

Touring the Past Uses of History in Tourism

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Tourism, Guidebooks and the Emergence of Contemporary Tourism in Portugal¹

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Introduction

The ways in which tourism has evolved in different countries have been studied with regard to the economic aspects related to the development of this activity, the political-cultural aspects associated with the dissemination of information about a country, or even the interrelationship between the development of tourism and cultural heritage.² However, the use of travel guidebooks as historic sources has opened new lines of investigation.

As part of a utilitarian literature, travel guidebooks are a reflection of economic, social, cultural and technological changes that have been introduced, through time, on cultural or summer travels, and have been gradually undertaken by wider and wider social groups.³ Thus, analysis of various tourist guidebooks allows one to study different topics. On the one hand, travel guidebooks can be connected to the history of art and define the concept of heritage at each point in time. On the other hand, they are connected to the economic history, through their interrelationship with different means of transport⁴ or new industries, which technological and industrial development provided for the travellers/tourists. Guidebooks act also as a tool for understanding space, which contributes towards dissemination of information about new leisure facilities, such as spas or beaches, and towards construction of images about cities or the countryside.

¹ This paper is part of the project *Viagens, Turismo e Lazer no Sul em perspectiva histórica. Dos finais do século XVII à primeira metade do século XX* (Travels, Tourism and Leisure in the South, in a Historical Perspective, from the End of the 17th Century to the First Half of the 20th Century), carried on the research Centre CIDEHUS – University of Évora. [http://www.cidehus.uevora.pt/index_investig.htm]

² For instance the communications presented at the International Association of Economic History conference analyse tourism under various headings: the infrastructures related to tourism; the actions of government and public authorities in promoting tourism; the role of the tourism industry in the economy; and the representations of tourism in relation to public opinion. These communications were published in Tissot 2003.

³ For Portugal see Matos and Santos 2004.

⁴ These interrelationships in Portugal have been studied in Ribeiro 2006 and Matos, Santos and Bernardo 2006.

This chapter focuses on the establishment of the first institution for the promotion of tourism in Portugal and examines some travel guidebooks which were published between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.

Institutions Promoting Tourism

Development of tourism led to the appearance of societies promoting it. The Touring Clubs, initially connected to cycling, were modelled on the *English Cyclist Touring Club*, which had been organising group trips from 1875 and had 25 000 members in 1879. The influence of this organisation extended into the countries in continental Europe. The *Touring Club of France* was created in 1890 with its headquarters located on one of the avenues that lead to the *Bois du Boulogne* in Paris, which was the cyclists' favourite place. In 1896, this society had 40 000 members and had diversified its activities. The appearance of the first automobile in France in 1895 and its wider use by the general public afterwards led to the publication of technical texts about this new means of transport and concern about the maintenance of the roads, which came to have new users.⁵ At the same time there was an effort to extend tourism into all of the regions in France, creating the concept of "tourism regions" and identifying certain cities as "centres of tourism".⁶ Furthermore, the Touring Club activities extended to the modernisation of the hotel industry and protection of historic monuments, creating a special association and a specific publication *Sites et Monuments*. With this initiative, the *Touring Club of France* "prend en charge des actions d'intérêt collectif qui ne font pas encore explicitement partie des fonctions de l'État".⁷ Portugal was not left out of this movement and in 1906 the *Sociedade Propaganda de Portugal*, also called the *Touring Club of Portugal*, was founded, which was an important element in encouraging tourism in the country.

The goal of the *Sociedade Propaganda de Portugal* was "to promote, through its own actions, through intervention with state authorities and local administrations, through collaboration with these and all other active authorities of the country, and through international relations that it can establish, intellectual, moral and material development of the country, and particularly, make an effort for the country to be visited and loved by nationals and foreigners".⁸

Since its foundation, the *Sociedade Propaganda de Portugal* was very well received in the Portuguese society and, asserting its independence from all political or religious affiliations, brought together individuals from different political or religious backgrounds, such as the Republican and Great Masonry Master, Sebastião de Magalhães Lima, or the monarchic and Catholic engineer Fernando de Souza. In December 1906, it had 2175 members (1054 founding members and 1121 other members). The following decades registered an increase in the membership: in 1916 the number of members was 9829 and

⁵ With regard to the Touring Club of France see, Lavenir 1999, 96 onwards.

⁶ Young 2002, 172.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁸ Estatutos da Sociedade Propaganda de Portugal 1906.

in 1925 it had reached a membership of 16 000. Although the number of members of the Portuguese organisation was less than that of the other European Touring Clubs, it was still significant, considering the size of the country.

In order to encourage national and foreign tourism the *Sociedade Propaganda de Portugal* launched a program of activities the main goals of which were: inventory of monuments and artistic wealth of the country; bringing Portugal's potential with regard to tourism to public attention within the country and abroad, through publication of guidebooks and travel booklets; organisation of trips; and promotion of infrastructure improvement associated with tourism such as hotels and transportation. As early as in 1906, when its statutes were submitted to the government, the directors of the *Sociedade Propaganda de Portugal* took advantage of the opportunity to present the government with a request for various measures to facilitate the coming of travellers to Portugal. Among these was the abolishment of the need to use passports, improvement of the Lisbon harbour and changes in boarding fees. Considering that the railway continued to be the main means of transportation used by tourists, the directors of the society tried to promote the establishment of the daily South-Express, as well as the organisation of a practical guide of the State Railway. In order to disseminate information about the country abroad, they contributed towards publication of an illustrated leaflet about Portugal, which was being printed by the Royal Company of the State Railway Administration and was to be issued in French, English and German, and accepted the publication expenses of a guidebook in Spanish.⁹

The *Sociedade Propaganda de Portugal*, whose headquarters was located in Lisbon, set up regional offices to expand their operations across the country. In 1925, it had 20 regional offices distributed from the north to the south of Portugal. In order to encourage the arrival of foreign tourists, it established regional offices in different countries in Europe. In 1925, it had bureaux in Paris, Bern, Geneva, Lausanne, Lorient, Madrid, Saint-Malo and Vichy, and information centres in Hendaye and Irun.

In order to distribute information about its activities the Society published a monthly bulletin, which was distributed free of charge to the members. It was distributed until 1921, when its publication was suspended until 1932. The bulletin offered suggestions for trips in the country and provided information about the main monuments in different cities, some of which were illustrated by photographs. At the same time, the Society had other publications throughout the years, which were aimed at distributing information about the different regions in Portugal, for instance, about destinations for national and foreign tourism, through *dépliants*, leaflets and monographs. Among the monographs there was an illustrated edition about Porto, which was translated into French. The Society hoped that this would be "a splendid advertisement for the north's capital city". The *Folheto Portugal*, which had a vast distribution in the country and abroad, was considered by the Society as one "of the most interesting of our publications due to its

⁹ Sociedade Propaganda de Portugal, "Relatório da Direcção Provisória apresentado à Assembleia Geral de 19 de Dezembro de 1906." Boletim da Sociedade Propaganda de Portugal 1 (1907): 11-14.

articles about the climate, landscape and art in our country, and whose excellent pictures make it even more outstanding, awakening the interest of those who read it". For wider dissemination, *dépliants* of beaches and excursions, namely from Coimbra to Bussaco were also published.¹⁰

The climate and beaches, the latter arousing increasing interest as places of leisure, were among the most important factors for attracting summer holiday travellers to the Southern countries. In this context, the mild climate of Portugal had to be publicised. In order to do so the *Sociedade Propaganda de Portugal* contacted English and French newspapers in 1907 and asked them to publish information on the registered temperatures in the country, namely in Lisbon and Estoril. In some cases, they were even registered at meteorological stations established by the Society itself. Acknowledging the increasing importance of beaches and spas as vacation destinations, *As nossas praias: indicações gerais para o uso de banhistas e turistas* was published in 1918.¹¹

In pursuit of its objectives, the Society divided into different commissions, such as the Commission for Hotels and the Commission for Excursions, in order to function more efficiently. The Commission for Excursions periodically organised trips to different parts of the country and in 1908 it published *Portugal: seus múltiplos aspectos como país de excursões*. Throughout the years, the Commission for Hotels was concerned about the development of the hotel industry in the country.¹² It aimed at making the hotels being constructed in Portugal follow an architectural style characteristic of the country, since it considered that "the creation of hotels in our country is not only a question of making use of capital but also an architectural problem, which must be solved." Adoption of foreign styles, in addition to causing severe practical inconveniences, is above all, "a very sad affirmation of that weakness of spirit which unfortunately characterises so many of our undertakings".¹³ With the purpose of creating a hotel style that would be adopted by the country, they asked the architect Raúl Lino, a member of the Society, to design a hotel that would meet this objective, in 1917. This project was particularly adaptable to the Southern regions of the country, which is why they opened a competition for the design of a "suitable" hotel for the Northern regions. With the intention of training professionals for the hotel industry, this committee established a professional school for hotel employees, at the Casa Pia of Lisbon, which was in operation during 1917, but was closed down as a result of the change of government and lack of allocation of subsidies.¹⁴

The constant concern of the *Sociedade Propaganda de Portugal* in developing the hotel industry was linked on the one hand with the need for the establishment of the necessary infrastructures for the accommodation of tourists, and on the other hand, with the recognition that tourism could contribute towards the economic development of the country. As it stated in 1913, "tourism is not a hobby of the rich, it is not a sport; it is

¹⁰ Boletim da Sociedade Propaganda de Portugal 1-2 (1919): 10-11.

¹¹ This work was translated into French, English and Spanish.

¹² In 1907 the society published the works of Luís Fernandes: Guia Prático dos proprietários de Hotéis, and Guia Prático dos serviços de Hotéis.

¹³ Boletim da Sociedade de Propaganda Nacional 6 (1917): 107

¹⁴ Ibid. 3 (1917): 62.

the development of a country in its economic interests, the encouragement of its regional life, the maintenance of its traditions, the widening of its hospitality; in a word, in all its material, moral, intellectual and artistic wealth".¹⁵

Understanding the importance tourism could have for the economic development of the country the *Sociedade Propaganda de Portugal* was one of the entities which put pressure on the Republican government to create an agency for promoting tourism in the Ministry of Interior Development. This measure was put into practice by the decree of law enacted on May 16th, 1911, which established the Council of Tourism assisted by a Tourism Bureau, at the head of which attorney José de Ataíde was nominated.

Publication of Travel Guidebooks as an Incentive for Tourism

Although there were some publications for travellers in the 17th century, the first travel guidebooks which provided specific and useful information about places to visit, such as the *Guide du Voyageur par Angleterre et Hollande* (Paris 1786), materialised in the 18th century. At that time, some series of pocket-sized books were also published, which indicated the most representative or picturesque monuments in each destination, such as the French series *Delices de...*, as part of which *Delices de l'Espagne et du Portugal*¹⁶ was published, in 1707.

While the previous travel guidebooks had been used to address elite, who considered travelling as a means of enriching its education, the tourist guidebooks of the 19th century addressed a wider audience and tried to respond to the new demands of travellers. Guidebooks, as we know them today, materialised in the first decades of the 19th century, and were associated with the development of the railway.¹⁷ In Portugal, some initiatives to publish guidebooks were also related to the railway. Before this, there did exist some guidebooks which could be used by travellers coming to Portugal, even though these were rather inaccessible due to their number and price. One can mention, as an example, *Guia Histórico do Viajante no Porto e Arrabaldes*, published in 1864.¹⁸ Aimed at facilitating and providing incentive for train travel, publication of *O Guia Oficial dos Caminhos*

¹⁵ Ibid. 9–11 (1913): 79.

¹⁶ Capel 1985, 15–16.

¹⁷ Catherine Bertho Lavenir distinguishes three generations of guidebooks. The first, whose prototype is the *Guide du voyageur en Suisse*, published by an Englishman, called Johan Ebel in 1793, is still very close to the travelogue. The second generation was related to the development of the railway and coincided with the industrialisation of tourism. These guidebooks take on a more practical approach and, although often preceded by a general introduction about the respective country or region, address the monuments and the material aspects of the trip. Another type of guidebook, monographs dedicated to a determined region, come into existence at the turn of the 19th century. Lavenir 1999, 58–62.

¹⁸ This guidebook, which included some sketches, also had practical information about hotels, coffee shops, post offices, carriage and coach stations, museums and temples, as well as information about different educational institutions, public buildings, factories and commercial establishments. F. G. F. 1864.

de Ferro de Portugal was started in 1882. This bi-weekly guidebook included the list of all stations and fees. These included regular and reduced fees, which were charged during the summer season on routes to beaches or spas. The reduced fees were also charged in other circumstances, such as organised trips.

The *Gazeta dos Caminhos de Ferro de Portugal e Hespanha*, published from 1888, included reports of trips, information about places to visit and suggested trips in the country and abroad.¹⁹ Despite this, in 1896, the *Gazeta de Caminhos de Ferro* realised that "for example, in the railway industry there is a great lack of publicity through attractive guidebooks, filled with views of buildings, cities, landscapes and points of interest, coloured maps and all else that can attract the attention of the traveller and provide him or the shipping agent with facts regarding the conditions and use of the railway and its routes and the services it provides for all kinds of transport, etc."²⁰

Seeking to attract new users, the guidebooks came to have new formats which facilitated their distribution and use, as was, for example, the case of the *Guides du Cycliste en France*, which were produced at the end of the 19th century in a small format and of modest quality. However, the innovation of pocket guidebooks dates from 1874, when Thomas Cook launched the series of *Tourist's Handbooks*, consisting of twenty-five titles with red or blue covers, in England.²¹

The appearance of more practical guidebooks with accessible prices was reflected in Portugal. In 1905, Santos Júnior (Santonilho) and Morgado edited the *Guia Illustrado do Viajante em Portugal or Manual do Viajante*, whose main novelty was its low price, which made it accessible to wider social groups. The guidebook states that, "though it seems extraordinary, we must tell our readers that there was no elucidative traveller's guidebook, until the production of this modest and unpretentious volume [...]. What does exist are some guidebooks about Lisbon and Oporto and a few sketches of different cities and villages of the country, which are almost always more historical than factual, and as a consequence of little use in meeting the requirements of those who travel throughout Portugal".²² In 1907, the *Manual do Viajante em Portugal: com itinerários da viagem em todo o paiz e para Madrid, Paris, Vigo, Sant'Iago, Salamanca, Badajoz e Sevilha*, was produced, coordinated by L. de Mendonça and Costa. This pocket-sized guidebook follows the model of the *Baedeker*²³ guidebooks.

Portugal, as a tourist destination, was also included in guidebooks which were published abroad. Several Baedeker guidebooks to different regions in Europe, the United States and Canada were published after 1870. Among these, there was a guidebook to the island of Madeira.²⁴ Also guidebooks to Portugal were published by the travel library of

¹⁹ Regarding the dissemination of tourism in this magazine see Ribeiro 2006.

²⁰ "O guia do Caminho de Ferro do Cabo." *Gazeta dos Caminhos de Ferro* 195 (1896): 59.

²¹ Guilcher 2000, 81–91.

²² Júnior and Morgado 1905.

²³ Karl Baedeker started the publication of guidebooks in 1832 and these were quickly disseminated in different countries.

²⁴ Guilcher 2000, 87.

Guides Joanne of the Hachette & C.^{1c} House of Paris, namely, in 1906, a new edition of *Guide de Espagne et Portugal*.²⁵

The practical character of these guidebooks for tourists demanded the text to become gradually more impersonal, systematic and complete, combining the description of places with practical information such as information about existing hotels and their quality, the exchange rate, the distance from post offices, the main roads and connections to other places and available means of transport. When suggesting tours in the main cities or trips between places of interest, the modern guidebooks contained plans of city tours and maps of the cities, as well as information about the main means of communication, and geographical and cartographic information that was considered relevant. The degree of analysis varied greatly between different guidebooks. In describing a destination, its monuments, buildings that were considered noteworthy, as well as the museums, were always mentioned. Sometimes, more or less detailed, historic or economic notes were provided, and a reference was possibly made to the natural geological characteristics and local flora and fauna. The guidebooks also came to be considered as a means of publicity and thus included several pages of advertisements for hotels and spas, main commercial establishments and industrial and transport companies.

Leisure Facilities Advertised through Travel Guidebooks

Scientific developments which occurred in medicine and chemistry in the 19th century, producing greater knowledge of the chemical composition of different thermal waters and their curative properties, provided the spas with a new dimension. However, also the cosmopolitan quality associated with these facilities led to construction of large hotels, casinos and other leisure facilities.²⁶ In response to the increasing interest for spas, the *Sociedade Propaganda de Portugal* published different guidebooks about the Portuguese spas, which addressed the public in other countries and were translated into other languages.

As a consequence of this increased interest in spas, which in many cases had the advantage of being close to the new railway stations, societies connected to the main spas were created, after the end of the 19th century. These not only created new therapeutic treatment facilities or enlarged the existing ones, but also created new hotels and infrastructure associated with summer holidays, such as casinos or clubs.²⁷ These works and the later operation of the new facilities created new dynamics in the economy of these regions, though in many cases this was marked by an annual fluctuation, which was due to greater or lesser interest of the public in the different spas throughout the 20th century.

²⁵ Regarding *Joanne* guidebooks see Rauch 2000, 95–100.

²⁶ See Anderson and Tabb 2002.

²⁷ The importance that spas and beaches came to have in the development of tourism in Portugal was mentioned by Carmina Cavaco, who studied the development of this industry, mainly after the 1940's. Cavaco 1980. With regard to the spas in the west of the country see Mangorrinha 2000.

Since the first years of the 20th century, when the spas were used by the elite and were considered as facilities of social affirmation, until the recent renovation of interest in these facilities, many spas went through periods of great disinterest and in many cases degradation.

Aside from therapeutic resorts that arose in connection with the study and exploration of thermal waters, the cold sea water of the ocean “was discovered” and also the mountainside became a place of choice, though with slower growth, mainly due to difficulties in access. On the other hand, “the South” was discovered – spending the winter in more moderate climates of Southern Europe attracted the wealthy people of the North. Portugal's geographic location and its long coast with numerous beaches attracted tourists who were looking for a temperate climate and the pleasure of swimming in the sea and other social activities associated with beach resorts. Also, infrastructure which would guarantee the comfort and enjoyment of tourists was constructed on the main beaches of the country, as was the case with the beaches along the Estoril or Figueira da Foz coast.

Appreciation of Heritage in Tourism Guidebooks

The development of tourism has often been associated with romanticism. Thus, respect for ancient culture and for constructions and monuments related to the medieval period was to be seen in the first guidebooks for tourists. The close relationship between this tendency and the emerging concept of heritage is in fact reflected in the guidebooks, and an investigation of them leads to an understanding of how they reflect the evolution of the concept of heritage and how they influence their main audience – the tourists.

For the tourists of romanticism, security in travelling was a fundamental element. Thus, before leaving, they tried to obtain information about the region or the country they had chosen as their destination.²⁸ In addition, the guidebook in which they could find all the practical information became an indispensable “partner” of a tourist, who visited the different locations which were suggested in these guidebooks. Thus, their travels became increasingly conditioned by the selection, appraisal and judgement of the author of each guidebook about different existing monuments in a region or city. In 1863, Hippolyte Taine described tourists as “êtres réfléchis, méthodiques, ordinairement portant lunettes, doués d'une confiance passionnée en la lettre imprimée. On les reconnaît au manuel guide, qu'ils ont toujours en main. Ce livre est pour eux la loi et les prophètes”.²⁹ As Claude Petitfrère states, “toute présentation d'un objet par un auteur à son public, suppose sélection et interprétation, que la communication passe par le truchement de l'écrit ou celui de l'image. Ainsi l'espace citadin livré au lecteur/spectateur est en quelque sort réinventé.”³⁰

²⁸ Boyer 2000, 122.

²⁹ Cf. Taine, H. *Voyage au Pyrénées*, Guides Diamant, 1882, XI–XVIII, quoted by Rauch 2000, 100.

³⁰ Petitfrère 2000, 49.

Places to be visited usually included, on the one hand, those which could be considered traditional and largely related to what is considered sacred, and on the other, buildings which are related to cultural, social and political values of each historical period.³¹ Churches, cathedrals and bishops' palaces were usually mentioned. Among civic buildings, town-halls, as symbols of the city, and palaces were highlighted. With time, other buildings, such as theatres, became valued, due to their architecture or social importance. In due time, in the 19th century, the guidebooks contained references to some engineering works as interesting places to visit. It is curious that in the 1864 *Guia do Viajante no Porto*, the suspended bridge was included under the heading *Monuments, Streets, Squares, etc.*, along with the monument to D. Pedro V, the Crystal Palace or Mansions. With reference to this bridge, not only were the dates related to its construction included, but also some of its technical aspects:

It is a bridge of beautiful construction and elegant perspective. It is 10 metres above the river, has a length of 170.14 m and a width of 6 m, with 1 m wide sidewalks on each side. It rests on four 18 metre high stone obelisks, two on each side connected with a metal plate on top [...] The bridge's pavement is suspended from eight cables, four on each side, made of 220 metal wires each.³²

In some cases the industrial buildings were highlighted. The Coimbra gas factory was described in *Guia Histórico do Viajante em Coimbra e arredores*, dated 1867. Regarding this industrial compound the guidebook mentions that

the building of the gas factory, located opposite the Santa Justa church, has a Norman style, and combines the advantages of simplicity, elegance and firmness. The whole main facade is of brick [...]. The interior of the building is conveniently divided into workshops, purifying chambers, offices, etc. It is quite perfect and has one of the best and most appropriate gas production systems of the major European cities.³³

In the 20th century, the great engineering works, such as bridges or hydro-electric plants, were more frequently mentioned and considered as works or places of interest to be visited by tourists. The first *Guides Verts* of Michelin, whose edition started at the outbreak of the Second World War, recommended visiting hydro-electrical installations.³⁴ The volume *Guia de Portugal* about Beira Baixa and Beira Alta, edited shortly after, states that Seia "is the recommended stop for trips to hydro-electrical centres of Alva".³⁵ With reference to trips to Senhora do Desterro and Lagoa Comprida it adds that "the old hydro-electrical centre of the Serra da Estrela Company (a 170 m fall) and the transition works to the present central of Jugais are worth seeing".³⁶

³¹ Ibid. 56.

³² F. G. F. 1864, 137.

³³ Castro 1867, 24.

³⁴ "On peut raisonnablement penser, même si rien n'a permis d'établir avec certitude, que les éléments culturels véhiculés par le Guide Vert sont en phase avec la culture d'entreprise." Farcon 2000, 116.

³⁵ Proença 1924, vol. III, 870.

³⁶ Ibid., 911.

Conclusion

According to Marc Boyer, the essence of tourism has not changed since the term "tour" was formed and spas, beaches and mountain-sides became popular in the 18th century – what has greatly changed is the number of tourists, and the challenge of our time is to provide the transport, housing and secure the regular flux and create strategies that help attract their attention and stimulate their wishes.³⁷ Publication of travel guidebooks was an essential element in the development of tourism, as it was through these publications that destinations were made known and the tourists were provided with the information necessary for their travels.

Tourism is a phenomenon that accompanies the development of consumer societies, and, as happens with any other industry, creates its own products: beaches, mountainsides, spas, rural areas, cities and the cultural life within them. The development of tourism and its expansion to increasingly wider social groups is accompanied by a diversification of what is on offer. It has developed from an undifferentiated industry into one with different branches, such as the so-called cultural tourism (discovery of cities, sites, regions and countries, visits and tours with special artistic or gastronomic themes or historical itineraries, only to mention some examples), rural tourism, mountainside tourism and adventure and discovery tours which appeal to those wishing greater contact with nature and the local population of the place being visited.

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³⁷ Boyer 1999, 41–42.

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