

# Architecture and Power in the University City of Lisbon (Portugal). Political dimensions of a project from the salazarist dictatorship

## Arquitectura y Poder en la Ciudad Universitaria de Lisboa (Portugal). Dimensiones políticas de un proyecto de la dictadura salazarista

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**Abstract:** This article aims to focus on the political dimension of the University City of Lisbon (Portugal) project. It seeks to establish not only the ideological and aesthetic principles underlying its construction in the 1950s, during the dictatorial Estado Novo regime led by António de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970), but also key events that took

**Resumen:** Este artículo pretende centrarse en la dimensión política del proyecto de la Ciudad Universitaria de Lisboa (Portugal). Para ello, se buscará establecer no solo los principios ideológicos y estéticos subyacentes a su construcción en los años 50, durante el régimen dictatorial del Estado Novo presidido por António de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970),

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place there and which would prove decisive in the end of the longest authoritarian regime in Western Europe in the 20th century. The academic crisis of 1962 was the first to unfold in the newly inaugurated University City of Lisbon. With a decisive impact on weakening the regime and transforming university spaces into places for asserting freedom, successive academic crises would play a pivotal role in the fall of the dictatorship in 1974, a regime that had ruled the country for more than four decades. These crises also contributed to the enrichment of the *Spiritus Loci* of the University City of Lisbon, as reflected in its designation as a National Monument in 2023.

**Keywords:** Estado Novo, university architecture, “cultural university”, student resistance, heritage.

sino también los importantes acontecimientos que tuvieron lugar allí y que resultarían determinantes para el fin del régimen autoritario más largo de Europa Occidental en el siglo XX. La crisis académica de 1962 fue la primera en tener como escenario la recién inaugurada Ciudad Universitaria de Lisboa. Con un peso decisivo en el debilitamiento del régimen y en la transformación de los espacios universitarios en lugares de afirmación de libertad, las sucesivas crisis académicas contribuirían decisivamente a la caída, en 1974, de una dictadura que dominaba el país desde hacía más de cuatro décadas, pero también al enriquecimiento del *Spiritus Loci* de la Ciudad Universitaria de Lisboa, que la clasificación en 2023 como Monumento Nacional refleja de manera precisa.

**Keywords:** Estado Novo, arquitectura universitaria, “universidad cultural”, resistencia estudiantil, patrimonio.

## Introduction

The study of the architectural projects of the University City, carried out between 1938 and 1961 by architect Porfírio Pardal Monteiro (1897-1957) and his nephew António Pardal Monteiro (1928-2012), found favourable conditions for its realization in the context of the celebration of the Centenary of the University of Lisbon in 2011. The research developed at that time, along with subsequent studies, allowed for significant advances in understanding the buildings of the Faculties of Law and Humanities and the Rectorate, both in terms of their architecture and the arts integrated within them, including sculpture, painting, stained glass, tiles, and mosaics<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ana Mehnert Pascoal, *A Cidade do Saber. O Património Artístico Integrado nos Edifícios de Pardal Monteiro para a Cidade Universitária de Lisboa (1934-1961)* (Lisboa: Universidade de Lisboa, 2012); Maria João Neto and Ana Mehnert Pascoal, “Cidade Universitária: ciência, espaço e função”, in *Património da Universidade de Lisboa*, ed. Marta C. Lourenço and Maria João Neto (Lisboa: Tinta da China, 2011) 173-194; Clara Moura Soares and Ana Mehnert Pascoal, “Cidade Universitária: um programa decorativo integrado”, in *Património da Universidade de Lisboa*, ed. Marta C. Lourenço and Maria João Neto (Lisboa: Tinta da China, 2011) 195-214; João Pardal Monteiro, *Para o Projeto Global – nove décadas de obra. Arte, design e técnica na Arquitetura do atelier Pardal Monteiro*. Tese de Doutoramento, Faculdade de Arquitetura, Universidade Técnica de Lisboa, 2012, available at [https://pardalmonteiro.com/Para\\_o\\_projeto\\_global-Volume\\_I.pdf](https://pardalmonteiro.com/Para_o_projeto_global-Volume_I.pdf); Maria João Neto and Clara Moura Soares, “Os Edifícios da Cidade Universitária de Lisboa projetados por Pardal Monteiro. Um Património a conhecer” in *Arquitetura Universitaria. Ciudades Patrimonio Mundial*, ed. Javier Rivera Blanco (Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, 2018) 269-289

The urban planning perspective of the University City of Lisbon has also been studied by Patrícia Pedrosa in her master's thesis entitled *Cidade Universitária de Lisboa (1911-1950). Génese de uma difícil territorialização* (2007), resulting in a critical reading of the territory and its urban evolution during the mentioned period.

The present study aims to focus not only on the architectural, artistic, or urban dimensions of the complex but on the political dimension of the project, seeking an integrated approach to its various aspects, where the protagonists, promoters, and users of the space play a fundamental role.

Although architecture in authoritarian and totalitarian regimes is an evident vehicle for asserting power, through the ideologies it carries and the messages it seeks to convey, there are other equally relevant issues that must be considered when analysing the political project of the University City of Lisbon. Through a global reading of the university project of head of government António Oliveira Salazar, heavily influenced by German models<sup>2</sup>, North American campuses<sup>3</sup>, and, above all, by the monumental architecture of Benito Mussolini's *Città Universitaria* in Rome, the aim is to analyse the new university campus in the city of Lisbon within the context of the regime's policies, concerning the mission to modernise university education and research in Portugal, as well as the relationship the regime sought to establish with young university students.

For this purpose, it is important to assess the political significance of the intention to create University Cities in Portugal from the 1930s onwards —the Estado Novo regime began in 1933— as clusters of infrastructure and services designed specifically for a community composed of academics (students, professors, staff). It is also relevant to identify the impact that these university structures, as they were being built, had on the country and, in particular, on the student community. What changes did the new and modern infrastructure bring to the life of students in a country governed by old conservative and authoritarian principles, dominated by tight mechanisms of repression and control over the population? What hopes did the new university campuses,

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<sup>2</sup> Barbara Miller Lane, "Interpreting Nazi Architecture: The Case of Albert Speer", in *Ultra terminum vagari: scritti in onore di Carl Nylander*, ed. Börje Magnusson, et al. (Rome: Quasar, 1997) 155-169; Christine Beese, "Grand Tour in Reverse: Marcello Piacentini's Tour of Germany in 1930 and 1931", *Architectural Histories*, 4(1): (October 2016):1-18, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/ah.197>

<sup>3</sup> Paul Hardin Kapp, "The University Campus in the United States—As a Designed Work to Produce Knowledge; and as an Artefact of Cultural Heritage", *Built Heritage* 2(1) (March 2018): 49-65.

equipped with sophisticated laboratories, spacious auditoriums, recreational and sports spaces, inspire in the higher education students of the time? What effects did the academic crises, registered worldwide in the 1960s, have in Portugal, at a time when the University City of Lisbon was just being inaugurated? What memories and tangible and intangible heritage were left behind by these times, contributing to the construction of the *Spiritus Loci*? What responsibilities do those who continue to have the privilege of living in those memory-filled spaces bear today, in their preservation and dissemination?

These are the questions that guide this article, which, through various sources —written (periodical press, archival documentation, and publications), oral (interviews, documentaries, reports), and iconographic (photographs and films)— seeks answers within the context of an integrated vision of architecture, politics, and the social values inherent in the University City of Lisbon project.

### *Under the motto of modernising University Education and Research in Portugal*

During the Estado Novo, the Universities drastically distanced themselves from the principles of expansion, diversification, and autonomy that had been granted to them during the First Republic<sup>4</sup>. They lost pedagogical, academic, and administrative autonomy, becoming entirely dependent on the decisions and will of the government. The essential concepts of the University under the new regime clearly reflected the influences of Italian fascist and Nazi propaganda<sup>5</sup>.

The University, as an “organic corporation” of the dictatorial regime, would become an eloquent expression of a traditionalist and imperial nationalism, rooted in christian ethics, catholic morals, and patriotic values. More than spaces of instruction, they were envisioned as spaces with a nationalist and conservative educational mission<sup>6</sup>, with principles of autonomy severely limited by the government appointment of academic authorities.

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<sup>4</sup> M. L. Rodrigues, “Políticas públicas de ensino superior em Portugal (1911-2011)”, in *Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos (OEI) (Ed.), La universidad reformada: Hacia el centenario de la reforma universitaria de 1918* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 2018): available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10071/28358>. In Portugal, the First Republic corresponds to the period from 5th October 1910 to 28th May 1926.

<sup>5</sup> Luís Reis Torgal, “A Universidade entre a Tradição e a Modernidade”, *Revista Intellectus*, year 7, vol. I (2008):13-14.

<sup>6</sup> Álvaro Garrido, “A Universidade e o Estado Novo: De “corporação orgânica” do regime a território de dissidência social”, *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 81 (2008) 138, DOI: 10.4000/rccs.656

It was due to the new regime that, in 1929, still under the Military Dictatorship, the National Education Board (from 1936, the National Board of Education<sup>7</sup>) was created, as well as, in 1936, the Institute for Higher Culture, both with specific objectives in the fields of education, the development of scientific culture, and the promotion of research, particularly at the level of higher education<sup>8</sup>. It was also during the Estado Novo that the construction of dedicated buildings for the Universities was promoted, designed as integrated university centers shared by multiple faculties and their respective students. These projects were part of a broader and consistent public works policy of the Estado Novo, in which the actions of Minister Duarte Pacheco (1900-1943)<sup>9</sup> were pivotal.

The goal was to create dignified buildings, framed within the regime's classicist architectural rhetoric, tailored to the needs of education and research, reflecting the awakening of applied sciences, but also aiming to improve the well-being of the academic community. It is within this context of "modernisation" of the University that the construction of university campuses in Lisbon and Coimbra<sup>10</sup> was promoted, fulfilling a vision of renewal that had originated with the First Republic.

The University of Lisbon was founded in 1911 (Decree of March 22), following the educational reform of the republican regime implemented in 1910. It initially included the Faculties of Medicine, Science, Humanities, and Economic Sciences (from 1913, the Faculty of Social Studies and Law).

The facilities for the new schools were an immediate concern, but, like many public services and organizations, the solution found, in most cases, was to repurpose old convent buildings or mansions. The construction of a modern university campus, similar to those emerging in other countries such as Italy, Germany<sup>11</sup>, and the United States, remained a goal for those in

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<sup>7</sup> The National Education Board (Junta Nacional de Educação) was responsible for all levels of education, including higher education.

<sup>8</sup> Torgal, *A Universidade entre a Tradição e a Modernidade*, 12. Decree-Law No. 26,611, of 19th May 1936, which approves the regulations of the National Education Board, Official Government Gazette, 1st Series, No. 116, 536-547: available at: <https://files.dre.pt/1s/1936/05/11600/05360547.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Sandra Vaz Costa, *O País a régua e esquadro. Urbanismo, arquitetura e memória na Obra Pública de Duarte Pacheco* (Lisboa: IST Press, 2012).

<sup>10</sup> In Coimbra, a purpose-built university campus was not constructed as it was in Lisbon. Some new buildings were erected, and others adapted, in a highly controversial project that ultimately led to the destruction of part of the old city. Nuno Rosmaninho, *O Poder da Arte. O Estado Novo e a Cidade Universitária de Coimbra* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> Harald Bodenschatz, Piero Sassi and Prof. Dr. Max Welch Guerra, *Urbanism and Dicta-*

charge. However, the political instability of the First Republic, coupled with the adverse context of World War I, prevented the creation of a feasible plan.

It was under the Military Dictatorship, established in 1926, that Lisbon would see its first university campus, that of the Instituto Superior Técnico (IST), integrated into the newly created Technical University of Lisbon<sup>12</sup>. The engineering school, founded in 1911, had been operating in outdated facilities on Rua da Boavista, in Lisbon, previously used by the defunct Industrial and Commercial Institute.

The increased investment in technical and scientific areas, such as engineering and applied sciences, aimed at modernising the country's economy, was crucial for the development of the new IST campus, inaugurated in 1942, although the first research centres only appeared in the following decade<sup>13</sup>.

It was the young engineer Duarte Pacheco, then director of the important engineering school (1927-1932; 1936-1937) and future Minister of Education (April-November 1928) and Public Works (1932-1936 and 1938-1943), who invited the promising architect Porfírio Pardal Monteiro to design the new IST campus. After a trip through Europe in 1928, where Pardal Monteiro sought to observe and gather examples of modern engineering schools, he designed the new university complex on a large scale, using a new construction system based on reinforced concrete<sup>14</sup>.

The start of the IST construction project encouraged the leadership of the University of Lisbon to relaunch the project for the construction of its own university campus, which would include a large teaching hospital, the Faculties of Humanities and Law, and the Rectorate, which were considered the most urgent buildings.

It would be Duarte Pacheco, in 1935, now in the position of Minister of Public Works, who invited architect Porfírio Pardal Monteiro to design the projects for three buildings on the new University of Lisbon campus: the Faculties of Law and Humanities and the Rectorate. The Teaching Hospital would be, from 1938, entrusted to the German architect Hermann Distel (1875-1945), an established figure in the Third Reich, who gained international recognition for his hospital projects<sup>15</sup>.

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*torship: A European Challenge*, Berlin, München, Boston: Birkhäuser, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783038215134>

<sup>12</sup> Created in 1930.

<sup>13</sup> Information available at: : <https://tecnico.ulisboa.pt/pt/sobre-o-tecnico/institucional/historia/> (Consulted on 6th February 2025).

<sup>14</sup> Ana Tostões, *Pardal Monteiro* (Lisboa: Círculo dos Leitores, 2010).

<sup>15</sup> Patrícia Pedrosa, "Território e esquecimento: a Cidade Universitária de Lisboa e a me-

Porfírio Pardal Monteiro was Duarte Pacheco's trusted architect. Responsible for the major public projects of the time<sup>16</sup>, he served a policy of monumental and functional works promoted by the regime, under the motto of modernity and national development, while also maintaining a certain scenography in the façades and interiors.

### *The Construction of the University City of Lisbon: The Power of Architecture*

The decision to build a University City from scratch, integrated into the General Urbanization and Expansion Plan of Lisbon (1938-1948), immediately overshadowed the possibility of concentrating university buildings in a specific area of the city, namely the Campo dos Mártires da Pátria, already occupied by several services of the University of Lisbon, such as the Faculties of Medicine and Law and the Ministry of Education<sup>17</sup>. Thus, the idea of a 'University District' within the consolidated city, as seen in Coimbra, was replaced by the solution of a 'University City,' built in an area of future city expansion, near Campo Grande. This location would allow the university to grow without spatial constraints, but it also created a certain isolation for the student community, which was convenient for the regime's control, both of what occurred within the university and of external influences.

The core buildings that formed the University City were designed and executed, as mentioned earlier, between 1938 and 1961 by architect Porfírio Pardal Monteiro, and later continued by his nephew, António Pardal Monteiro (Figs. 1 and 2). These monumental buildings integrated architecture with other arts such as sculpture, painting, tiles, and stained glass, functioning as a cohesive whole in line with the German concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art).

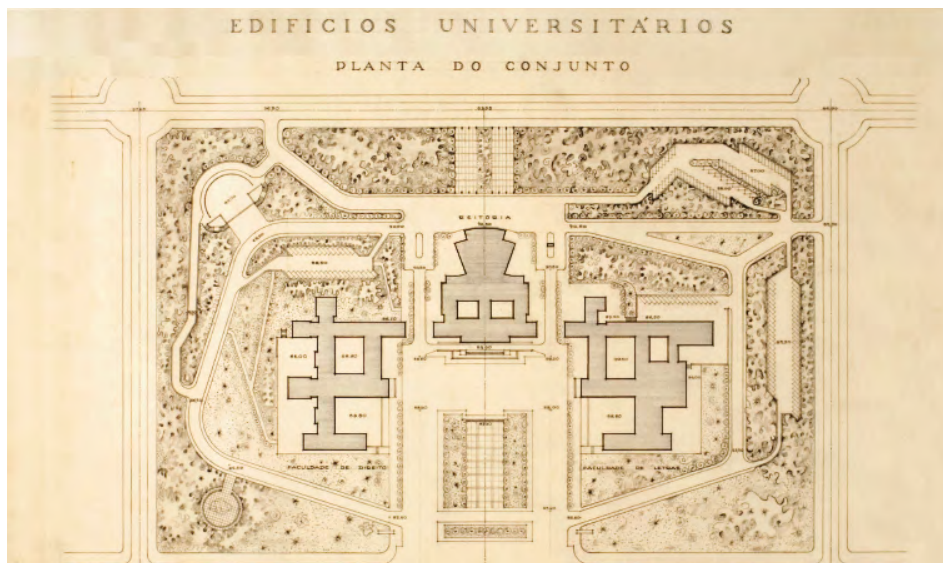
The University City of Lisbon came to embody what the Portuguese architect Nuno Teotónio Pereira defines as the route chosen by the Estado Novo regime for major public buildings, where "the dominant character was

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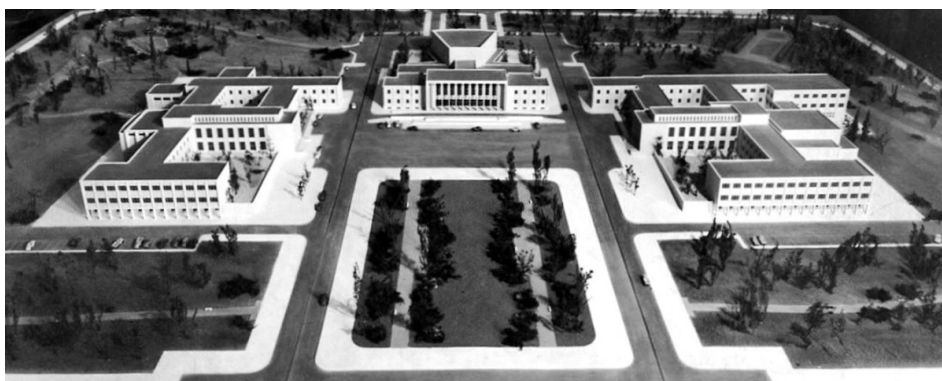
mória (1)", *Arquitextos - Periódico mensal de textos de arquitetura*, ano 6 (August 2005): available at <https://vitruvius.com.br/index.php/revistas/read/arquitextos/06.063/434> (Consulted on 3rd February 2025).

<sup>16</sup> In addition to the Instituto Superior Técnico, he designed the Cais do Sodré Railway Station (1925-1928), the National Institute of Statistics (1931-1935), the Maritime Stations of Alcântara and Rocha do Conde de Óbidos (1934), and the Church of Our Lady of Fátima (1933-1938).

<sup>17</sup> "O Bairro Universitário", *Diário de Notícias* (6th December 1929) 1; "A Cidade Universitária de Lisboa...", *Diário de Notícias* (6th February 1930) 1.



*Figure 1. Pardal Monteiro, Sketch of the General Layout of the New University Buildings in Lisbon, 1953. Department of Works and Maintenance Archive, Rectorate of the University of Lisbon.*



*Figure 2. Model by Ticiano Violante of the three buildings of the future University City, 1956. Pardal Monteiro Architects Studio Archive. Available at [https://pardal-monteiro.com/Para\\_o\\_projeto\\_global-Volume\\_I.pdf](https://pardal-monteiro.com/Para_o_projeto_global-Volume_I.pdf)*

a monumental classical rhetoric, closely aligned with the German and Italian models of the time. The goal was to express the power of the State and instill in citizens values of authority and order.”<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Nuno Teotónio Pereira, “A arquitectura do Estado Novo como instrumento de inculca-





Figure 3 - Marcello Piacentini, View of the campus of the Città Universitaria di Roma in 1938. Available at: [https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citt%C3%A0\\_universitaria\\_di\\_Roma](https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citt%C3%A0_universitaria_di_Roma)

Naturally, being large-scale government-sponsored constructions, these buildings had to meet the specific requirements of public works of the time: they needed to be symbols of governmental stability and vehicles for propaganda of the prevailing ideologies, while also showcasing technical advancements and mastery of materials<sup>19</sup>. Furthermore, an artistic decoration in line with the aesthetic principles promoted by the regime and suitable for the purpose of the buildings would be crucial to project an image of balance, blending history and tradition with progress and modernization.

The first drafts for the buildings of the University City of Lisbon were presented by the architect in 1938, following a study trip to Europe undertaken with Minister Duarte Pacheco. They visited Italy, particularly Rome, and then Paris, where the Universal Exposition on Arts and Techniques in Modern Life was taking place. There, they admired the architectural proposals of the participating countries' pavilions, with the German and Soviet pavilions standing out amidst a climate of growing political tension.

The visit to Mussolini's Rome was also influential on the new university projects for Lisbon. The inspiration taken from the recently inaugurated

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ção ideológica", in *Arte & poder*, ed. Margarida Acciaiuoli, Joana Cunha Leal and Maria Helena Maia (Lisboa: Instituto de História da Arte, Estudos de Arte Contemporânea, 2008) 200.

<sup>19</sup> Harald Bodenschatz, "Urbanism and Dictatorship: Expanding Spaces for Thought!", *Urbanism and Dictatorship: A European Challenge*, Berlin, München, Boston: Birkhäuser, 2015, pp. 15-26. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783038215134-002>



*Figure 4 - Porfírio Pardal Monteiro, perspective of the façade of the Rectorate of the University of Lisbon. Photo by H. Novais, no date, Photographic Archive of the General Secretariat of the Ministry of Education.*

University City of Rome, with the imposing rector's building designed by a group of emerging Italian architects under Marcello Piacentini (1881-1960), is evident (Fig. 3). Furthermore, at the same time, Piacentini was leading the colossal architectural and urban project for a neighbourhood, with majestic public buildings for the 1942 Universal Exposition (EUR) to be held in Rome. Although no buildings had been constructed yet, models and drawings of various palaces and other facilities were on display at the exhibition's commission headquarters, where Pardal Monteiro and Duarte Pacheco were able to appreciate the grand designs<sup>20</sup>.

The first drawings presented by Pardal Monteiro for the three buildings of the University City of Lisbon required some adjustments. The first preliminary project was submitted for approval in 1940. In this proposal, the three buildings were placed in a single plan and connected by galleries, with the prominent axuality of the Rector's building, very close to the Roman university model. This proximity was also marked by the adoption of parallelepiped volumes, with multiple rectangular windows characterizing the various floors, in a geometric rigor marked by porticoed entrances with imposing pilasters (Fig. 4).

<sup>20</sup> Teresa Neto, "Roma 1942: 'A Exposição Universal que nunca aconteceu'. Ecos do planeamento do EUR no quadro da arquitetura portuguesa", *ARTIS, Revista de História da Arte e Ciências do Património* 3 (2015) 136-139.



Figure 5. Gaetano Minnucci, *Palazzo degli Uffici dell'Ente Autonomo*, c. 1938. © ANTT, SNI, box 1630, 9.

Despite approval of the project, the funds necessary to begin construction were not immediately allocated by the government, which was facing considerable expenditures resulting from various ongoing public projects. The premature death of Minister Duarte Pacheco in 1943 and the continuation of the global war further delayed the implementation of Pardal Monteiro's plans for the University City of Lisbon.

For the new university installations in the capital, priority would be given to the construction of the teaching hospital, which would begin in the early 1940s and be completed in 1953. It was only with political will and the new economic context of the First Development Plan (1953-1958), implemented by the regime under the Marshall Plan for the economic recovery of post-war Europe, of which Portugal was a beneficiary<sup>21</sup>, that the works resumed.

The 1940 preliminary project was revisited, but with some cost-cutting alterations. Pardal Monteiro made several changes to the original proposal, without sacrificing the monumentality and functional needs of the

<sup>21</sup> Maria Fernanda Rollo, *Portugal e a Reconstrução Económica do Pós-Guerra. O Plano Marshall e economia portuguesa dos anos 50* (Lisboa: Instituto Diplomático – Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros, 2007).

complex. He abandoned the connection between the three buildings and presented the final designs between 1953 and 1956, which were approved by the authorities.

The new design for the Rector's building, in particular, was very similar to what Pardal Monteiro had seen in Rome for the EUR project. However, it also bore similarities to the eastern façade of the Rector's building of the University of Lisbon and the Palazzo degli Uffici, designed by architect Gaetano Minnucci (1896-1980), the first building erected in the 'imperial' EUR district, between 1937 and 1939 (Fig. 5). The influence was not limited to architectural lines, but also included decorative elements such as sculptures in high and low relief and mosaic panels, inspired by the Roman example.

After the death of Porfírio Pardal Monteiro, his nephew António Pardal Monteiro took over the technical direction of the works, working closely with the artists involved in decorating the three new university buildings. A group of sixteen distinguished artists worked on the central theme of the University City's visual arts: Knowledge and the glorification of the University of Lisbon and its historical roots. An iconographic program was developed, celebrating knowledge and encouraging study, according to the function of each building: in the Faculty of Humanities, a historical and allegorical vision of law; in the Faculty of Arts, the apotheosis of knowledge and a memorial to historical and literary figures; and in the Rector's building, the sublimation of the University of Lisbon.

The monumentalism, inspired by classical architecture, associated with power, order, and discipline, shaped the artistic model, which extended to other arts, conveying ideological content with great eloquence. The inclusion of artistic elements in the architecture based on epic themes from the history of Portugal or patriotic ideology, created through ancient techniques, emphasized the grandeur of the constructions and asserted the power of the state under the idea of national art.

Works progressed well in the University City of Lisbon, with the Faculties of Law and Humanities completed in 1957 and 1958, respectively, while the Rector's building was inaugurated in 1961, along with the Canteen (Cantina), designed by architects Manuel Norberto Corrêa (1926-) and F. Rafael Miranda (1927-?)<sup>22</sup>, marking the 50th anniversary of the founding of the University of Lisbon.

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<sup>22</sup> Inventory System of Architectural Heritage (SIPA), Inventory Sheet of the University of Lisbon's Canteen / Old Canteen, available at [http://www.monumentos.gov.pt/site/APP\\_Pages/User/SIPA.aspx?id=14261](http://www.monumentos.gov.pt/site/APP_Pages/User/SIPA.aspx?id=14261) (Consulted on 13th February 2025).

In 1961, on the occasion of the inauguration of the Rector's building, Professor Marcello Caetano (1906-1980), the then Rector, proudly stated:

"The University is deeply grateful to the Government for solving yet another national problem—its worthy installation, enabling it to fulfill its duties, not only in teaching but also in culture, in every sense<sup>23</sup>."

He added that it was his intention to enhance the University City by bringing other University services together, which were still scattered throughout the city, into a "unified and organic spirit." Thus, the Faculty of Sciences, located on Rua da Escola Politécnica, the School of Pharmacy, "precariously installed" in the 'Castelinho' of Quinta da Torrinha<sup>24</sup>, and the University Museums (Ethnography, Zoology, and Mineralogy) needed to be relocated closer to the student body, along with other schools and institutes that were required to meet the needs of the country and the aspirations of the new generation<sup>25</sup>. He concluded, saying: "Thus, it is the University of Lisbon to which the 'university city' belongs."

In fact, a preliminary study for a full-fledged University City program, called the *Preliminary Plan for the Urbanization of the University City of Lisbon*<sup>26</sup>, had already been developed in 1956 by architects João Simões (1908-1994) and Manuel Norberto Corrêa, aiming to find solutions through a systematic study of the territory<sup>27</sup>. The proposal presented, revised several times, included the construction of the Museum of Art and Natural History, the Ethnological Museum, the University Chapel, the Faculties of Architecture and Fine Arts, multifamily housing for professors, University Radio, space for Theatre and Cinema, an open-air auditorium, and a recreational swimming pool (artificial beach)<sup>28</sup>. Only the Canteen building was completed, opening in 1961.

Despite some attempts at a general urban revision in the 1960s and early 1970s, it was only after the democratic revolution of April 25, 1974, that new buildings for the faculties scattered throughout the city were cons-

<sup>23</sup> *Inauguração do Edifício da Reitoria da Universidade de Lisboa* (Lisboa: s.n., 1961) [13], available at <https://digitarq.arquivos.pt/details?id=3887869> (Consulted on 9th February 2025).

<sup>24</sup> "Castelinho. A primeira casa de Farmácia e da Cidade Universitária", *ULISBOA – Revista da Universidade de Lisboa* (30 out. 2024) 20-23, available at: <https://www.ulisboa.pt/sites/default/files/documents/publication/2024/ulisboa30net.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> *Inauguração do Edifício da Reitoria da Universidade de Lisboa*, [14]

<sup>26</sup> *Plan Preliminar para la Urbanización de la Ciudad Universitaria de Lisboa*.

<sup>27</sup> Patrícia Pedrosa, *Cidade Universitária de Lisboa (1911-1950). Gênese de uma difícil territorialização* (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2009) 154-155.

<sup>28</sup> Pedrosa, *Cidade Universitária de Lisboa*, 155-158.

tructed within the University City of Lisbon. However, the logic adopted remained the same as the one that had guided the original constructions: the “building-by-building” approach, territorial fragmentation, without a spatial plan or relationship with the city or neighboring urban realities, as concluded by architect Patrícia Pedrosa<sup>29</sup>.

### *An Old Life for the New University City of Lisbon*

With the inauguration of the buildings along the main avenue of the University of Lisbon<sup>30</sup>, between 1957 and 1961, near Campo Grande, various academic and cultural events, previously scattered across different areas of the city, began to take place there. The construction of the Aula Magna, for instance, an extraordinary auditorium with a capacity of 1,547 seated places, integrated into the building of the Rectorate, would allow the holding of academic activities (ceremonies and congresses) as well as various cultural performances (music, theatre, poetry)<sup>31</sup> for larger audiences<sup>32</sup> and with better technical conditions and comfort.

As the then rector, Professor Marcello Caetano, stated in the inaugural speech for the new university auditorium: “It was indispensable that the University could fully participate in its responsibilities in Portuguese cultural life, having appropriate venues for its own solemnities, without having to beg for borrowed rooms and suffer perhaps embarrassing refusals<sup>33</sup>.”

It is undeniable that students, professors, and staff of the University of Lisbon, since then, have had access to working conditions, spatial arrangements, technical facilities, and comfort that the centenary buildings they

<sup>29</sup> Pedrosa, *Cidade Universitária de Lisboa*, 159

<sup>30</sup> The toponymic designation of the location as Alameda da Universidade was only made official in 1970, by a decree of 31st March. The toponym is bounded by Campo Grande and the Rectorate building. Information available at <https://informacoeseservicos.lisboa.pt/contactos/diretorio-da-cidade/jardim-da-alameda-da-cidade-universitaria> (Consulted on 12th February 2025).

<sup>31</sup> Clara Moura Soares and Maria João Neto, “The Aula Magna of the University of Lisbon (Portugal): an architectural and artistic project for academic activities, cultural displays, and political interventions” (in press).

<sup>32</sup> It was, at the time, the largest performance venue in the country. “É a maior do País. A ‘Sala Magna’ da Reitoria da Universidade Clássica de Lisboa”, *Diário de Notícias* (1st December 1961) 1 e 7.

<sup>33</sup> “O novo edifício da Reitoria da Universidade de Lisboa foi solenemente inaugurado pelo Chefe do Estado” *Diário de Lisboa* (3rd December 1961) 1.



were previously housed in could not offer. However, it is also evident that the social interaction among students that the new campus, now concentrated into a university setting, could provide, fell far short of expectations.

The testimony of the poet Gastão Cruz (1941-2022), who was then a student in the Germanic Philology course at the Faculty of Humanities, published in the student magazine *Grafia* (the publication of the students of that faculty), stands as an unequivocal witness to this:

“... there is much talk about socialising. But what kind of socialising do we actually have, if we don't count the occasional gathering on Student's Day, which, in fact, only in a very limited way facilitates our contacts? What kind of socialising is being spoken of, if almost a type of socialisation, generally showing frivolity and the waste of words, has become institutionalised in the daily university life, a classic symptom of national ignorance?”

Focusing on the role of student associations in cultural activities, which was absent due to the effects of Decree 40.900 of 1956, a key moment that sparked the severe academic crisis which would unfold later, Gastão Cruz continues:

“To this pseudo-socialising, superficial and corrupting, let us oppose a socialising planned and led by the students themselves, meeting their needs as a theory and practice of humanisation. Between the ivory tower of individualism and a false socialising which is nothing more than a form of stupefaction, it is urgent to build another kind of social interaction, one that, in addition to realising the impulse for fellowship among Portuguese students, makes them more cultured and, consequently, more human. But for this, we must organise it<sup>34</sup>.”

The eagerness of university students to participate in multiple dimensions of academic life is undeniable, at a time when, still far from the democratisation of access to higher education, they belonged to a social elite destined to fill senior positions in the state and in companies. This is the paradigm of the “Cultural University,” and, in a sense, the effects of the Higher Education reform project defended by the “Democratic Renewal” movement, created in 1932, began to be felt<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> Gastão Cruz, “O movimento associativo e a Cultura”, *Grafia* 2, Revista não periódica dos Estudantes da Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa (maio 1962) 22. Archive of the Mário Soares and Maria Barroso Foundation, available at <http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?passa=07974.010> (Consulted on 27th January 2025).

<sup>35</sup> Artur Manso, “O Projecto de Reforma do Ensino Superior no Movimento da Renovação Democrática (1932)”, in *Libro de Actas do Congreso Internacional Galego-Portugués de Psico-pedagogía*, ed. A. Barca, M. Peralbo, A. Porto, B. Duarte da Silva e L. Almeida (Coruña: Universidade da Coruña, 2007) 2873-2884.

Photographs and video records made of some events, many of which were only made available for public consultation in recent years, stand as the most indisputable evidence of this. The packed auditoriums at the occasion of the First National Congress of Archaeology, held at the Faculty of Humanities, from December 15 to 20, 1958<sup>36</sup>; the theatrical performance of final-year students from the Faculty of Law, held on February 18, 1960, which included university sketches, songs, and dances<sup>37</sup>; or the classical music concert for university students, with baritone José de Oliveira Lopes, accompanied by pianist Tânia Achot, held on November 2, 1973, at the Rectorate of the University of Lisbon<sup>38</sup>, are some examples.

Alongside these events, and others related to music, cinema, theatre, literature, and the fine arts, which are not detailed here, it is important to highlight, for their participatory relevance, the popular Summer Courses at the Faculty of Humanities, which had a tradition even before the establishment of the University City, intended for both national and international students. During the 38th Summer Course, held in the summer of 1973, a report for the weekly news programme TV7 on RTP1 mentioned around 500 participants. People of all ages and from countries such as Spain, England, France, Germany, as well as Persia, Poland, and the United States<sup>39</sup>, were provided with an expanded knowledge of Portuguese culture and traditions through cultural activities and study visits (Fig. 6).

Students expected that universities, beyond professional preparation, could be spaces of culture, in line with the fundamental idea of the University as defended by Ortega y Gasset in *Misión de la Universidad*<sup>40</sup>. Therefore, it was the students who fought the most for the change in the paradigm of the University under the Estado Novo regime.

<sup>36</sup> “I Congresso Nacional de Arqueologia”, RTP1, National News Bulletin of December, 15th December 1958, RTP Archive, available at <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/i-congresso-nacional-de-arqueologia/> (Consulted on 8th February 2025).

<sup>37</sup> “Espetáculo dos estudantes da Faculdade de Direito”, RTP1, Originals of the Report of January, 18th February 1960, RTP Archive, available at <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/espetaculo-dos-estudantes-da-faculdade-de-direito/>

<sup>38</sup> “Concerto para estudantes universitários”, RTP1, National News Bulletin of December, 2nd December 1973, RTP Archive, available at <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/concerto-para-estudantes-universitarios/>

<sup>39</sup> “Cursos de férias para estrangeiros”, RTP1, TV7, 15th July 1973, RTP Archive, available at <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/cursos-de-ferias-para-estrangeiros>

<sup>40</sup> Text published in Madrid in 1930 and translated into Portuguese in 1946, with publication by the Seara Nova group, an ideological opponent of Salazarism. “Missão da Universidade” (Lisboa: Seara Nova, 1946).





Figure 6. Participants of the summer course at the Faculty of Arts of Lisbon, leaving the Jerónimos Monastery. 11th August 1934, PT/TT/EPJS/SF/001-001/0031/18131. Available at: <https://digitarq.arquivos.pt/details?id=1016257>

### *The Academic Crises of the 1950s and 1960s in Portugal: Student Protest and the Struggle Against the Dictatorship*

With the growing dissatisfaction among students in response to a traditional university system, disguised by outward appearances of modernity, the academic crises soon took over university spaces, just a few years after the inauguration of the University City in the capital. However, from the early years of the Military Dictatorship established in 1926, students were already at the forefront of resisting the regime, in light of the legislation that had been passed regarding public higher education.

In the 1930s, legislation imposed the model of the University as an “organic corporation of masters and students,” significantly limiting student associations’ life and extracurricular activities—that is, activities beyond teaching at institutions of higher learning. To this end, student associations were placed under the organic dependency of university governing bodies (Senate, Rector, and School Councils).

The confrontations that occurred on April 28, 1931, at the Faculty of Medicine, then located at Campo dos Mártires da Pátria, in front of the Ministry of Education building (at the corner with Travessa do Torel)<sup>41</sup>, with

<sup>41</sup> “Universidade de Lisboa. A instalação das suas Faculdades”, *Diário de Notícias* (5th July 1929) 1.

a replica in the Porto Academy the following day, would go down in history (Fig. 7). The strike, subversive cries against the Dictatorship, and the hoisting of red flags on the building windows, associated with Soviet Russia, led to a heavy police intervention, resulting in numerous arrests and severe injuries, under the pretext of maintaining order and accusations of infiltration by non-academic persons in the insurrection<sup>42</sup>.

From 1935 onwards, within the Antifascist Academic Bloc (BAA), an organisation created by Álvaro Cunhal (1913-2005), and in solidarity with the Spanish Republic during the Civil War, students continued to fight on the front lines against the Dictatorship. The creation of the BAA was one of the first organised efforts to combat political repression, censorship, and the oppression imposed by the Estado Novo regime, primarily focusing on mobilising students.

However, with the end of World War II in 1945, the student struggle gained momentum within the newly formed Movement of Democratic Youth Unity (MUDJ) in Lisbon. Hopes for renewal and the democratisation of the regime grew among university circles, fuelled by the defeat of international fascisms.

Yet, it would be the promulgation of the controversial Decree-Law No. 40.900, on December 12, 1956, already briefly mentioned, through which Oliveira Salazar sought to impose, by law, the limitation of student associa-



Figure 7. Student riots at the Faculty of Medicine, 28th April 1931. PT/TT/EPJS/SF/001-001/0019/0560F. Available at: <https://digitalq.arquivos.pt/viewer?id=1212749>

<sup>42</sup> “O Conflito Académico. O que se passou em Lisboa e no Porto com os Estudantes”, *Diário de Lisboa* (29th April 1931) 1.

tions' freedom, removing even competencies they had been exercising in the social and cultural fields<sup>43</sup>, that would lead to the first major manifestation of higher education students against the regime. At that time, the battle fought in the two Portuguese universities of Lisbon and Coimbra, supported by important intellectuals such as António Sérgio, for whom "education is the art of emancipating men"<sup>44</sup>, challenged the regime, Salazar's law was suspended, and student associations grew in prestige across the country. The 1958 presidential elections and the candidacy of Humberto Delgado (1906-1965), a dissident general of the regime<sup>45</sup> who would become popularly known as "the fearless general," involved many young people who were awakened to the antifascist struggle. This was a time when repression against student associations and the growth of "student syndicalism" increasingly caused dissatisfaction among young university students<sup>46</sup>.

The 1960s, all over the world, were marked by youth struggles. Reflecting the various social, political, and cultural changes occurring in countries like France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Greece, former Czechoslovakia, the United States, Argentina, and Brazil<sup>47</sup>, these movements were far more than mere protests against educational systems. They were crucial to the development of Western democracies, influencing educational reforms, the strengthening of civil and social rights, and a greater openness to new forms of political and cultural thought<sup>48</sup>.

In Portugal, within the University, the idea of establishing a National Union of Students, similar to those in other countries like the United Kingdom or Brazil, was conceived in 1961. However, it was from the academic crisis of 1962 that the student movement became one of the most active fronts of the fight against the dictatorship, with student associations increasingly

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<sup>43</sup> These activities included, among others: "a habitação, a alimentação, a vida em comum, a educação física, a saúde, o conhecimento do Mundo e das várias formas de cultura humana, o seguro, a escolha de carreira e o emprego". *Diário da República*, 12th December 1956, Decree-Law No. 40.900 Ministério da Educação Nacional, Direcção-Geral do Ensino Superior e das Belas-Artes, 1895.

<sup>44</sup> António Sérgio, *Antologia sociológica*, 7<sup>o</sup> caderno (Lisboa: ed. do autor, 1957) 9.

<sup>45</sup> Ana Sofia Ferreira, "As eleições no Estado Novo", *Revista da Faculdade de Letras HISTÓRIA*, Porto 3rd Series, vol. 7 (2006) 205-207, available at <https://ojs.letras.up.pt/index.php/historia/article/view/3769>

<sup>46</sup> Garrido, *A Universidade e o Estado Novo*, 134-135.

<sup>47</sup> Andrés Payà Rico e José Luis Hernández Huerta (eds.), *History of Education & Children's Literature. Special Issue Students in action during the «long 60s»*, XIV / 2 (2019), available at <http://www.hecl.it/>

<sup>48</sup> Augusto Santos Silva, "The symbolic politics of cultural heritage: a view from Portugal", *Sociologia. Problemas e Práticas* 104 (2024), 9-21, <https://doi.org/10.7458/SPP202410431194>

assuming the role of “corporate trade unions”<sup>49</sup>. Students, adopting typical labour-related protest tactics, directly contested the regime with strikes and demonstrations. The 1962 generation, which the dictatorship responded to with brutal violence, marked a new era in the struggle for freedom in Portugal, and students became one of the most active forces in the fight against the authoritarian, autocratic, and corporatist political regime that characterised the Estado Novo, without the regime ever managing to provide them with convincing responses until the fall of the dictatorship on April 25, 1974<sup>50</sup>.

The banning of the first National Student Meeting, scheduled for March 9, 1962, in Coimbra, followed by the prohibition of celebrating Student Day on March 24 in Lisbon<sup>51</sup>, sparked the fuse that led university students to rise up dramatically against the political power. This revolt involved strikes, classroom boycotts, besieged university buildings, police charges, and mass arrests, in one of the most expressive uprisings against the Estado Novo. “Unity today for union tomorrow”<sup>52</sup>, was one of the slogans distributed in leaflets early in March that year, and it became inextricably linked to this student movement, with significant repercussions on the relationship between students and political power. In a matter of months, the issue of defending university autonomy transformed into a direct confrontation with police repression and censorship, leading to the resignation of the Rector of the University of Lisbon, Marcello Caetano, in April, in protest against the regime’s repressive tactics, and the imprisonment and suspension of numerous students from Lisbon and Coimbra. However, the effects were also felt within the government, with the Director-General of the International and State Defence Police (PIDE), the political police of the Salazarist Estado Novo, Homero de Oliveira Matos, being dismissed during the 1962 academic crisis.

The Portuguese student movement grew throughout the 1960s, becoming increasingly politicised. Ideals such as liberty and equality inspired students in their struggle not only against the dictatorship but also against the war in Africa, to which they did not want to be sent.

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<sup>49</sup> Garrido, *A Universidade e o Estado Novo*, 133.

<sup>50</sup> José Medeiros Ferreira, “O movimento estudantil como motor da democratização da Universidade e da liberdade em Portugal”, *Ler História* 62 (2012) 173, available at <https://doi.org/10.4000/lerhistoria.617>

<sup>51</sup> It is not known exactly when Student Day was first celebrated; however, it would become significant from 1957, as a reaction to the promulgation of Decree-Law No. 40,900 of 12th December 1956. Ferreira, *O movimento estudantil*, 174.

<sup>52</sup> “Unidad hoy para la unión de mañana”.

In 1965, academic authorities attempted to replace Student Day with University Day. In Lisbon, University Day in 1965 was celebrated on January 21, just hours after a wave of student arrests by the PIDE, who accused them of being Communist Party militants, with around fifty students detained at Aljube prison<sup>53</sup>.

The student movement was once again thrown into turmoil, and by October 1965, another repressive action targeted hundreds of students. The months of protest culminated in the imprisonment of key student leaders, the exclusion of 53 students from all universities in the country, and the suspension of 124 students from their schools during exam periods<sup>54</sup>.

In 1968, fueled by the protests of French students in “May 1968,” where they had become important protagonists in history, and in the context of Oliveira Salazar’s replacement by Marcello Caetano as Prime Minister<sup>55</sup>, young Portuguese students began to hope for change, viewing it as an opportunity to strengthen collective mobilisation in the fight for a “New University” as an inseparable element of a “New Society”<sup>56</sup>. This set the stage for a new academic crisis, similar to those seen in France just months earlier, rooted in the growing student demands for the democratisation of education and university management. The crisis would intensify in 1969, when President Américo Thomaz (1894-1987) visited the University of Coimbra on April 17<sup>th</sup> to inaugurate the Mathematics Building. During the official ceremony, the President of the General Board of the Coimbra Academic Association was prevented from speaking, which sparked protests among students. These protests escalated, eventually triggering a general strike for classes and exams, with student participation of about 85%<sup>57</sup>. In response, the government ordered the closure of the University of Coimbra on May 6<sup>th</sup>. On June 22, 1969, university students protested against the Estado Novo during the final of the Portuguese Cup between the Coimbra Academic Association and Sport Lisboa e Benfica<sup>58</sup>, and strikes continued until September.

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<sup>53</sup> Eliana Gonçalves de Oliveira, *Aljube, uma cadeia política*, Master’s Dissertation, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade Nova (Lisboa, 2012) 22, available at <https://run.unl.pt/handle/10362/9390>

<sup>54</sup> Ferreira, *O movimento estudantil*, 178.

<sup>55</sup> António de Oliveira Salazar suffered a fall in August 1968 that would greatly limit him.

<sup>56</sup> Miguel Cardina, “Movimentos estudantis na crise do Estado Novo: mitos e realidades”, *ecadernos CES* 01 (2008) 68, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/eces.101>

<sup>57</sup> “Crises académicas nos anos 60”, *Infopédia. Dicionários Porto Editora*, available at [https://www.infopedia.pt/artigos/\\$crises-academicas-nos-anos-60](https://www.infopedia.pt/artigos/$crises-academicas-nos-anos-60) (Consulta: 10.01.2025).

<sup>58</sup> Miguel Cardina, *A Tradição da Contestação. Resistência Estudantil no Marcelismos* (Coimbra: Angelus Novus, 2008) 81.

Figure 8 - "Plenary in front of the Faculty of Arts," 1962, Mário Soares Foundation / DAP - Artur Pinto Documents, Available at: <http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=06895.002.011>



Figure 9 - "Plenary of students during the 1962 Academic Crisis, in front of the Rectorate, Lisbon," c. March - April 1962, Mário Soares Foundation / DAP - Artur Pinto Documents, Available at: <http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=06895.002.002>

The most "harsh and radical" student struggle<sup>59</sup>, this time focused in Coimbra, would lead to the resignation of the Minister of Education, the change of Rector, and the sending of insubordinate students to the colonial war as traitors to the nation.

<sup>59</sup> Luís Reis Torgal, "A Universidade em Portugal em período de transição para a democracia e para o neoliberalismo", *Espacio, Tiempo y Educación*, 2(2), (2015) 156, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14516/ete.2015.002.002.008>

After the death of Oliveira Salazar, under the pretext of an education reform led by Minister José Veiga Simão (1929-2014) in 1971, aimed at attempting to pull Portuguese universities out of the deep crisis they were mired in, the dictatorship responded with increased violence to the growing popular dissent and increasingly politicised student struggles. Despite efforts at modernisation, universities continued to protest with strikes and plenaries, students were imprisoned or expelled, student associations were shut down, and the so-called “gorilas” from the Ministry of the Interior –vigilantes tasked with exerting police control over student activities<sup>60</sup>– occupied faculties to prevent new “subversive and revolutionary” movements. The strong student resistance to this measure led, months later, to the withdrawal of these officials from the institutions where they had been placed<sup>61</sup>.

This was the atmosphere in Portuguese universities at the end of the Estado Novo, on the eve of the pril 25<sup>th</sup>, 1974 Revolution, a time when students were the social category most affected by the regime’s repression, making up more than a third of all political prisoners<sup>62</sup>.

It was, however, in this tumultuous and painful journey that thousands of young people realised the importance of participating in and fighting for their rights and for democracy, in a struggle that extended far beyond the confines of education.

### *University City of Lisbon: The Stage of the Serious Academic Crisis of 1962*

Since the promulgation of Decree-Law 40.900 of 1956, the issue of student associations and extra-curricular activities remained unresolved in Portuguese universities, causing significant dissatisfaction within the student community.

The celebrations for Student Day, scheduled for March 24<sup>th</sup>–26<sup>th</sup>, 1962, which were to be banned by the Minister of National Education, Manuel Lopes de Almeida (1900-1980), and marked by an ostensible police presence, coincided with a new university reality in Lisbon. The newly built, grand, and modern facilities had, in some way, contributed to the strengthening of both expectations and the student movement’s power of mobilisation.

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<sup>60</sup> *Diário do Governo*, 1st Series, No. 14 (17th January 1973) 81-82. Decree-Law No. 18/73, of 17th January.

<sup>61</sup> Torgal, *A Universidade em Portugal*, 157.

<sup>62</sup> Guya Accornero, *Efervescência Estudantil Estudantes, acção contenciosa e processo político no final do Estado Novo (1956-1974)*. PhD Thesis in Social Sciences, specialising in Historical Sociology, Instituto de Ciências Sociais (Lisboa: Universidade de Lisboa, 2009) 2

The 1962 Student Day programme, which bore little difference from those held previously, now took place in a true University City, or “workers’ city of science,” as the government referred to it at the time. This included the Santa Maria School Hospital (opened in 1953), the University Stadium (opened in 1956), where a sports festival was planned, the Faculties of Law and Humanities (opened in 1957 and 1958, respectively), the Rectorate building, and the Student Centre’s Restaurant and Social Area at the University City of Lisbon, i.e., the Canteen (both inaugurated in 1961), where a cultural evening and a dinner event were planned.

In response to the ban, the University of Lisbon decided to strike in protest, with the University of Coimbra expressing solidarity. This resulted in a massive gathering of students in the University City of Lisbon, which was violently repressed by the police.

The press of the time practically silenced the events, publishing only a discreet notice from the Ministry of National Education regarding the cancellation of the student initiatives. In this notice, it was stated: “Regarding a projected commemoration of the ‘Student Day,’ elements of clearly subversive action attempted to divert some university, secondary school, and even primary school students from academic activities under the pretext of meetings, discussions, and social events to be held in Lisbon on the 24th, 25th, and 26th”<sup>63</sup>.

Photographs, television footage<sup>64</sup>, and subsequent testimonies from some of the participants give us some sense of the scale of the events. Thousands of students gathered in the same space, framed by the monumental buildings newly constructed by the regime, displaying banners with slogans such as: “United for Student Day,” “United we shall overcome,” and “You were offended: mourn. Only united can we triumph”<sup>65</sup>.

At a time when university access was selective, conservative in ideology, and elitist in its societal position, the physical concentration of faculties in one space amplified student meetings and collective mobilisation for common causes. One such cause was the demand for the management of the new university canteen by the student associations of Lisbon, which led to multiple student protests and eventually to shared management with a university committee (the Administrative Commission of Academic Facilities).

<sup>63</sup> “O dia do estudante”, *Diário de Lisboa* (25th March 1962) 9.

<sup>64</sup> “A Crise Académica de 1962”, Television News of 26th March 1962, RTP Archive, available at <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/crise-academica-de-1962-2/>

<sup>65</sup> “Unidos por el Día del Estudiante”; “Unidos, venceremos”; “Fuiste ofendido: ponte de luto. Solo unidos podremos triunfar.”





*Figure 10. "Plenary at the University Stadium," 24th March 1962, Mário Soares Foundation / DAP - Artur Pinto Documents, Available at: <http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?passa=06895.002.013>*



*Figure 11. "Grafia," No. 2, May 1962, Mário Soares Foundation / DSC - Sottomayor Cardia Documents, (cover and page 1). Available at: <http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=07974.010>*

Accused of "suspicious ideological movements," repressed by the political police during a plenary meeting on the afternoon of March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1962, at the University Stadium (Fig. 10), and prevented from holding the dinner at the Canteen, students declared "academic mourning," a term chosen to avoid the prohibited word "strike," which would continue for several months due to the failure of negotiations with the government (Fig. 11).

From that point onward, the university effectively became a significant stage of regime dissent and a space for democratic aspirations, accompanying the successive crises faced by the dictatorship until the overthrow of the Estado Novo regime on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1974.

The reopening of student associations, such as the one at the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Lisbon on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1974, became a symbol of change and a historic milestone, immortalised through various photo-



Figure 12. "Faculty of Arts: the reopened association and the most attended meetings ever," 29th April 1974. PT/TT/EPJS/SF/010/08230/001/033<sup>a</sup>. Available at: <https://digitarq.arquivos.pt/viewer?id=8058559>



Figure 13. Students on the main staircase of the Faculty of Arts of Lisbon, 29th April 1974. Available at: <https://digitarq.arquivos.pt/viewer?id=8058558>

graphic records. On the same day, a General Student Meeting was held at that faculty, the most attended in its history, where topics such as: the general reform of education; the restructuring of student activism; and the union of all Portuguese students were discussed, as seen in the banner placed at the main entrance of the building (Figs. 12 and 13).



Images of joy spread to various faculties of the University of Lisbon and across the country, with general student meetings and various actions expressing solidarity with the military coup that had overthrown the Estado Novo regime in Portugal. For instance, students from the Faculty of Law is-



*Figure 14. "Applause from Law students for the arrest of the head of the secretariat," 29th April 1974, PT/TT/EPJS/SF/010/08230/001/031<sup>a</sup>. Available at: <https://digitarq.arquivos.pt/details?id=8058557>*



*Figure 15. The head of the secretariat descending the main staircase of the Faculty of Law of Lisbon, accompanied by three soldiers, 29th April 1974. Available at: <https://digitarq.arquivos.pt/viewer?id=8058556>*

sued a public declaration affirming “their readiness to stand by the struggles, aspirations, and victories of the Portuguese people in the radical transformation of Portuguese society, and specifically regarding the content of education and its radical change”<sup>66</sup> (Figs. 14 and 15).

Subsequent phases of the student movement for the democratisation of education were gradually incorporated into the new regime’s “normalisation of school life,” as it was then termed. These included: the replacement of repressive education laws; the eradication of all fascist elements from schools, starting with Education Minister Veiga Simão; the dismantling of existing fascist organisations in universities; and, notably, the defence of the universities’ autonomous management in various domains. One of the most evident consequences was the increase in the number of candidates for education at all levels, including higher education, which rose from around 38,500 in 1968 to 80,919 by 1980<sup>67</sup>—just six years after the April Revolution.

*Dictatorship and Freedom: Identities of the Spirit of Place and the Heritage of the University City of Lisbon*

Sponsored by the Estado Novo regime, the urban complex of the University City of Lisbon suffered from this association after the establishment of democracy in 1974.

Neglected within the context of mid-20th-century Portuguese architectural and artistic production, the three buildings of the University City of Lisbon designed by Porfírio Pardal Monteiro – the Rectorate and the Faculties of Letters and Law – only gained detailed scholarly attention during the celebrations of the centenary of the creation of the University of Lisbon in 2011<sup>68</sup>.

In 2013<sup>69</sup>, following the research carried out, the process of classification for the complex of buildings comprising the Reitoria and the Faculties of Law and Letters as national monuments of cultural significance was initiated. The process culminated in their classification, along with the surround-

<sup>66</sup> “Declaração dos alunos da Faculdade de Direito de Lisboa”, *Diário de Lisboa* (2nd May 1974) 2.

<sup>67</sup> Torgal, *A Universidade em Portugal*, 157. Belmiro Gil Cabrito, Luísa Cerdeira, Ana Nascimento and Pedro Ribeiro Mucharreira, “O Ensino Superior em Portugal: Democratização e a Nova Governação Pública”, *Revista Educere Et Educare*, vol. 15, nº 37 (Oct/Dec.2020) [11], DOI: 10.17648/educare.v15i37.23968

<sup>68</sup> Pascoal, *A Cidade do Saber*.

<sup>69</sup> *Diário da República*, 2nd Series, No. 13, 1 (10th July 2013).

ding Alameda da Universidade (University Avenue), as a National Monument in 2023 (Figs. 16 to 25), supported by the following arguments:

“The University City of Lisbon, which has been the formative environment for many prominent national figures, constitutes a remarkable and emblematic work from the golden age of public works and the entire 20th-century national architectural output. The buildings combine, in an extensive and meticulously planned project, values of classicism and solemnity with solutions of deliberate modernity. The buildings, articulated through the Alameda da Universidade, stand as dignified urban references, not only for the institution and the public programme they represent but also for the city itself<sup>70</sup>.”

In addition to its material dimension, an intangible feature is also highlighted in the legislative document, referring to “the genius of its creator, its significance as a remarkable testimony of historical experiences and events, its intrinsic aesthetic, technical, and material value, its architectural, urbanistic, and landscaping design, and its scope and what it reflects from the perspective of collective memory”<sup>71</sup>. This is a matter of *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, popularised by Pierre Nora<sup>72</sup>, imbued with the *Spiritus Loci*, as articulated by ICOMOS in the Quebec Declaration, which values both tangible and intangible heritage and their mutual interaction<sup>73</sup>.

Regardless of the classification of this heritage, it is crucial to continue to invest in its study, preservation, and dissemination, “adopting the values of the past as a starting point for the advancement, in freedom, of knowledge and education for the future,” as expressed in the Alcalá Declaration<sup>74</sup>.

While the research conducted has provided a historical understanding of the commissioning and construction process and a solid interpretation of the artistic ensemble, leading to the opening of the classification process, it has also brought about increased responsibility. This heritage is subject

<sup>70</sup> “La Ciudad Universitaria de Lisboa, que ha sido el entorno formativo de muchas figuras nacionales destacadas, constituye una obra notable y emblemática de la edad de oro de las obras públicas y de toda la producción arquitectónica nacional del siglo XX. Los edificios combinan, en un proyecto extenso y meticulosamente planificado, valores de clasicismo y solemnidad con soluciones de modernidad deliberada. Los edificios, articulados a través de la Alameda de la Universidad, se erigen como referencias urbanas dignas, no solo para la institución y el programa público que representan, sino también para la ciudad misma”.

<sup>71</sup> Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Decree No. 25/2023 of 22nd September, *Diário da República, 1st Series, No. 185* (22nd September 2023) 14-15.

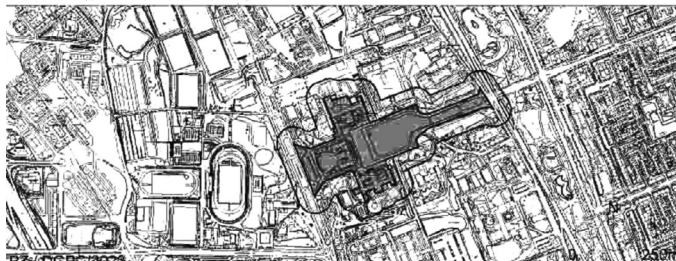
<sup>72</sup> Pierre Nora (dir.), *Les Lieux de la mémoire*, [Paris] : Gallimard, 1984

<sup>73</sup> ICOMOS, *Québec Declaration – On the Preservation of the Spiritu Loci*, 2008, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/uploads/activities/documents/activity-646-2.pdf>

Conjunto constituído pelos edifícios da Reitoria, da Faculdade de Direito e da Faculdade de Letras, incluindo o património móvel integrado, e pela Alameda da Universidade

Lisboa  
Freguesia de Alvalade  
Concelho de Lisboa

▲ Conjunto de interesse nacional / monumento nacional (MN)  
△ Zona geral de proteção (ZGP)



*Figure 16. Image taken from the Diário da República of 22nd September 2023, with the identification of the group of buildings classified as National Monument and its corresponding General Protection Zone.*



*Figure 17. Aerial view of the University City of Lisbon, extracted from Google Maps, 10th January 2025.*

to significant wear and tear due to the nature of its usage. The academic life, with its fluctuations in student numbers and the evolution of teaching programmes and methodologies, places considerable functional and spatial demands on buildings dating from the 1950s.

The need to rethink and expand spaces, particularly within the two faculties, has already led to alterations, which have not always been in line with the historical and artistic importance of the pre-existing structure. The very location of the complex, which quickly became a developed urban hub within the city, saw the access avenue transform into a busy thoroughfare,





*Figure 18. General view of Alameda da Universidade with the Rectorate buildings (in the centre), and the Faculties of Law (on the left) and Arts (on the right).*



*Figure 19. West façade of the Rectorate building of the University of Lisbon, photo by Teresa Soares, 15th February 2025.*



*Figure 20. General view of the main façade of the Faculty of Arts, photo by Teresa Soares, 15th February 2025.*



*Figure 21. General view of the Faculty of Arts building from Alameda da Universidade, photo by Teresa Soares, 15th February 2025.*



*Figure 22. Main façade of the Faculty of Arts, photo by Teresa Soares, 15th February 2025.*

regularly traversed by a significant volume of vehicular traffic.

In order to enhance and safeguard its value, the implementation of an integrated management plan is required. Such a plan would continue to promote the study of the complex, both in its material and intangible dimensions, and further support its dissemination.

### *Final Remarks*



It is evident that the university models of Germany and North American campuses had a significant influence on the model adopted by Oliveira Salazar for the projects of the Portuguese University Cities, with a particular parallel to the monumental architecture of the Città Universitaria in Rome, designed by Marcello Piacentini for Mussolini<sup>75</sup>. The classical grandeur and monumental scale, with porticos supported by pilasters, and the artistic decoration integrated into the architecture, featuring bas-reliefs inspired by Greco-Roman motifs, were decisive references drawn by Porfírio Pardal Monteiro during his trip to Rome in 1938, when he was preparing the first drafts for the University City of Lisbon.

The construction of the University City in Lisbon was part of the broader public works plan for national development in the late 1930s and early 1940s. However, several factors made the realisation of this project difficult and protracted. The premature death of the Minister of Public Works, Duarte Pacheco, in 1943, the impact of the Second World War on the scarcity and rising costs of materials, as well as the challenging financial management of so many ongoing projects, were decisive in slowing the progress of the University City of Lisbon. In addition to these factors, which were significant, there was also Oliveira Salazar's greater commitment to the University City of Coimbra, his *Alma Mater*.

Although the first buildings were inaugurated throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, the idea of a university campus near Campo Grande, in a developing area of the city, was not fully realised during the regime's existence, as many of the planned buildings would not be constructed in this period. The buildings for the Faculties of Science, Psychology and Education Sciences, Pharmacy, Dentistry, and the Institute of Social Sciences were only implemented from the 1980s onwards<sup>76</sup>. These now form part of ten of the eighteen schools of the University of Lisbon, alongside the Rectory, the The Canteen, and the University Stadium.

Therefore, one can speak of a project by the regime for the Universi-

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<sup>75</sup> Fabrizio Di Marco, "La Città Universitaria di Roma. Dal Piano Aperto di Gustavo Giovannoni alla 'Piccola Città Raccolta' di Marcello Piacentini", in *Arquitettura Universitaria. Ciudades Patrimonio Mundial*, ed. Javier Rivera Blanco (Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, 2018) 301-314.

<sup>76</sup> Maria João Neto and Ana Mehnert Pascoal, "Cidade Universitária: ciência, espaço e função", in Marta C. Lourenço and Maria João Neto (Coord.), *Património da Universidade de Lisboa* (Lisboa: Tinta da China, 2011) 190.

ty City in the capital, which was partially unsuccessful, not only in terms of construction, as a material assertion of power but also in terms of the moral assertion of that power over the university community, and particularly over the students. A few years after the inauguration of the first buildings in the new University City of Lisbon, the students would react vehemently to the regime's forceful approach, particularly when it prevented the symbolic celebration of the Student's Day in March 1962. This event, which triggered the severe academic crisis of 1962, with several repercussions throughout the 1960s, would play a decisive role in the downfall of the dictatorship in April 1974, a regime that had dominated the country for more than four decades. It also contributed to the transformation of university spaces into places of democratic assertion and freedom.

In 2025, half a century after the revolution, the University City of Lisbon still stands as a testament to monumental architecture of high technical and material quality, involving some of the most notable architects and artists of the time. Moreover, the memories of the past and the experiences associated with the place, which give strength to its *Spiritus Loci*, remain. This represents the intangible dimension<sup>77</sup> of the heritage of the University City of Lisbon, which is composed of academic crises, repression, and violence, but also of significant scientific, cultural, social, and political events that took place there, both before and after 1974. It is also the priceless heritage of the people who have contributed to the history of the University City of Lisbon, among them many of the country's illustrious figures, from politics to literature, history to medicine, and engineering, who graduated from its schools and have taken the name of Portugal far and wide.

The classification in 2023, nearly fifty years after the end of the dictatorship, of the "ensemble formed by the the Rectorate Building, the Faculty of Law, and the Faculty of Humanities, including the integrated movable heritage, and the Alameda da Universidade, as a National Monument, was, as mentioned, the culmination of an extensive research project. This was undertaken as part of the Centenary of the University of Lisbon in 2011, which allowed for an in-depth study of the various heritages associated with the University. However, the recognition of all the tangible and intangible heritage values associated with the place of the University City of Lisbon was

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<sup>77</sup> Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa (ed.), *Intangible Heritage*, Routledge, New York, 2009.

made possible by the temporal distance from these events. This distance was crucial to formulating more objective perspectives, free from the traumas and intolerance that may colour perceptions of a period which we now seek to leave behind.

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