

## The 'Plain Style' in the Theory and Practice of Project Design: Contributions to the Shaping of an Urban Image on the Waterfront Prior to the 1755 Earthquake

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**Abstract :** In the specific context of the Iberian Union between 1580 and 1640, characteristics emerged in Portuguese architecture that stood out from the main architectural production of the period. Recognised and identified aspects that had begun making their appearance decades before (1521) became significantly more marked during the Hapsburg-Spanish occupation. Distinctive even from the imperialist language of Spain, this trend would endure even after the restoration of independence (1706), continuing through to the start of the age of absolutism. Or perhaps not. This trend, recognised as Plain Style (Kubler), associated with a certain scarcity of resources, involved a certain formal and decorative simplification, as well as a particular set of conventions that would subsequently mark the landscape. This expression could also be seen as a means of asserting a certain spirit of independence as the Iberian Union breathed its last. The image of a simple, bare-bones architecture with purer design lines is associated by various authors –most notably Kubler– with the narratives of modernism, to whose principles it is similar, in a context-specific to the period. There is a contrast with some of the exuberance of the baroque or its expression in the Manueline period, in a similar fashion to modernism's responses to nineteenth-century eclecticism. This assertion and practice of simple architecture, drafted from the interpretation of the treaties, and highlighting a certain classical inspiration, was to become a benchmark in the theory of architecture, spanning the Baroque and Mannerism, until achieving contemporary recognition within certain originality and modernity. At a time when the baroque and its scenography became generally very widespread, it is important also to recognise the role played by plain style architecture in the construction of a rather complex and contradictory waterfront landscape, featuring promises of exuberance and more discrete practices.

**Keywords :** Carlos Mardel, Lisbon's waterfront, plain style, urban image on the waterfront

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