

Transport, tourism and technology in Portugal between the late 19th and early 20th centuries¹

*By Ana Cardoso de Matos / Maria Luísa F.N. dos Santos / Maria Ana Bernardo**

1 - TOURISM AND TRANSPORT: INTERCONNECTED JOURNEYS

In recent years, tourism has experienced increasing interest from researchers in various areas, a fact that has resulted not only in a diversity of approaches from which this theme can be treated, but also in the uncovering of the interconnections that exist between tourism and the development of the economy of transport and of society².

Thus, tourist growth in each country has been the subject of several studies, ranging from economics to the political and cultural aspects associated with publicising the country as well as to the links between tourism and transport developments³. Research on the institutions promoting tourism and the magazines in which it is advertised has led to an understanding of the role that professionals such as engineers have played in promoting the activity and how they have long regarded it as a form of development for the economy⁴ and for transport⁵. The study of travel guides is another possible approach to understanding the links between tourism and transport. Utilitarian in their nature, travel guides are a reflection of the economic, social, cultural and technological changes that, over time, have been introduced into travel for cultural purposes or for summer vacations, and which gradually have come to be participated in by increasingly larger social groups⁶. The analysis of various tourist guides allows for an approach to various themes, particularly the different forms of transport and the new industries that technological and industrial development have made available for travellers/tourists.

Analysing the 20th century tourism phenomenon thereby implies understanding all the economic, social, political and technological changes that were initiated in the second half of the 18th century and which eventually brought about today's phenomenon of 'mass tourism'. Access to tourist travel – for improving knowledge, for leisure or even for therapeutic reasons – at the beginning of the 18th century, a privilege of the aristocracy, was gradually extended to include the rich bourgeoisie. Throughout the 19th century, it embraced even wider social strata through the development of transport and communications. However, in the 20th century its high level of growth allowed tourism to become, for many regions and even for some countries, one of the main sources of income and an important support for the economy.⁷ Throughout the 20th century, new achievements were established in the world of work, such as the right to paid holidays, which contributed largely to increase the numbers of those who could spend their leisure time getting to know other places and other cultures.