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Lisbon and its Port : Urban Planning and Surveillance Expectations and Results

Magda Pinheiro

Introduction

The rapid urban growth in the Contemporary period had a strong impact in the life conditions of the inhabitants of the cities. Paradigms and social practices aimed at transforming a city - seen as unsafe and unhealthy - in a mirror of modernity professionally run and anchored on scientific progress. Emerging problems in the early stages of this process were related to hygiene, traffic, safety, and the urban image of the city (Hietala, 1987). The cities had to develop institutions capable of meeting the basic needs in areas such as food quality and abundance, movement of goods and people, security and control of the population, hygiene, health and housing (Niemi, 2007).

At the end of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century, the development of the functions needed to control the modernization of the cities involved the participation of new professionals whose fields of action were set up anchoring in scientific progress (Dagenais, Mayer, Saunier, 2000). Fights among the new professionals took various politicized contours according to the periods and circumstances. Literature points out ports as one of the places where authority conflicts occurred (Le Buedec, Linares, 101-114, 2009). The importance of improvement commissions in the relationship between central and local governance was also enhanced.

Port Cities contributed importantly to urban growth in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century as they were good places for industrialization (Lees, Lees, 2007). The trade growth and the technological changes in ships led to the construction of new port facilities that totally transformed the landscape of port cities. Low skilled workers migrated from the country side to the construction sites of harbors. Due to their relations with an outside world, the impact of migration and the existence of a fluid labour population, port cities sometimes had the image of dangerous and unsafe havens. It was difficult to survey the flows of population and to control not only goods and people, but also diseases.

Lisbon's extraordinary expansion during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries was the reason behind the fact that at the beginning of the eighteenth century the city still was in the list of the ten largest cities of Europe. By the end of the eighteenth century, a quarter of the raw cotton imported by Britain came from Brazil through Lisbon (Maxwell, 1998). Nevertheless, Napoleonic wars and opening of the Brazilian trade had a strong impact on Lisbon's trade. On the Iberian Peninsula, even the Atlantic ports, like Lisbon were stagnant during the first half of the nineteenth century. Mendoza considers that their excellent location for long-distance sea routes was also diminished by the railway system that linked the north with the south of Europe (Mendoza, 1992).

This was not what Portuguese authorities expected. In order to stop the decline of the port, it was hoped that the coming of the railways had, as a result, the integration in the European railway network. Railways would make possible to transform Castile in a hinterland of the Lisbon port and to link the country with the rest of Europe.

Due to the industrialisation in the area around the North Sea and in Central Europe the port cities in that area showed more important growth. Nevertheless, the expansion of the Portuguese African colonies since the late nineteenth century supported a growth of trade and passengers that sustained for a long time the dream of Lisbon's port as a gateway to Africa, Asia and America.

If we compare the history of Lisbon with the history of port cities like Rotterdam—a minor town in the Dutch province of Holland situated rather far from the sea—we may point out different developments. In the ports situated in the Belgian and Dutch coast the rapid industrialization of Germany contributed for the growth of trade from and for the United Kingdom. Transit treaties allowed a cheap transport with boats and barges using the rivers and a modernized system of canals, whereas the port of Lisbon, although it had 212 km of river navigable by small boats, was largely dependent of a railway connection to Madrid. Although a transit treaty was signed in 1867 it was not immediately translated into new applicable rules. Spanish State had other agenda and either wanted an united Iberia, or the defence of the ports situated in its own territory¹. At that time the interior of Spain was not a fast growing industrial area. Last but not least Portugal had not enough mobile capitals to invest in the port modernization and only could get it slowly and with very high interest rates. The aims of this paper is to access the gap between expectations and reality in the in the planning and surveillance of the Lisbon's port.

Planning and port development in Lisbon

¹ This paragraph is the result of a long time scientific collaboration about port cities with professor Henk Van Dijk.

Lisbon's Great Earthquake led to a planned reconstruction of an extended part of its downtown. The reconstruction following the plan was slow and confined to the central part of down town, the old neighbourhoods were let to the will of their landowners. During the first half of the nineteenth century, with no population growth, there was almost no need for new urban planning. After the civil war, which ended in 1834, masculine monasteries were closed and a part of the public and even private needs for space could be fulfilled by the use of monastery's buildings.

Until 1850, although some sketches were made after the earthquake, the port of Lisbon had not undergone major reconstructions. Some retained walls, ruined forts, packed beaches or cliffs stretching directly into the water were only interrupted by three quays of which the first was situated close to Belém, in face of the rope factory. In 1811 the rules for the police of the port established very precisely the places for the ships to anchor (Navy Archives, 927, 1811¹). The loading of ships was done on the river by means of barges that unloaded their content in front of the House of Customs which was located east of the Commerce Square (*Terreiro do Paço*). The same was established by the rules for the port published in 1860.

In 1872, eight hundred barges were employed to carry goods to the customhouse. In the structure of the Portuguese state budget, custom duties were the most important post. The Custom house together with the Corn Exchange Hall had an important presence in the city's frontline.

The Navy's Arsenal was located very near in the west of the Commerce Square in the heart of the City. In the sixties a shipyard, named Parry & Sons, was established in Cacilhas in the south bank. In 1876 it had the capacity to produce steam engines. Artisanal shipyards building wood ships were distributed both in the south and in the north bank of the river.

The population of Lisbon began growing since at least the middle of the nineteenth century. The expansion of the city to the north and a better circulation in the riverside needed the opening of new avenues and streets. Many sketches and projects were made showing public concern about the problems related to the modernization of the port.

The main problem to solve was the financial support for the projects, as neither the City nor the State had enough capital to invest. In a proposal for a new port made in 1855, the location of the port facilities was west of the Commerce Square and was linked with the construction of a railway track to Sintra (MAE Paris, B31245, 1855). The project and the contract received approval but a disagreement among international investors, in particular the French groups Crédit Mobilier and Prost, led to the abandon of the construction shortly after its beginning. Different proposals of contracts, plans and studies by several commissions, delayed the start of the construction of the new port. Even the

Town Council engineer, Pezerat, made his proposal in 1858 criticizing the plans of Lucotte and defending that the railway line to Madrid should have its terminus in the south bank, and that the commercial dock should be in Alcântara (Pezerat, 1867, 22).

Around 1870 new proposals related the expansion of Lisbon, a new railway to Sintra and the construction of the new port led to the installation of a commission to study the works to implement in the port area. An extensive report was published in 1874 which included the guide lines for a plan of the new harbours. The landfills needed for the construction would allow the installation of a sewage system too. In the report the housing problem was addressed and a part of the new area was reserved to a new workers neighbourhood (Gammond, 1870).

Finally the report of a new commission installed in 1883 was submitted to public debate and the law of July the 16th 1885 authorized the opening of a competition for the concession of the works. In 1887 the contract for the port construction was signed with Hersent, a French entrepreneur who also built the new port in Antwerp (Barjot, 1994). The investments needed to build the modern facilities of the three sections of the port was evaluated in 60, 000,000 French Francs. Hersent had also offered to build a Railway from Alcântara to Belém but the Royal Portuguese Railway Company finally claimed the railway line from Santa Apolónia to Cascais. As usually the contracts were criticised in the parliament and its financial conditions considered unfavourable. An inquiry committee was installed and published a long report in April 1888 concluding for the legitimacy of the process (Parliament Historic Archives).

The crisis of 1891 prevented the achievement of all three sections of the new port. In the 8 of May 1894 the project and the contract were altered. Only the construction of the first section was assured. Hersent also got the concession for the exploitation of the port facilities. A consulting commission including the representatives of the Customs, of the port's Captain, of the Town Council and of the Engineers was established. In 1896 the tariffs and other conditions of the services were published. New police rules for the port area were also published. Only one section of the port was in exploitation until WW I but in 1907 the state got back the exploitation.

The different plans, the works and the rules for the exploitation of the port show conflicts among different state offices and the town council. Based in old donations the town council could claim the power over the banks of the river including the port. Lisbon Municipality had always a particular situation as it was a capital city, and the head of a *Distrito*. In 1852 the City Council asked the government to make clear the different powers over the port.

The captain of the port was, and remains until today, a navy officer. A government rule of 1864 considered the seaside as national property under the

control of the Navy Ministry. In 1869 a decree defined the functions and the territories of the “Capitânias de porto”. In May/June 1887, when the works began, the captain of the Lisbon’s port, claiming to act under the orders of the Navy Ministry, tried to maintain control over the construction (Navy Central Archive, Lisbon Port, 1887). Nevertheless the Public Works Ministry had already established a public bureau of engineers specifically engaged to control the construction of the port. After an aggressive exchange of correspondence between the two institutions the Navy Minister had to accept the control of the Public works engineers over the construction. It was also a conflict between civil engineers and military that had other arenas (Pinheiro, Vaz, 2010).

The state also made a law in 1864 introducing the obligation to have an urban plan for Lisbon including new rules for the opening streets and construction of buildings. Within the new rules security measures were combined with norms for the circulation and the beauty of the new streets. In 1867 the city also ruled about the approval of new buildings. Lisbon's Municipal code of 1886 integrated these precepts and many other rules. During the Republican period new rules were introduced. The permission from the city was needed for changes in the facade of the buildings like advertising, tents and other ads. The occupation of public roads and the construction of new buildings in courtyards and lobbies were also forbidden without the City Council approval.

The plans of a first commission included the opening of an avenue longing the port from Cais do Sodré in the landfills of Boavista, and also the opening of an avenue allowing better communication with the north. Shortly after new avenues and streets were planned. The construction of the avenue of Liberdade and the nearby neighbourhoods began in 1879.

The area of the city of Lisbon was enlarged from 1 224 ha to 7 980 ha in 1886. Large parts of the land remained rural inside the new city limits. The expansion of the urban fabric of Lisbon was, at that time, largely the work of urban developers that bought plots of rural land and developed it without an approved plan. They mostly were small entrepreneurs responsible for one or two buildings. The neighbourhoods built by developers had a more popular profile than those that were the result of the municipal urban planning (Silva, 1996, .603).

Although the planned expansion of Lisbon went on, the formal approval of the so called “New Avenues plan” dates only from 1904. The Parisian model was present although it was only an expansion plan and did not impose any architectural style or typology to the buildings (Silva, 2005). The changes in the old neighbourhoods of the city also existed but were comparatively modest. The control of urban expansion existed and was effectively exercised by the City Council, nevertheless, as it is usual in Portugal, a rigorous application of the laws was not very common.

The lack of monumental buildings in Lisbon was permanently a reason for critics of the expansion. Intellectuals often complained about the lack of uniformity of the Art Nouveau or eclectic buildings. At that time the idea of a monumental historic city enlightened the growth of cultural nationalism.

An inquiry to the conditions of housing in popular collective buildings known as *Pátios*, was done by the Committee for Sanitarian Improvements. It showed that in the beginning of the twentieth century existed 130 *Pátios*. 32 were considered unhealthy and were pointed out to be demolished; while new houses for workers should be built. Until 1918 neither the municipality nor the state was able to plan and build houses for the poor. The construction of the first social house neighbourhoods began only in 1918 and finished after 1933.

The new port slowly entered in operation until 1903. In 1904 the Congress of the International Maritime Association was held in Lisbon with a conference and a touristic program. Shortly after Portuguese State became the owner of the port concession. Public administration only programed minor improvements. Although the improvement of the basin of Count of Óbidos was planned, it was only after 1926 that new works effectively began, including new maritime stations for passengers and merchandises and the docks of Xabregas and Poço do Bispo. A new contract was signed in 1930. By the end of WW II, in 1946, the works were not finish and new financial support was approved in the parliament. The II and III sections intended in 1887 were completed. The two Maritime Stations were built.

The construction of the new Arsenal at Alfeite, in the south bank, began after World War I, using German war repairs. It was only in 1939 that the Arsenal was transferred to Alfeite. The Navy Academy and other navy facilities were also transferred there. Small housing neighbourhoods both for navy officers, sergeants and navy sailors were planned and built inside the military compound. For the workers of the shipyard, and the rest of the navy personnel, a social housing neighbourhood was built after the World War II in Cova da Piedade outside the military facilities (Rodrigues, 2001).

Since 1932 Forrestier, a landscape and urban planner, come to Lisbon to participate in the planning of Costa do Sol. The territory from Belém to Cascais was planned as leisure and touristic suburb served by a new highway and a seaside road. A small urban forest was planted at Monsanto. Since that time urban planning in Lisbon was influenced by Garden City movement. Railways were no longer considered a priority and new roads aimed to link the port, and in particular it's East new industrial area, with the national road network. Urban plan should allow a radio concentric approach, linking the centre and the periphery.

In this context the new Av. of Ribeira das Naus, from Terreiro do Paço to Cais do Sodré, was opened. It also became a space of leisure that emphasizes the

monumental aspect of the two places. There was an emphasis on road infrastructure, ports and airports as well as in social housing and the “reintegration” of monuments.

The imperial idea was the motto for the Portuguese World Exhibition, that opened in 1940 at Belém. The world exhibition and was an early case of redevelopment creating a leisure space in an once industrial area related to the port. The exhibition was also the pretext for a legislation that would give the Mayor the possibility of expropriating a large part of the city’s soil with small costs (Ferreira, 1987).

The heavy industry was now being built in the East, mainly near the new sections of the port. People like Saint Exupery, who were lucky enough to pass through Lisbon escaping Nazism, could see the exhibition and the new face of Lisbon under the planning of Salazar’s New State. Saint Exupery was impressed by the luxury of the Hotels at Estoril. Like many others he did not comment on the poverty and shanty houses showing the gap between social housing neighbourhoods and the needs of the population.

The planning in the old suburbs aimed to give them autonomous city functions. Nevertheless social housing remained unable to give the growing population minimum living conditions. Only in the sixties a bridge over the river, in the west of Lisbon, was built.

Health and Security in Lisbon

By the end of the eighteenth century Lisbon was seen in Europe as a very unsafe City. Even Lord Byron, in its *Child of Harold Pilgrimage*, reported being assaulted and almost killed by burglars’ (Byron, 1872, 295). The marquis of Pombal created the “Intendência da Polícia” in 1760 but this was not enough to change the perception of Lisbon as an unsafe city.

Since 1780 each ship entering Lisbon received the visit of the police near the Belém Tower and only after that could proceed to the city centre. In 1801 a Royal Guard directed by French émigrés was introduced. In those times of war quarrels between pro-french and pro-english, soldiers, sailors and royal guards led to serious conflicts.

Port and sea workers were not trapped to be soldiers but the navy was dangerous to the poor city inhabitants. Men and children were arrested and obliged to be sailors in the vessels of the king under the charge of being homeless. In 1805 a widow petitioned to the judge of her neighbourhood protesting against the forced incorporation in the navy of his son, a master painter of carriages. The owner of the carriages shop testified that the young man was a good painter and the sole support of his mother (Navy Archives, *Intendência*, 1805).

Prostitution, in association with the port and its trade, was also a concern both in social and health terms. In 1814 a workhouse was established next to Belém in the Rope Factory, to accommodate sixty prostitutes, replacing an old establishment existing inside the Arsenal itself and called oakum house.

In 1821 the banks of the Tagus River were still seen as dangerous because activities such as the storage of goods, ship building and repair, leisure and bohemian practices, took place there. Sometimes the captains of the boats complained that groups of burglars using good boats attacked the sailors during the night (Navy General Archives, box 358). In September of that year, a fire started in the river side and failed to catch the city. The banks of the river were full of fishermen, rowers and sailors as the shores served the river traffic as well as the long and medium distance navigation. The prevention of fires remained an important issue even after the concession of the port in 1895.

The boaters pressed the clients to choose their services. They were often accused of violence and after the civil war had some fights with the guards (Castilho, 1981, IV, 258). In 1836, a new Administrative Code gave the municipalities the authority to maintain good order and cleaning in the quays. Nevertheless, at least since 1871, the Spanish consul could use a boat with national flag and signalize to Portuguese's authorities, beggars to be arrested and expulse from the country.

Another issue was the security of the boats entering the port. Lighthouses, a company of pilots and signals in the landscape were progressively developed to help the captains to find their way (Loureiro, 1907). In 1883, a school to prepare the technical personnel needed to develop the light house system, as well as pilots to guide the ships in the entrance of the river, was proposed in a report. All those services should be under the direction of the Captain of the Port. A new diploma of the 1th December 1892 effectively put those services under the direction of the Captain of the Port and gave him the general surveillance over the port. The port was a part of the national frontier watched by the custom guards. In 1862 not less than 142 guards were employed to survey the international trade and the guards of the ports fiscal barriers were 126². In 1867 a new transit treaty was signed with Spain. The attempts to create a free port area (Porto Franco), although repeatedly published did were not successful until the first world War.

In what Concerns health security, the he Committee of Public Health existed since 1813. In 1820-1822 the Deputies to the Parliament proposed modernizing reforms, including an office of health and medical visits to all ships (Oliveira, 1992). As the visit of the police, the health visit would be made in Belém. In 1837 a new regulation for health surveillance was published. A member of the

² ANTT, Lisbon, Correspondência do Ministério do Reino com o Ministério da Fazenda, 20 de Outubro de 1862. Documento gentilmente cedido por Gonçalo Gonçalves.

committee complained in the forties that the venereal diseases were not checked there (Cruz, 1984). Nevertheless in the middle of the XIX century the dangerous health situation remained a main concern focused in all the plans for the construction of the new port of Lisbon. The situation was exposed in a more dramatic way, because cholera and yellow fever had their origins in the ports and made a large number of victims. The role of the mosquito was unknown and the spread of the disease was seen as the result of the activity of the port. The 18.000 ill and 5.858 dead were understood as a result of the trade relation with Brazil. The Health committee produced regulations and finally the quarantine was accepted as the best solution.

In March 1860 medical visits to ships became mandatory and a new building replaced the São Sebastião tower which functioned as the Lazareto of Lisbon since 1816 (Moreno,2013).

The landfills for the new port gave the possibility to install a sewage system, although unachieved; it contributed to a much better health situation at the end of nineteenth century. The inauguration of a disinfection building in January 1906 meant that finally the role of the mosquito as a disease propagation vector was recognized. Since then the old Lazareto stayed as an empty building until it became an asylum for children after 1926.

With the growth of nationalism security was also seen as a problem of national defence. The planning of the railroads and of the avenues adjacent to the port should allow a quick movement of military troops. Some politicians, like the Marquis of Sá da Bandeira, were convinced that the new infrastructures could ease an invasion of Lisbon by Spanish troops. For that reason the defence of the port was seen as a serious problem and new forts and batteries were planned.

The history of police is a new discipline in Portuguese historiography. Sources were not available for a long period and, as the rest of the sources for the study of the port, are dispersed. Recent studies by Maria João Vaz, Gonçalo Gonçalves and Nuno Madureira do not focus on the specific issues of the port but show that the port was often considered as an unsafe place where criminals could hide. As studies of criminal anthropology developed the interest in tattoos and other elements of the culture of the prisoners drew attention to the sailors and the port workers. The unpredictable timing of their work, the migrations and the contact with foreigners included those who worked in the port, in the world of gambling, vice and crime generated by urban society.

The specific problems of the surveillance of the port were also the result of the diversity of powers in the area. In 1853 the town asked the government for a better definition of the responsibilities of each institution in the surveillance of the port. The code of Belém municipality in 1884, had references to the norms that should be applied to the quays. Shortly after Belém municipality was

absorbed by Lisbon's one. Since 1852 a new penal code existed in the country and in 1867/68, Portugal abolished the death penalty. A new civic police was introduced in Lisbon the same year with a large spectrum of functions but very few men. In 1895 the new rules for the port of Lisbon concession gave part of the surveillance functions to the employees of the port. The Rules of the Police of the Port dating from 1894 had the fires as the biggest preoccupation. The Captains of each ship were made responsible in particular for the defence to transport gunpowder in their ships. In the beginning of the twentieth century there were 450 port employees and 800 permanent workers in the concession. Since 1899, each year the number of crew members of the ships entering Lisbon until 1905 presented an average of 95,862.

The place of Cais do Sodré was since long time a meeting point for the dockers. There, each day, from 7 to 10 am, the contracts of the dockers by the captains took place. Taverns, gambling places and prostitution houses were near the coffee houses attended by foreigner employees of the maritime, and trade companies.

The construction of public works- including the port and the growth of private construction in the new areas of the city- brought to Lisbon thousands of low-skilled workers whose living conditions were difficult. As several authors pointed out the average standard of living fell (Reis, 2010,263-269),.Social and political tensions grew. Until 1926 workers organization and strikes became present and a concern for the administration of the Port (Silva, 1923).

The administrative code of 1878, in use after the 1910 revolution, gave the Civil Government the responsibility over the public order, including the surveillance over beggars, tramps, foreigners and prostitutes. Since the sixties the prostitutes were compelled to register, obliged to pass a medical visit and submitted to compulsory hospitalization in case of illness (Liberato, 2000). Consular agreements between states gave Consuls powers over crews of the ships under the banner of their country. They had their own boats with the flag of their country and the power to impeach crew members from staying in the port. The authorities could also retain beggars and tramps they pointed out as already convicted in theirs countries.

With the republican regime the new Police of Public Security (1914) became a strong intervenient in the conflicts. By the rules of the 10th of May 1919 all the sailor men had to present a registration bulletin as maritime workers. In the ware houses of the port, beggars and tramps could find a place to hide. It was often reported that the marines gave a hand to the inhabitants of the area against the municipal police (Vaz, 1998). The fights between Portuguese and foreigner marines were also proverbial. Even more than the workers of the commercial port, the workers of the Navy Arsenal had a strong presence in Portuguese workers movement. In 1906 a sailor's riot led to severe

punishments but the worse movement took place in 1936. Two vessels tried to join the Reds in Spanish Civil War. Several sailors and Arsenal workers implicated in this riot and were among the first prisoners to join the Cap Vert concentration camp of Tarrafal.

Table nº 1-Workers of the Port

Year	Permanent workers	Journey men	Without permanente job
1920	289	1848	
1921	650	1361	2011
1922	633	1491	2124
1923	598	584	1187
1924	581	557	1438
1925	564	661	1225
1926	544	693	1307
1927	534	668	1259
1928			
1929			
1930	634		
1931	631		
1932	628	734	
1933	623	727	
1934	418	722	

Sources: *Reports of The Board*

In 1934 the authorities within the limits of the port were, in the words of the President of the Board of Administration, the fiscal guards, the maritime police (under the orders of the Capitan of the port), the pilots and the sanitarian authorities. Nevertheless in the reports of the Port Administration we can see that in 1928-30 the budget for security bypassed 375,184 Portuguese escudos. It grew in subsequent years bypassing 400 thousand Escudos. The police services in 1944 were vigilant arresting 577 persons. The most common crime being robbery with 302 arrests, but sodomy was one of the causes for arrest. In 1946, a total of 220 persons were arrested showing a fall after the end of the war. Aggressions and robberies were the dominant crimes but prostitution and indecency were also present. In 1947 there were 198 policemen that made a total of 218 arrests. At that time robbery and aggression remained the most important crimes but the number of persons arrested under the accusation of being tramps grew.

The President of the administration board, in the reports he signed, was forgetting (or intentionally hiding) the presence of the secret political police by then very active in the surveillance of the port and all its workers. Under different names after 1926, secret police had the power to catch and torture, not only Portuguese, but also foreigners that could be incommunicable for long periods.

Conclusions

The modernization of the port of Lisbon was a central objective of the socio-economic development strategy of Portuguese Government. The port and the capital city should also be a mirror of the new ideas about city design and order. The late nineteenth century added beauty to hygiene, circulation and order, a program that the engineers had carried out until that time. Too high expectations, lack of capitals and conflict among the institutions and professionals with power to manage the port zone contributed to delay the constructions and also to the rupture of consensus about the model of development previously chosen. Social tensions after the First World War had the outcome of suppressing political as well as municipal and social freedom. It was under this regime that urban planning and the conclusion of the port modernization took place.

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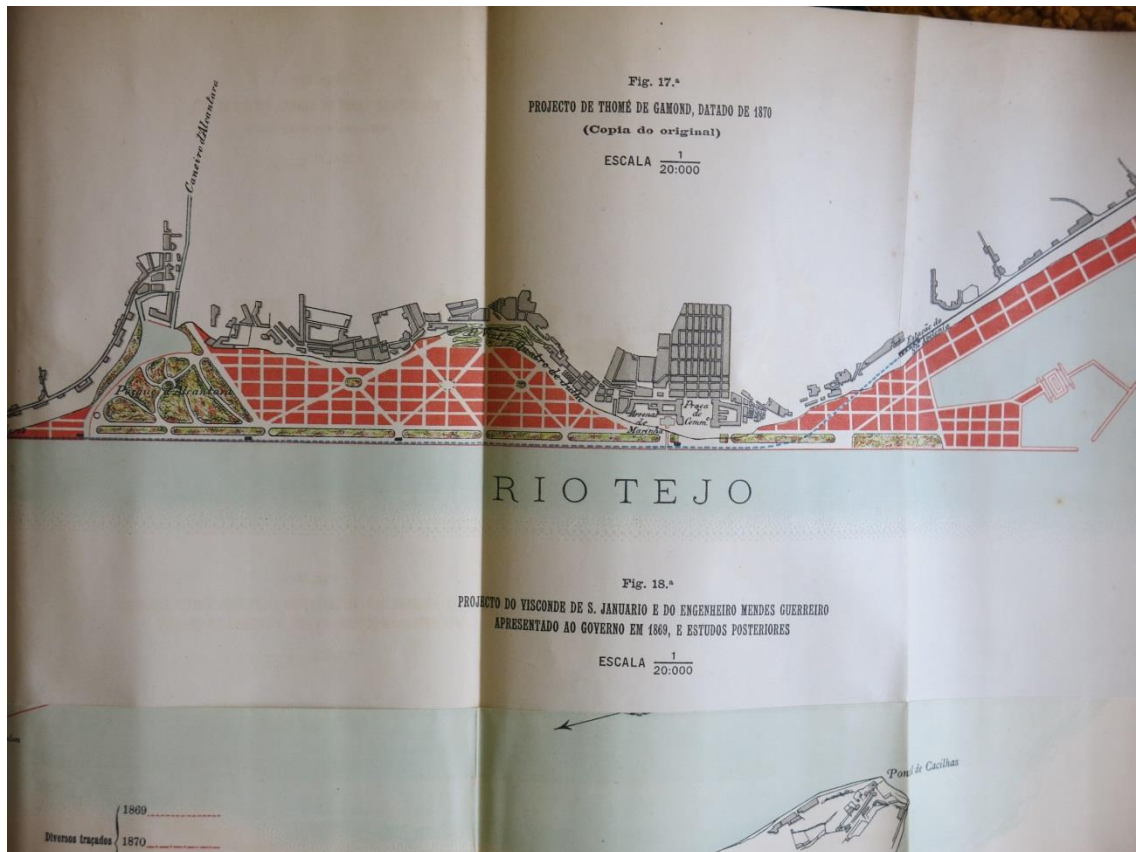
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Source: Loureiro, Adolfo, 1906, Os Portos Marítimos de Portugal, 9 vol., Lisbon.



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Source: Salvador Sá Nogueira, Conferência, feita na Câmara Municipal em 15 de Janeiro de 1934, pelo administrador do Porto de Lisboa, Lisboa, I.N. Images

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