

THE UNIQUENESS PORT WINE WAREHOUSE'S OF THE HISTORIC CENTER OF VILA NOVA DE GAIA

Daniel Couto

Architect, Presidente do Conselho de Administração da GAIURB

danielcouto@gaiurb.pt

António Correia Historiador (*investigação e texto*)

Joana Magalhães, Rita Amaral, Verónica Pereira (*arquitectas*)

Susana Madureira (*imagens e cartografia*)

Abstract

The Oporto wine's warehouses in Vila Nova de Gaia started to be built in the 18th century and the area was formally institutionalized as a commercial unit in 1926 by the Portuguese government. These unique and private warehouses are, nowadays, an urban agglomerate that compounds an architectural composition and a landscape with no equal (all landscapes are unique!!!). Not classified by ICOMOS but they are. In fact, these warehouses are already part of the protected area of the city of Porto – Serra do Pilar Monastery – Luís I Bridge – World Heritage (1996).

The presentation focuses on the enhancement and safeguarding measures that, over the last 40 years, the municipality has implemented in the Historic Centre, given the dynamics of Port Wine and Tourism sector.

Key words: *Historical Centre of Vila Nova de Gaia, Oporto Wine Cellars, Humanity Heritage.*

THE OPORT WINE WAREHOUSE, A SINGULAR ELEMENT ON THE HISTORICAL CENTER OF VILA NOVA DE GAIA

“The one of a kind and private Oport wine warehouse in Vila Nova de Gaia (...) was a requirement of Douro's agriculture (...) in order to guarantee the genuineness and authenticity of the Oport wine”¹.

Origins and evolution of the Port Wine Warehouse - Vila Nova de Gaia

Vila Nova de Gaia has an inseparable history from the Riba Douro wine, that comes from the high lands of the Douro. It's the popular "fine wine", on a global scale: the Port wine, gives the city an universal notoriety.

Cited by Strabo, in his *Gheograficá*, in the early Christian era, the Douro wines, since the XII century, used the dock on the mouth of this great river, in Porto and Vila Nova de Gaia, and it was the embryo of a commercial process, that gained relevance after the eighteenth

¹ PEIXOTO, Fernando Anibal Costa, (2011), “Do Corporativismo ao modelo Interprofissional – O Instituto do Vinho do Porto e a Evolução do Sector do Vinho do Porto – 1933-1995”, ed. Instituto do Vinho do Porto, Porto

century. Because of tax-related, environmental and space issues, foreign and portuguese merchants installed themselves in Vila Nova de Gaia, and this add value to the product and to the economic circuit control. They stayed close to the river, which was a way of connection, transportation, arrivals and departures.

This brought: an urban expansion; the creation of the Company's General for Agriculture of the Upper Douro Vineyards, as also many exporting companies; the construction of long and extensive buildings for Port wine storage.

In the picture of Teodoro Maldonado, 1789, the "first plan" is already filled by long roofs (the warehouses of Port Wine) that give an idea of the movement on the Douro River (image1, on up) and shows the relationship with the city of Oporto. The concentration of stores (image4, CV) is an important element of Vila Nova de Gaia Historical Center, an essential part of a consolidated and coherent urban ensemble of unique architectural features, recognized worldwide and inseparable, even today (image1, bellow), from the urban landscape so peculiar that the topography provides and the river together to Porto, a World Heritage, and it is an specific protection zone (image4, LM3).

The development and technical improvement of wine production, associated with industrial development and the growth of trade relations, based on the Treaty of Methuen between Portugal and England, provided the rapid multiplication of merchants and exporters, Portuguese and foreign, some of whom gave their name to the wine: Kopke, Quarles, Harris, Warren, Croft, Taylor, Fladgate, Morgan, Burmester, Hunt, Rope, Offley, Forrester, Smith, Woodhouse, Sandeman, Atkinson, Martinez, Gassiot, Gonzalez, Byass, Osborne, Van Zeller, Feuerheerd, Hutcheson, Cockburn, Graham, Feist, Nieeport, Andresen, Mackenzie, Wiese, Kronh, Delaforce, Robertson, among others, a truly universal movement.

The Port Wine: intangible value of the region

The global process of affirmation of this wine gains a new dimension in Vila Nova de Gaia from 1907 when was established the dock of Douro privilege for the exportation and in particular from 1926 with the delimitation of the area in Vila Nova de Gaia, institutionalizing the One Warehouse and Private Port Wine.

Vila Nova de Gaia now concentrates storage, aging and bottling wines, while on the other side of the river, in the city of Porto, the essential organisms are located which help to control the functioning of the sector and the exportation of the product: the Alfândega do Porto (Custom's Porto city), the Feitoria Inglesa (Trading Post English), the Associação Comercial do Porto (Oporto Commercial Association), the Instituto do Vinho do Porto (Institut Oport Wine), and the Confraria do Vinho do Porto (Confraternity of the Oport Wine).

These agglutinators elements with common interests of both sides are reinforced since 1996 and acquired another reputation, when the historical center of Oporto city is elevated to a World Heritage (image4, PM), classification, once again using the Douro River and it extends to the Luís I bridge and the Monastery of Serra do Pilar, involving the entire town of Old Town Vila Nova de Gaia, as the Specific Protection Zone (image4, LM3).

Vila Nova de Gaia, margin of the city, dock and merchant, is also a functional extension of the Douro demarcated region, both linked in most of its economic destiny and history and also today in the valuation which is made of the landscapes that Wine Port produced, on the terraces of production and urban terraces of storage.

Therefore, Vila Nova de Gaia (image2, Gaia – Entrepoto) is a summit of this transcendental triangulation between the Alto Douro (image 2, Douro vinhateiro), the wine production, and the Oport city, administrative and exportation center (image2, Porto – Alfândega), constituting today, thanks to the large and growing tourist traffic, the main door and Access to this Douro Wine Region, a World Heritage.

As François Guichard², geographer of Bordeaux, another river and wine city, studios of Port Wine and urban areas of Porto and Vila Nova de Gaia demonstrated, these two cities are, with the Douro, a united identity for a history destination, heritage and cultural one and inseparable, which can only be enhanced by this "heritage channel" which is the Douro River itself (image2, bellow).

The dock of Gaia, arrival of the Douro wine, is revitalized as a privileged local of departures of cruises through the Douro Wine Region river, and others, and part of an integrated recovery strategy of the waterline and its banks in the metropolitan area, making the Douro River a way of development and connection regional but also peninsular.

Douro: river and wine, union factors

No less important than the connection to the Alto Douro is the connection of the urban margins, very marked by crossings of a rebel river and majestically steep banks. In these crossings, there is the iron bridge of "Maria Pia" (image3, on up) built by Gustave Eiffel between 1876 and 1877, winning a span of 300 meters over the Douro River at an elevation of 60 meters, establishing not only the rail link between north and south of the country, but also the line of the Douro, allowing the arrival of wine at gare of Devesas in Vila Nova de Gaia, in the heart of the Warehouse of the Port wine. Although disabled for over two decades, it continues to be a symbol of human enhancement and urban development, industrial and cultural progress, reinforced by significant classification in 1990 by the American Society of Engineering - ASCE as Intenacional Historic Landmark Engineering.

As the upper board of the Luis I bridge was converted into a straight platform in 2005, shared by Metro do Porto and pedestrians, allowing an extraordinary view over the river and ancient urban fabric on both sides, we want to transform the railway bridge deck "Maria Pia" (image3, 2) with a panoramic and urban-tourist-patrimonial view, in a pedestrian bridge, and extend it to the tunnels and disabled railways, linking the two sides, between the old Customs Port (Alfândega do Porto, image3, 1) and St. Benedict Station (Estação de São Bento) in Porto, and the platform of Devesas and General Torres in Vila Nova de Gaia (image3, 3). This circuit, in conjunction with the metro, the bus, the train, the funicular, pedestrian and river crossings, it will value another old passer railway viaduct over the warehouse of the Port wine, which is another viewpoint over the historic centers of Porto and

² GUICHARD, François, (1992), "Porto, la Ville dans sa region - Contribution a l' étude de l' organisation de l' espace dans le Portugal du Nord", ed. Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian – Centre Culturel Portugais, Paris.

Vila Nova Gaia, providing a similar view to that of Teodoro Maldonado (image1, on up) engraving, marked, even today (image1, below), the long roofs of the warehouses in the foreground as opposed to the river activity, now more tourist than commercial, the profile of the city of Porto, valued for elegance of Luis I Bridge and the Monastery of Serra do Pilar, accentuating the unique character of these goods, included on the World Heritage list that unites Porto and Vila Nova de Gaia, for whose historic center is proposed to extend the Cultural Heritage classification of mankind.

Built to replace the previous "Pênsil Bridge", (1843), the Luis I Bridge, provided the opening of the Republic Avenue which connects to the National Highway Lisbon-Porto and it was built in 1886. It's the second project of Theophile Seyrig and it is unique, even today, because it has two boards, allowing the connection of the margins at the river level and also on a higher plane simultaneously. It serves the town council of Vila Nova de Gaia and Porto which were installed in new buildings at higher points, as a response to the urban expansion, with functional requirements and new architectural interests.

This brings an extension of the urban area, and the convergence of access.

The arrival of the train to Devesas Gare, on the highest plane of Gaia's Old Town, provided the installation of various metallurgical industries, glass and cooperage, associated at the Port wine, and artistic and utilitarian pottery, which marked Vila Nova de Gaia for decades, contributing also to give the space its current configuration.

Today, the Douro margins are joined by those bridges centennial "Louis I" and "Maria Pia", notable examples of iron architecture and the industrial revolution, but also by other important structures such as the "Arrábida Bridge", the largest arch reinforced concrete so far, over the Douro estuary, emblematic work of the engineer Edgar Cardoso, completed in 1963, and the road bridges the "Infante", the "Freixo" and the modern railway bridge "São João".

Gaia History Center: the regeneration challenge

The effort to increase the physical, economic, social and cultural value, has been the major aim of the town council of Vila Nova de Gaia and motivated it to delimit, in 1984 (image4, LM1, near the river), a geographical area surrounding the old towns of Gaia and Vila Nova, and this older core warehouse of the Port wine, so it became the Vila Nova de Gaia Historical Center, with the help of the government protection of some patrimonial elements, which some of these has this classification from the beginning of the century³. As a result of what has been approved and published in the Regulations of

³ Igreja e Claustro do Mosteiro da Serra do Pilar – Decreto (law) de 16 de Junho de 1910 (image4, C3); ZEP, DG, 2ª Série, nº 137, 16/6/1949; Quinta e Paço de Campo-Bello - Decreto 129/77, de 29 de Setembro (image4, C8); Área do Castelo de Gaia - Decreto 29/90 de 17 de Julho (image4, C7); Casa Barbot - Decreto 28/82 de 26 de Fevereiro (image4, C4); Igreja de Santa Marinha - Decreto 2/96 de 6 de Março (image4, C5); Convento de Corpus Christi - Portaria 632/2012, de 31/10 (image4, C6); Luis I Bridge (image4, C2) e Maria Pia Bridge (image4, C1)

the Rehabilitation Plan and Safeguarding of the Historical Center, in 1985, arises a territorial management strategy in order to balance protection that will develop in the following years⁴, until the strengthening of intent in 2009 with the revision of the PDM.

- Municipal Master Plan in order to "enhance the recreational and tourist industry anchored in the unique nature of the assets in presence"⁵.

These measures are justified by the combination of the uniqueness of this area and the threat over the vacant warehouses. The construction of the Dock of Leixões, localized at north of Porto city, which began in 1884, withdrew importance of the Douro Dock for exportation. And the construction of the railway line (1873-78) and the legislation authorizing its use in the transport of wine, withdrew importance to the "rabelo", typical boat of Douro river. But it was the legislation of the 1970's and 1980's, authorizing the export of tankers, containers transported by trucks; the establishment of the rule Warehouse and Customs delegation of Peso da Régua, in Douro Region; improvements in road Douro network and export from the source, and the subsequent relocation of activity, in Vila Nova de Gaia for the Douro Region, the origin of functional and physical problems of Warehouse Area of Port Wine in Vila Nova de Gaia.

The new challenges of the Vila Nova de Gaia city, are serious problems, we are sure. However, with the architectural and urban appreciation, touristically attractive, there are many opportunities where the historical, economic and cultural relationship of river front with Port wine deserves to be safeguarded, leading to an economic, social and environmental development that will safeguard the social and human interests but also to global responsibility in the preservation of a good value that transcends borders.

The "Spirit of the Place"

Currently, the Port Wine diversifies its markets, as part of a trade globalization and the demands of the new times, since, "in the last years of the twentieth century (...) experienced a period of remarkable expansion, marked by some good harvests, by export growth and prices. (...) Worldwide, the Port Wine strengthened its prestigious image, originality and authenticity (...)"⁶

The secular traditions are regarded and reinforced by a constant innovation of technological means and generational renewal producers and winemakers young people, especially the University of Tras-os-Montes and Alto Douro, along with a larger multi-sensory sensitivity and authenticity of "terroir" going beyond the fortified wine and the setting of major international companies in the sector in the Douro Wine Region, driven Center, that will lead

⁴ In 1985, the Preliminary Studies of the PDM - Municipal Master Plan - are prepared by the Urban Planning Office. In 1993, the PDM defines the Historical Center as Operative Unit. In 1997, the Historical Center is classified as Municipal Project and it is created the Urban Rehabilitation Office of Historical.

⁵ Municipality of Vila Nova de Gaia (2009), "Municipal Master Plan," artº 45, p. 28, ed. Município de Vila Nova de Gaia, Vila Nova de Gaia

⁶ PEREIRA, Gaspar Martins, (2003), "Porto, um Vinho com História", in" O Vinho do Porto – Edição comemorativa dos 250 anos da Região Demarcada do Douro", ed. Instituto do Vinho do Porto, Porto, p. 61

to the Municipal Regulations for the Protection and Rehabilitation of the Gaia's Historical Center. In 1986 and 1989, the streets Rua Cândido dos Reis / Rua Guilherme Gomes Fernandes and the Castle of Gaia, and the Escarpment from Monastery Serra do Pilar, respectively, were classified as Recovery Critical and Conversion Urban Area, which classification was extended in 1997 to all the area of Gaia's Old Town, and this status was reinforced in 2014 with the creation of the Rehab Urban Area, applicable law by the tourist attraction and the special Douro landscape classified as a World Heritage Site.

The Port wine, for its authenticity and genuineness, can and must be the guarantor of the revitalization of a region, if it is associated with the regeneration of the consolidated and coherent architectural-cultural urban area that is the warehouse of Port wine in Historical Center of Vila Nova de Gaia, in its complementarity to Porto – World Cultural Heritage.

The occupation of the riverfront as a showcase of the "Product Port" (result of a massive new "living rooms" promotional of individual brands "port", as a detriment of many of the traditional and original spaces (image5, on up), which are equally noble and attractive) should be extended to the entire warehouse, as a repository of living memory and authentic wine sector, where through art, pedagogy, history and traditions, heritage and architecture; the harmonization of knowledge and flavors, customs and traditions, it becomes the tourist and cultural growth of the entire region, as the sap that gives life and promotes the economic, social and territorial sustained.

And it is the conservation of this essence that today presents itself as a challenge. Indeed, since the authorization of the storage on farms of production and exportation from the source, this consistent, consolidated, architecturally rich and unparalleled agglomerate, has several potentially serious conservation and reuse problems, with the gradual abandonment and physical and environmental deterioration. Only the awakening of public authorities for a regeneration policy of cities and historic centres⁷; correct procedures of protection and conservation, presentation and management; an adaptation and harmonious relationship⁸ to contemporary needs, to prevent, enhancing and prolonging in time with the aim of preserving the spirit of the local and of tangible and intangible values of the cultural place⁹ - atmosphere and environments, colors and shades, smells and perfums, visual arts and sensations (image5, bellow, right side) - following some spaces reuse examples which lost their initial function and stayed different activities: restoration, exhibition halls, ateliers of art, design, ballet, hospitality (...), from what resulted in cared for and appreciated interventions, integrating new uses and new materials¹⁰, the

⁷ "Princípios de La Valetta sobre a salvaguarda e gestão das cidades e dos conjuntos urbanos históricos", ICOMOS, La Valetta, Malta, 28 de Novembro de 2011, in LOPES, Flávio, et al, (2014), "Património Cultural – Critérios e normas internacionais de protecção", ed. Edições Caleidoscópico, Casal de Cambra, p.p. 481-494

⁸ "Carta internacional sobre a salvaguarda das cidades históricas", ICOMOS, Washington, DC, 7 a 15 de Outubro de 1987, idem, p.p. 265-268

⁹ "Carta sobre a interpretação e a apresentação de sítios culturais", ICOMOS, Quebec, Canadá, 4 de Outubro de 2008, idem, p.p. 449-456.

¹⁰ "Recomendação sobre a salvaguarda dos conjuntos históricos e da sua função na vida contemporânea", UNESCO, Nairobi, Quênia, 26 de Novembro de 1976, idem, p.p. 207-220.

environment and architectural authenticity of spaces and magical atmosphere that these environments emanate, such as memory and spirit of the place, and they always evoke the integrity of the matrix and indelible fashion to the Port.

As François Guichard, major reference in the study of Porto city and its region, in the past and presente, said:

"(...) The Gaia Warehouse, if it ever is threatened, the reason won't be the competition with the Alto Douro, which until now has been fruitful for both (...)

It's up to us (...) prevent such threats and possible mischaracterization of Gaia Warehouse. But without neglect - on contrary – the improvement of the conditions, often difficult, of life, accommodation, circulation and work (...). Perhaps this would be a part of the necessary response. (...)

It is a unique area in the world today, for its dimension, harmony and unity; for its urban and architectural quality dash (...) It is a jewel with no equal, priceless and it worth taking proper awareness while you can."¹¹



¹¹ GUICHARD, François, (2003) "Os espaços do Vinho do Porto – O Entrepasto de Gaia", in" O Vinho do Porto – Edição comemorativa dos 250 anos da Região Demarcada do Douro", ed. Instituto do Vinho do Porto, Porto, p.p. 27-2.

Image 1: Desenho de Teodoro de Souza Maldonado, 1789 (Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal. <http://purl.pt/4036>) mand Entrepasto do Vinho do Porto, Mosteiro da Serra do Pilar e Cidade do Porto (Departamento de Reabilitação Urbana – Gaiurb, EM,)

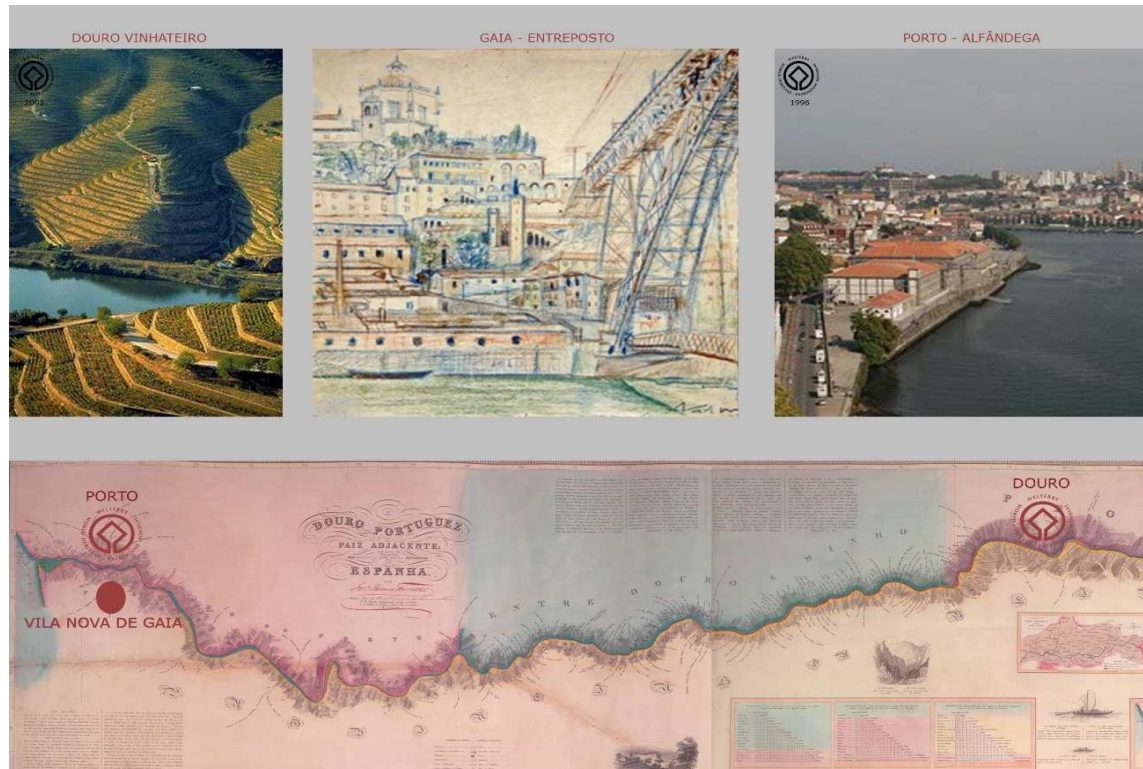


Image 2:

On up, left: Alto Douro – Socalcos de vinha sobre o Rio Douro

(<http://arqnat.webnode.pt/parques-naturais-portugueses/parque-natural-do-douro-internacional>)

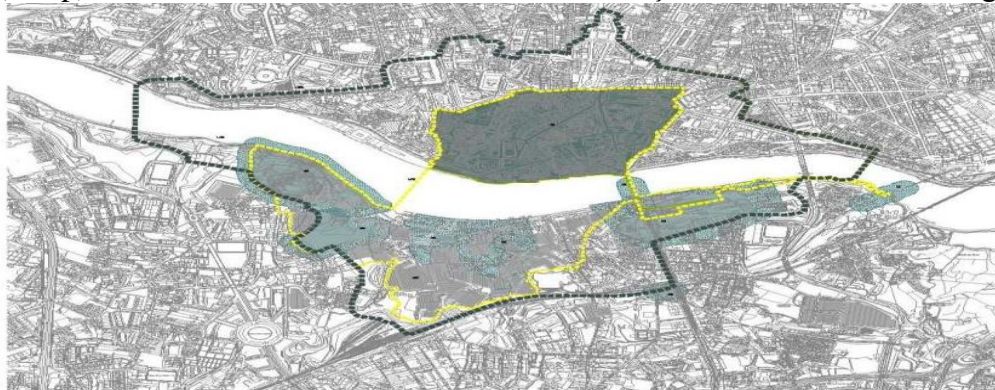
On up, center: Vila Nova de Gaia – Socalcos sobre o Rio Douro – Armazéns de Vinho do Porto (http://obviousmag.org/archives/2012/06/nadir_afonso_-_uma_vida_apos_o_circulo_vermelho.html)

On up, right: Alfândega do Porto, sobre o Rio Douro com Vila Nova de Gaia, ao fundo (http://cidadessurpreendente.blogspot.pt/2009_08_01_archive.html)

Bellow: “Mapa do Douro Portuguez e Paíz adjacente” (Desenho de James Forrester e William Hughes, 1848 Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal – <http://purl.pt/22487>)



Image 3: Rio Douro, Porto e Vila Nova de Gaia – Enteposto do Vinho do Porto
(http://commns.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Portugal_-_View_of_Porto.jpg)
(on up) Ponte Ferroviária “Maria Pia” – 1877 Colecção Particular Manuel Magalhães)



- legenda
- Limite da área classificada como Porto Património Mundial da Unesco
 - ZEP - Zona Especial de Protecção
 - Proposta de extensão da área classificada como Porto Património Mundial da Unesco
 - Caves de vinho do porto
 - Classificado / Área de protecção
- C1 Ponte Maria Pia
 - C2 Ponte Luís I
 - C3 Mosteiro Serra do Pilar
 - C4 Casa Barbot
 - C5 Igreja Paroquial de Santa Marinha
 - C6 Antigo Convento Corpus Christi
 - C7 Área do Castelo de Gaia
 - C8 Paço de Campo Belo

Image 4



Image 5: Armazéns de Vinho do Porto, aspecto exterior Alçados de armazéns de Vinho do Porto Vila Nova de Gaia (Gaiurb, EM – Divisão de Projectos, 2015)
(Bellow right side) Aspecto interior dos armazéns de Vinho do Porto (Caves de Vila Nova de Gaia – Entrepasto do Vinho do Porto) (in Sousa, F., *O Património Cultural da Real Companhia Velha*, Vila Nova de Gaia, 2005)