

## **LISBON AND THE ALCÂNTARA NEIGHBOURHOOD CHANGES: IS TOURISM INVADING OR RENOVATING?**

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**Abstract:** Alcântara neighbourhood in Lisbon has good conditions to develop as a tourist destination in the next few years. It is probably the best district of Lisbon to recall the industrial era. The aim of this article is to understand what is currently going on in the heritage and tourism sector, and what is foreseeable to happen in the near future. A qualitative-quantitative approach has been used. The qualitative part has been based upon the direct observation of the analysed area. The quantitative part has been based upon the figures related to accommodation in Lisbon supplied by Turismo de Portugal. We believe that Alcântara district will fit profitably into the tourist boom that Lisbon has been experiencing for a number of years, thanks to several factors: Its diversified resources; Its dynamic and “trendy” neighbourhood image; Its barycentric position; Its good accessibility; The rapid increase in the receptive supply.

**Key words:** Lisbon, Alcântara, urban tourism, heritage, post-industrial

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Contemporary tourism is characterised by an increasing segmentation of demand, in terms of income, age, consumption, habits, places of residence, education levels, motivations, attitudes. Analysts agree that the global demand for tourism is likely to diversify further in the medium and long terms (Bădulescu & Rusu, 2009; Wilson, 2011). The supply, therefore, should evolve towards increasingly specific products. Consequently, new forms of tourism and tourist accommodation will emerge and develop (Avdienko & Kuznetsova, 2014), and new ways of interpreting and living the traditional ways will come to the forefront (King, 2016). The reasons behind this evolution are both technological (better accessibility to a growing number of destinations thanks to the development of transport; wider information due to the Internet), and motivational (search for alternative destinations; desire of experiencing the “otherness”; aspiration to expand one’s own sphere of action).

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Cultural tourism is the best suited segment to design new tourist products, thanks to the fact that the term “culture” is now understood as any sensible manifestation of human action (Smith & Robinson, 2006; Richards, 2007). Therefore, if tourism is no longer seen as just simple leisure or holiday, but also as an opportunity to experience a deep personal satisfaction and to reach a complete knowledge of the destination, then even the traditional benchmarks of the tourist supply are questioned. Until a few years ago, for example, cultural assets were only intended as historical, artistic, archaeological and architectural evidences to be preserved, protected and visited because of their beauty and uniqueness, whereas today they are considered as witnesses of values, memories, identities which are capable to attract tourist flows and to act as factors of development and economic growth for the territory they belong to. And so, cultural tourism has shifted to “heritage tourism”.

“Most researchers accept that heritage is linked to the past, that it represents some sort of inheritance to be passed down to current and future generations” (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). Heritage can be categorised as tangible immovable resources (e.g. buildings, natural areas); tangible movable resources (e.g. objects in museums, documents in archives); or intangibles such as values, customs, ceremonies, lifestyles, festivals and cultural events (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). Thus, heritage tourism can be defined as an immersion in the natural and cultural history of a place, made perceptible to human senses by a specific mix of tangible and intangible resources that represent the basic elements upon which values, memories and identities are built (Marcos Arévalo & Ledesma, 2010). The heritage tourism experience is influenced and shaped by a mix of elements: supply and demand, the nature of the heritage landscape, the impacts heritage creates, heritage management and interpretation (Timothy & Boyd, 2003; Gozner, 2014). Heritage tourism, therefore, pushes the contemporary tourist to seek diversity and to encounter genuine and authentic cultures, landscapes and *genres de vie*: in the case of this paper, the focus is on the transition from an urban industrial “lifescape” to a post-industrial one, and on the role that tourism can play in such a transition (Bujok et al., 2014; Bujok et al., 2015).

According to several authors (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000; Orbasli, 2000) the tourism sector is crucial for the rehabilitation of the urban spaces. Tourism is seen as a force of regeneration (Tiesdell et al., 1996) that reverses the loosing process, introducing new functions, creating employment and local wealth, attracting young population with different patterns of behave and consumption. On the other hand, tourists give a great importance to the elements that reflect the essence of the place, such as the public space and the architecture, the gastronomy and the everyday life of the local communities. They seek for integration in the local cultural life and want to enrich their experience taking advantage of the local atmosphere. Therefore, the distinct character of the historic city and the unique experiences are key resources of a city or neighbourhood (Boavida-Porugal & Kastenholtz, 2017). However, the quantity of heritage existing in a certain place is not by itself directly related to the development of tourism. Although it is a necessary condition for success, it is not sufficient to make it happen. Other items are becoming more and more relevant such as the environment preservation, the existence of urban open-spaces, entertainment, bars and restaurants, concerts and performances, arts and emotions and the sense of uniqueness (Costa & Albuquerque, 2017).

The tourist image of Lisbon and its uniqueness was shaped through the existence of “popular neighbourhoods”, spaces of intense and unchangeable social life where the above-mentioned elements of cultural life are present as a landmark of each different space. Alcântara, Bica, Alfama, Mouraria, and Madragoa are examples of traditional Lisbon neighbourhoods, which today continue to be closely associated with specific representations of the city and of its people’s ways of life within the city (Cordeiro &

Costa, 1999). Alcântara neighbourhood has very good conditions to develop as a tourist destination in the next few years. Situated by the river Tagus, next to the museum district of Lisbon (Belém), and not far from the town centre (Baixa), it presents a different tourist supply – besides the traditional local heritage, composed of monuments, palaces and museums, it is probably the best district of Lisbon to recall the industrial era, its buildings, activities and ways of life. To confirm it, in the recent past, as a reaction to the increasing demand of the tourists, several hotels, apartments and other types of local accommodation have emerged. If a tourist was a “specimen” hard to find in the area some years ago, now they are becoming part of everyday life in Alcântara. Tourists seek for the trendy local restaurants, unique libraries, modern business opportunities and young entrepreneurs’ shops, which concentrate in Alcântara, in places such as LX Factory and Village Underground. Young people are present not only during the day but also in the evening and during the night, because Alcântara neighbourhood offers many attractions such as restaurants, bars and discos.

Besides being well situated, Alcântara is currently served by different means of transport, such as the train (the line Lisbon-Cascais leads both to the centre, to the museum district and to the seaside), and Alcântara-Oriente a direct line to the interface station of Lisbon and the north of the town. The city bus and the tram are also available in the area and the underground will probably reach Alcântara in a couple of years. On the other hand, interesting museums and heritage sites can be found in Alcântara. Just to name some of them we can climb up the hill to see the view over the Tagus river from Santo Amaro Chapel, go for a walk in the park of Tapada da Ajuda or in the gardens of Pestana Palace Hotel, see the church of S. Pedro de Alcântara, or just stroll along the river docs to have an aperitif or diner in one of the open-air restaurants. For those who like museums the choice goes from the Orient museum to the Lisbon transports museum, among others. Besides, new sites are planned to the area: The Art Nouveau and Art Deco museum and the Interpretation Centre of the 25<sup>th</sup> of April bridge over the Tagus, which will include a lift and the possibility of crossing the bridge on foot. Given this reality, the tourist development of Alcântara is only predictable. Therefore, the aim of this article is to leave a testimony of these transition days of Alcântara, narrating how it was in the past, what is currently going on in the heritage and tourism sector, including tourist spots, accommodation and facilities and what is foreseeable to happen in the near future.

## **METHODOLOGY**

To carry on the research, a qualitative-quantitative approach has been used. The research method is partly bibliographical and documentary. The bibliographic investigation was based on the search for clarification and discussion based on material already published (Gil, 2010). Examples include printed materials, legislation, such as books, magazines, newspapers, theses, dissertations, and annals of scientific events. Other types of publications can be added, such as disks and all material made available on the Internet. The above-mentioned sources were used for the construction of the theoretical framework, interconnecting them with the practical part of the work. Documentary research was performed through the use of several types of documents as data source (Severino, 2007). Documentary research is the collection of data in primary sources, either written or not, belonging to public archives; private archives of institutions and households, and statistics. The qualitative part, aimed at evaluating the tourist offer in terms of heritage, facilities and landmarks, has been based upon the direct observation of the analysed area. This process will be illustrated in the next chapter through a visit to the neighbourhood and its symbolic places. The visit is a central practice of tourism. Tourists travel to visit or, according to the Latin definition of *visitare*, they go to see

(Vidal, 2014). To reach this goal, a field research initially took place, in order to have a good understanding of the neighbourhood's geography, social environment, cultural features and overall atmosphere. The quantitative part, discussed in the following chapter and aimed at assessing the neighbourhood's tourist offer in terms of accommodation facilities, has been based upon the figures related to accommodation in Lisbon supplied by *Turismo de Portugal* and listed in the *Registo Nacional de Turismo* (National Tourism Registration), with special reference to a kind of accommodation called *alojamento local*, for the most part consisting of apartments intended for tourist accommodation.

Finally, the qualitative elements achieved through on-field activity were related to aforementioned figures in order to shape a clear notion of what is happening in the neighbourhood and how tourism is contributing to its visible changes.

### **ALCÂNTARA NEIGHBOURHOOD'S HISTORICAL AND URBAN EVOLUTION**

The borough of Alcântara counts a population of 13.943 (2011) people in an area of 4.40 Km<sup>2</sup>. The civil parish was created in 1770 with the name S. Pedro de Alcântara, when the old parish church of S. Pedro, in the Alfama neighbourhood, was destroyed by the earthquake of 1755<sup>2</sup>. The name Alcântara comes from the Arabic word *Al-quantâra* meaning "the bridge", due to an ancient roman bridge that still existed here when the Arabs occupied Lisbon (718-1147), which disappeared during the reign of John V. The bridge was actually located at the corner of *Rua de Alcântara* and *Rua Prior do Crato*<sup>3</sup>.

Pre-historical vestiges were found in the area, especially along the Alcântara ravine at Alvito hill and Tapada da Ajuda. During the Roman era, the local area was called *Horta Navia* in honour of the Roman divinity Nabia, a goddess of rivers and water. The area was notable for the above-mentioned Roman bridge across the Alcântara ravine.

Alcântara was the battlefield of several conflicts with Spain, mainly in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, when King Ferdinand fought against John I of Castile and in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, when António Prior do Crato, was unable to defend the entrance of Lisbon's harbour, exactly in the area of Alcântara, from the attack of Philip II of Spain, leading to sixty years of Spanish government of Portugal, from 1580 to 1640. Until the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Alcântara area and its people lived on agriculture, with the production of cereals and wine, and on the exploitation of limestone quarries. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Royal Palace of Alcântara was built, a country residence complemented by the royal grange (Quinta Real). The palace was sold and destroyed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Nowadays, the only memory of that grandeur is the *Tapada da Ajuda*, the old royal hunting grounds. After the earthquake of 1755 the king as well as several noble families moved to Alcântara, Belém and Ajuda, because these areas were not affected by the quake. In those days Junqueira, a long street within Alcântara neighbourhood, became very trendy and still today we find there several palaces dating back to that period<sup>4</sup>. The Portuguese industrial revolution of the 19<sup>th</sup> century radically changed the life in Alcântara. Between 1807 and 1824, members of the Ratton family erected a porcelain factory in Calvário square. New factories of tanneries, chemical products, cereal grinding, and textiles were founded around that area and therefore Alcântara became one of the most important industrial districts in the Lisbon region.

"In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Alcântara neighbourhood of Lisbon became one of the most important industrial centres in Portugal. In this territory, located at that time on the periphery of the capital, were gathered some of the greatest companies and factories in the country: textiles, mechanics, and chemicals, among

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<sup>1</sup> [www.cm-lisboa.pt](http://www.cm-lisboa.pt) (retrieved 11 May 2017).

<sup>2</sup> [www.jf-Alcântara.pt](http://www.jf-Alcântara.pt) (retrieved 11 May 2017).

<sup>3</sup> [www.cm-lisboa.pt](http://www.cm-lisboa.pt) (retrieved 11 May 2017).

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.jf-Alcântara.pt> (retrieved 11 May 2017).

others” (Vidal, 2014). To support the industrial development, a new railway was inaugurated in 1887, connecting Alcântara-Terra to Sintra. Extended to the station at Alcântara-Mar in 1891, the rail-line was completed after public sanitation works along the beach of Alcântara (1876), which resulted in the recovery of an additional 500 meters of land from the Tagus River, quickly expropriated by factories, docks and warehouses. The workers of these industrial plants contributed to Alcântara’s associative movement and its popular character that subsists still today. 1910, when the Republic was implanted, a large number of republicans who participated in the fights came from Alcântara.

“During a period in which the Republicans prospered, their results in Alcântara were well above the Lisbon average although they did not match the extraordinary landslides achieved in the Socorro and São Cristóvão neighbourhoods” (Vidal, 2015). In the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as industrial heritage became more appreciated by the tourists worldwide, and as a “culture of pleasure”) became more valued and fashionable, Alcântara became a trendy place for restaurants, pubs and discos, mainly because its outer area is mostly commercial, and the noise generated at night would not disturb its residents. Today, some of these areas are slowly being taken over by loft development and new apartments that can profit from its river views and central location.

### **ALCÂNTARA – HERITAGE AND TOURISM RESOURCES**

Alcântara is surely not the most visited neighbourhood in Lisbon. Its monuments, museums, churches, and other tourism resources are not well known if compared to Belém district, Baixa (downtown) or the castle hill. Yet, a closer look at the whole quarter and near surroundings may show a different scenario and change the idea that one has about its attractions, which are all and all worth of at least a long full-day visit. Therefore, in order to understand the potential of this neighbourhood, we propose an itinerary that starts at the hills of Alcântara and slowly arrives down to the tourist attractions situated near the river Tagus<sup>5</sup>. Although not included in the perimeter of Alcântara neighbourhood, but still in a walking distance from it, the belvedere in front of **Palácio das Necessidades** (Necessidades Palace) is the best place to start a visit to the Alcântara district, so that one can have a notion of the whole area. Besides the Palace and its chapel, “the sole royal residence that resisted to the earthquake of 1755” (Santana & Sucena, 1994), the picturesque view overlooking the Tagus, the 25<sup>th</sup> of April Bridge and Lisbon’s harbour, also includes the whole area of Alcântara. The belvedere is actually a peaceful garden with a beautiful fountain that dates from 1748. If you turn your back to the river, you will see the long pink façade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century palace that is from 1950 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as its chapel and bell tower that once belonged to the Convent of St. Philip Nery, known as the Oratory Congregation. “The priests had to teach Christian doctrine, grammar, rhetoric, moral theology and philosophy” (Santana & Sucena, 1994). If you are lucky enough to visit the chapel, that is closed most of the times, you will find a baroque interior with paintings, marbles, gilt woodwork and sculptures signed by Agostini Giusti e de José de Almeida. On the west side of the palace, there is an entrance to the so-called *Tapada das Necessidades*, a charming park where one can walk or just relax before a 10 minutes’ walk down the hill to the next stop<sup>6</sup>.

The **Church of S. Pedro de Alcântara** was built in replacement of the primitive church, dedicated to St. Peter, located in *Alfama* since 1344, which suffered total ruin in the earthquake of 1755. Queen Mary I promoted the construction of the current church in 1780. The building, with a rectangular plan and a single nave, is considered an 18<sup>th</sup> century relic, representative of a Portuguese late baroque. Inside, in the main chapel there

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.patrimoniocultural.gov.pt/pt> (retrieved 11 May 2017).

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.patrimoniocultural.gov.pt/pt> (retrieved 21 June 2017).

is a baroque sculpture representing St. Peter and several symbols related to the life of the saint. You can also see remarkable paintings by Bento Coelho da Silveira<sup>7</sup>.

The next attraction is **Tapada da Ajuda** (Ajuda hunting grounds), which is situated in the perimeter of the old Necessidades Convent (Santana & Sucena, 1994) and occupies a total surface of 11 Km<sup>2</sup>. It was created as a royal hunting reserve by king John IV, in 1645, then on lands of the Alcântara Royal Palace. King Joseph I called it *Tapada da Ajuda*, sponsored its afforestation and the renewal of the fauna and flora. Currently, this area is in charge of the Higher Institute of Agronomy and here some of the best examples of specific civil architecture of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were built, such as the Exhibitions Pavilion (1881) or the Astronomical Observatory of Lisbon, created twenty years earlier (1861) and inaugurated by King Peter V. Inside the walls of the *Tapada*, there is a Natural Botanical Reserve, named António Xavier Pereira Coutinho (botanist), which consists on a calcareous knoll, located above the Exhibitions Pavilion, known as *Alto da Casa Branca*. The reserve was founded in 1923 and is representative of the local flora. In 1951 it acquired the current designation.

A visit to the *Tapada* includes, among other places: a) the Exhibitions Pavilion with a singular structure in iron and glass where several cultural activities take place; b) The water mines, built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century; c) The amphitheatre, or stone auditorium built in the 1940's, seating 3000 people; d) Lisbon's Astronomical Observatory situated at 100m high, an idea of the Frenchman Faye, built in 1850; e) The old Coach house and Queen Amelia *Chalet*; f) The belvedere at 135m high, decorated with glassed tiles and built on a cistern used for the water that comes from the mines, in front of the botanical reserve.

About 10 minutes walking from the Tapada, on top of Santo Amaro hill, **Vale Flor Palace** is one of the most beautiful romantic buildings in Lisbon, dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. José Constantino Dias, a Portuguese emigrant who grew richer as a farmer in Sao Tome and Principe islands, ordered its construction when he returned to Portugal and received from King Carlos I the title of Marquis de Valle Flôr. The project of the building was given to the Italian architect Nicola Bigaglia. In 1992, the palace was acquired by the Hotel Group Pestana, to transform the space into a five-star hotel unit. The hotel project retained the original features of the space. The central body is divided into four floors, with Parisian style attics. In the main façade stands the sumptuous entrance space in marble with iron and glass doors, which is accessed by a wide Portuguese limestone sidewalk. In the gardens of the palace, besides the swimming pool and the sculptural pieces, stands out the House of the Lake, a pavilion of oriental taste<sup>8</sup>.

Not far from the hotel, implanted on a hill overlooking the Tagus, near the Alcântara valley, the **Chapel or Hermitage of Santo Amaro** (Figure 1) was built in 1549, as indicated by the inscription placed on the main door of the temple. The project of this centralized plant hermitage, in Mannerist style is unique in the city of Lisbon, and is attributed to Diogo de Torralva (Markl & Pereira, 1986; Moreira, 1995; Serrão, 2002), one of the great Portuguese architects of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

It is not sure if this shrine of pilgrimage was instituted by a group of Galician sailors or a brotherhood founded in this place in 1532 by friars of the Order of Christ, (Cortez, 1994). The temple is inspired on an engraving by Sebastiano Serlio that represents the Mausoleum of the Crescenzi family, in Via Appia, Rome (Moreira, 1995). The nucleus of the structure is the circular space of the chapel, surrounded in half of its area by the semi-circular galilee that composes the facade. The galilee is covered by a dome. The walls of this space are fully lined with late-Mannerist polychrome tiles, organized in two registers alluding to Saint Amaro. The circular nave is covered by a semi-

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<sup>7</sup><http://www.cm-lisboa.pt> (retrieved 11 May 2017).

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.patrimoniocultural.gov.pt> (retrieved 11 May 2017).

spherical dome and lantern. The sacristy is contiguous to the chancel. Held on January 15, Saint Amaro pilgrimage was one of the busiest in the city, and took place for the last time in 1911. With the advent of the Republic in 1910, the chapel had been abandoned and looted, even serving as charcoal. In 1927, it was delivered to the Brotherhood of the Blessed Sacrament, and the following year the space was rehabilitated for worship<sup>9</sup>.



**Figure 1.** The Chapel of Santo Amaro

Walking down the stairway from the chapel, at the corner between Calçada de Santo Amaro and Rua 1<sup>o</sup> de Maio, **Palace Pinto Basto** is noteworthy. Built in 1716 to Pinto Basto family, it was inhabited by the founder of *Vista Alegre* porcelain and glass factory, who lived there with his 14 children. The factory still exists today and it produces the best quality porcelain in Portugal. In the beginning of Junqueira Street (nr. 30) there is the Macao Scientific and Cultural Centre<sup>10</sup>, a research and high-dissemination unit of the Ministry of Education and Science, for scientific and cultural cooperation with China. The most complete and specialized Library about China in Portugal, the only historical-cultural **Museum of Macao** outside China, as well as a unique collection of Chinese Art are to be found there. The Museum of History and Art houses a collection of about four thousand objects, classified in several categories, such as: ceramics, painting, furniture, textiles, graphic documents, numismatics and goldsmiths. The permanent exhibition of the Museum is divided in two parts: The Historical-Cultural Condition of Macao in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and the Chinese Art Collection. The built complex keeps a tile record, with the representation of Saint Antony and the inscription Vila de Santo António, on one of the walls of the building that faces the garden. The Vila de Santo António was a social work created by the Count of Burnay for the workers of the Tramway Company, of which he was the largest shareholder and director. The building, which is developed over five floors, was prepared to house the Museum, the Auditorium, the Cafeteria, the Multipurpose Room and work offices.

The walk proceeds along **Junqueira Street**, where several palaces and noble dwellings are to be found. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the name *Junqueira* already appears in official documents published by king Dinis (Santana & Sucena, 1994). From the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, noble families moved to this part of the town, building

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.patrimoniocultural.gov.pt> (retrieved 11 May 2017).

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.cccm.pt/> (retrieved 13 May 2017).

several summer residences. But most of them were built after the earthquake of 1755 because the Portuguese aristocracy wanted to live close to King José I, who had just moved to Ajuda hill and had a Royal Wooden Palace (*Real Barraca*) built there, because he was afraid of earthquakes - this area had not been as much affected as the centre of Lisbon. Besides the beautiful palaces, one also finds picturesque 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century popular houses, which facades are often decorated with glazed tiles, alongside with trendy shops, pleasant open-air bars and gourmet restaurants. Halfway between Alcântara and Belém, a 19<sup>th</sup> century fountain also decorated with tiles is worth a note.

But before arriving there our attention goes to **Palace of Ribeira Grande** (nr. 66) (Figure 2), built in the early years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, by the Marquis of Nisa and deeply altered in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to host the Secondary School Queen Amelia. The next attractive building is **Palace Burnay** (nr. 86) (Figure 3), originally built on the initiative of D. José César de Meneses in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. After the earthquake of 1755, the property was sold to the Patriarchate of Lisbon, who adopted it as a summer residence of the position titular. In the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the palace passed into the possession of Henry Burnay, who undertook a total renovation of the interior. In 1940 it was acquired by the Portuguese State, which installed several organisms there. The gardens are partially occupied by modern buildings of the Institute of Tropical Scientific Research.



**Figure 2.** Palace of Ribeira Grande



**Figure 3.** Palace Burnay

Not far from Palace Burnay, **Palace Ponte** (nr. 94) belongs to the Port of Lisbon. It belonged to the Counts of Ponte, the Melo Torres family, who served the Portuguese Royal House for several generations. From 1762 until 1950, the property was owned by Posser family. In the 1950's, the palace would pass to the possession of the Port of Lisbon. In the interior, much modified by the current functions, the panels of tiles, placed at the entrance of the building, signed by Jorge Colaço, represent King Dinis and his wife, the Holy Queen Isabel; there are still two other compositions made by the famous Viúva de Lamego tiles factory. A little further, **Palace Pessanha/Valada** (nr. 112) was built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century for the Pessanha family, and bought by the second Marquis of Valada in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, who was an erudite, depute and 1<sup>st</sup> official of the royal house. **Quinta das Águias** (nr. 138) dates back to 1731. Diogo de Mendonça Corte-Real obtained the rights to the estate that later came to be known as Quinta das Águias. In the following decades, the Quinta (farmhouse) had several owners and in 1841 it passed to the possession of José Dias Leite Sampaio, Viscount of Junqueira. The next interesting property is **Palace Lázaro Leitão Aranha** (nr. 194-196), built in 1734 by the principal of the Lisbon's Cathedral and Lens of the University of Coimbra, Lázaro Leitão Aranha. Carlos Mardel



was the architect responsible for the project. The palace, built in the shape of an L, develops parallel to the Rua da Junqueira, and consists of a central body with a single floor. There is also a chapel built in 1740. The original plan of this noble house has been the target, over time, of enlargements and adaptations. Today it is the Lusíada University.

A short turn can be made to have a look at **Palace Ega** (Boa Hora). The original construction of the Ega Palace dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as indicated by a 1582 inscription on a fountain at the entrance of the main house. The current organization of the building, with three clearly distinct bodies, is due to the great reform of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The famous Pompeii Hall dates from that period, decorated with Dutch tiles from the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, alluding to views of European ports. New works in the 19<sup>th</sup> century gave to this Hall the appearance that it holds today, with the erection of the false cupola, which replaces the old 18<sup>th</sup>-century ceiling. The property had several owners until it was finally acquired by the Portuguese state. Since 1931, the Arquivo Histórico do Ultramar (Overseas Historical Archive) has been operating there.

Crossing Junqueira Street to the riverside we find the **Centro de Congressos de Lisboa**<sup>11</sup> (Lisbon Congress Centre) or CCL inaugurated in 1957. According to the statistics of the “International Congress and Convention Association”<sup>12</sup> Lisbon is in the ninth place in the world ranking for number of congresses, which makes this kind of tourism an extremely important resource for the city’s economy. Lisbon has numerous structures for such events, some of which are very modern, but the one boasting the most illustrious tradition is the above-mentioned one. Located alongside the Tagus River, in an accessible area near the four star Vila Galé Ópera Hotel, the CCL is equipped with five pavilions, eight auditoriums, seven foyers, 34 meeting rooms, a restaurant for 400 people and two car parks with 1.100 parking lots. The main building (*Pavilhão do Rio*) has been classified as “architectural heritage of Lisbon”. After the creation of more modern structures on the occasion of the EXPO 98, the importance of CCL decreased, but it has kept its somewhat vintage charm intact. The greater centrality that the district of Alcântara will presumably gain after the construction of the new tourist attractions - the *Museu Berardo Art Nouveau and Art Déco*, and *Experiência Pilar 7* (see further below) - might restore part of the CCL’s former role as a congress centre.

The **Art Nouveau and Art Deco Museum** “is under construction”<sup>13</sup>, in Rua 1<sup>o</sup> de Maio. It will feature the entire Berardo’s Art Nouveau and Art Deco collection although there is not yet a precise date of inauguration. This new Lisbon museum will house about 300 pieces from the collection of the Madeira Island’s businessman Joe Berardo. Among the works of art are decorative pieces by artists such as Lalique, Leleu, Perzel, Brandt, Porteneuve and Ruhlmann, from a collection that has already been exhibited in spaces such as the Serralves Museum (Oporto) or the Berardo Museum itself (Belém, Lisbon).

Right next to the future Museum, there a long red building that used to be the **Flamengas Convent**, built under the orders of Philip II in 1582 to give shelter to a group of nuns who were expelled from the Nederland with the arrival of Protestantism. The façade and the church are very simple. Above the entrance there is the coat-of-arms and the crown of Portugal. Inside the single nave church, there are interesting glazed tiles depicting the tribulations of the Flemish nuns (1760). The floor is made of polychrome marbles and in the main chapel the image of Our Lady of Quietação is displayed. The convent is currently adapted to collective housing<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://lisbonvenues.pt/centro-de-congressos-de-lisboa/> (retrieved 30 May 2017).

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.iccaworld.org/dcps/doc.cfm?docid=1951> (retrieved 30 May 2017).

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.dn.pt/artes/interior/berardo-vai-abrir-novo-museu-em-lisboa-com-art-deco-em-2017-5453459.html> (retrieved 11 May 2017).

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.cm-lisboa.pt> (retrieved 11 July 2017).

The **Centro Interpretativo da Ponte 25 de Abril – Experiência Pilar 7** (25<sup>th</sup> of April Bridge Interpretation Centre – Pillar 7 Experience)<sup>15</sup> (Figure 4) was inaugurated in 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017, a facility that will allow visitors to experience the bridge “from within”, thanks to a panoramic lift and terrace built in correspondence with a pillar (*pilar 7*) located in Alcântara. In all likelihood, this facility will further increase the bridge's importance as an urban landmark and will enhance the tourist relevance of the whole district. The **25 de Abril Bridge**, with an overall length of 2.278m and the longest main span in Europe, links the two banks of the Tagus in close proximity to the estuary and surely represents one of the most important and well-known urban landmarks in the city of Lisbon. Inaugurated in 1966 with the name of Salazar Bridge<sup>16</sup>, it was renamed *25 de Abril* Bridge after the day when the Carnation Revolution<sup>17</sup> took place in 1974. It is very similar to San Francisco's *Golden Gate*, because it was built by the same company that built the Californian bridge. The *25 de Abril* bridge, despite being visible from almost every panoramic viewpoint in the city, manifests itself in all its grandeur especially in Alcântara: in fact, one of the entrances from Lisbon's side is located in this district, which grants the visitor a visual experience definitely more intense than anywhere else in the city, both from right below the bridge, in the area of the *Docas de Santo Amaro* (see further below), and from what might be its most interesting outlook, which is from the belvedere in *Bairro do Alvito* (see further below).



**Figure 4.** Centro Interpretativo da Ponte 25 de Abril (under construction)



**Figure 5.** Village Underground

“How down-at-heel Lisbon became the new capital of cool”: Thus, an on-line article of 16 April 2017<sup>18</sup> published in the English newspaper *The Guardian* was headlined. Part of the answer is in the Alcântara district: here is located the now famous **LX Factory**<sup>19</sup>, a successful experiment to repurpose an industrial complex into a multifunctional space. Inaugurated in 2008, the LX Factory occupies a former industrial area of around 23,000m<sup>2</sup> (a central avenue with two big lateral structures), where important companies, among which the *Companhia de Fiação e Tecidos Lisbonense* (Lisbon Fabrics and

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.cm-lisboa.pt/noticias/detalhe/article/ponte-25-de-abril-vai-ter-um-miradouro-panoramico> (retrieved 30 May 2017).

<sup>16</sup> António de Oliveira Salazar, Portuguese dictator from 1932 to 1968

<sup>17</sup> The nonviolent regime change implemented in 1974 by soldiers of the progressive wing of the Portuguese army, which put an end to the long authoritarian regime founded by Salazar.

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/apr/16/lisbon-new-capital-of-cool-urban-revival-socialist-government-poor-antonio-costa?CMP=share\\_btn\\_fb](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/apr/16/lisbon-new-capital-of-cool-urban-revival-socialist-government-poor-antonio-costa?CMP=share_btn_fb) (retrieved 30 May 2017).

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.lxfactory.com/PT/welcome/> (retrieved 30 May 2017).

Threads Mills) and the *Gráfica Mirandela* (Mirandela Printing Shop), were located. The complex, after a long period of inactivity, has undergone an intelligent recovery, which has preserved its former “factory” feel, although according to a contemporary formula: in fact, it hosts various design offices, art *ateliers*, start-ups, restaurants, cafés, bookshops, night clubs, co-working spaces, and even a hostel. It also hosts workshops, concerts, cultural activities and a Sunday market of vintage and biological products. Nicknamed from time to time “cultural incubator”, “creativity factory”, “creative isle”, the LX Factory is to its users - the residents of the neighbourhood and the whole city, but also the increasingly numerous tourists - an interesting and pleasing place where to spend a Saturday night or a Sunday morning in a mood that some - like *The Guardian* - would define as “cool”. We can close this paragraph with the words of Xie (2015): LX Factory “experienced a process of gentrification from factory production to tourism” (Xie, 2015, p.174). It “is viewed as both an industrial icon and an ideal location for the logical transition to a service economy via the reinvention of traditions” (Xie, 2015, p.191).

The same can be said about the **Village Underground**<sup>20</sup> (Figure 5), reproduction of the homonym English space: located in a neighbouring area to the LX Factory where the *Museu da Carris* lies too (see further below), the Village Underground is made up of 14 disused containers and two old buses turned into offices, co-working spaces and even a coffee shop. Many have chosen to establish an operating centre there: among them, the band *Macacos do Chinês*, the Portuguese division of the magazine *Vice*, and the artist AkaCorleone. The Village Underground hosts cultural and musical events, in addition to being the location of commercials. To complete the picture of Alcântara’s museum equipment, we need to mention the **Museu da Carris**<sup>21</sup>, the Society providing public urban transport in Lisbon since 1872. Perhaps it’s not a coincidence that this museum is in Alcântara, since transport, in its many forms, is particularly relevant in this district. Inaugurated in 2012, the Museu da Carris is divided in two sections: in the first one, more like a traditional museum, the evolution of the Society, and therefore of public transport in Lisbon, is described through an exhibition of documents, projects and technical drawings, tickets, uniforms and other objects of historical interest. The second one, however, is located inside warehouses and consists of particularly representative samples of buses and historic trams, which also testify the technological evolution that public transport in Lisbon has undergone over time.

It is appropriate to mention what could be defined as a “diffused” artistic heritage, the so-called “**street art**” or “**urban art**”. For several years now Lisbon has been emerging as one of Europe’s most representative venues for this form of expression, with many important examples in the district of Alcântara<sup>22</sup>: some artists, now internationally famous, such as **Vhllis**, **Bordalo II**, **How and Nosh** and **AkaCorleone** carried out important works which are displayed on the facades of buildings and masonry all over the neighbourhood, as well as inside the LX Factory and the Village Underground, while the underpass of the Alcântara-Mar railway station leading to the *Docas* (peers) is entirely covered with murals painted by the *Associação Portuguesa de Arte Urbana*. As an evidence of the tourists’ interest towards this kind of art, we can mention the guided tour, “The Real Lisbon Street Art Tour”, organized by the travel agency Estrela d’Alva, which also crosses the district of Alcântara.

The **Docas de Santo Amaro** (Saint Amaro Peers) are located under the first section of the bridge and were completely renewed during the restoration works of the port of Lisbon, completed in 1887. Their function almost ended as the port progressively

<sup>20</sup> <http://vulisboa.com/> (retrieved 30 May 2017).

<sup>21</sup> <http://museu.carris.pt/> (retrieved 30 May 2017).

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.lisbonlux.com/magazine/lisbon-street-art.html> (retrieved 30 May 2017).

shrank over time, so that in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the *Docas* merely harboured small boats. In 1995, in the context of a larger recovery project of abandoned or underused port facilities for cultural and recreational aims, the *Docas de Santo Amaro* were converted in a lively area of restaurants, bars and clubs, attended both by residents and tourists, especially in the evening and at night, which contributes to make Alcântara one of the poles of Lisbon's nightlife. The *Docas* also feature a modern and well-equipped marina, with a capacity of 330 boats and water games facilities. Something similar happened in Paris, where the quays along the River Seine, that once where used to unload deliveries, since 2013 have become a walk for pedestrians (Xie, 2015).

Nearby the *Docas de Santo Amaro* there is one of the main cargo terminals of Lisbon's port and a terminal for cruise ships, which makes the whole area an important junction for the transport geography of the city of Lisbon. To emphasize this role there is the *25 de Abril* Bridge, literally overhanging the *Docas* and providing a visual and audible impact that cannot be found anywhere else in the city. Right in front of the cargo area, an old building of the Port of Lisbon, designed by the architect João Simões from 1939 onwards, where cod was stored, currently houses the **Museu do Oriente** (Museum of the Orient). The building was part of the rationalist and functionalist spirit that represented one of the great tendencies of the time.

It was built from scratch to store and preserve dry cod and fresh fruit, with a structure of slabs and reinforced concrete beams designed to support the weight of these products. It was divided into 50 differentiated cold rooms and several food treatment areas, as well as warehouses, engine rooms, and even a gym for the workers. On the outer walls, panels with low-reliefs of the master Barata Feyo are preserved. It functioned as a cod warehouse until 1992, when it was closed down. Its requalification, by the architects Carrilho da Graça and Rui Francisco (with a landscape setting of Gonçalo Ribeiro Telles) was conceived to house the Museu do Oriente. The museum has six floors and basement, with two floors of exhibition area, reservations, auditorium and panoramic restaurant. It welcomes the art collection of the East Foundation and the private collection of the French sinologist Jacques Pimpaneau, made up of thousands of pieces of popular art from different Asian countries.



**Figure 6.** The *25 de Abril* Bridge from the *miradouro* of the *Bairro do Alvito*

This tour in Alcântara may be concluded with a brief visit to the **Bairro do Alvito**, which, like the bridge, was originally named “Salazar”. It is a group of popular houses of modernist style designed in 1937 by the architect Paulino Montez. The area is inside the perimeter of the **Parque Florestal de Monsanto**, which, with its almost 1.000 hectares, represents the true “green lung” of the city of Lisbon. The *Bairro do Alvito* has an odd triangular shape, and without a doubt it may be of some interest to contemporary architecture scholars and enthusiasts. However, the main interest in the *Bairro do Alvito* resides in its peri-urban and hilly position. The “explorer” tourist who happens to reach this far - not only in the sense of physical, but also cultural and mental distance - from the “traditional” routes of Lisbon's urban tourism, will discover an unusual and certainly unfrequented naturalistic itinerary, as well as a different view of the *25 de Abril* Bridge (Figure 6): typically, only its profile is visible, with the three spans separated by the main pillars surmounted by high towers; instead, from the *miraduro* of the *Bairro do Alvito* the perpendicular and elevated outlook allows to observe its whole structure and see its curvature, unperceivable from other viewpoints.

### **ACCOMMODATION IN ALCÂNTARA: FEATURES AND TRENDS**

As mentioned in the introduction, the district of Alcântara, besides being a secondary pole of tourist attraction based on the resources described above, as well as a *trait d'union* between two strong tourist areas (the Baixa - Chiado - Cais do Sodré districts on one side, and Belém on the other) thanks to its intermediate position and its good location within Lisbon's transport geography, is now turning into an additional nucleus of accommodation<sup>23</sup>, although semi-peripheral and residual compared to the central ones. The development of this new phenomenon will depend to a large extent on the actual conception of some rail transport facilities, currently at the planning stage<sup>24</sup>, and on a desirable strengthening of the district's image in the tourists' mental map, which has been quite vague until recent times. However, it is possible to outline its features and evolution of the last years thanks to the figures of the *Registo Nacional de Turismo* (National Tourism Registration)<sup>25</sup>, where all accommodation facilities are sorted by year of opening and location.

As for the hotel services, there is not much to report. The facilities available in Alcântara are just two, though large in size and of high quality:

- Pestana Palace Hotel, in Vale Flor Palace, the historical and cultural importance of which has been discussed above, active since 2005, 5 stars, 194 rooms and 388 beds, equipped with a conference facility of its own;
- Vila Galé Ópera Hotel, renovated in 2014, 4 stars, 259 rooms and 518 beds, located near the Lisbon Congress Centre.

More interesting, and definitely more dynamic, is the situation of accommodation facilities defined as *alojamento local*<sup>26</sup>. In order to understand its evolution and diffusion it is appropriate to first analyse the city context as a whole, before going into details about the districts, with special reference to Alcântara.

In the city of Lisbon, by 31 March 2017, 7.198 *alojamento local* facilities were open to the public, with a total of 16.105 rooms and 41.170 beds. It should be stressed, however, that almost all of these lodgings (6.805, equal to 94,5%) started their activity between 2014 and

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<sup>23</sup> According to Jean-Pierre Lozato-Giotart's definition (2003), we can state that Lisbon is turning into a great multipolar tourist destination, with a tourist supply based on diversified poles of attraction, and also a multinuclear one, thanks to numerous districts for tourist accommodation.

<sup>24</sup> Connection between the railway lines of Lisbon-Cascais and Alcântara-Oriente through the creation of an underground station in Alcântara-Terra; extension of the subway unto Alcântara.

<sup>25</sup> <https://rnt.turismodeportugal.pt/RNT/ConsultaAoRegisto.aspx> (retrieved 9 April 2017).

<sup>26</sup> As for Alcântara, the only facilities of *alojamento local* which are not tourist apartments are the hostel The Dorm, located inside the LX Factory, with two dormitories for 32 total beds, and the Lisbon Student's Inn, with 11 rooms and 16 total beds.



These data point out the increasing importance of this kind of accommodation, not only for the tourism market but also for the local and national taxation. As for Lisbon as a whole, it is interesting to note that the phenomenon - predictably - is stronger in the central civil parishes, or *freguesias* (Figure 7) (Santa Maria Maior, 2015; Misericórdia, 1.641; Arroios, 718, Santo António, 674; São Vicente, 55), inside which are the most important tourist areas: Baixa, Chiado, Cais do Sodré, Bairro Alto, Príncipe Real, Alfama, Santa Apolónia, Mouraria, Martim Moniz, Almirante Reis, Avenida da Liberdade, Marquês de Pombal, to mention the main ones. As one moves away from the most central areas, the phenomenon obeys to the “decay distance”<sup>27</sup>: in a second ring just outside the very centre, with 100 to 500 facilities, are the *freguesias* of Estrela (394), Avenidas Novas (200), Campo de Ourique (159), Beato (152) and Penha de França (114). With the exception of Parque das Nações (157) and Belém (152)<sup>28</sup>, every *freguesia* located outside this second ring displays definitely smaller numbers, and under the 100 units anyway: besides Alcântara, which will be discussed later on, within this group are Ajuda (60), Areeiro (84), Alvalade (64), Campolide (46) and São Domingos de Benfica (40). It is quite clear that centrality and accessibility are fundamental requirements for the location of this kind of activity. As for Alcântara in particular, by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, 85 non-hotel facilities, with 177 rooms and 447 beds, have been counted out. First of all, an evolution trend akin to that of the city of Lisbon can be noted: out of the 85 facilities, 83 have been open to the public since 2015 (22 in 2015; 48 in 2016; 13 in the first 3 months of 2017)<sup>29</sup>. The majority of them (58) operates as an individual enterprise, which suggests the prevalence of small entrepreneurship as an integration of personal and familiar income. Basically, all of them, with just one exception, are run under various legal titles<sup>30</sup> by physical or juridical Portuguese persons.

In conclusion, the district of Alcântara can count an overall accommodation (hotel and non-hotel) of 630 rooms with 1.353 beds (Table1). Even though most accommodation is ascribable to the two above mentioned hotels, the non-hotel component shows a definitely livelier trend, in witness of an ongoing phenomenon: the increasingly more structural and consistent presence of Alcântara in Lisbon’s tourism geography, not only in terms of resources, but also as a convenient location for tourist accommodation.

**Table 1.** Alcântara: accommodation by 31.03.2017, (Source: Turismo de Portugal data, 2017)

Hotel			Alojamento local			Total		
no.	rooms	beds	no.	rooms	beds	no.	rooms	bed
2	453	906	85	177	447	87	630	1.353

## CONCLUSIONS

The study carried out in the paragraph dedicated to tourism resources clearly shows that the urban landscape of Alcântara, rather than a more traditional and historical-cultural heritage, no doubt remarkable, finds its distinctive trait in tangible manifestations of Post-industrial, port and transport dimensions, which brand it as a unique reality in the Lisbon context (Figure 9). As mentioned in the introduction, Alcântara is first of all a neighbourhood of contrasts: ancient noble mansions and prestigious palaces dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to today are a short distance away from popular buildings and dilapidated housing environments. The amenity - due to the proximity of the river, the Tapada da

<sup>27</sup> The weakening of a phenomenon is proportional to the distance from the central nucleus.

<sup>28</sup> These two districts, despite their peripheral position, benefit from their role as strong tourist poles. Also, Parque das Nações benefits from a strong accessibility via subway, which cannot be said of Belém.

<sup>29</sup> Also in the case of Alcântara we believe that there are fiscal and administrative reasons for the timing of the registration into the *Registo Nacional de Turismo*.

<sup>30</sup> 44 as properties, 30 for rent, 7 as loan, 1 as usufruct, 3 as other titles.

Ajuda and the Monsanto Park - that one can breathe in some areas of the neighbourhood, as well as the “scenographic” quality of the hilly part of Alcântara, are in conflict with the real life and its material accomplishments (dismantled factories, sheds, port and rail structures, the bridge itself). This is due to the historical evolution of Alcântara that has been characterized by the industrial revolution, begun in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which has radically altered its urban, social and economic structure. The construction of the *25 de Abril* Bridge completed the landscape transformation of the neighbourhood.

The inevitable deindustrialization that followed has left an often degraded legacy susceptible to recovery and reconversion. It becomes evident that it is exactly in this functional reconversion that the authorities are investing for several years, aiming at revitalizing what is becoming more and more one of the trendy areas of Lisbon, both in terms of nightlife and in terms of the lifestyle in general. The corollary logic of this evolutionary parable is the image of dynamism and constant transformation that the neighbourhood transmits in comparison to the static reproduction of traditional and popular “*genres de vie*”<sup>31</sup> that characterizes “historical” areas such as Alfama, Mouraria and Bairro Alto. The dynamism of which the neighbourhood is pervasive arises not only from the intense recovery and reconstruction of discontinuous areas and structures, still in progress, but also from the urban planning itself, strongly marked by the presence of important transport infrastructures (the bridge 25 de Abril, surface rail lines, the commercial port, the cruises terminal, the marina, the railway stations of Alcântara-Terra and Alcântara-Mar), which contribute, even metaphorically, to generate that idea of movement and tension towards other places and other ideas. Somehow, Alcântara is the neighbourhood of a future that is going on, unlike, for example, Parque das Nações, which is the neighbourhood of a future that has already been completed and therefore, somehow, more “static”.



**Figure 9.** Overview of Alcântara neighbourhood

The multifaceted nature of the neighbourhood and the diversity of its resources correspond to various types of tourists interested in visiting it and possibly staying there: Traditional tourists, directed towards the restaurants of *Docas* and, in perspective, to *Experiência Pilar 7*, a future “great attraction”; Tourists belonging to the younger age groups, recalled by nightlife and the musical and cultural events taking place in the *LX Factory* and in the *Village Underground*; Explorers, searching for unusual or at least

<sup>31</sup> For example, fado culture, the popular saints’ festivals, traditional handicrafts and typical gastronomy, all often weakened because of tourism and therefore partially artificial.



peripheral itineraries as compared to the “mass” flows that characterize the central neighbourhoods; Congressmen; Even Eco tourists, attracted by the green and less known areas such as Tapada da Ajuda and Bairro do Alvíto.

We therefore believe that Alcântara district, which today represents a sort of “new frontier” of tourism in Lisbon, will fit profitably and organically into the tourist boom that the city has been experiencing for a number of years, thanks to several factors: Its diversified resources; Its dynamic neighbourhood image, “trendy”, but still authentic; Its barycentric position between two “strong” areas (between the historic city and Belém); Its good accessibility, still being strengthened; The rapid increase in the receptive supply, which is also a fairly clear signal of the phenomenon that has been attempted to describe in this article. Future research could analyse the changes regarding the accommodation and catering facilities of Alcântara district as well as their typologies. Much more should be known about the type of tourists who visit Alcântara, as well as about the role of public administration, namely the *Junta de Freguesia* and *Câmara Municipal*, in the tourist development of the area.

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