Neighbourhood's narratives as cultural heritage
From country lanes to urban narratives

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Abstract

This research is based on the dialectic City – Neighbourhood, focusing on the importance of the ancient rural settlements – important districts of Lisbon – as fundamental urban structures for a new historical and cultural city approach. It is essential, in the light of the new economic paradigm of post-industrial city, to understand the role that this may have on both economic and social development of the contemporary city. Our study will focus on the urban and tourist potential, which comes from understanding the city as a network of historical cores where the urban, cultural and social heritage, when properly integrated, potentiate the city as a whole. The territory is a palimpsest where it is rewritten, at each moment, a new urban history. Our research considers the urban narratives' importance, supported in territorial elements (such as country lanes), in their role on structuring the territory and creating identity relations.

Keywords: Historical Cores, Neighbourhood, Lisbon, Cultural Landscape, Tourism

Introduction

Lisbon is a city in constant transformation, where urban meshes were being overlapped along the times and the history of the places is told many times for the physical elements of the space. The country lanes, the squares, the streets, the buildings and the toponymy are elements that integrate a widened narrative, being part of a cultural landscape that perpetuates the memory of the city, reflecting itself in its identity and its collective memory.

Figure 1 - Parse of Carnide, 2010. The present and the past
Photo by Jorge Nicolau

"La ciudad es pasado apropriado por el presente y es la utopia como proyecto actual. Y es el espacio sum de tiempos. Así como no hay comunidad sin memoria, tampoco hay ciudad sin proyecto de futuro. Sin memoria y sin futuro la cidade es un fantasma y una decadência." (Jodi Borja, 2003 : 27)[1]

The city planner projects the city to a macro-scale, redefining it and creating new layouts. The new roads rewrite the territory by destroying the old paths and country lanes, erasing its identity. Many of the old quarters, previously isolated, coexist today with new urban accumulations, completely different, without any connection between itself and the city in general. It is fundamental that the citizens identifies themselves with the space where they live. The urbanization is not city, the city is the reflex of the life of its citizens; it is interchange, trade, culture, ethics and aesthetic urban and is the public space for excellence (Borja, 2003). The quarters are fundamental parts in all this urban and symbolic structure.

"To know the Parishes of Lisbon is to know the city through many cities that it closes. Old and new, better or worse the neighbourhoods contain features that affirm them as a joint with strong personality" (Rego Mendes,1993 : 3) [2]

LISBON CITY OF the QUARTERS is part of the Strategic Vision for Lisbon 2012 and is one of the first vectors in the proposal of revision of the new PDM[3]. For the first time, the thematic of the neighbourhoods is assumed objectively for the City of Lisbon. In 3 of July of 2009, the Strategic Letter of Lisbon 2010/14 was presented formally, in the Municipal Theater of S.Luís.

"For its inhabitants, Lisbon needs to transform into a city of neighbourhoods by enhancing the existing character and planted the seeds of the future. The quarter must be the structural unit, in the space and the time, defining of the pride and the pleasure of the citizenship (...) it must have a human scale, not exceeding the space dimension of the medieval cities"[4]

The present article intends to be a reflection on the contemporary city, focusing on the dialectic City – Quarter, in a search of contributions that allow identifying the quarter as element joint, in the connection between the old rural cores and the urban center, that it harnesses a collective memory, with proper identity that is reflected in the city memories. The presented work integrates a project investigation, named "the Quarter and the City in question", and developed in the CIAUD of the FAUTL, which is associated, a doctoral thesis entitled *The Quarter as Catalytic of Urbanity of the City*.

In this context and having as object study the city of Lisbon it is intended to reinterpret the city through the territory. In our approach there is a paradigm modification in the analysis of de urban space, the city planning / architect interprets the city directly, without any filter, through the observation and the feeling, when walking trough the town. The observer assumes two points of view, the macro-scale in the approach to the object (Territory / City), and the micro-scale in the interpretation of the object (Territory / Quarter).

In the macro-scale we pretend a direct observation, top-down, appearing the roads and the old paths as structural elements of the urban morphologies. In this observation scale, we appeal to the cartographic analysis to interpret the growth of the urbe, based on its territorial structure.

The micro-scale reflects the present, the city *in-loco,* covered for the observer. In this scale of comment, we focus our study in the Territory / Quarter, recognizing the physical elements of the place,

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[1] "The city is passed appropriate by the present and is utopia as current project. It is the space adds of the times. Thus, as it does not have community without memory also does not have city without future project. Without memory and future the city is a phantom and decay."

[2] Translated from the Portuguese version.

[3] Municipal Director Plan

[4] Translate from the Portuguese version by the Strategic Letter of Lisbon, 2010/24, page 3

such as: the country lanes, the old paths, the farmers, the monuments and the squares, among others. These elements of the space produce an including narrative, potentiating has a symbolic identity that is inward by its residents.

Territory of connections the MACRO-SCALE OF the CITY

In its morphogenesis, the territory affects the action of the man, imposing its rules and conditioning its occupation. This reality leads to the appearance of the first cities, after the agricultural revolution, in the period of the Neolithic. They are small agricultural accumulations, villages that are in the origin of the great cities (Lynch, 1981). The territory, as we know it today, is the cumulative result of successive transformations that have been subject over the centuries, some that occur by the action of nature and other by direct intervention of the man (Corboz, 1980). It is the book on which the history of the city is rewritten, the palimpsest.

Lisbon is a city with more than 3000 years of existence[5], subject to some territorial occupations, fundamentally the Roman and the Arab, who are in the origin of important agricultural cores (Buraca, Benfica, Carnide, Paço do Lumiar, Ameixoeira, among others). These territories, with its strong historical, patrimonial and cultural identity, are important parishes of the city of Lisbon today. The memory of the city is closely related to the physical and cultural memory of these cores, today completely urban. According to Indovina, (2006), the city is the combination of the Morphology (physical form, urban landscape and urban patrimony) with the Urban Condition (socialization, social services, daily life and culture). With the macroscopic analysis of the territory, *top-down*, based on the old cartography, we intend to have an including view of the city evolution.
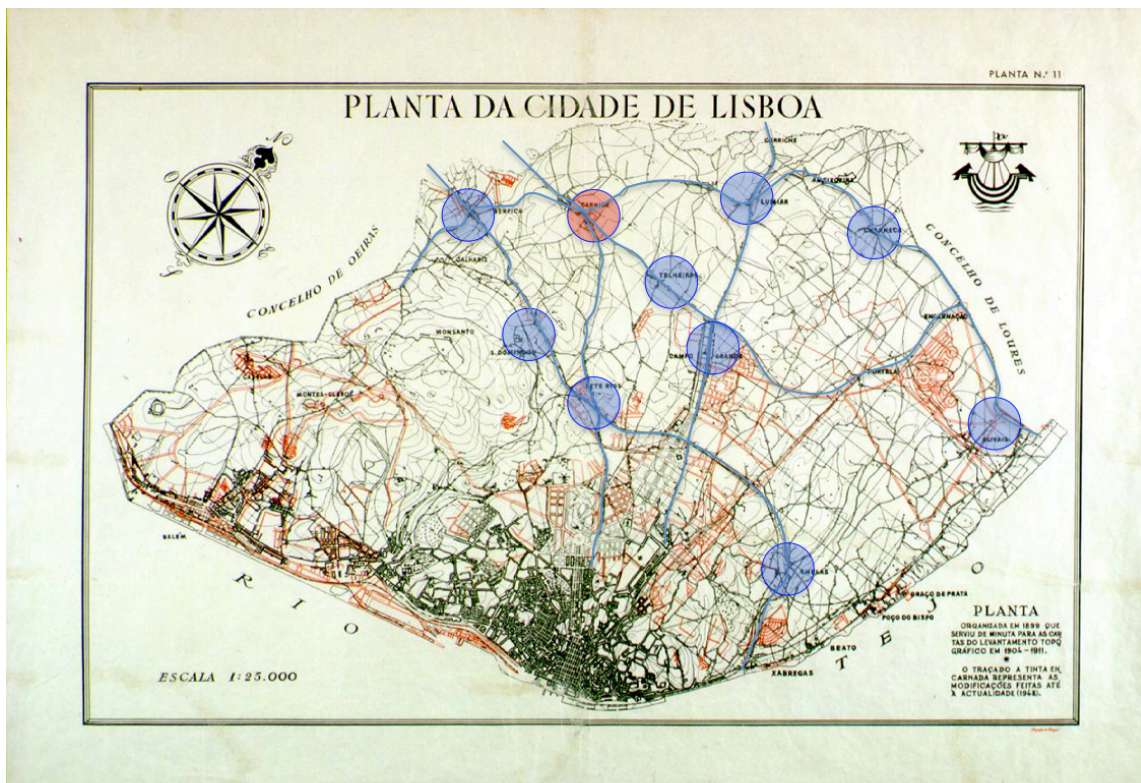

Figure 2 - Mapping of Lisbon, 1904-1911. The red are the changes made until 1948
Source: Lisbon City Hall

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[5] PIMENTA, João; CALADO, Marco e LEITÃO, Manuela – *Novos dados sobre a ocupação pré-romana da cidade de Lisboa: as ânforas da sondagem n° 2 da Rua de São João da Praça*, Revista Portuguesa de Arqueologia, Vol. 8 número 2, 2005, pag. 313-334

The city is intense, it is dense, but it is not continuous, it has a story and an urban narrative based on the old paths and country lanes that connect the quarters between themselves and the city in general.

In the **Figure 2**, it is possible to see, in black, the urban structure of the city. The blue circles represent the old rural cores[6], today completely absorbed by the urban area. The blue lines are the old main connecting paths. The layout of the city in 1948 is represented in red. Under the influence of Modern Movement and the Athens Letter, the city is "drawn by the ruler", interrupting paths and destroying the country lanes. Each territory is unique therefore it needs to be recycled; however we need to preserve its memory, before it is destroyed (Corboz, 1980).

The Architect / City planner has an important role in redefining the urban design and physical regeneration of the contemporary city in the light of a new economic paradigm, the city as a touristic product. We think that this paradigm shift is essentially a new reading of the physical and social space, understanding the city in its microscale and not in the macro where everything looks the same. The city is differentiated, it has a story and a narrative that is fundamental to understand first to be able to intervene afterwards. The neighborhood allows multiple rhythms and scales of intervention, differentiated, resulting in a constant renewal of urban space. This new attitude implies rediscovering the city, in its heritage, in the sections of country lanes that still remain, in the "rurality" of urban and in decoding the symbols given by *the walking through the city*.

The urban narratives – MICRO-SCALE
Territory / Neighbourhood
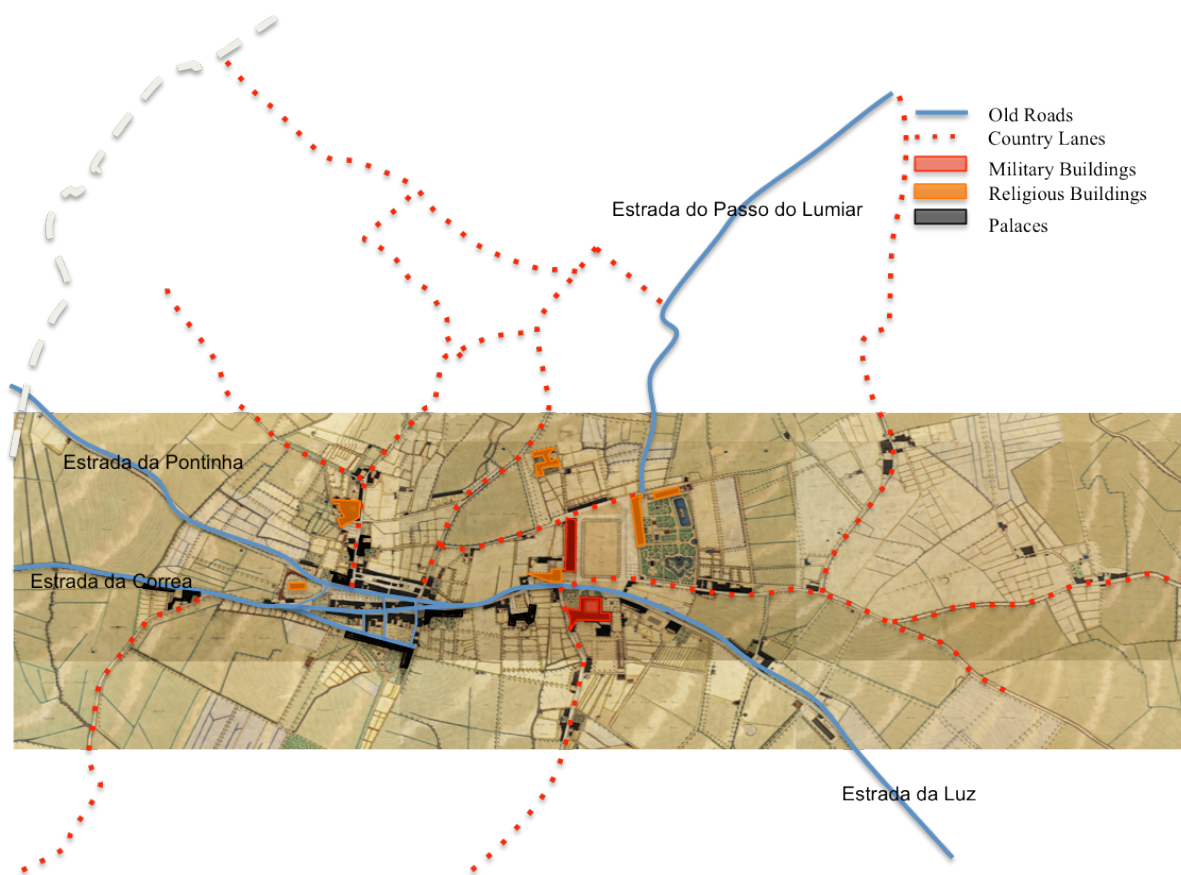
Figure 3 - Parish of Carnide, 1899. The Country Lanes as a Path
Source: Lisbon City Hall

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[6] The red circle represents the Parish of Carnide

This territory approach, which is initially given by mapping study and iconographic references, take us to another dimension through the literature, leading us to a different perception of the contemporary city. The physical space gains another dimension. The city *in-loco* has an urban history and a narrative that can be found in every street and every corner, reflected in its physical and social heritage. The architect has a direct view of the physical space, and understands the city in a simple and decoded way. Based on the analysis of the territory, *in-loco* and crossing it with old maps and satellite images, it is possible to redesign the rural routes, rediscovering them in the built territory.

The **Figure 3** represents the Carnide Village in the late nineteenth century, where the old farms, the country lanes and the existing heritage are visible. Most of these farms no longer exist. The lands were urbanized originating different forms of urban settlement, however, regardless of the great changes that this territory has been subject to over the past 50 years, Carnide was able not only to preserve its identity but also to irradiate to the surrounding neighbourhoods.

The city has much more to offer than what we can perceive (Lefebvre, 1992). In the *The City of Collective Memory*, Christine Boyer (1996) identifies, in a synthetic but comprehensive way, elements and concepts of geography, architecture, literature and painting that reflect the urban culture. What emerges from *this walking through the city* is a sense of a revitalized city with wealth and potential, the city's collective memory. The streets work as a sort of diagnostic on the quality of city life (Sieber, 2008). The street is the place of popular manifestation, it is a strategic point of encounter, observation and conversation (Cordeiro, 1997). Just as the street is a reflection of their neighborhoods, the city is a reflection of urban centers. The neighborhood is the stage of collective memory that is reflected in the memory of the city. The *Marchas Populares*[7], which are held every year in Lisbon, are a reflection of this neighbourhood culture that symbolically "contaminates" the center of town. The revaluation of urban life led to a parallel revaluation of the neighborhood as a public space for collective use, which, with its parties, its traditions and its associative life, give urbanity to the city (Jodi Borja, 2005 : 53). The urbanity is the virtue of uniqueness, but at the same time of ceating the new from the collective memory, of appropriating a space and time by sharing (Arendt, 2006).

Conclusion
The neighborhood as a cultural product of the City

There are many discussions about the future of the city, which is one of the biggest unknowns of humanity, for the loss of quality of urban life. We question our ability, as technics, knowledge holders, to produce a sustainable city, compassionate, humane, able to meet the demands of a largely urban population (Fortuna, 2009). We understand that the paradigm shift is essentially a new reading of the physical and social space, considering the city as a microscale. The city has a history and a narrative attached to each of its neighborhoods that it is crucial to preserve. The parish of Carnide is an interesting *case study* for the existing urban and social diversity. From a small feudal core, in the end of nineteenth century, it is today one of the most important parishes of the city of Lisbon. It is possible to create a tourist route, having as guiding line the old paths and lanes, which interconnect a rich and distinctive heritage, unknown to most citizens. Lisbon has a history and a culture that was lost in time and that it is urgent to rehabilitate.

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[7] It is the Portuguese term for a cultural tradition that consists of a parade through the main street of de city center, Av. da Liberdade, with music and dance. People participating in the parade wear traditional costumes. As *Marchas Populares* are a manifestation of the history of the neighborhood.

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