



O Plano Geral de Melhoramentos do Funchal (1915), by Miguel Ventura Terra

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This review focuses on the General Improvement Plan for Funchal, as designed by architect Miguel Ventura Terra between 1913 and 1915. We will also refer his importance in 20th-century Portuguese city planning and identify future research perspectives.

Architect Miguel Ventura Terra (1866-1919) was one of the most important Portuguese architects of the early 20th century. Born in a humble family, he studied architecture in Oporto and later in Paris, at the expense of the State, in Victor Laloux's office. After his return to Portugal, in 1894, he became one of the most relevant and prominent architects of his time. His work is quite remarkable and he also held several public positions, having had an important role in promoting architecture in Portugal. [1] In 1908 he was elected a councillor of Lisbon Municipality. During his mandate of a little over four years, he was devoted to city planning issues. He worked in a new General Improvement Plan, in several ambitious projects on urban intervention and in the updating of the Municipality's action on city planning and architecture, widely promoting his proposal of a modern and cosmopolitan Lisbon. [2].

Surely with the action in Lisbon in mind, in 1912, the councillors of Funchal, aiming to adjust the city to the increased importance of tourism for its economy, invited the architect to design a General Improvement Plan. Weeks after his mandate in Lisbon was over, Ventura Terra was already in Madeira to know the city, its issues and opportunities. In September 1913, he sent the first elements of his plan from Lisbon, followed by his draft project, in 1914, and his final project, approved in 1915. Some avenues were built and then came the First World War, which led all the work to a stop. However, Ventura Terra's Plan



remained a reference for the next city planning proposals and is thus a key element to understand the city's urban development.

Despite its importance, the Plan was basically forgotten until a little over a decade ago. It was included in the retrospective exhibition on Ventura Terra (RIBEIRA, 2006), including some elements provided by the historian Rui Carita, which, nevertheless, did not allow for a full understanding of the Plan. Teresa Vasconcelos's Master Dissertation, supervised by Rui Carita and published, (VASCONCELOS, 2008), offered the first more thorough approach to the plan and its historical context via a Project Brief which had been found in the meantime. Two other Master Dissertations followed (PERDIGÃO, 2009; MAIA, 2010) which furthered morphological aspects and confirmed the relevance of the Ventura Terra's Plan for later city planning proposals. [3] An exhibition organized by the Madeira Delegation of the Portuguese Architect Association on the hundredth anniversary of the plan's approval, showed it in all its splendour and included a good catalogue (100 ANOS, 2015).

The referred studies analysed the General Improvement Plan for Funchal essentially at local level and within the context of the city's urban development. They do not analyse, or aim to analyse, its importance in the history of city planning in Portugal or even in the work by Ventura Terra. In works on these topics, the Plan is, at best, briefly mentioned, probably due to lack of direct knowledge of the document, less accessible from the point of view of continental Portugal. [4] The exhibition "Ventura Terra, Arquiteto: Do útil e do bello," that Lisbon Municipality organized in 2017, [5] was – as then referred to by Vasco Rosa (2017) – a lost opportunity to compare the architect's proposals for Lisbon and Funchal. The see the full scale plan, you need to go to Cascais, where a reproduction of the Plan was included in the exhibition "Miguel Ventura Terra, Vida e Obra, Casas de Cascais," at Fundação D. Luís. [6].

We aim to further reinforce the importance of the Plan both in Ventura Terra's work and in the history of city planning in Portugal, thus contributing to new research perspectives.

In terms of the architect's work, the Plan for Funchal has similar assumptions to the Plan he designed for Lisbon. Though the cities are different in size, there are common typologies, namely the boardwalk with equipment for leisure activities and the area by the sea to welcome visitors, the close connection between the cities and the river/sea and its landscape, their cosmopolitan and bourgeois values and, in general, the concern with urban "beauty" and "comfort" with circulation area in the background. However, in Lisbon, and unlike the plan for Funchal, Ventura Terra never presented the General Improvement Plan he proposed at the beginning of his mandate, and all we have now are references to it [7]

Moreover, as a counsellor, Ventura Terra was in contact with the international urban culture. This was a crucial time for city planning in Europe and in the USA: core concepts, legislation, institutions and the term itself - *urbanisme*, town and city planning - appears in the decade before the First World War. Ventura Terra had access to this culture, and frequently participated in International Conferences on Architecture, which likely placed him in contact with the ideas then under discussion. [8].

The Plan for Funchal, since we have its full version, is an important element to assess how much Ventura Terra had absorbed the concepts of the recently-founded city planning culture, at this time already beyond the Haussmann model. In regards to this, we may



emphasize:

The comprehensive perspective of the city, considering both the restructuring of the existing city and its urban expansion;

The modern work methodologies;

The ambitious urban structuring, namely through a still basic division in neighbourhoods (see Neighbourhoods ... And ... In the Plan);

The concern in reinforcing public control on architecture design of private buildings;

The attention to the design of public space and integration of public equipment, in contrast with the allotment that was typical in the 19th century.

The Plan obviously maintained the structural role given to roads and the preference for the avenue, already tried and tested in Portugal.

Comentado [IS1]: falta nomes

From a wider perspective on the history of city planning in Portugal, the Plan for Funchal is a rather interesting case, still requiring study. There are not many known General Improvement Plans which have been approved. The Plan for Lisbon is undoubtedly the best known, designed under Ressano Garcia's supervision and approved in 1904. The Plan for Lisbon is essentially a formal ratification of the expansion plans implemented in the previous decades (the so-called Avenidas Novas), to which are added a large park and some roads linking the centre of the city and its outskirts. The Plan does not include the existing city and ignores the expansion areas by the river, where factories and low-income population had been settling. In the Project Brief, Ressano Garcia himself admits the shortcomings of the plan due to lack of funding and means. In practice, it was a limited urban expansion plan. Ventura Terra was very critical of the work developed under Ressano Garcia's supervision, so it is relevant to compare the 1904 Plan and his plan proposals for Lisbon and Funchal.

Another important comparison is with the proposal by Barry Parker for Oporto, made at a similar time. Raymond Unwin's partner, Barry Parker was the co-author of the projects for the garden-cities of Letchworth and Hampstead, and was hired to redesign Avenida dos Aliados, a project later expanded to include the whole city centre. This may also provide a perspective to assess Portuguese city planning at this complex transition period between 19th century city planning represented by Ressano Garcia and the institutional city planning by Estado Novo in the 1930s. These perspectives are crucial for a more comprehensive understanding of the first steps of Portuguese city planning in its historical complexity and specificities.

Notes

1. The main references to the architect and his work are two catalogues published by A. I. Ribeiro (2006) and Xardoné, Costa & Rufino (2009).

2. This was the first republican city council to manage Lisbon municipality, anticipating the implementation of the Republic in the country, two years later. The council resigned in January 1913, allegedly due to tiredness and disappointment in regards to the new regime. For more on the context, see the Municipality of Lisbon (2010). Ventura Terra's work in Lisbon is widely discussed in Verheij (2017). Almost none of the proposals by Ventura



Terra was implemented but much of what he proposed has influenced urban projects implemented in the past decade.

3. Perdigão's main ideas are summarized in conference proceedings (PERDIGÃO, VIRTUDES, 2010); a topic she resumed in her PhD thesis (2013). Already in 2007, another Master dissertation had analysed the Plan for Funchal, though the author had not had access to sources which were later published by Vasconcelos. This dissertation was published as a scientific paper in 2010 and is now outdated (BETTENCOURT, 2010).

4. A reference work such as that by M. S. Lobo (1995) is not mentioned. The Madeira Delegation of the Portuguese Architect Association will scan the plan and thus make it more easily available. We hope that the Project Brief will be published, as it is kept in the Direção Regional dos Assuntos Culturais in Funchal, given its interest in view of the lack of written work on city planning in the first decades of the 20th century.

5. See <http://arquivomunicipal.cm-lisboa.pt/pt/eventos/ventura-terra-arquiteto/> [retrieved on. 15 June 2018].

6. See http://fundacaodmluis.pt/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=433:miguel-ventura-terra-cascais-portugal-fundacao-d-luis&catid=72:destaques [retrieved on 15 June 2018].

7. For this and for the next paragraph, see my PhD thesis (VERHEIJ, 2017).

8. As representative of the Lisbon Municipality, he signed for in the 1910 Town Planning Conference (London), a key moment for British town planning. He did not attend it, probably because the conference was held some time after the Republican Revolution in October 1910, in which Ventura Terra was actively involved.

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