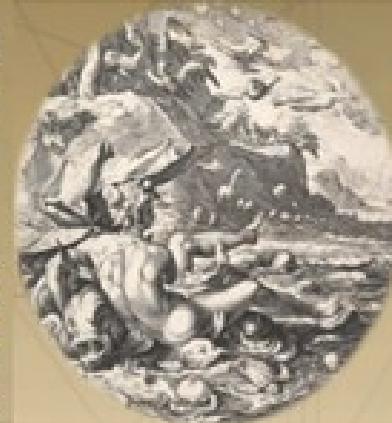


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The urban plan of Macedo de Cavaleiros by Arménio Losa: a symbol of an impossible shift towards progress during the *Estado Novo*

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Abstract

In modern culture, the automobile has become a synonym for progress, with consequences for Architecture in general and the city space in particular. This machine was given a role and symbolism that transcended its own importance, regardless of real needs and the actual number of cars in circulation, changing the meanings of the urban space. In Portugal, a new set of plans, the *Planos Gerais de Urbanização* (from 1933 onwards), provided architects and urban planners with a similar context to rethink urban space with regard to the car. In this context, Macedo de Cavaleiros, a small rural and minor village in northern Portugal, significantly shows how modern ideas spread in the country. However, it also indicates a hypothetical change that could never happen. For almost the entire duration of the *Estado Novo* right-wing political regime (1933-1974), the permanent contradiction between the attempts for a progressive economy and the “spiritual base” of the country in agriculture is vital. Similarly, the contrast between this plan (representing the new ideas for the urban country in a radical proposal) and the firmly chosen Portuguese economic basis displays two opposite poles. As this paper shows, the urban plan of Macedo de Cavaleiros symbolizes a transformation that would be impossible.

Keywords: Arménio Losa, *Estado Novo*, Macedo de Cavaleiros, *Planos Gerais de Urbanização*, Progress