb”, “the Rest”, and “the Earth or the virtual city”) was originally written for a round-table debate held at the University of Porto in June 1994¹. The guest editors of *Joelho 8* asked me to publish it once again for its relevance in a discussion on ideas and practices for the European City, the theme of this issue. For me, the original aura that this text might have had in a time of transition or little awareness is now lost. Today, I think the metaphors I have used in 1994 should be replaced by the reality observed in the Vale do Ave region. Hence, I’ve decided

to extend the original text with a coda, “Practiced places versus places of memory”, which I’ve originally written in 2013, and published in Portuguese in the magazine *Património*.

Practiced places versus places of memory

As a first warning, we affirm that we are neither interested in, nor find operative, the distinction between the so-called “historic center” and the rest of the city. Everything is city and all of it is, nowadays, inherited city. In fact, the very term “historic center” itself constitutes a trap.

We continue by pointing out that, for architects, History is of particular interest when some of its aspects help to recognise and understand the territory for the exercise of the discipline. As this exercise stems from the capacity to imagine solutions for the future, it is these possible solutions that provide the analytical matrix. They affect, define and limit the field of analysis, and therefore, not all History is of interest. Even when the future of the city, as a social fact par excellence, is still a nebula without clear contours, it is then that only design can display, in a process that gradually conforms it, pointing it to a rigorous

Fig. 2 Vale do Ave.
Photo: Álvaro Domingues.



definition. It is, therefore, our intent, that which makes the need for analysis clear: historical and all others, geographic, morpho-typological or sociological and anthropological, or even political, as we are in the field of citizens' rights.

This starting position implies the neglect of any inescapable fatality in the design of the territory in transformation. This would, anyway, detract the architect from any intervention, rendered useless within the already stabilised and preserved historical centres, as a result of their heritage classification, which identifies them as well defined and limited special places, defended from rampant fury, be it from speculation or from the exercise of the vital needs of contemporaneity. The parentheses that imprison historical centres and take them out of the wider context of the expanding city have produced the greatest misunderstandings.

These considerations justify the ambition and, perhaps, the responsibility, to reflect, outside the vest-of-forces that so often imprisons us – to speak of the old stones, leaving the new ones for the cartography of the diffuse or for the books of Álvaro Domingues², seizing the opportunity to try to discuss the concepts underlying the phrase of the back cover of the book quoted in the note that we reproduce here: *The urban is an unconfined and unstable "outside", as opposed to the image of the walled city* (Domingues, 2009).

Departing from the analytical processes in their connection to the design, we are convinced that, even if we base the analysis of the city on apparently objective techniques and procedures, this does not prevent it from being sequestered by desire, imagination and remembrance. This is where the key that allows us to consider the analysis as part of the design will reside.

Analysing is tantamount to re-describing. Only with a patient work of re-description of the city, we can get to know its intimate substance. To observe, to imagine and to design is, perhaps, the only passable route to reach an interpretation of the city that, at the same time, presupposes an idea of transformation and design.

This mixture of rigor and invention may shed some light on the everlasting discussion on the connection between analysis and design.

The bond we establish with the city and its enigmatic condition is complex and unstable: either it quickly settles in complicity, or it drifts towards rebuke and regret. But, as we perform our experience of the city, it gradually becomes an imaginary construction for which we can and should provide a form.

In fact, although not excessive, our confidence in the exercise of architecture is sincere, provided we have the courage and, above all, the willingness, to talk about politics once again.

We will attempt an approximation to the concreteness of our territory, the coastline of the peninsular northwest, stemming from disciplinary beliefs, neither putting aside the essential role of theory and criticism, nor forgetting the importance of new technologies.

The recent concept of *diffuse urbanism*, stimulating and apparently innovative as it is, has, from our point of view, grounded academic reflections that do not deepen the knowledge of the real, rather making it unknown, with its cartography being a purely formal exercise. The worst being that it neither seems to be operative, nor instrumental, in the transformation of the real, rather even imposing a certain fatalism that deflates the function of design.

When the Romans depopulated the hillforts (*castros*) and gave land to its inhabitants, in a gesture of great economic impact, the population scattered across the countryside.

The colonisers did not build “aldeias da luz”³ to rehouse the new citizens of Rome, rather dispersing them across the fertile lands, all the while building villas for themselves. A network of paths was gradually drawn on the territory, connecting houses, fields and mills, pigeon houses or small handcraft workshops, chapels or sanctuaries and cemeteries. The Roman roads, previously drawn as less organic, linked the main urban centres independently of that particular network.

This dispersion was *diffuse* and was already studied by Alberto Sampaio⁴.

We contacted a small group of young people from the Vale do Ave region, in the parish of Lordelo from the Municipality of Guimarães, next to Covas, bordering Santo Tirso.

These young people, averaging 18 years old, belong to the diffused movement of the outraged, *peace and love*, *facebook*, hoodie, no violence in their gaze, behaviour or talk. They are factory workers, students, freaks with moderate BPM⁵ and a joint ready to be lit. Self-named “warriors of peace”.

Asked about their own reading of the Vale do Ave, they explained that, being all from Lordelo, they belonged to different places, even offering some stimulating names, Chamusca, Alto, Rua Nova, Atainde, Monte, Lubazim, Paço, Escalheiros, etc..

They were unable to explain how the borders of these places were defined (*great question!* they said), promising to do some research, *consulting the elders and the internet*.

I, myself, knew that on the rural path to my primary school, I went through four places and that on a granite table, placed in a key, but enigmatic, place, there was an annual lunch of representatives from the six places of the parish.

One of these youngsters, a resident of Rua da Estrada 105, sent us an e-mail a few days later. *We researched, and on the maps of the parish the places are not noted, only names of streets and alleys... concluding: they have been modernized!*

It is true that they have been modernized. The Postal Office forced all streets to be named and all houses to have a number and thus, the signs of the old roads or paths, that announced the places, gradually disappeared. Traces still remain in some markedly rural areas: Mosteiro, Testorio, Carretouro, Riolongo, Pardelhas, Chãos, Costa.

Meanwhile, we recall the SAAL program and the plots of territory that we called operational units⁶, we remember Fernando Távora, Architect, and his Detailed Masterplans that anticipated the General Masterplan of Guimarães... but we remain doubtful! Times are changing, some colleagues keep telling us. The ways of the present must go through other paths, as our time corresponds to a new and still not recognizable paradigm!

Despite our doubts, we persevered on the path we had taken, encouraged by the perplexity of the “warriors of peace”, who had also informed us that there is, in their parish, a factory so large that it sits across two parishes at the same time. A virtual borderline goes across the building, separating places, and this line is visible for some, i.e. them.

First conclusion; without them, we will never understand anything, except the spectacular images of disorder that are the mysterious expression of a territory that must be deciphered, analysed, before acting (badly) or giving up (worse)!

That is to say – second conclusion – it is paramount to give meaning to cartography, to infuse it with content and, for this, enter all the aforementioned disciplines, including History and citizens’ participation!

Planning, which has also been ironically termed “territorial planning”, has thus different methodological hypotheses which, in extreme cases, can be characterised in two different ways.

Either create a structure that encompasses everything, establishing a new grid or network that overlaps the territorial reality, without seeking any of its particularities, as if proposing a new super-place, a new world with value in itself, a-historical, timeless, modern, as a design by Paulo Mendes da Rocha.

Or designing or redesigning the territory, from its deciphering, which we used to name re-description, trying to identify its fragments, explaining and encompassing them, and from the casuistry of this specific reality, carry out its restructuring. In this option, the design intervention should consolidate or reinvent “practiced places” which, like the old, inventoried and classified places, should be promoted alongside them as “places of memory”.

For the architects who have refused the first process, and with the inescapable laziness caused by the burden of deepening knowledge that the second implies, the easiest way will be to continue designing the public spaces, without understanding continuities or discontinuities, as if they were automatically generating new sociabilities, always fearing some connotation with the so-called “historic city”, considered an irreversibly lost model. This intermediate process, which has been called “urban design”, has been allowing architects/urban planners to give themselves a “taste” free from major dramas that would require them to reflect more deeply or to consider their solutions facing the citizens.

By placing ourselves in the second methodological hypothesis, we consider the “historical center” one of the places, among others,

perhaps still sub-divisible, with the advantage over other places to have, from the outset, a clear definition of limits, usually corresponding to the medieval wall, even if it no longer exists.

As in any of the other places that today constitute the so-called *diffuse*, to be deciphered, it will be, therefore, from its inner logic that the processes will be grounded and the references searched, so that in the casuistry of each and every one the appropriate design to redefine and qualify them can be determined, without any mechanical morpho-topological transposition, from one place to any other.

Even if it has the dignity and symbolic value of the medieval city.

We must confess that, in the heterodoxy of our personal conformation, insoluble contradictions emerge between bourgeois taste and the torment of History, which reconsidered, represents some sort of postmodern updating of this very same conformation.

The vanguards realized the dynamics of a revolutionary acceleration in the ways of living, producing and leisure. They applauded the new metropolis framed in concrete and steel, in the nudity of glass. The new city was the geometric, luminous and timeless city of de Chirico's metaphysical painting; the vertical and towering city of Sant'Elia.

The sight of the collapse of the past is as bleak as the stinginess of its survivors, and Marinetti therefore proposed, as a shock therapy, *to release the country from its fetid gangrene of teachers, archaeologists, cicerones, and antiquarians* (Marinetti, 1909).

For the architect of today, it is no longer a question of the continuous extinction and total renovation of the grand proposals of the Modern, nor of the contemplation or reorganisation of vacant sites in between its scattered debris, or of the proposals of its revision. The possibilities of History are especially enriched when the disciplinary exercise is taken as social cause, tending to respond to the aspirations of Man, who has the right to the recognition of his past, his place of residence and the right to participate in the process of its transformation.

1 → This debate was held at Reitoria da Universidade do Porto, in June 1994, in a session with the title “A cidade em estado de sítio” (The City in a state of siege), with the participation of Nuno Portas, Jorge Figueira, Álvaro Domingues, Guilherme Ferreira, Isabel Duarte and Paulo Varela Gomes. The article was originally published in Alexandre Alves Costa, *Candidatura ao Prémio Jean Tschumi, UIA 2005, Ordem dos Arquitectos, 2005*. The text was translated into English by Paul Bernard. The translation of the CODA into English was made by Manuel Montenegro and published in this issue of *Joelho* for the first time.

2 → Among other works, Álvaro Domingues is the author of *A Rua da Estrada*, Dafne Editora, 2009.

3 → Reference to Aldeia da Luz, built to rehouse the inhabitants of the former village of Luz, submerged by the waters of the Alqueva Dam. The new village was built between 1998 and 2002 in order to maintain, in essence, the characteristics of the previous village.

4 → Alberto da Cunha Sampaio, historian, was born in 1841, in Guimarães, graduating in Law from the Universidade de Coimbra. He gained recognition throughout his life as the pioneer of economic and social history. He began studies on the agrarian history of Portugal, with the 1885 publication in the *Revista de Guimarães* of the first article in the series, *A propriedade e a cultura do Minho*, which he would further elaborate with one of his best known works, *As Villas do Norte de Portugal*.

5 → BPM, “beats per minute”, set the rhythm and, in a way, the intensity of the music they listen or produce.

6 → The “operational unit” should be an area with some architectural and urban unity, coinciding with the area of influence of the Residents Commission, that is, with other identities of a sociological or even political nature. It would, therefore, be an identitarian, relational and historical place. It would have the potential, within its strict and rigorous limits, to solve all its housing problems. The design should thus consolidate, or reinvent, a “practiced place”.

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