

# RESEARCH REPORT:

A DIPLOMATIC VIEW OF SALVADOR'S URBAN EVOLUTION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE TERMS OF ALIGNMENTS AND SURVEYS (1724-1891)

## RELATO DE PESQUISA:

UMA LEITURA DIPLOMÁTICA DA EVOLUÇÃO URBANA DE SALVADOR SOB A ÓTICA DOS TERMOS DE ALINHAMENTOS E VISTORIAS (1724-1891)

JAN MAURÍCIO VAN HOLTHE

Universidade Salvador, Architecture and Urbanism Undergraduate Course, Salvador, BA, Brazil

**ABSTRACT:** This article presents the partial results of a research project developed with the *Terms of Alignments and Surveys* (1724-1891), an extensive collection of primary sources belonging to the Municipal Historical Archive of Salvador, with the aim of preserving part of the documentary records of the old City Council. Due to the precarious state of conservation of this material, the work, carried out with very simple - but nevertheless efficient - technical resources, was divided into three stages: an on-site analysis of the documents, the collection of digital photographs and, finally, a complete diplomatic paleographic transcription. To conclude, a printed copy of all the transcribed documents together with a set of media containing all the digital photographs collected during the process were donated to the above-mentioned institution. It is our hope that this material will contribute to a better understanding of the urban and social evolution of our city during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

**KEYWORDS:** Salvador, history, urbanism, paleography, diplomatics

**RESUMO:** Este artigo consiste no relato do projeto de pesquisa desenvolvido com os *Termos de Alinhamentos e Vistorias* (1724-1891), extensa coleção de fontes primárias pertencentes ao Arquivo Histórico Municipal de Salvador (AHMS), visando preservar, em caráter definitivo, os registros documentais do antigo Senado da Câmara do município. Em função do precário estado de conservação do referido material, o trabalho, dispondo de recursos técnicos bastante simples – mas eficientes –, foi subdividido em três etapas: análise in loco dos documentos, captura de imagens digitais e posterior transcrição paleográfica diplomática. Ao final, com a doação ao AHMS de uma versão impressa de todos os documentos transcritos, junto com uma coleção de mídias contendo as fotografias coletadas durante o processo de manuseio dos volumes encadernados, esperamos poder contribuir para um maior conhecimento da evolução urbana de nosso município, bem como de aspectos distintos e variados de sua sociedade nos séculos XVIII e XIX.

**PALAVRAS - CHAVE:** Salvador; história; urbanismo; paleografia; diplomática.

## INTRODUCTION

If we set aside the narrow, restrictive scope of the traditional concept and fields of action of the two branches of knowledge [...] we may perceive the amplitude that today both Palaeography and Diplomacy encompass. [...] The competence of these studies extends from the clarification [...] of the different ways of writing [...] to the legitimacy of family inheritances, economic contracts, the proceedings of various institutions, and so on. In the lives of ordinary citizens, as well as those of institutions and communities, many might benefit from the “truths” that Palaeography and Diplomacy may reveal, at all times and in all places. (BELLOTO, H. Apud: BERWANGER, A.; LEAL, J., 2012, p.09).

The Municipal Historical Archive of Salvador (Arquivo Histórico Municipal de Salvador - AHMS), a public institution affiliated to the Gregório de Mattos Foundation (FGM) and to Salvador's Secretariat of Culture and Education, has long been recognized as one of the most important collections of primary sources in the State of Bahia, thereby justifying its registration, in 2009, as a documentary heritage of humanity by UNESCO's Memory of the World Program (FUNDAÇÃO GREGÓRIO DE MATOS, 2015)<sup>1</sup>. Thousands of manuscripts housed within this archive, therefore, preserve a significant chapter of Salvador's history. As “Head of Brazil” (OLIVEIRA, 2004) the “Loyal and Valiant City of Bahia”<sup>2</sup> henceforth became one of South America's most populous cities and busiest ports. However, a considerable part of this vast documental collection - composed almost entirely of manuscripts written since the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century-, despite an increase in academic research and historical publications witnessed in our country over recent years (MATOS, 2013), has not been included in the list of primary sources referred to by most researchers, including those residing in Salvador.

On the other hand, it cannot be ignored that, nowadays, there are numerous obstacles that hinder the efforts of most scholars seeking information through the analysis of old manuscripts, such as those belonging to the AHMS: the limited opening hours of public institutions all over the country, centuries-old manuscripts in an advanced state of deterioration, the poor quality of the ink used in some of the old documents (giving rise to stains and smudges), erroneous restoration procedures, the intricate calligraphy of countless ancient scribes, outdated vocabulary and archaic abbreviations that interfere in the full comprehension of texts, etc. Such drawbacks may therefore explain, albeit in part, why contact with this important collection of primary sources has been limited. However, this far from justifies the precarious conditions of the facilities at AHMS – and of several other Brazilian archives - which time and again have been denounced by the media (FARIAS, 2012).

Of all the collections of manuscripts that comprise the AHMS, one in particular caught our attention, and led us to advocate that it deserves greater attention from Brazilian architects and town planners: a set of eleven bound volumes known as the *Terms of Alignments and Surveys*. Encompassing a period of approximately 170 years of Salvador's history (1724-1891), the aforesaid *Terms*, comprised entirely of manuscripts in an advanced state of deterioration, mainly, but not exclusively, contain reports of inspections carried out by officers and municipal authorities, their assessments, recommendations and warnings, usually in response to formal petitions formulated by city residents, addressed to the former Senate of the Chamber<sup>3</sup>, requesting proper licenses to erect new edifices, to promote renovations or extensions of buildings located in Salvador. Therefore, we strongly believe that this collection, due to its formal, legal status, constitutes an important source of information that may enhance, with

<sup>1</sup> This and all citations hereafter have been translated by the author PREFEITURA MUNICIPAL DE SALVADOR. Available at: <[http://www.culturafgm.salvador.ba.gov.br/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=670&Itemid=1](http://www.culturafgm.salvador.ba.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=670&Itemid=1)> Accessed on: May 10th, 2016

<sup>2</sup> Honorific title used, since 1829, by the City Council to designate the city of Salvador in official documents, including the *Terms of Alignments and Surveys*.

<sup>3</sup> “[...] the City Council of Bahia was elevated to the title of *Senate of the Chamber* by the charter of March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1646 [...]”. (SILVA, 2000, n.p.)

greater accuracy, much of the research studies comprising the urban evolution of Salvador since the second quarter of the eighteenth century.

Consequently, in an effort to minimize the impact of the most common obstacles, mentioned above, regarding the handling and usage of data contained in sets of ancient primary sources, we initiated, under the sponsorship of UNIFACS – Universidade Salvador, the process of conducting a diplomatic paleographic transcription of a number of bound volumes of the *Terms of Alignments and Surveys*, producing, at the end of each semester, a printed version consisting of all the transcribed documents, accompanied by digital media (DVD) containing the digital photographs collected during the on-site consultations<sup>4</sup>. To date (July 2017), a total of five printed volumes, each covering a specific period of time, have now been made available for public consultation in the AHMS: 1775-1800, 1800-1812, 1817-1827, 1827-1829 and 1837-1841. This set of printed books comprises approximately 1.750 individual documents, encompassing almost sixty-six years of the city's urban evolution between the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. With these resources, our main objective is not only to promote - and facilitate - the use of this valuable collection of primary sources by contemporary researchers, but also to reduce the need of directly handling old, fragile pages, therefore cooperating with the conservation of the original volumes.

In summary, this article seeks to disclose a provisional report of the ongoing research project, including the scope and extent of the results hitherto reached, as well as the methodology applied, which includes a proposed working model that – although admittedly incomplete from a technical viewpoint - may be used during future initiatives of the same nature. In addition to this, a few examples - selected excerpts from different manuscripts - are presented not only to establish the importance of the transcribed texts for the study of Salvador's urban evolution, but also to introduce a variety of topics and activities under the control of the former Senate of the Chamber, which justified their inspections and led to the production of the *Terms*. From our perspective, we trust that public awareness will be raised in relation to the material we have donated to the city's Historical Municipal Archive (AHMS).

## RESEARCH PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Paleography is the science of deciphering manuscripts, taking into account the vicissitudes suffered by writing across all the centuries and all nations, in whichever material it appears. (RIVERO, J.; Apud: BERWANGER, A.; LEAL, J., 2012, p.15)

We must initially recognize the selective, emergency status of the methods that have been applied to the research on the *Terms of Alignments and Surveys* since 2013: it may be summarized as the photographic register, followed by the paleographic transcription of all the diplomatic manuscripts which still possessed a certain degree – total or partial - of readability. For example, it was not possible to analyze the manuscripts covered by layers of old Japanese paper (Washi), – that had unfortunately become opaque over the years - which would naturally require the use of sophisticated technological resources, such as ultraviolet light and infrared photography (BERWANGER, A.; LEAL, J., 2012). It was also not possible to clean or restore the most damaged pages at this stage of our research.

Therefore, the main objective of this research project was to ensure the integrity of information contained in the highly deteriorated documents on the shortest possible timescale

<sup>4</sup> Some documents were already covered with layers of old and opaque Japanese paper, making it impossible to be entirely transcribed at this stage. We hope that after future restorations these excerpts may be fully legible.

before they cease to exist, using the most basic, low-cost resources and technical processes available to the majority of scholars. In other words, we attempt to demonstrate what may be achieved with very simple resources – in both technical and financial terms - in an emergency situation, thereby minimizing the need to handle the original manuscripts (i.e., without exposing them to any additional unnecessary risk), while in no way jeopardizing the security of the information collected and produced during the transcription phase. In methodological terms, we divided the activities into two distinct phases:

### PHASE 1

Due to the precarious state of the manuscripts examined and the inherent risks associated with the frequent handling of such material, rich in pathogens of different origins (CASSARES, 2000), we decided it would be best to work with digitized images (photographs) of the referred documents. Therefore, in this phase we applied very simple, affordable and easy to use resources: a Sony digital camera, model DSC-WX300 (18.2 Megapixel) and a Vanguard tripod, model Niveló 204SL. Thus, by carefully handling each sheet individually - under the supervision and guidance of the archive technicians - and using the indispensable personal protective equipment (PPE) – a reusable respirator, disposable gloves and protective acrylic goggles - we dedicated a few days of each semester to the delicate task of collecting images. Once again, we fully acknowledge that this is not the best equipment available for capturing digital images of ancient manuscripts. However, we believe it constitutes a very practical and useful example of what may be done, in emergency situations with modest resources, especially given the speed with which old documents are deteriorating.

Digitized images on the other hand, in addition to being a recent and significant tool for the work of paleographers, also allow manuscripts to be analysed and transcribed within a very flexible schedule. The images have also enabled the assistance of volunteer undergraduates at UNIFACS – Universidade Salvador, who, protected from direct exposure to the pathogenic agents that thrive on old sheets of deteriorated paper, have been able to contribute to the time-consuming effort of transcribing the documents.

There is also another significant advantage of working with digital photographs rather than directly with the physical documents themselves: the digital files enabled us to decipher and transcribe several extremely deteriorated manuscripts by employing image editing software such as the GNU Image Manipulation Program (GIMP), a very efficient free cross-platform image editor, with features that surpass the process of reading a document with the naked eye, such as: the ability to zoom in on specific words, enhance the script by modifying the brightness, contrast, color saturation or sharpness of the photographs etc. Indeed, in most cases, with the use of just two filters (brightness and contrast), it was possible to highlight several sections of the manuscripts that had been damaged by stains and blots, thereby considerably increasing the accuracy of the paleographic transcriptions.

It should be mentioned that the research project began to work in 2013 with the set of *Terms of Alignments and Surveys* that presented the worst state of conservation: the bound volume produced during the last quarter of the eighteenth century (1775-1800). At the time, this particular book included dozens of sheets containing sizeable gaps and many others almost entirely covered by fragments of old, opaque Japanese paper (Washi)<sup>5</sup>, which required the frequent use of digital resources. In fact, soon after the digital images had been collected, this volume was sent for restoration, with no indication of when it would return for future consultations at the AHMS.

<sup>5</sup> Washi (or Japanese paper) is a special type of paper, produced from the fibers of a few typical Japanese shrubs – Kozo, Mitsumata and Gampi – and best suited for the restoration processes of old manuscripts. (Available at: <<http://www.worldpaper.com.br/washi/>>. Accessed on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017).

## PHASE 2

With all the manuscripts digitized and enhanced using the image editing software, we proceeded to the next step, consisting of the diplomatic paleographic transcription of each document, converting them all into electronic files in the *Word for Windows* format (Microsoft Office Suite), easily accessed and obtainable for reproduction (printing) at anytime.

During this phase, the fundamental premise of our work was to maintain the old texts in their original spelling, noting the terms in the exact form they appeared, reproducing the errors, the archaic punctuation rules, and outdated abbreviations etc. Thus, we chose to produce what is described as an elementary<sup>6</sup> and diplomatic<sup>7</sup> paleographic transcription. Had we decided to adopt the modern spelling of the words or expand abbreviations with the missing letters in order to help the comprehension of contemporary researchers, we would be developing, conceptually, what is defined as a “semidiplomatic” or “translated” edition of the manuscripts, one in which...

[...] there is an attempt to improve the text, since there is a small degree of intervention by the editor, which is practically a summary of the abbreviations, keeping all other aspects of the testimony, and, by doing so, the text is kept very close to the original. (ANDRADE, E.; DELGADO, M., 2011)

Therefore, based on the recommendations of the *Brazilian Technical Norms for Transcribing and Editing Manuscripted Documents*<sup>8</sup> applied in this work – with a few exceptions, due to the urgent nature of the activity - we decided to “reproduce the document **as it was created** by the author” (BERWANGER, A.; LEAL, J., 1995, emphasis mine). In other words, without “modifying the spelling to the **current** graphic form” and respecting “the **particularities** of the manuscript” (BERWANGER, A.; LEAL, J., 1995, emphasis mine). While the modernization of scripts - “published in a form similar to the original but in a contemporary version” (FLEXOR, 2000, n.p.) – as advocated by certain experts (ARAÚJO, 1985), may to a certain degree, appeal to the “general public”, in our opinion it may limit their use. In other words, we believe that the decision to maintain the original characteristics of the old manuscripts increases the number of researchers and fields of knowledge benefited by the transcriptions, including, in addition to architecture and urbanism, disciplines such as philology, history, archivology etc. Nevertheless, in order to facilitate the comprehension of the information contained in these transcripts, at the end of each printed edition we have annexed a glossary of all the archaic abbreviations, thus hopefully resolving the main doubts.

In specific terms, our work adopted the following paleographic rules, which are part of the 1993 Brazilian norms: (BERWANGER, A.; LEAL, J., 2012):

### SPELLING

- Unduly united syllables and words shall be separated; letters and syllables incorrectly separated shall be joined.
- Letters should be written in the usual manner, regardless of their phonetic value.
- With errors, omissions, repetitions and truncations that undermine the understanding of a text, the use of the Latin word is recommended [sic] underlined and placed between square brackets.
- Abbreviations still in use or easily identified may be preserved.

<sup>6</sup> Elementary paleography: “[...] that deals only with the reading”. (BERWANGER, A.; LEAL, J., 2012, p.19).

<sup>7</sup> Diplomatic paleography: “[...] that deals with the text of old documents”. (BERWANGER, A.; LEAL, J., 2012, p.19)

<sup>8</sup> These rules were systemized in 1990 and later revised during the Second National Meeting of Paleographic Normalization and Palographic Teaching that took place in São Paulo (Brazil), in 1993.

- When the paleographic reading of a specific word is doubtful, it should be followed by a question mark placed between square brackets: [?].
- Accent marks should be kept in their original form.
- The original punctuation should be maintained.
- Upper and lowercase letters should be maintained.
- Spelling should be kept in its original form, and there should be no grammatical corrections.

#### CONVENTIONS

- Words that are partially or entirely illegible, but whose textual meaning allows them to be reconstructed, should be written between brackets.
- Words that cannot be identified by the transcriber should be indicated by the term “illegible” underlined and placed between square brackets: [illegible].
- Lines or words damaged by corrosion, ink blots, dampness, tears or corroded by insects should be indicated by the nature of the deterioration underlined and between square brackets, followed by the approximate extension of the mentioned damage: [corroded, +/- 6 lines].
- The interlinear textual or marginal autographic elements that complete the script should be inserted in the text between angle brackets: < ... >.
- Any margin notes and glosses, not inserted in the text, should be kept in their original position or in the sequence of the main script, with the indication: [in the right margin] or [in the left margin].

#### GRAPHIC PRESENTATION

- Documents may be transcribed line by line or in sequences.
- The original paragraph divisions should be maintained.
- Pages should be numbered according to the original document, indicating the sequence of numerals, noted between brackets and according to the Brazilian norms, such as in the following examples: [fl.3r], [fl.3v].

The cases omitted by the Brazilian norms, were in turn clarified through consultations with two distinguished Brazilian authors, both of whom are specialized in diplomatic paleography: Maria Helena Ochi Flexor, Ph.D, and João Euripedes Franklin Leal, to whom we extend our heartfelt thanks.

Finally, the last stage of this research project involved donating a printed copy of each transcribed volume to the AHMS, along with digital media (DVD) containing copies of all the photographs collected since 2013 and the original text files in *Word* (Microsoft Office Package) format of the transcribed documents. With this material now available, we trust that future researchers may finally complete the formatting of the current version of the old manuscripts to the entire set of rules of the Brazilian Technical Norms for the Transcription and Edition of Manuscript Documents. We also hope that other paleographers may accept the challenge to revise, correct and complete this work, in a process of continuous evolution of the effort to preserve the information contained in this antique collection of manuscripts.



## THE TERMS OF ALIGNMENTS AND SURVEYS

The set of antique manuscripts assembled under the title *Terms of Alignments and Surveys* may briefly be described as the official reports of on-site inspections carried out by special committees from the former Senate of the Chamber in Salvador, normally through petitions submitted by its residents<sup>9</sup>, with the basic aim of controlling the use of urban land and the quality of constructions executed by its citizens. These commissions were usually composed of three city councilors, one clerk, two stewards (also called the “Council’s Measurers”) and eventually, depending on the complexity of the work, military engineers, master masons and carpenters (sometimes described in the manuscripts simply as the city’s “experts”).

Once the commissions had been established, the municipal authorities proceeded to the site mentioned in the petitions in order to evaluate the pertinence of the suppliant’s original request. During these surveys, a set of basic information regarding the petitioner - and the site - were usually registered: name of the petitioners, date of inspection, address, the nature of the work intended (erection of a new building, the enlargement or renovation of a preexisting edifice, the opening of additional doors or windows, the construction of walls or fences etc.), the frontage of the lot (the same measurement was also used to determine the value of the annual ground rent<sup>10</sup>), the stability of preexisting walls (whenever the construction of additional floors was requested), the identity of existing neighbors etc. On completion of the inspection, with the measurements registered and the verdict of the experts submitted, the councilors finally announced their decision and, subsequently, signed the document. During the measurements of the urban lots, on occasions it was also necessary to align the streets, eventually enforcing changes on existing facades to ensure not only the “attractiveness” of the urban landscape<sup>11</sup>, but also in order to guarantee a minimum functional width to the main public thoroughfares of Salvador. We may consider the following transcribed manuscript as a typical example of the *Terms of Alignments and Surveys*:

Term of the Inspection and street tracing executed

at the Request of Ignacia de

Lima on the street that descends from the [place known as] *ganhadores* towards the Maciel

On the ninth day of the month of November, of the year one thousand seven | hundred and ninety-one, in this City of Bahia and Street that | descends from the Church of the third order of Saint Domingos towards Maciel, having cometh | The Council [...] and the city stewards at the Requirement of Ignacia de | Lima, a free creole, with the purpose of aligning the front of the | old single storey house, that was ruined and in the same place build a storey house; and once there, the aforesaid Council sent the aforesaid stewards to align and parallel, and after laying | their Line, they declared that its front amounted to two and a half *braces*, | In which the same Council determined that the aforesaid Ignacia de Lima, could construct, and raise the said storey house, in the form of the new *Prospectus*, following in everyway the angle of the | contiguous properties, under the penalty of doing | the Opposite, having it demolished at her expense and to be noted | I made this term that shall be signed [...]. (AHMS, *Termos de Alinhamentos e Vistorias*: 1775-1800, fl. 86v)

In the final analysis, we would like to evince the fact that the *Terms of Alignments and Surveys* in Salvador record, year by year, the official version of the city’s physical evolution. We believe it is logical to assume that buildings of a temporary nature or erected with low durability techniques (such as adobe huts) would not justify an inspection by the highest municipal authorities, since these structures could easily be removed whenever necessary: to

9 Some of the surveys, however, were executed *ex officio*. That is, by initiative of the municipal authorities themselves, without a previous requirement.

10 “Obligation: [...] the offer, or taxation, that owes whoever beholds a leased property” (SILVA, 1789, p.612).

11 “[...] and in the case of desiring the same Brotherhood elevate [the wall] in order to serve as the house’s front, it shall be forced to request again to this Senate the alignment and signalization of the direction in order to attain the **beauty** and regularity of the aforesaid street [...]”. (AHMS, *Termos de Alinhamentos e Vistorias*: 1775-1800, fl.82r, emphasis mine).

widen preexisting streets, to allow the construction of drainage trenches or to clear the firing ranges of the old fortifications etc. Indeed, the surveys - at least those we have transcribed from between 1775 and 1841 - only mention licenses being granted for new buildings erected in brick masonry or with stone and lime mortar, a plausible testimony of the kind of buildings that, due to their durability and permanent character, focused the concerns of the City Council in the past. To support this hypothesis, we have often come across citizens requesting special permission to demolish simple one-storey houses – or, in some cases, just the main facade - and then rebuild them “in stone and lime mortar”:

On the twelfth day of February of the year one thousand eight | hundred and twenty eight, in this city of Bahia | and Genipapeiro Street being present the undersigned Council [...] with the | City's Measurers at the Request of Victoria Ma- | ria da Encarnação for the purpose of granting her | License to demolish the front of a one storey house | and then **rebuild the same front with stone | and lime mortar**, being it in the possession of her grandsons and which occupies | one *brace* and seven *palms* at its front [...]. (AHMS, *Termos de Alinhamentos e Vistorias*: 1827-1829, fl.18r, emphasis mine)

On the other hand, for those who disobeyed the City Council's resolutions – daring to ignore the limits imposed by the stewards - or for those who executed clandestine works, without the previous surveys and licenses -, the penalties listed in the manuscripts were quite severe: irregular buildings should be immediately demolished at the owner's expense, a particularly expensive measure, especially when the dwellings were erected in stone and lime mortar. After the edifice was demolished, in order to guarantee the “public transit”, the owner was also required to immediately dispose of all rubble, risking new penalties. However, bearing the cost of demolishing their own homes was not the only punishment to which offenders might be subjected, as exemplified by the following documents:

On the fifth day of February of the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-one, in this City of Bahia and Paço Street, [...] at the Request of Marcos Antonio Fernandes Landlord of some houses in the aforesaid Street, in order to lift the embargo [...] and once arriving the Council, they ordered the aforesaid Measurers to inspect the alignment and examine the construction [...] and after laying down their Line, they declared that [...] | had again raised an upper floor, on top of the old walls, and | made a wooden balcony [...] | and with that being seen by the aforesaid Council, **condemned the aforesaid Marcos An | tonio Fernandes to the amount of six thousand reis for having done this work without | a License of the Senate**, and also to **another six thousand reis** for | having modified the Design of the new Prospectus, being notified to lay down the aforesaid wooden balcony in twenty-four hours and to rebuild it in the form that was determined [...] (AHMS, *Termos de Alinhamentos e Vistorias*: 1775-1800, fl.80v, emphasis mine)

And also:

On the thirtieth day of May, of the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-five | in this city of Bahia in front of the Church of the Monks | of Our Holy Lady of Carmo [...] at the Request of Jozé Francisco de Carvalho regarding the embargo of the construction of a window that had been built without license of the Senate, for which reason **he had been sent to | Jail**; and once arriving the aforesaid Council, [they] granted him leave | to continue the work on the mentioned window in the wall, and in attention to the small nature of the matter, shall be exempted from the fine | and the embargo lifted [...] (AHMS, *Terms of Alignments and Surveys*: 1775-1800, fl.152r, emphasis mine)



We believe, therefore, that the penalties imposed by the authorities caused sufficient inconvenience - or fear – so as to exert a tighter control over the enterprises undertaken by citizens, especially in the central neighborhoods of Salvador, areas with a greater visibility and where the buildings constituted vital components of the urban landscape.

Indeed, official control over what was built in the city was obviously not limited to the width of the facades, the buildings's main purpose, or the number of floors the dwellings would eventually possess. Since 1769 (at least), local authorities tried to provide Salvador with a more “civilized” aspect, as expressed in the City Council Act dated July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1769:

[...] and during the meeting of the City Council, while caring for the common good of this | City, and its boundaries, was uniformly settled, that in view of the fair determination of Your Excellency the Most Illustrious Marquis of | Lavradio, Governor and Captain General of this Captaincy, **regarding the proper aspect of the edifices, that are to be constructed, or rebuilt in this city, and areas beyond the wall, since they are | for the most part where most of them have been erected without that nobility of appearance, of which are made the most civilized cities worldwide**, and which this city should be included into the number of them, they decided that it was convenient, | and useful to the public that this good presentation be perpetuated, by making the present act, by which they determine, that deciding any person to build in this city, and | outside of it, will be given for its appearance the form | and measurements as follows [...]. (CÂMARA MUNICIPAL DE SALVADOR, 2010, p.146-147, emphasis mine)

Thus, the *Terms of Alignments and Surveys* also bring to light the existence of the so-called “prospectus”, designs produced with the purpose of predefining the appearance of the facades of new buildings and, consequently, of the city itself. Reading the manuscripts, it becomes clear that the applicants, in order to obtain a license, were required to sign the *prospectus*, presented at the time of the survey by the councilors and at the same time were also informed of the penalties that would be incurred in cases of disobedience or if designs were modified without the necessary authorization:

On the twelfth day of September, of the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety | two in this City of Bahia and Street behind the wall | of the Nuns of the Desterro and on the path towards the new fountain where the City Council has cometh with [...] the Measurers of the Council at the Request of Matheus Dias Lobatto in order to have the street traced in front of his one storey house that | had been embargoed by order of the same Senate for lack of a License | to execute the mentioned construction: and once there, the City Council ordered the Measurers to align and parallel, and by laying their Line declared that the forefront had two *braces* and two *palms*, on which the aforesaid City Council demanded that **the front of the one storey house should be executed according to the design of the City Prospectus and according to the Governors' Directives** | obliging himself to demolish the mentioned construction at his expense in case of transgression and without being able to appeal to the prescription of the penalty and | Ordinance whenever notified of the transgression within | a one year period, **being the mentioned Plan presented by me and recognized and undersigned by him**, and in this manner being obliged to fulfill and keep this | term and whatever it contains, and declares that in no time will be able to claim ignorance due to which was granted him a License for the reconstruction of the mentioned forefront. (AHMS, *Termos de Alinhamentos e Vistorias: 1775-1800*, fl. 98r, emphasis mine)

The City Council, therefore, was also entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing the aspect of Salvador's urban landscape, with the purpose of maintaining a "civilized complex" as it expanded, imposing upon the inhabitants architectural models that undoubtedly reflected the values and traditions imported from the Portuguese metropolis.

The *Termos*, however, as previously mentioned, are not only limited to chronicling the inspections carried out in the city and its surroundings. Several other aspects of Salvador's urban life demanded the attention of the *Senate of the Council* during this period, leading to documentary records that reveal different features of life in colonial and imperial Salvador. We believe therefore, that this additional research material may provide an effective contribution to studies linked to other fields of knowledge, beyond our initial scope of architecture and urbanism. Examples of this thematic variety are listed below:

a) History of repairs executed in relevant public buildings in Salvador:

On the thirty-first day of the month of January of the year one thousand seven | hundred and ninety-five in this City of Bahia and **Jailhouse of this City**, where by Order of Your Excellency the Illustrious Lord General, Dom Fernando Jozé de | Portugal Governor and Captain General of this Captaincy | has cometh the Council [...] and the Assistant Engineers [...] | and the Master Masons [...], and Carpenters [...] | and once there they carried out the necessary examinations on the mentioned | walls, and under the oaths of the Holy Gospels and | of their professions: they declared that the wall that extends from the pillar in front of the main Square towards the spot where the Closed Room ends, should be laid down [...]; and that only after relieving the wall in such a manner one could properly examine the ruin that may exist on the walls of the dungeon [...]; And that in the thick part of the window masonry | of the Closed Room, should be entrenched the grates of these windows because of the great inclination they cause in detriment of the walls, being necessary for that reason new stonework [...]. (AHMS, *Termos de Alinhamentos e Vistorias*: 1775-1800, fl.134v, emphasis mine)

b) History of emergency repairs and routine public works promoted throughout the city:

On the twenty-ninth day of the month of March of the year one thousand seven hundred and eighty, | in this city of Bahia, and Street that follows from the corner of the Main Square towards | Gravatá, [...] being present in the act of inspection | the King's' Magistrate, and councilmen, and the Senate's Solicitor [...] and the Street Plotter of the Council [...] with the purpose of examining the damage, than with the **work | of the new sidewalk that had been ordered to be executed for public use**, had been feeling the Landlords of the mentioned Houses, at whose Request the same work had been embargoed; and being seen, and examined | the work of the sidewalks, it was witnessed that with the new landfill | which had been made at the [...] side of the slope to smoothen the sidewalk, some harm was being done [...] which being seen by | the aforesaid Council [...] determined that [...] the work of the sidewalk be done in the way as it was formerly executed, raised a bit at the lower end about a *palm*, and lowered a bit at the upper end, being this way the slope better disposed than it was before for the benefit of public utility [...] by the way it had been outlined | by the Master Paver [...]. (AHMS, *Termos de Alinhamentos e Vistorias*: 1775-1800, fl. 21v, emphasis mine)

c) Registration of the annual ground rent paid by the citizens of Salvador:

On the twenty-second day of September, of the year one thousand seven hundred | Eighty, and five in this city of Bahia, and Site behind | the Wall of the Nuns where João Baptista | Ferraz has a small plantation, where the undersigned City Council with me, the Senate's Registrar, and the Plotters of the Council Januario da Costa Carneiro, and Jozé Caetano Rebelo de Mesquita have

come with the purpose of tracing twelve *braces* of vacant land behind the wall | of the Nuns, being the forefront of these twelve *braces* aligned with the angle of the fence belonging to João Baptista that follows the North-South direction along the path towards the Fountain of the Stones, and the East to | West direction along the aforesaid Road, and the far side of the Dike, and witnessed | by the aforesaid Council [...] they sent the aforesaid Street Plotters to align and parallel it, | which they did, and ordered the construction or wall to be executed in the form mentioned above, paying the aforesaid | João Baptista the **anual land rent amounting to one hundred reis for each brace**, and to register everything it was ordered this term, which will be signed, to be written down. And I Antonio Joze da Rocha e Souza wrote it (AHMS, *Termos de Alinhamentos e Vistorias*: 1775-1800, fl. 45r, emphasis mine).

d) News of inspections carried out in different tracts of the city's escarpment after significant landslides:

On the eighteenth day of April of the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-five in this city of Bahia, and Path in front of the Church of Our Holy Lady of Lapa, ahead from Soledade, in the place where the Canon Jozé da Silva Freire has a small plantation, where the City Council [...] has cometh by Request of Paulino da Silva Lisboa, having him declared that he had **suffered on the eleventh day of the current month | a considerable loss, throughout the factory and Building of his Distillery, and kitchen of the neighbouring house, since the whole Distillery Building had fallen down, burying four slaves that evidently worked there**, as well as another one that escaped in a miserable condition, and is still in great risk of her life, remaining of all this great Ruin only the front walls, resulting all this damage from the | many waters that streamed down the land of the aforesaid plantation, which is located in the eminence, | and rushed through the banks of the estate, since the pipes were arranged in several plateaus [...] And continuing on this examination of the Distillery located at the Path to the Muganga fountain, following towards the Novitiate, if | was seen that the entire Building of the Distillery was devastated by the soil that broke off from the last plateau above, halfway up the scarp, and on the edge of the same upland, two large adobe facades, where it was visible that great forces of water had rushed by, through the cracks that brought down the Slope, leaving only the front walls [...], for which reason | it was necessary to remove the rubble of that Ruin, and put in safety the aforesaid | Property [...]. (AHMS, *Termos de Alinhamentos e Vistorias*: 1775-1800, fl.142r emphasis mine)

e) Chronicles of the main urban improvements:

On the seventeenth day of March, eight hundred and nine, in this city of Bahia, and Road | that through the lowlands reaches the Papagaio where the current City Council has cometh with the Measurers of the Council, | and Master Mason Gonçalo Lopes Perdigão, and examining the state of the Trench opened by Francisco Ferreira | da Gama crossing the Public Path, so | wide that it was navigable, and through it with his big private Canoe conducts to his Home all the provisions that are necessary to him; | and although it has two pillars of stone, and lime mortar, and over them some boards, that allow the crossing by foot, this is not enough for the public transit of Beasts, and | Carriages, which are prevented from passing without | danger over these wooden boards, and since it is a | public Road, and the oldest of that Site, | and being necessary to guarantee a safe passage not only to pedestrians, but also | to those on Horseback, and Carriages, it was agreed by plurality of votes that Francisco Ferreira da Gama shall be notified that in the peremptory term of sixty days, in the same place of the public Road he must build **a bridge with a vault made of stone, or brick, and lime mortar, safe enough to enable the transit of people on foot, | on Horseback, and Carriages**, under the penalty that by not doing so, the order has been given to immediately

clog the Ditch on the Site of the Road, being admired the Aforesaid's obstinacy, and disobedience | to this Senate after being summoned several times | to give safe passage over a trench, that he had opened without permission | of this Senate on marine land, and only by his own | Whim, for which he was not authorized; and to be registered I have written down this term which they shall sign [...]. (AHMS, *Termos de Alinhamentos e Vistorias*: 1800-1812, fl.196v, emphasis mine)

f) News of the efforts applied in order to curb irregular occupations of land in Salvador:  
On the third day of the month of April of one thousand Seven hundred and eighty Seven, in this city of | Salvador [...], and barren field behind the Piedade Church | being present the King's Criminal Magistrate [...] and Councilmen, [...] it was said by the Senate's Solicitor [...] that the aforesaid **Joze Xavier, with a new fence he has built, had taken the old, and customary, path by which the Barril fountain was accessed with all due convenience to fetch drinking water, and to wash clothes, also taking possession of all the Utility of the part of that field** where the Washwomen would wash and spread the clothes to bleach, and dry, reason why on the day before the City Council had come to this place to visually examine this plundering fact, which they found to be true in such a way that in order for the aforesaid Councilmen to have access to the fountain [...] the King's Magistrate [...] had to dismantle a small portion of the mentioned fence with his own hands, just enough for them to enter the place that revealed the old Path [...], and reaching the place of the fountain, it was seen that the washwomen were deprived of their old Usage, and tucked into a small enclosure washing very close to the fountain [...] in considerable harm to the Public Health, and laying the clothes on the stakes of the fence with the risk of tearing them, and more easily being stolen, something that did not happen when they washed, bleached and dried on the grounds of the old public Usage [...] and being heard [...] the aforesaid King's Magistrate and Councilmen ordered the return of the path, and Usage to the manner it was before, removing the fence that had deprived them of it [...] (AHMS, *Termos de Alinhamentos e Vistorias*: 1775-1800, fl.49v, emphasis mine)

g) Reports of inspections executed on buildings and ruins that threatened public safety:  
On the fifth day of March, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-two | in this City of Bahia and site of the Mizericordia Slope, being present Your Excelency the Illustrious Dom Fernando Jozé de Portugal Governor and Captain General of this Captainty with | the City Council [...] the Master Builders [...] and Engineers [...] and the Assistant [...] and the Master Mason [...] to **examine the thick walls that exist | under the Churchyard of the See, and those at the Palace of His Most Reverend Excellency, which find themselves fissured, threatening eminent ruin to the passers-by and | inhabitants of the Lower City**, and which by order of the same Excellency and | Lordship are held with stakes as well as the other wall that is located at the declivity | towards the Beach and the Pereira fountain: and being witnessed [...] it was declared that, since it was near Wintertime, when the Risk to that Temple, Palace, Church and College would be greater, it was necessary to build a large wall on the exposed Rock, [...] holding back the Mountain from [...] the Courtyard of the mentioned See, casting down the fractured lateral wall, maintaining the safety and rectitude of the New Street, giving it the necessary width so that in the future there is no demerit, beginning this work as soon as possible [...]. (AHMS, *Termos de Alinhamentos e Vistorias*: 1775-1800, fl.89v, emphasis mine)

h) Testimony of social conflicts related to the use of public spaces:  
On the twelfth of February of the year one thousand, and eight | hundred, in this City of Bahia, and House of the Chamber, being present the City Council [...] came Manoel Antonio de Sá Pinto as | Solicitor of the black women working behind the Jailhouse | and by him was presented a Request

[...] of the following content // Illustrious Lords of the Senate, Theodozia, Anna, Maria, Jozefa, and Anna, all [...] **vegetable vendors that for several years have occupied the place behind the Jailhouse, near the butcher's shop at the Square, selling the aforesaid vegetables, by order of this Senate were taken a few days ago to the site of Our Lady of Guadalupe.** And in this place, not only is it | distant from the mentioned butcher shop, not being able to sell anything | for lack of buyers; therefore they Request that Your Lordships allow the Supplicants to conserve themselves at another place they have chosen, which runs | behind the same Jailhouse towards the Algivebe and in this place sell their vegetables, since they will be closer to the | aforesaid butcher shop, obliging the Supplicants to always benefit the same Street, removing the great filth that currently floods it whenever People lay there all sorts of things, thus avoiding the great expense spent by this Senate last year in the removal of the rubble which filled the aforesaid Street [...]. (AHMS, *Termos de Alinhamentos e Vistorias*: 1775-1800, fl.229r)

i) News of risks to the public safety:

On the twenty-second day of September, of the year one thousand seven hundred | Eighty, and five, in this city of Bahia, and Site behind the Wall of the Nuns where João Baptista | Ferraz has a small plantation and where the City Council has come [...] with the purpose of plotting twelve *braces* of barren land behind the same wall | of the Nuns, [...] and being seen | by the City Council that **the land was useless to serve the public, on the contrary being harmful for serving as a Nook of several murderous robberies**, sent the Street Plotters to trace it, | [...] and ordered the construction, or wall to be executed in the manner described above, paying the aforesaid | João Baptista the amount of one hundred *reis* for each *brace* as annual land rent [...]. (AHMS, *Termos de Alinhamentos e Vistorias*: 1775-1800, fl.45r, *emphasis mine*)

j) Measures applied to control the use and maintenance of public water fountains:

On the twenty-fifth day of the month of April, of the year one thousand seven | Hundred and ninety-two in this city of Bahia and Gameleira fountain, behind the Preguiça Slope, where the City Council has cometh [...] at the Request of Alexandre Gomes de Figueiredo, a dweller at its foot that has offered to **repair the aforesaid fountain that finds itself ruined by all the rubbish and filth that was cast inside, reason why it was necessary to build a wall with a gate at its front | in order to ensure that the same fountain be kept clean for the benefit of the | Public:** which being seen by the same Council, | a License was granted to the aforesaid Alexandre Gomes de Figueiredo in order to allow him to Raise the aforesaid wall with its Gate which will be kept open and | free of any hindrance from five o'clock in the morning | until eight o'clock [...] at night so that the People may fetch water [...] to be used at their homes, obliging the aforesaid Figueiredo to keep it that way and at no time claiming its possession, since it belongs to the People and this faculty is being allowed only for the purpose of keeping it clean [...]. (AHMS, *Termos de Alinhamentos e Vistorias*: 1775-1800, fl.91r, *emphasis mine*)

It is evident that the examples listed above do not exhaust all aspects of Salvador's urban life encompassed by the transcribed documents. Nevertheless, we believe they are sufficient to testify the relevance of the manuscripts chosen for this research project. Another goal of this work would be to encourage other scholars to engage themselves in similar endeavors to preserve the assemblage of the AHMS, in order to avoid the irreparable - and definitive - damage that would result from the loss of so much information as the manuscripts gradually lose their readability.

The *Terms of Alignments and Surveys* are currently assembled into eleven bound volumes

and grouped according to the following periods: 1724-1746 (volume 1), 1746-1770 (volume 2), 1775-1800 (volume 3), 1800-1812 (Volume 4), 1817-1827 (volume 5), 1827-1829 (volume 6)<sup>12</sup>, 1837-1841 (volume 7), 1841-1849 (volume 8), 1845-1855 (volume 9), 1877-1885 (volume 10), 1885-1891 (volume 11). As previously mentioned, it becomes immediately discernible that there are several gaps in this collection: 1771-1774, 1813-1816, 1830-1836, and 1856-1876. The disappearance of these documents<sup>13</sup> confirms that our fear of losing the remaining manuscripts is more than justified, and that the memory of Salvador's urban life and physical evolution has already suffered irreparable damage.

<sup>12</sup> This volume erroneously identifies the period as being 1824-1828. In reality, the manuscripts encompass only the period between 1827 and 1829.

<sup>13</sup> In the survey done in the AHMS during the 1960's these documents were already missing.

## CONCLUSION

The task of analyzing and transcribing antique manuscripts, primary sources of information available in its original form, with no intermediation, comments or interpretations proposed by previous authors, based on our experience, is not a routine procedure for most architecture and urbanism researchers. In fact, paleographic activities require previous knowledge of specific procedures and rules regarding this branch of science. Given the precarious physical conditions of the installations in most of Brazil's public archives, the act of definitively preserving historical facts registered on physical media (paper) subject to countless risks becomes, according to our previous experience, is one of the greatest contributions to the effective preservation of our society's collective memory.

As we have witnessed numerous times during our transcriptions, each document, regardless of its primary scope or purpose, is able to provide a variety of information that invariably sparks the interest of numerous scholars in different fields of knowledge. For architecture and urbanism researchers, for instance, we highlight a few possible studies that may benefit from these manuscripts: the historical evolution of each of the city's parishes in specific periods of time, estimates of the average width of local buildings in different time periods or neighborhoods, a testimony of the construction activities in Salvador identifying the periods of greater - or limited - investments and enterprises, the actual construction date of relevant buildings in Salvador, details of the most serious accidents that occurred on the city's escarpment - especially during the rainy seasons - and their immediate consequences etc.

The *Terms of Alignments and Surveys* of Salvador, however, besides expanding the knowledge of the evolutionary process of the city's urban fabric during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, may also be useful, as mentioned above, to researchers interested, for example, in the history of economic development of Salvador - and even the State of Bahia, the history of the city's guidelines and construction regulations, the activities of specific members of the City Council during the periods covered by the documents, linguistic studies of the archaic Portuguese language over the centuries, the role of women in Brazilian colonial society etc. Therefore, its loss - due to the action of microorganisms, corrosion, prolonged exposure to dampness, the careless manipulation of manuscripts etc. - amounts to an irreparable gap in the process of acquiring a greater knowledge of our past.

In view of this situation, a research project such as this, sponsored by the Research and Extension Program of UNIFACS - Universidade Salvador, providing printed copies of the palographic transcription of thousands of primary sources - now available for free consultation in the Municipal Historical Archive of Salvador - serves a number of purposes: it draws attention to the importance of the remaining documents in our public archives, it alerts to



the urgent need for conservation, it represents a practical example of what may be achieved in an emergency situation to preserve our memory (even with limited resources and simple techniques) and, according to our belief, it may contribute to increment the local academic production of contemporary and future researchers.

**Jan Maurício van Holthe** has a master's degree in Architecture and Urbanism at the Universidade Federal da Bahia; a professor of Architecture and Urbanism at UNIFACS – Universidade Salvador.

E-mail: [jan.holthe@pro.unifacs.br](mailto:jan.holthe@pro.unifacs.br)

Article received on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017 and approved for publication on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017

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