



FRONTIERS OF HUMANITY AND BEYOND

TOWARDS NEW CRITICAL
UNDERSTANDINGS OF BORDERS

P20 - AFRICAN BUILT ENVIRONMENT: MAPPING PRACTICES OF EXPLORATION AND CONTROL BEFORE THE SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA

ORGANISERS

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ABSTRACT

Before the scramble for Africa, this large territory was considered, by the Europeans, a land without frontiers. For almost four centuries - mid 15th century, when the Portuguese established firsts outposts, to mid-19th century, when the era of New Imperialism started - European presence in Africa was restricted to ports along the African coasts. Nevertheless, these outposts left physical marks in the landscape and started a transformation of the African built environment of alien initiative. A slow transformation at first that escalated in the 19th century terminating in the partition of Africa between European powers.

This panel aims to bring together different perspectives on the construction and transformation of the built environment before the scramble for Africa and contribute to a critical understanding of the legacy of colonial borders today. The panel will privilege the works on territories where the Portuguese presence was institutionally organized, such as Angola, Guinea Coast, Cape Verde, São Tome and Príncipe, and Mozambique. Nevertheless, works that explore connections, between these territories and other European or indigenous powers and narratives of resistance and negotiation between power, will be very welcome. The relations with the *Slave Coast* (Costa da Mina) are welcome, due to the political-commercial importance of this extensive territory that had the Portuguese presence in different phases. Works that explore connections, between these territories and other European or indigenous powers and narratives of resistance and negotiation between power, will be especially welcome.

It is intended to explore and develop cross-checking approaches on topics such as city governance, urban development, public works and territorial infrastructure, plantations, arborisations and other soil exploitations, sanitation and public health concerns, inland research and exploration, among other relevant topics. Studies on institutional networks and individual paths supported on digital humanities tools are encouraged, for the emergence of match-making and new narratives, overpassing disciplinary frontiers.

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