

## **Railway Heritage of the Samaritá station in São Vicente - SP**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

During the economic cycle of coffee and technological development attributed to the arrival of railways on the coast of São Paulo, São Vicente – SP as well as the cities of the interior of the state of São Paulo, witnessed potential economic and urban advances generated by industrial activities throughout the first half of the twentieth century. From the implementation of the railway, eight railway stations were built in the mountains and on the continental plain of the city being, the first, Samaritá. Given this importance, we justify this research in order to build an understanding about the apogee and decay of railway and industrial heritage in the city, under the section of this station. Based on historiographical research through maps, photographs and documents it was possible to clearly understand the implementation of the railway bed in the continental region of the city, where new urban groupings derived from the railway tracks had emerged. The vast majority of São Vicente's railway stations have been abandoned or demolished, and the last exemplary on the Vicentine plain that remains is samaritá station. Thus, the work analyzes either the emergence of the railroad, from the perspective of the building that generates the first occupation in the continental plain of the city and its process of deterioration, when presenting the current situation of the railway complex.

**KEYWORDS:** Urbanism. Preservation. Rail.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The intrinsic relationship between the São Paulo economy and coffee culture are among the relevant reasons for the construction of the railway network in the state of São Paulo, being considered extremely important for the consolidation of a new modally shifted-route transportation for the flow of the so-called "black gold", originating from the cities of the interior of São Paulo.

The need to accelerate the movement of goods to the port of Santos was a challenge for the coffee economy. At the very beginning of the 20th century, the first attempts were made to execute the lines that made the connection between the farms of the interior of São Paulo and the coast; however, one of the greatest difficulties was to overcome the gap between the plateau and the coastal plain.

Countless railroads were created to address the problem, among which, the one that has a certain notoriety in baixada Santista is the São Paulo Railway (SPR) – the first railway in the state and the second in the country, which had the premise of interconnection of the producing regions to the port. In this sense, the first railway bed that crossed the municipality of São Vicente was the connecting structure between the cities of Santos, São Vicente and Itanhaém, on January 17, 1914.

The aforementioned railroad, which was 162 km long, was part of the Santos-Juquiá line, interconnecting these municipalities. The main function of this railway line was the flow of goods from the south coast and the Ribeira Valley. The second connection, built by the company Estrada de Ferro Sorocabana (EFS) was belonging to the Extension Mairinque-Santos, which would completely alter the urban development of the city of São Vicente, previously restricted to the island perimeter. Thus, this extension began the occupation of the continent, providing the emergence of new neighborhoods, the first of which was: Samaritá.

The foremost purpose of this study, was dealing with the railway line and the urban constitution of a part of the coast of São Paulo, more specifically, the one that cut the mountains and plains, the continent and the island of the city of São Vicente. A study that is justified by the importance of analyzing the urban context constituted from the construction of the railway, in addition to the first station of Samaritá.

A research that presents itself as a way to constitute a reflection on the past and present of the Vincentian railway heritage, in order to elucidate its apogee and its decay. Thus, its objective is to present the emergence of the District of Samaritá, through the implementation of the railway and its influence on the urban development of the continental area of the city of São Vicente - SP, from the perspective of the railway station that bears its name.

The survey of data on the constitution of the continental area of the municipality of São Vicente, for the construction of the meanings that connect the past to the present, in order to better understand the permanence and transformations of the railway heritage, as well as the landscape that circumscribed it was carried out using the historiographical method. As results we have the construction of some maps that demonstrate the urban development achieved with the implementation of the railway in the continental area of the Vincentian plain, in addition to images that are assembled to understand the current state of The Samaritá Station. A concern that may reveal even more about the abandonment of this important exemplary.

### **SÃO VICENTE AND ITS URBAN FORMATION**

The city of São Vicente can be understood in three periods, the first related to the settlement of the island by its settlers, between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. The second, in which he came across territorial dismemberment in the twentieth century affecting its limits on the island and continent and lastly the occupation of the continental region of the city caused by the emergence of the railway.

Founded on January 22, 1532, the village of São Vicente arose through the process of colonization on the coast of the state of São Paulo carried out by Martim Afonso de Souza, building the House of Chamber and Chain and Pelourinho by establishing the first administratively organized village in Brazil. Santos (1982) comments that a ship squad of Martim Afonso traveled the Brazilian coast on August 8, 1530, departing from Rio de Janeiro with the objective of exploring the territory. The letters issued to the Portuguese crown report the official foundation on January 2nd and 2nd, 1532 by Martim Afonso at the behest of King D. João III. Hence, this nucleus allowed the foundation of the cities of São Bernardo do Campo, São Paulo and Santo André later, afterwards. However, before the official foundation of the village there was already a village constituted on the site, begun parallel to the discovery date of Brazil between 1500 and 1502.

Regarding the economy of the village, attempts were made to plant sugarcane, establishing the distribution of land for planting and the creation of mills, the main one was the Erasmos' mills. The action aimed to consolidate an economic and political pole for the region inasmuch the proximity of the Portuguese metropolis. Over the years, the village has suffered several attacks, of indigenous origin, due to the multiplicity of tribes and their rivalry.

In 1591 the Englishman Thomas Cavendish deliberately torched the village, devastating the plantation and, in 1615, the village was invaded by Dutch pirates. On October 29, 1700, according to the Royal Charter, he instituted the official creation of the Vincentian

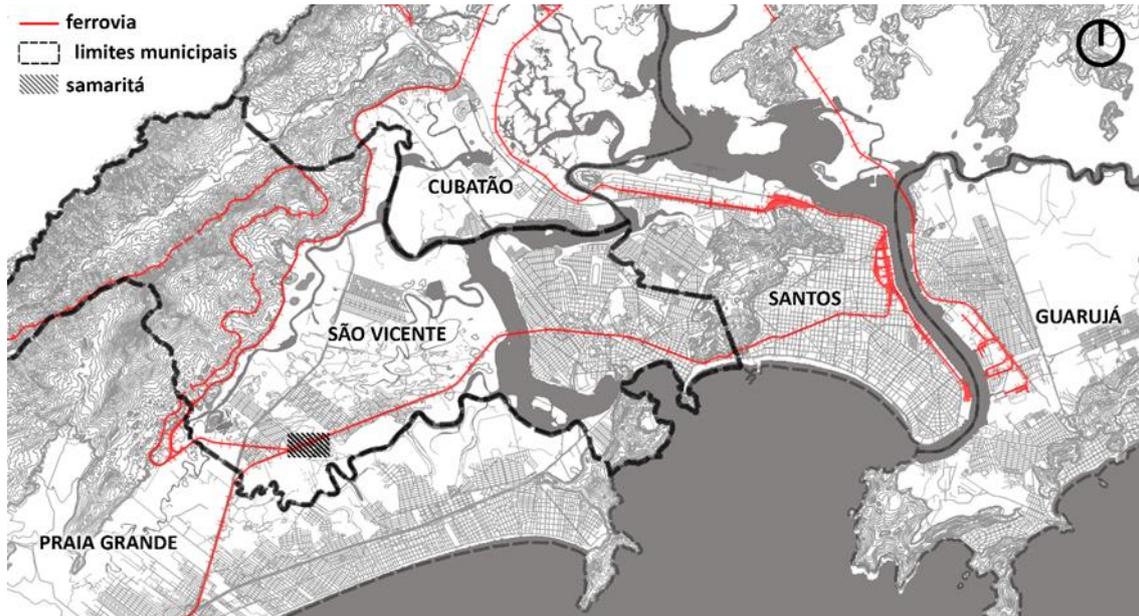
municipality. And on December 31, 1895, from a municipal law, there was the elevation to the category of city.

According to Vale (2008) the diffuse relationship with vincentian history occurs through a deficiency of collection resulting from both technical and logistical problems, causing historical documents to be stolen, wet, lost or burned, hindering the historiographical reconstruction of its main events. São Vicente, until the second half of the 20th century, was still constituted by only one district, undergoing changes in its political-administrative limits due to its precarious resources. It lost its territory to Santos, still in 1545, when it received the regulation of land through the royal concession, and in 1561 for the Parish of Conceição de Itanhaém (VALE, 2008, p. 39). Nevertheless, the greatest expressiveness in its dismemberment occurred during the twentieth century, losing part of its territory to the district of Parelheiros, at the top of the Serra do Mar, between 1945 and 1948. In 1948, on its seafront, by plebiscite lost the stretch of Mongaguá, which was annexed to Itanhaém, being today an independent city.

During the decades of 1940 to 1960, the municipality loses to Santos, neighborhoods that currently make up the northwest area (Vila São Jorge, Bom Retiro, Jardim Rádio Clube and Areia Branca) of the neighboring city and part of the beach shore when it is rectified in its border with the neighborhood José Menino. In another time, during the years 1949 to 1953, São Vicente now has two districts, the head office and Solemar, as a dismembered territory, which later enabled the emancipation process of Praia Grande. On May 1, 1951, its subprefecture was installed, and in 1953 the first attempt at emancipation. In the following year the process of allotment and streeting is initiated and only ten years after the first trial of emancipation, this claim is conquered. The following year, the report that required the elevation of the district of Solemar to the municipality was approved on February 28, 1964. Notwithstanding, the definitive recognition and political-administrative emancipation of Praia Grande took place in 1967.

The territorial changes of São Vicente are intrinsically related to its availability of intraurban accesses in the metropolitan region, currently we observe the fragmentation arranged in its urban fabric. Another related effect is the fact that it has become a dormitory city, whilst assisting the development of neighboring municipalities, either because of the port, commerce and services, as is the case of Santos; by industry, with Cubatão, and summer with Praia Grande. Thus, these economic valuations of these municipalities are also related to the industrialization process of Baixada Santista, where "São Vicente became attractive to low-income families (VALE, 2008, p. 42)", a factor that will guide the city during the late twentieth century and beginning of the 21st century.

Figure 1: Cities of São Vicente, Praia Grande, Cubatão, Santos, Guarujá and the railway network.



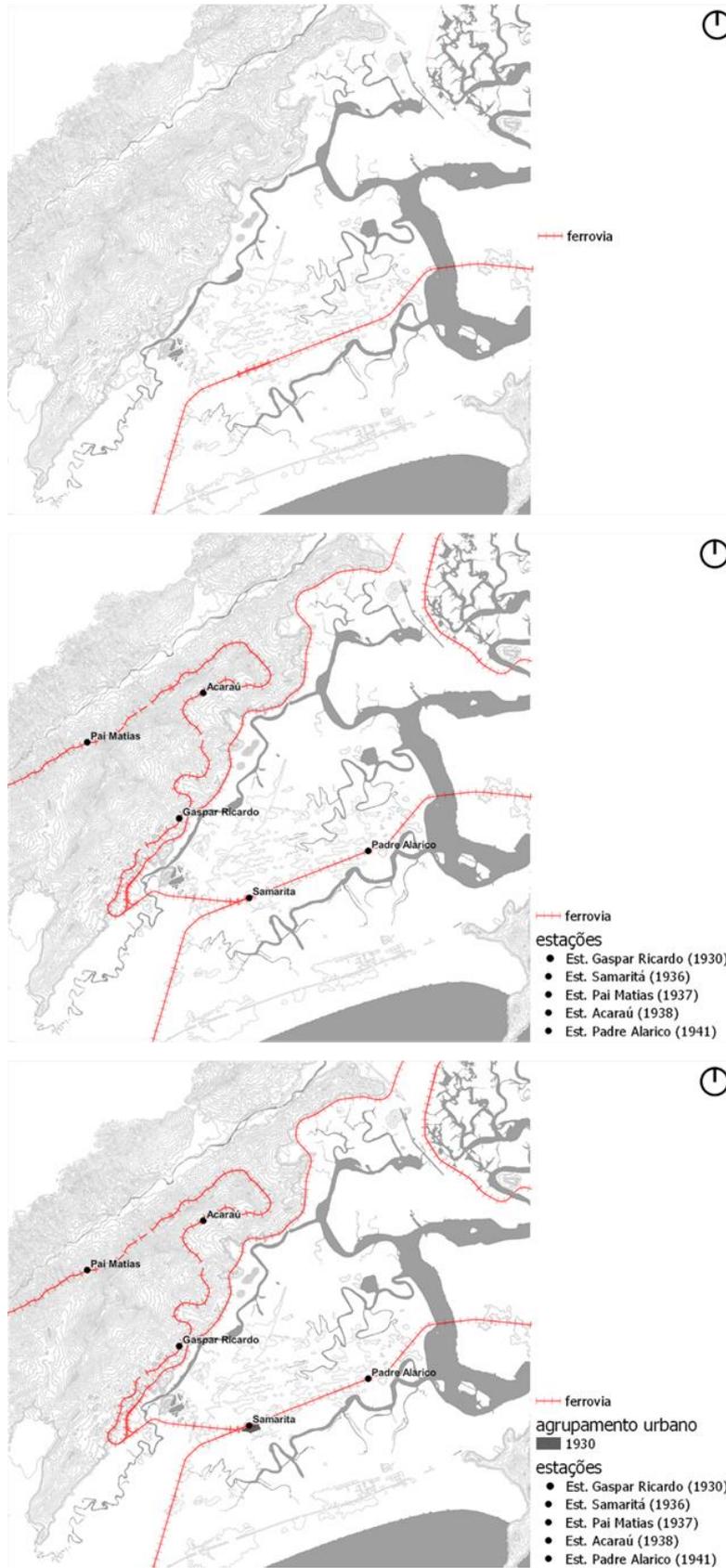
Source: PREPARED BY THE AUTHORS, 2022.

#### URBAN DEVELOPMENT FROM THE RAILWAY LINE

The activities established by society in its practice of social division of labor result in the space produced. For such activities, whether individual or collective, interconnections are constituted for their realization in a given location (DEÁK, 1985, p. 85). According to Vale (2008) the process of formation of neighborhoods in the continental area of São Vicente took place through occupations perpendicular to the accesses to the island, confined between the Padre Manoel da Nóbrega highway and the former railway line of Ferrovia Paulista S.A (FEPASA).

In this sense, the implementation of the railway system demonstrates the development of the urbanization process resulting from industrial activities and the consequent population increase of urban areas (KÜHL, 1998). Thus the integration of the city of São Vicente with the Santos-Juquiá line, which occurred in 1914, through the Itanhaém station preceded the emergence of the Mairinque-Santos extension, with a new access to the santista port. Considered the ground zero for the beginning of its settlement, the district of Samaritá would be constituted by the work of construction of the railway, thus it was the first of the consequent neighborhoods to constitute the occupation of the continental region (SANTOS, 1982).

**Figure 2: Emergence of The Santos-Juquiá Extension, the Mairinque-Santos Extension and the beginning of the occupation of Samaritá.**



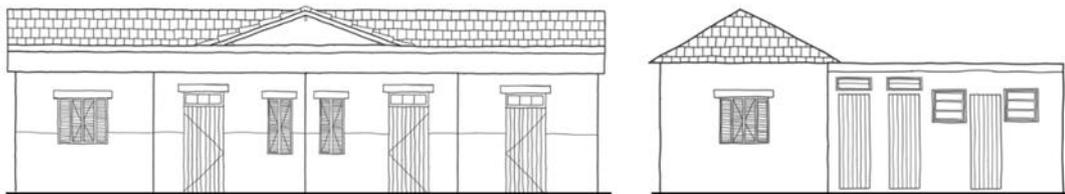
Source: PREPARED BY THE AUTHORS, 2022.

The process of occupation of the areas near the railway station generated a district within the city of São Vicente (SANTOS, 1982, p. 286):

[...] It is called – wrongly – the District of Samaritá, but it is not a district, it is only a suburban neighborhood of São Vicente, because it is disconnected from the headquarters of the municipality. The municipal area of Samaritá has 69 km<sup>2</sup>. Currently, it does not have direct access. [...]

The occupation on the continent was more expressive in the mid-1930s, when the Samaritá station was inaugurated on February 15, 1930, which operated between 1930 and 1936, however, according to Giesbrecht (2019), the original station is one kilometer away from the current one, which dates from the year 1936. It is unknown the reason for the exchange and construction of another building. For Oliveira, the production of the space also had control over the workforce and not only the organization of production. Thus, the railway villages had maintenance and operation workshops, constituting an industrial railway complex. The new station was destined to the railway complex that had a wagon review post and load scale, which would support the workshop areas and maintenance located near the railway yard of the Ana Costa station in Santos.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 3: Samaritá Station (1936) with the administrative annex built in 1986.**



Source: PREPARED BY THE AUTHORS, 2022.

Trains departed from the city of Sorocaba, crossing cities such as Mairinque and Embu-Guaçu arriving at Samaritá train station. The choice of Samaritá to host such a link was strategic, because it took advantage of the bed of kilometer 19 of the port, thus allowing the Sorocabana Railway to enter the estuary. At the appropriate time, in 1928, engineering work was started on the mountain and plateau, consisting of the adhesion system instead of a rack. During the construction of the extension, for the execution of tunnel opening services and making beams, reinforced concrete was used, as well as in caves, chasms, streams and rivers.

The first locomotive to arrive in Santos was number 280, its schedule was recorded as demonstrated by Santos (1982), at 16 hours on November 27, 1937. From this moment on, the connection between the Sorocabano plateau and the Santista plain was made.

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<sup>1</sup> The experiences of sharing the railway memory are restricted to the actors involved in its use, and, especially to its operation in the photographs that allowed the registration of industrial actions, however despite the descriptions of the stations and the operation of the railway line, there are still difficulties in finding images that prove or indicate how these elements were structured in the urban network of the city.

In the same year, on December 2, via Mairinque, an experimental trip with passengers on board led the administration of the sorocabana company and representatives of the press from São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Santos. Eight days after the event, cargo and passenger traffic began.

The stretch belonging to Sorocabana traveled in the Serra do Mar in Vincentian territory has 42 km, and 27 tunnels are built. Continuing on the plain, it crosses the Barreiros channel on its bridge – with a length of 720 meters, built in metal parts and rebuilt in 1972-1975 with reinforced concrete pipes (SANTOS, 1982) – towards the island area destined for the estuary.

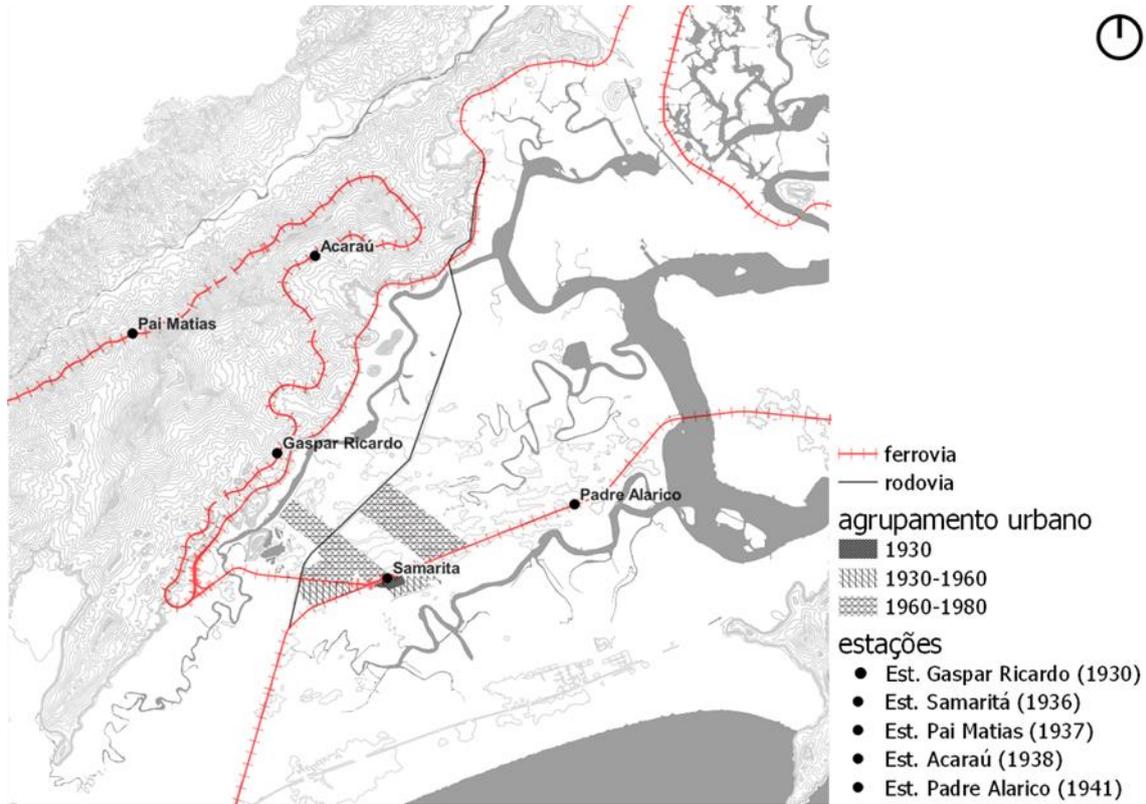
In relation to the urban groupings in the territory it should be noted that "an extensive part of the continental area consists of the Plain of Samaritá, with slightly wavy relief, with low slopes and cut by meandric rivers" (VALE, 2008, p. 79), being noticeable the preference of the occupation of this flat region to the detriment of the escarpments of the Serra do Mar. This geographical disposition may have facilitated urban expansion just in the vicinity of the first urban nucleus of Samaritá. This is because, according to Vale (2008, p. 72) the process of occupation of the continental area occurred between 1970 and 1980, with the opening of allotments by the real estate market, but also, due to the proximity to the layout under construction of the Priest Manoel da Nóbrega highway – one of the main road connections of the coast.

Therefore, the growth of neighborhoods in the Samaritá region are linked to the proximity to the railway line and the Padre Manoel da Nóbrega highway. VALE, 2008, p. 70). In this sense, some of the first consolidated allotments<sup>2</sup> were – with the exception of Samaritá and blocks near the railway network of the station – generated by speculation of real state agents, expansion in search of cheaper land due to the spatial saturation and developments on the island, but also the result of the social need to live, facilitated by the accessibility created by the highway (VALE, 2008, p. 70).

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<sup>2</sup> The urban groupings that make up the continental area of São Vicente are: Vila Iolanda, Vila Matias and Vila Emma derived from the allotment of the district of Samaritá; Jardim Rio Branco with allotment started in 1962 and Jardim Rio Negro fruit of occupations in preservation areas near the Piaçabuçu River; Parque das Bandeiras and Gleba II, plotted in 1969, the need to keep workers close to the Presidente Bernardes refinery in Cubatão; Continental Park plotted in 1982 and constituted as a neighborhood in 1998; Humaitá, a residential complex built by the Housing Company of the State of São Paulo (COHAB); Quarennary Garden, located in the area of an old farm for receiving and maintaining cattle from the interior of São Paulo; Vila Ponte Nova established after the construction of the road railway bridge; Vila Nova São Vicente was plotted in 1984 by a real estate company; Vila Nova Mariana with abairramento dated in 2003; Fazendinha, an occupation in an area of environmental protection with population growth from the year 2000.

Figure 4: New urban groupings near the Padre Manoel da Nóbrega railway and highway.



Source: PREPARED BY THE AUTHORS, 2022.

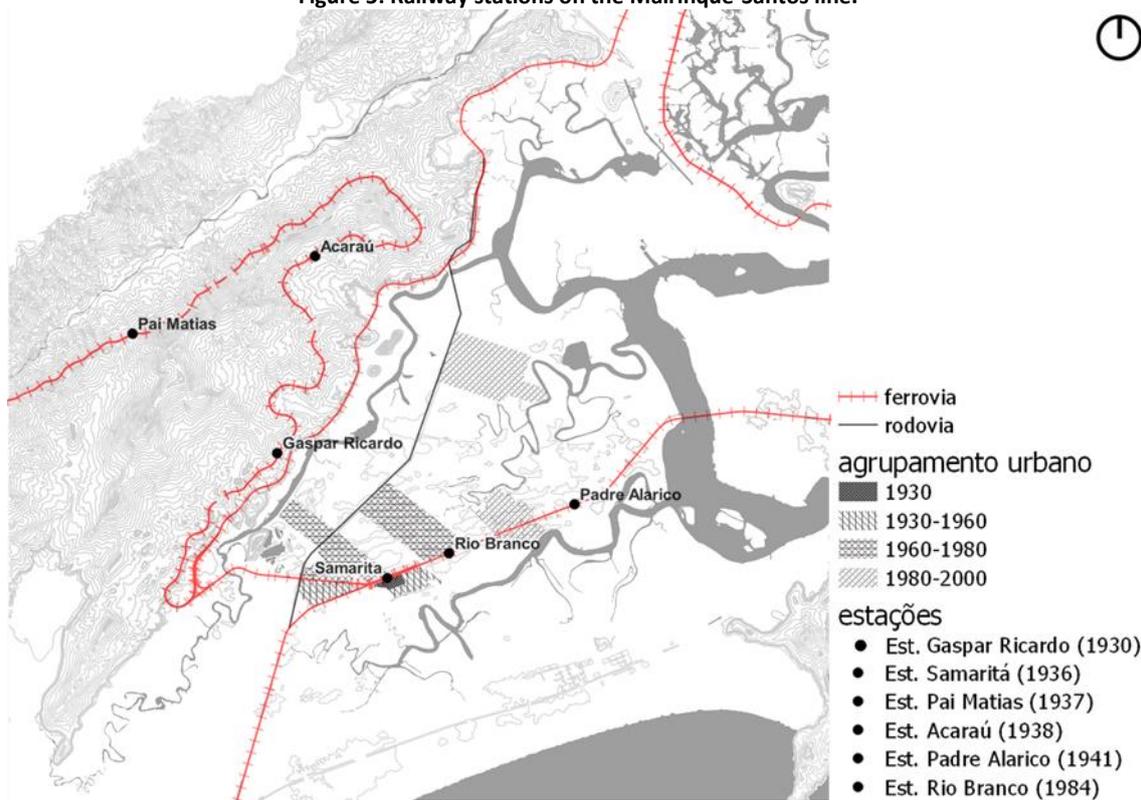
## RAILWAY STATIONS OF SÃO VICENTE

There were eight stations built in the continental region that we highlight here. They were started in 1930 and ended in 1986 (GIESBRECHT, 2019). Those located at the top of the mountain range, between the altitudes of 446m to 90m were demolished or depredated (Pai Matias, Mãe Maria, Salles da Cruz, Acaraú and Gaspar Ricardo, we even had difficulty locating them on the map because of this); however, it is not only exclusive to these seasons such events, because there were also depredatations in the seasons of the Vincentian continental plain (Rio Branco and Padre Alarico).

These buildings passed through the administrations of E.F.S. (1930-1971) and FEPASA (1971-1998), a process that caused periods of discontinuity in transport operations with the reduction of trains and schedules. Between the 1990s the Companhia Paulista de Trens Metropolitanos (CPTM) maintained the Inter-Municipal Train (TIM), which traveled from the Samaritá station to the Ana Costa station, in the city of Santos.

Another element of the industrial period is the railway bridge, dating from 1912, which conquers the Barreiros channel and connects the mainland and the island. It is reminiscent of the stretch that connected the cities of Santos, São Vicente and Itanhaém, being built by the São Paulo Railway. During the first half of the 20th century, the population living in Samaritá and its surroundings had only this direct access to the municipality's headquarters.

Figure 5: Railway stations on the Mairinque-Santos line.



Source: PREPARED BY THE AUTHORS, 2022.

With the construction of this bridge, a population growth was detected in the continental neighborhoods, considering that there would be no difficulty to reach the fringes of the city. Less affluent populations migrated, enabling a greater occupation of the continent. The emergence and increase of certain portions of the population due to access by the railway bridge were greater, consolidating new neighborhoods in its surroundings, although the traces of poverty and inequality increased in the relationship of differentiation between the space of the continent and the island.

At the end of the 20th century, with the construction of a road bridge next to the existing railway, the intention arose to promote greater availability of access, motivated by the possible economic growth by the implementation of industries on the continent. The discussion mediated by various actors (between entities, personalities and authorities) called for a road connection between the two parts of the city through an adaptation on the FEPASA railway bridge. Thus, the authorization for its construction took place in 1986, however, financial problems were found by the municipality to bear the costs of the work. Work on the execution of the road bridge resumed four years after its authorization in 1990 and, only in 1995, it was inaugurated, despite the outages due to lack of resources.

The road rail bridge allowed two-way traffic of motor vehicles. The operation of the Inter-Municipal Train line for passengers then took place until 1999 and the transport of cargo lasted until 2007, when it was decommissioned due to the placement of the mixed gauge line between Cubatão and the port of Santista. After the interruption of rail transport, access to the continent was only through the road model. Ironically, the contemporary use of the railway line

is due to the Light Rail Vehicle (VLT) without making any mention of the previous use of the train in that territory.

### **THE STATION OF SAMARITÁ**

In the Brazilian context, especially in the Baixada Santista region and in particular in the city of São Vicente, the railway and railway heritage are an important historical witness in relation to the effort to transport coffee, generating wealth for the development of the state and the municipality. However, with the phenomena related to the implementation of road transport, gradually, the railroad fell into disuse, being discouraged and, later, its decay process began by deactivating the main lines and, consequently, of the secondary lines (KÜHL, 1998).

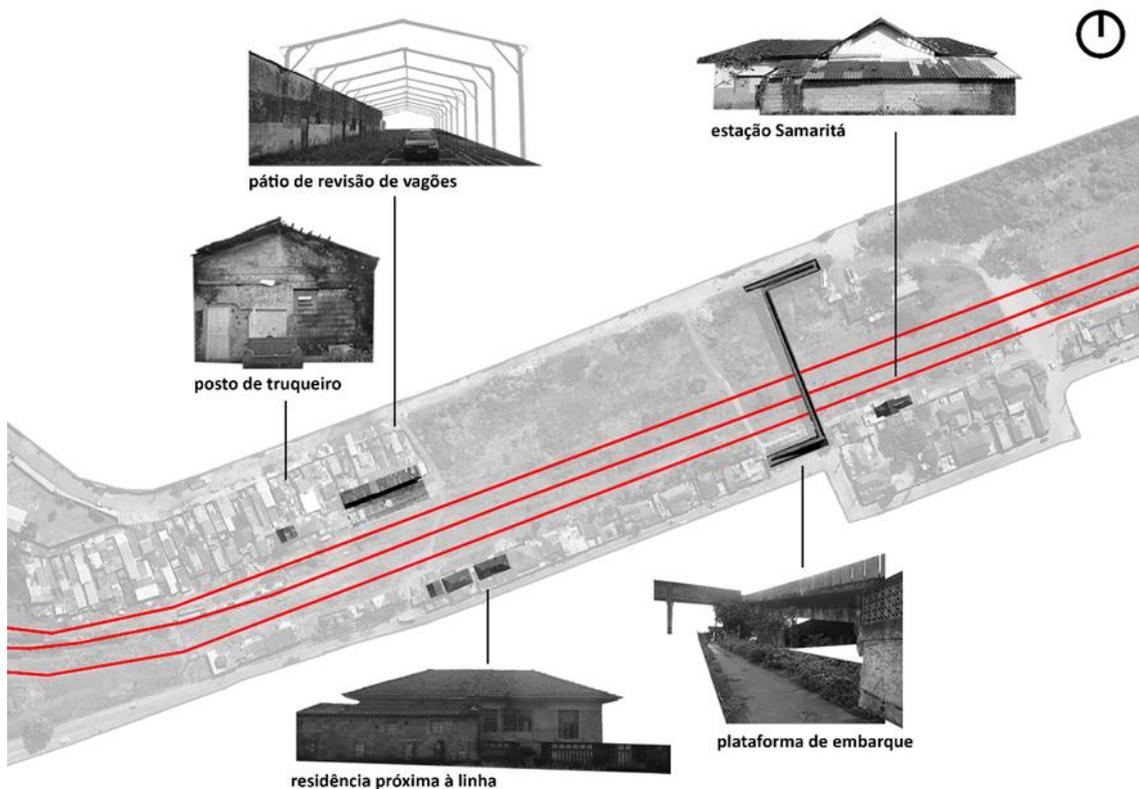
According to Choay (2014, p. 11), historical heritage is an asset destined to the enjoyment of a community, maintaining links with its common past, wisdom and human knowledge. Thus, "the historical value attributed to cultural goods comes from being traces of historical processes that form a society", even if such traces are related to the industrialization process. However, the absence of the preservation of the railway and industrial heritage implies the recurrent disappearance of the stations, as happened in the case of São Vicente; and his last copies ended up suffering severe mischaracterizations.

Safeguarding the "testimonies of an era that refers to social and cultural transformation" (FREIRE; LACERDA, 2017, p. 561) did not contemplate any of the stations present in the Vincentian territory and its remnants are configured as a desorising place. Possibly, the constant change in the urban fabric led to the payment of most stations that existed in the landscape of São Vicente, either in the island or continental area, due to the lack of public policies for the preservation of heritage and the replacement of rail transport by the road model. The deterioration of these emblematic spaces compromises the preservation and record of the memory of the city, represented in these public spaces, especially in the old railway buildings.

Currently, the buildings that make up railway complex are mischaracterized, in ruins or have adapted to new uses. The Samaritá station itself, since its deactivation in 2007, is being used in other ways, has already lost part of the original structure and its cover, in addition to the removal of the original wooden frames. The two other buildings, the treaper post and the wagon review post are deteriorated, the wall and roof of the boarding platform have also been ruined. Buildings with residential use around the railway also undergo mischaracterizations.

This spatial situation can derive precisely from the change in the passenger transport system, becoming scarce by favoring individual transport through the expansion of the road network or, also, by the houses that were established around the railway and, gradually, taking for itself the unoccupied railway bed, organizing it as its large backyard.

Figure 6: Remaining assets in the Samaritá railway complex.



Source: PREPARED BY THE AUTHORS, 2022.

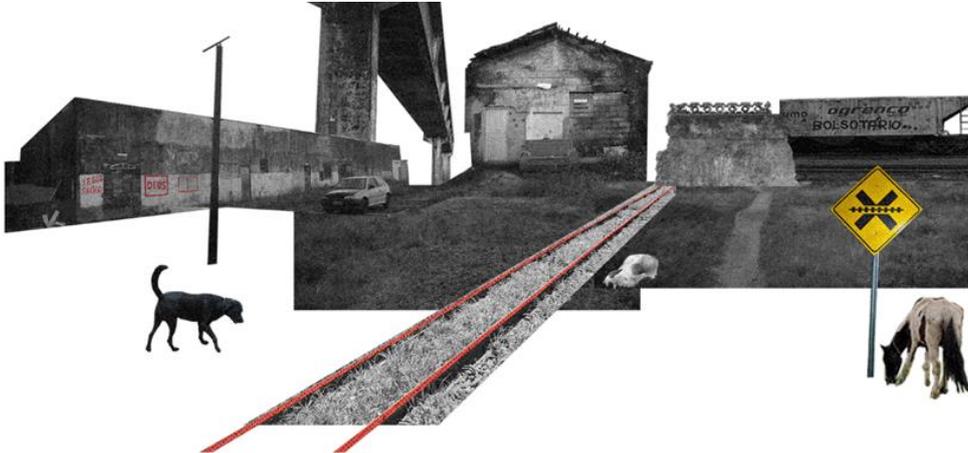
In such a way, from this scenario of abandonment and desolation could still arise a "picturesque landscape" (FIORIN, 2018, p. 41). A locality full of other meanings, singularities, and singularities to be constituted by indeterminate projects, which listen to the desires of the "others" (FIORIN, 2020, p. 121). In this singular place, abandonment can be a chance of some kind of relationship with the desire of others, the attempt to establish a place that hitherto did not exist and compatible with what may have in it one day (DERRIDA, An architecture where desire can dwell in NESBITT, 2013, p. 168), in order to reconnect what is left of the railway and industrial heritage with the urban imaginary of those who live in this region.

Thus, something recurrent in the culture of space, comes back to the fore as well as the sense of abandonment and the meaning of the territory of this station, before our rereading of this place. This is because, at its etymological root "[...] the name Samaritá comes from the Hebrew Sama, which means desolation, abandonment, aridity, and desert. A powerful image, which may relate to the delay in the district's settlement process [...]" (VALE, 2008, p. 79). However, we prefer to understand here that the sense of desolate, ermo, desert place, paves the way for a concept present in the works of philosophers Deleuze and Guattari (2012) of a locality that may be able to wrap uses and occupations in the counterculture of spaces that are read as hegemonic.

By speculating on the very etymological root of the name that is attributed to the station we can think that abandonment is intrinsic to this territory, therefore, the use of overlapping images intends to show here, that the current situation of the railway complex should not only be understood by the romanticized bias of a loss of heritage existing there, yet

as a powerful sign capable of opening up to the new, generating gains, that is, a territory full of possibilities – a void that evokes silence as a counterpoint to the roar of the old industrial machinery. From this point of view, the place that has as the sign the idea of abandonment can still produce new meanings and generate new objects (PIGNATARI, 2004, p. 56).

**Figure 7: Photomontage with the elements of the railway line near the Samaritá station.**



Source: PREPARED BY THE AUTHORS, 2022.

Nowadays, these spaces can be revealed by some uses that are not foreseen, without being planned, overlapping and marginal. They are neglected spaces and buildings, underutilized, without hegemonic character, therefore, also present an opportunity to the subaltern subjectivities that use these spaces for their appropriation in the vicinity of the railway line, as in several other cities in the interior of São Paulo.

Ruins that "turn into a modern archaeological find from a very recent past" (ROSA; FIORIN, 2016, p. 16) and who fill the empty space with their new users. They constitute cities within cities, stories that can be written by their own nomadic inhabitants in an urban desert. Spaces adrift from an old railway complex that has microterritorialities, places of becoming before the many social inequalities and the spatial misfortunes of Brazilian cities.

Moreover, the current situation is also an invitation to go to the field on a non-linear route through the tracks of history and railway architecture, in search of an encounter with the Others, in a journey that is through the means of the lines that we are about to write about the abandoned territorialities of Samaritá.

## **CONCLUSION**

The article presented the emergence of rail transport as a generating element of the process of occupation of the continental area of São Vicente, when some railway stations emerge in the continental landscape, between the mountains and the plain. We also marked drastic changes with the replacement of the rail modal to the road model in the course of the 20th century, with the implementation of new routes for the displacement of the population living on the continent through the Padre Manoel da Nóbrega highway and the construction of a road bridge next to the pre-existing railway bridge.

Possibly, these transformations of transport systems contributed to the process of deterioration of railway architecture, with the loss of much of the references of the architectural past, but other gains, from the point of view of occupations in the counterculture of hegemonic spaces. Samaritá, as the first and last railway station on the Vicentine continental plain, generating urban development in the continental area of the city, continues with the same difficulty of preserving the remaining assets of a process of late industrialization, but can still help us to understand the uses, occupations and possibilities of future interventions, which may be more adesable in revealing a culture of space.

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