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The paper will analyse the proposals for the historic centre of Salvador presented in two urban plans designed with an interval of almost 40 years. The first is the plan conceived between 1943 and 1950 by Epucs (Office of the Urban Plan for the City of Salvador), responsible for the first modern planning experience of the city. Coordinated by the sanitary engineer Mario Leal Ferreira until his death in 1947, the Epucs then becomes coordinated by Diógenes Rebouças, a young agronomist engineer (and self-taught architect) who was the coordinator of the landscape sector of the plan. The second plan is the public transport plan designed by Rebouças in 1982 for the central area of Salvador. We intend to analyse how those two plans, conceived by Rebouças and partners in a range of almost four decades, solve the challenge of meeting the (alleged) demands of the present and the future while preserving the inherited cultural values. On the other hand, we also intend to identify the continuities and changes in the approach adopted by Rebouças and partners while intervening in a historic site that, in 1959, was listed as national heritage and, in 1985, was inscribed in Unesco’s World Heritage List.

Keywords
Diógenes Rebouças, historic centre of Salvador, urban planning
INTRODUCTION

This paper analyses the proposals for the historic centre of Salvador presented in two urban plans. The first was conceived between 1943 and 1950 by Epucs (Office of the Urban Plan for the City of Salvador). The second plan is the public transport plan for the central area of Salvador designed almost 40 years later, in 1982, by Diógenes Rebouças, former coordinator of the landscape sector of the Epucs plan.

We intend to analyse how those two plans, conceived by Rebouças and partners in a range of almost four decades, solve the challenge of meeting the (alleged) demands of the present and the future while preserving the inherited cultural values. On the other hand, we also intend to identify the continuities and changes in the approach adopted by Rebouças and partners while intervening in a historic site that, in 1959, was listed as national heritage and, in 1985, was inscribed in Unesco’s World Heritage List.

The methodology adopted in this paper includes the analysis of plans, maps and texts of both urban plans and a bibliographical review on urban planning in Bahia in the 20th Century. It is important to highlight that only in 2014 the original maps, plans, photographs and texts of Epucs were opened to the public, after decades of neglect that resulted in the loss of dozens of documents and after ten years of a careful process of cleaning, cataloging, restoration and scanning. Although some studies on the Epucs plan have been published since the 1970s, none of them focused on its proposals to the central area of Salvador, as is the purpose of this paper.

For the Plan for Integrated Mass Transport developed by Diógenes Rebouças in 1982, it was never implemented and remained unpublished until today. The main source used in this paper regarding this plan was Rebouças’ personal copy of the documents, organized as a book and full with his notes as a final revision before the publication that never happened.

THE CITY OF SALVADOR DE BAHIA

The city of Salvador de Bahia was founded in 1549 to be the capital of the Portuguese colony in America. The chosen site was divided into two parts: a hill 60 meters high and a narrow strip of land at the level of the Bay of All Saints, separated by a steep slope. At the upper part, the Portuguese settled the administrative city, with the seat of government, the Cathedral and the churches of religious orders - such as the Jesuits, the Franciscans, the Benedictines and Carmelites - as well as much of the trade, services and housing. In the lower part, they settled the harbour, which would be progressively extended and would become the most important of the South Atlantic in the 18th Century, although in 1763 Salvador lost the function of capital of the Portuguese colony for Rio de Janeiro, located 1,200 km south.

About four years after the founding of the city, around 1553, the mud walls that protected it were demolished and rebuilt, expanding the walled city to the north and to the south. Two gates were created: the Saint Catherine to the north, where today is the Largo do Pelourinho, and Saint Lucy to the south. In the following centuries, the city gradually expanded also to the east, on the second hill, where new neighbourhoods appeared. In 1812, near the old city gate of Saint Lucy, the Teatro São João was built and, in front of it, was created the Praça do Teatro (Theatre Square), currently Praça Castro Alves, since then one of the main public spaces in the centre of Salvador. Between the late 19th and the early 20th Century, the city expands further: while the more affluent families migrate to the south, the north is occupied by low-income families, as well as by an important textile industrial park with its company towns.
Between 1912 and 1916, during the first term of José Joaquim Seabra as Governor of the State of Bahia, monumental works and major transformation in the city centre take place: several streets of the Lower Town and on the city centre are widened, Avenida Oceânica is built, creating a new axis of urban expansion in the Atlantic Ocean waterfront, and dozens of buildings are demolished. Seabra’s most important intervention, though, is the opening of the Avenida Sete de Setembro, result of the rectification and enlargement of several streets and alleys and of the demolishment of tens of buildings to link the Praça Castro Alves to the Farol da Barra, connecting the city centre to the new bourgeois neighbourhoods on south.

From the 1940s, with the implementation of road infrastructure on the outskirts of the city and the subsequent eccentricity of the foundational city, this one begins to lose its centrality.

THE EPUCS – OFFICE OF THE URBAN PLAN FOR THE CITY OF SALVADOR (1943-50)

Aiming the elaboration of an urban plan to Salvador, it was signed, on November 3rd, 1942, a contract between the City of Salvador and the Office of the Urban Plan for the City of Salvador (Epucs), coordinated by engineer Mário Leal Ferreira, holder of a wide experience in several fields related to the urban planning – especially sanitary engineering and sociology.

The research work, data collection and definition of urban planning guidelines of Epucs only started in April 1943, and continued under Ferreira leadership up to March 1947, when he suddenly died, and Diógenes Rebouças, then coordinator of the landscape design section of Epucs, takes its coordination. Epucs would work under Rebouças’ coordination up to 1950, when it would be extinct.

On its first years of operation, Epucs came up with a series of depth studies in several areas. Beyond aerophotogrammetric survey of Salvador urban zone and a set of historic research aiming to constitute the “urban encyclopedia of the City of Salvador”, Epucs developed investigations about a range of topics, from geology, topography, meteorology and climatology to urban infrastructure networks, also including finances, urban economy and urban legislation. These data collection subsidized the plan proposals, among which there were the zoning plan; the definition of communication routes, of areas intended to parks and gardens and residential zones; the location of several public services, such as the Civic Centre of local and urban reach and supply centres.

From the geomorphological understanding of Salvador and the historic occupation that had privileged the hilltops, Epucs identified and adopted a radio centric system of occupation, having the foundational city as the centre and formed by radial roads connecting the city centre to the concentric roads and neighbourhoods, creating neighbourhood-to-neighbourhood connections (Figure 01). It were also foreseen the articulation between ridges and valleys; the traffic division by circulation modals which included automobiles, trams and pedestrians; and the creation of fast traffic routes on the city valleys, vacant by then.

The proposal of creating a network of valley avenues (park-ways) is certainly the most known aspect of the Epucs plan, as it was, in a certain way, incorporated as a priority to Salvador urban planning during the following decades, and as the first valley avenue – the Avenida do Centenário –, designed by Rebouças, began to be constructed in 1949, as part of the celebrations for the 4th centenary of Salvador foundation.

By that time, the new avenues proposed by Epucs were also criticized. The editorial of the last edition of 1949 Técnica – Revista de Engenharia e Arquitetura accuses the Mayor Wanderley Pinho of grabbing a sizable loan “under high interests” to “spend millions each year supporting Epucs on its cocainic daydreams”, among which the construction of “avenues to ‘leave in the shade’ the 5th Avenue in New York or the Champs-Élysées in Paris.”
Despite these critics, Epucs rapidly became a reference, all over Brazil, in modern analysis and urban planning. In 1946, the Paulista engineer-architect Eduardo Kneese de Mello, after paying a visit to Salvador, published on the Acrópole magazine the transcription of a lecture held in São Paulo about his “Impressions about a voyage to Bahia”, which highlights Epucs as an example that deserves to be followed. After comparing São Paulo – “the city that mostly builds in the whole world” and “the biggest industrial centre of South America” – with Salvador – which population is “smaller than a fifth of São Paulo’s” – he highlights the qualities of the plan that has been elaborated in “Bahia”, as he refers to Salvador.

Bahia is not only widening streets, as many other Brazilian cities have done, under the title of urbanism. Bahia is studying its plan for real. [...].

The future plan for Bahia will be based on the rigorous topographic survey of the region, on the study provided and the waters flow, the traffic study, the use of parks and natural groves, on the conservation of historical and artistic monuments, on the zoning, the proportional distribution of schools, hospitals, and playgrounds. The master plan for Bahia will be based, ultimately, on the complete knowledge of its current conditions and of its future opportunities. Holding these data, the urban planner can safely draw the guidelines of the urban development and Bahia will then be one of the most beautiful cities of America. 12
changes and continuities in two urban plans for the historic centre of Salvador: the Epucs (1943-50) and the public transport plan (1982)
Changes and continuities in two urban plans for the Historic Centre of Salvador: The EPUCS (1943-50) and the Public Transport Plan (1982)

The listed Nossa Senhora da Barroquinha's Church (1722) and some blocks would be demolished and a connection underneath the Praça Castro Alves between Ladeira da Montanha and Barroquinha would be created. Curiously, the new link would preserve some buildings erected on the previous decades, such as the deco headquarters of the Secretaria da Agricultura da Bahia and the eclectic Palace Hotel, beyond the recently inaugurated Edifício Sulacap (Figure 03).

Another proposal developed within EPUCS and that is worthy to be analyzed because of what it would represent in terms of destruction of the architectural, urban and landscape heritage of the Historic Centre of Salvador is the creation of a new Civic Centre on the southeast side of Praça da Sé.

Three whole courts, mainly composed by eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings, would be entirely demolished to make room to a gigantic building, divided in two asymmetric blocks with different dimensions. As a local version of the Ministério da Educação e Saúde building, in Rio de Janeiro (1936-43), the new Civic Centre would adopt the repertoire of the Carioca School of Corbusian origin: prismatic volumes erected on circular section pilotis surmounted by roof-gardens; slender concrete marquees supported by “V” shape pillars; brise-soleils. Preserving due proportions, the Civic Centre project seems to prognosticate the Edifício Octacílio Gualberto, which would be built a few meters from there, less than ten years after (Figure 04).

Despite the contrast created with the old and listed buildings located on the other sides of the square, it is necessary to highlight Diógenes Rebouças concern on the definition of the quota of the new Civic Centre. The new architectonic set reaches a limit height of 29 meters, corresponding to nine pavements, showing Rebouças concern to limit the height of the new edifications to 6,50 meters underneath the 100,00m quota, relative to the top of the crosses of the main catholic temples in Salvador City Centre.
FIGURE 3 Proposal developed in Epucs for the creation of an underground connection between Ladeira da Montanha and Barroquinha, underneath Praça Castro Alves.

FIGURE 4 New Civic Centre in Praça da Sé, developed in Epucs.
However, this height limit, so carefully studied by Rebouças, is deliberately discontinued by some vertical elements proposed, on the same study, to the Praça da Sé: a set of palm trees and a bell tower, coated on tiles and installed on a podium, that would be erected on the site where the Igreja da Sé – demolished in 1933 – was located.

The proposals of the Epucs plan for the centre of Salvador, developed in the 1940s, have many points in common with others proposals of the European modern urbanism from the 1920s. On one side there are striking similarities between the new avenue proposed to connect Terreiro de Jesus and Avenida Sete de Setembro – especially the view shown in Figure 02 – and the Hochhausstadt conceived by German architect Ludwig Hilberseimer in 1924. On the other, it is indisputable the approximation of Epucs proposal and the Plan Voisin developed for Paris by Le Corbusier in 1922, especially in the decision to demolish whole blocks of centuries-old houses – preserving only some monumental buildings – and to build new modern buildings – even though the buildings proposed by Epucs in Salvador are much more modest in scale than the skyscrapes designed by Le Corbusier for Paris.

THE PLAN FOR INTEGRATED MASS TRANSPORT (1982)

Most of the proposals elaborated on the 1940s within Epucs to Salvador City Centre were not executed. Beyond that, the migration of higher income families in direction to the new neighbourhoods located to the south of the centre speeded up, from the 1940s, the process of degradation and slumming of the old houses of the area. On the following decades, this process accelerates further. The construction of a new Administrative Centre by the State of Bahia Government begins to be imagined in 1966 and is finally executed on the 1970s. On the same period, a new Bus Station (1974) and the first mall of the city (Shopping Centre Iguatemi, 1975) are built on a still unoccupied region located halfway between the foundational city and the new Administrative Centre of Bahia, creating a new centrality.

If, by one side, the central area had lost, mostly, its centrality, on the other it had earned the status of national heritage in 1959 and in 1985 the Historic Centre of Salvador is inscribed on the World Heritage list by Unesco.

While it became a world heritage, the Historic Centre of Salvador housed several areas in an advanced state of ruination occupied by low income afro descendant families – by then, important cultural groups came up, highlighting Olodum, founded in 1979 and which, with its musical, theatre and dance activities, fosters the self-esteem and pride of the local population.

When, in 1982, the 68 years-old Diógenes Rebouças develops to the State of Bahia Government the preliminary study to an Integrated System of Mass Transportation to the central area of Salvador, neither the Historic Centre nor Rebouças are the same as they were in the 1940s.

The Integrated Mass Transportation System had as one of its primary goals “to reach Salvador City Centre in strictly strategic spots, the ones of origin and destination of the routes, an operation that will be carried by the integration of the network elements to the road structures of the Centre.” According to Rebouças, “when they reach the Centre, the lines provided to the mass transportation should serve as a motivation to the dissolution of multiple problems that affect the quality of life in this urban space”: 
It is necessary, at the beginning of the work, to take a position on what it concerns to the philosophy to be defended and followed in one of the prime aspects in which the Mass Transportation problem unveils itself, of the ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT; for seeming to be of utmost importance and for being about the City of Salvador ...

[...] on what it concerns to achieve visual integration of these elements on the landscape, from aesthetic, emotional and psychological points of view, it is necessary to require from the responsible for the approach an elevated degree of sensibility.

[...] It is intended then to admit that, in certain areas, when the restrictions are the landscape or environmental preservation, finding the best solution, to then intervene, and if economical healthy and technically valid reasons justify it, it must not be hindered a correct intervention, especially when there are lumps or when the irreversibility of architectural values is found. This will occur if these values are already lost or soiled by the interference of surreptitious buildings and ruins that are real proliferation focus of harmful and offensive agents to the health of the population [...]”

It is declared then a courageous action, since solutions that represent contemporary values and that are harmoniously added to the preserved ancient ambient, will, in a certain way, inspire respect and be applauded by the current and the future generations. 20
Rebouças then forecasts the implementation of a ring shaped line that would be articulated to the great converging lines of the neighbourhoods’ traffic corridors, recapturing, in general terms, the radio concentric scheme conceived by Epucs. (Figure 05)

The ring, with a route of approximately 5.5km long, would be implanted on the east bank of the valley of Dique do Tororó and on the ancient channel “Rio da Vula” (Rua Dr. J.J. Seabra, a.k.a. Baixa dos Sapateiros). The connection would happen through the transposition of the watershed of the valleys, in two points: north, connecting the Baixa dos Sapateiros to the Fonte Nova Sports Complex; and south, nearby the just-inaugurated Lapa Bus Station. The ring would be supported by stations on the Campo Grande, Piedade, and Praça dos Veteranos.
However, the main ring would only hem the Historic Centre. Praça Thomé de Souza and Praça Cairú – main public spaces of the central area of the Up and Lower Towns, respectively –, would be reached through connections starting on the Estação Praça dos Veteranos, in Baixa dos Sapateiros, in which the circuit would be installed on an elevated structure, connected through a footbridge to a gigantic mall that would replace the three blocks located between Ladeira da Praça and Rua 28 de Setembro. Many 18th, 19th and 20th century buildings would be demolished. (Figure 06)

Rebouças justifies his decision for the demolishment of those three quarters for them being “real centres of proliferation of all kinds of harmful to health agents, creating a bad use of the space and highly damaging conditions to the City’s economy.”

To Rebouças,

Undoubtedly, the position in which the alluded blocks are found, in the heart of the City, is what justifies, without a contraindication, the implementation of an optimistic and brave project of renovation, in which the goals to be reached, beyond the attendance to the needs of a city centre, should also be scheduled to the expansion of the Commercial City in attractive, comfortable and modern terms, with the installation of several arrangements to provide important services and energize the community life.

The proposed mall would count on a “terrace coverage”, with “garden areas”, that would assure “environments that would enable moments of leisure and refreshment to the people” and allow the connection leveled with the Rua José Gonçalves and, consequently, with important public spaces of the Upper City, such as Praça da Sé, Rua da Misericórdia, Praça Thomé de Souza and Rua Chile. At the same time, tunnels containing escalators starting from the mall would guarantee the fast and practical access to Praça Cairú, in the Lower City.

Another extension provided for in the ring would be related to a tunnel that, underneath the foundational city, would connect the Baixa dos Sapateiros to the lower part of the hill that divides the Up and Lower Towns, on the quota of Rua do Julião and Caminho Novo do Taboão. There would be built the Estação Taboão-Comércio, to support the Lower City. Rebouças highlights that

The project and execution of this Station will be a challenge for the professionals that are delegated to these functions, not only for the issues concerning the visual integration on the landscape, but also because of its location interfering in a stretch that demands a brave action, for technical reasons and for the opportunity to reintegrate, in the urban context, an area strongly degraded and owner of a damnable ambience to the human life, where there are really poor quality constructions.

Rebouças himself features studies of “landscape integration” to the station that demonstrate his capacity to carefully implement a contemporary equipment of reasonable size in a delicate and consolidated urban landscape (Figure 07). On the other hand, the implementation of this station in this place would represent the demolishment of dozens of 18th and 19th century houses, beyond the Elevador do Taboão (1891), one of the most interesting elements of the network of urban lifts implemented in the centre of the city in the second half of the 20th century and which structure and machinery were brought from England.

If, despite the demolishment of historical preexisting buildings, Rebouças is capable of reaching a proper landscape integration in the Estação Taboão-Comércio, in the Estação Praça dos Veteranos the visual impact that the mall would cause in the immediate surroundings of some of the most representatives examples of the civic Baiano architecture, such as Casa dos Sete Candeeiros (built in the 17th century and listed by Iphan in 1938) and the Solar do Gravatá (built in the first half of the 18th century and listed by Iphan in 1974) is incontestable.
CONCLUSION

Despite the almost 40 years that divide both of the experiences, we can find some similarities on the proposals to the Historic Centre of Salvador developed within Epucs and on the Mass Transportation Integrated System. The first of them is the permanence of the radio concentric traffic scheme, conceived in Epucs and that, in a certain way, structured the creation of the first valley avenues, and that is reinterpreted in the 1982 studies, through a net of mass transportation.

Either on the 1940s proposals or on the 1982 ones, the creation of a traffic infrastructure predicates the demolition of entire blocks on the urban fabric of the Historic Centre, and even of monuments of undeniable historical value, bringing back echoes of the Baron Haussmann and Pereira Passos “demolisher urbanism”, which Seabra had already incorporated on the 1910s. This reference to the “demolisher urbanism”, really current on the urban renovation undertaken in Brazil on the beginning of the 20th century gets even clearer in the hygienist rhetoric featured by Rebouças on the proposal for the Mass Transportation Integrated System, which links the physical degradation of the buildings to the (supposed) social degradation of its dwellers. If in the 1940s this approach was not only acceptable but even current in Brazil, it was not anymore in the 1980s.

Fortunately or unfortunately, the proposals for both of the plans to the Historic Centre of Salvador that we have presented here have in common the fact that they have, mostly, remained on the paper.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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The careful process of cleaning, cataloging, restoration and scanning was held by a team coordinated by Professor Ana Fernandes, from the Faculty of Architecture of the Universidade Federal da Bahia (FAUFBA), with funding from Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado da Bahia (FAPESB) and Petrobras. The Epuc Archives are currently deposited in Fundação Gregório de Mattos, in Salvador. In 2014, at the same time that the access of the images scanned from this archives were opened to the public, the team responsible for this recovery published a book about the collection. (Ana Fernandes (Org.). Acervo do EPUCS: contextos, percursos, acesso. Salvador: Universidade Federal da Bahia, 2014)


Diógenes Almeida Rebouçass was born in 1914 in a farm in Amargosa, in the State of Bahia, and, at 4, moved with his family to Itabuna, in the cocoa cultivation region of the State, where his parents had farms. At 16 he enrolled in the course of Agronomic Engineering in Agricultural School of Bahia in São Bento das Lajes, close to Salvador. Completed the course in 1933 and returned to Itabuna, where he began to work as a surveyor for the City at the same time as he helped to manage the family cocoa farms. Through social contacts of family and engineers who he met as surveyor in Itabuna, started to design houses and other buildings, becoming one of the most productive architects in the city in the 1930s. In 1936, Rebouçass moved to Salvador, where he had started five years before architecture and painting courses at the School of Fine Arts of Bahia, which, however, he frequented little. In 1937, receives a diploma of Professor of Drawing and Painting. Rebouçass only received the title of architect in 1952, when he already was the most important architect in Bahia. (Nivaldo Vieira de Andrade Junior. Arquitetura moderna na Bahia, 1947-1951: uma história e controlo. 2012. Thesis [Doctorate in Architecture and Urban Planning] – Post-Graduation Program in Architecture and Urban Planning – Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador, 2012). Salvador: Op. cit. 23-25.
Officially, the Epucs ended its activities after the death of Mário Leal Ferreira and, from the decree signed by Mayor Wanderley Pinho on January 29, 1948, was created the Commission of the Urban Plan of the City of Salvador (Cpucs) to continue the actions initiated by Epucs. However, local media and even the Mayor reports continued to refer to Epucs - and never to Cpucs - in articles published in the following five years (Continuidade na execução do plano de urbanismo. A Tarde, Salvador, p. 02, 28 mai 1949; O E.P.U.C.S. também ameaçado de despejo. A Tarde, Salvador, p. 02, 01 jun 1949; Começou o asfaltamento da Liberdade. A Tarde, Salvador, p. 02, 06 fev 1950; A Bahia terá uma Penitenciária-Modelo. A Tarde, Salvador, p. 02, 10 fev 1950; O hotel servirá a toda a cidade. A Tarde, Salvador, p. 02, 13 dez 1950; Casas populares na Bahia. A Tarde, Salvador, p. 02, 04 abr 1952). For these reasons, throughout this article, we always refer to Epucs even when we are describing the actions taken after the death of Ferreira and the official – but not real – extinction of that structure.

The team that composed Epucs was extensive and formed by engineers, architects, lawyer, historians, doctors, archivists, draftsmen, topographers and model makers, in addition to an administrative section and contributors to several specialties, such as botanic, geography, health, construction materials and museums. On the period when Epucs was under Mario Leal Ferreira coordination (1943-47), it was up to Diógenes Rebouças “to match the space conception of the chosen model to the ‘general principles’, submitting the physical proposal to the general coordination of Mário Leal.” (Sampaio. Op. cit. 198)


Although the foundational city of Salvador had been listed by the National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN) in 1959, in 1984, the listed area is expanded, and embraced the surroundings of the foundational city, from the Mosteiro de São Bento, on the south, to the Carmo, on the north.

As we saw, since the 1940s the centre of Salvador had lost great part of its centrality, beyond having become a national heritage and being about to become world heritage. On the other hand, Diógenes Reboças, who in 1943 was a young self-taught architect of 29 years-old, had become, in the 1950s, the most influent architect of Salvador, mostly due to the buildings projects elaborated in Epucs, such as the Hotel da Bahia, the Escola-Parque and the Avenida Centenário. Author of more than a hundred of projects distributed in dozens of cities of Bahia and neighbour States, Reboças started, from the mid-1960s, to mainly devote himself to consulting and teaching activities, becoming one of the most respected professors of the Architecture School of the Federal University of Bahia.