

TRAVELLING IN THE DOURO VALLEY BY THE PEN OF WRITERS

ITINERARIES ALVES REDOL

VOYAGER DANS LA VALLEE DU DOURO PAR LA PLUME DES ECRIVAINS

ROUTES ALVES REDOL

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SUMMARY

This paper focuses the landscape literary representation, an important asset in tourism development. Two literary itineraries are supported by excerpts from two outstanding 20th Century novels (*Porto Manso*, 1946 and *Horizonte Cerrado*, 1949) written by Alves Redol, a remarkable neorealist Portuguese writer. They describe landscapes of the Douro Valley, the harshness of the natural conditions and the difficult circumstances of life, in the beginning of the last century. The reader/tourist can understand the social, economical and spatial organization of the Douro Valley in that time and compare it with the present. In particular, are stressed the difficulties of the owners of the boats (*rabelos*) used in the transport of the wine from the Douro Valley to the exporting cities Oporto/Vila Nova de Gaia; the difficulties of the small farmers to keep their proprieties and the heroic effort implicated in the terraces construction, whose result is a unique wine and a unique landscape, with high environmental and aesthetical quality, recognized as Cultural Word Heritage (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1046>).

Wine, Gastronomy and Cultural tourism are strategic products of Portugal and recent studies by the author show the need of implementing more focused tourism proposals and creating innovative convergences of interests and actions for Douro Valley development (Lavrador, 2011). The literary itineraries proposed intend to enhance cultural tourism promotion of that remarkable wine region. The construction of a touristic itinerary always implies a landscape diagnosis across many dimensions to create a tailor-made product as follows: a) time - the structure of the itinerary should be flexible; b) target - a differentiated and organized trip; c) specific requirements - motivations of individuals or specific routes. In these particular itineraries excerpts were collected and sorted in a GIS database, as part of the project LITSCAPE.PT, Atlas of the Literary Landscapes of Continental Portugal (<http://paisagensliterarias.ielt.org/>). As a result of this project, a Literary Guide to Portuguese Winegrowing Regions will soon be available on-line.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article a comme sujet la représentation du paysage littéraire, un important atout dans le développement du tourisme. Deux itinéraires littéraires sont présentés établis sur les extraits de deux romans remarquables du 20^{ème} siècle (*Porto Manso*, 1946 et *Horizonte Cerrado*, 1949) écrits par Alves Redol, un remarquable écrivain néoréaliste portugais.

Les extraits littéraires décrivent des paysages de la vallée du Douro, la dureté des conditions naturelles et les circonstances difficiles de la vie, au début du siècle dernier. Le lecteur / touriste peut comprendre l'organisation sociale, économique et spatiale de la vallée du Douro, au début du vingtième siècle et le comparer au présent. En particulier, on puisse reconnaître dans les romans les difficultés rencontrées par les propriétaires des bateaux (*rabelos*) utilisés pour le transport du vin de la vallée du Douro vers les villes exportatrices de Porto et Vila Nova de Gaia, les difficultés des petits agriculteurs de conserver leurs propriétés et l'effort héroïque impliqué dans la construction des terrasses, dont le résultat est un vin et un paysage uniques, avec une qualité environnementale et esthétique élevées, reconnus comme Patrimoine Culturel de l'Humanité (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1046>).

Le Vin, la Gastronomie et le tourisme culturel sont des produits touristiques stratégiques pour le Portugal. Des études récentes de l'auteur reconnaissent la nécessité de mettre en œuvre des propositions plus précises dans le tourisme et de créer une convergence innovante des intérêts et des actions pour le développement de la Vallée du Douro (Lavrador, 2011). Les itinéraires littéraires proposés ici ont comme but de proposer une offre supplémentaire à la promotion du tourisme de cette région viticole remarquable.

En ce qui concerne la méthodologie, la construction d'un itinéraire touristique implique toujours un diagnostic du paysage, impliquant des dimensions matérielles et immatérielles pour créer un produit sur mesure en ce qui concerne: a) le temps - la structure de l'itinéraire doit être souple; b) cible - un voyage organisé et différencié ; c) les exigences spécifiques - les motivations des individus ou des itinéraires spécifiques. Dans ces itinéraires particuliers des extraits littéraires ont été collectés et triés dans une base de données SIG, à l'intérieur du LITSCAPE.PT projet, Atlas des Paysages littéraires du Portugal Continental (<http://paisagensliterarias.ielt.org/>). À l'issue de ce projet, un guide littéraire pour les régions viticoles portugaises devrait être disponible dans un futur site web.

Mots-clés: itinéraires, paysage, littérature, tourisme, Douro

Keywords: itineraries, landscape, literature, tourism, Douro Region

INTRODUCTION

The main propose of this work is to draw attention to the importance of landscape literary representations in promoting (eno)tourism. Through the writers, a more comprehensive understanding of landscapes is achieved and richer tourism experiences emerge, which can be enhanced with a technical guide. The paper targets the construction of two itineraries¹ based on excerpts from two remarkable books by the great Portuguese neorealist writer Alves Redol - *Porto Manso* and *Horizonte Cerrado*, as they are complementary regarding the Douro region, Portugal. The reader and tourist can gain an understanding of the social, economic and spatial arrangement of the Douro Valley in the first part of the XX century and compare it with the present. The novel *Porto Manso* stressed the difficulties of boat owners (*rabelos*) used in the transport of the wine from the Douro Valley to the exporting cities Oporto/Vila Nova de Gaia. Other perspectives of the Douro are represented in the novel *Horizonte Cerrado*, one of the three Port Wine Cycle books reporting the difficult living conditions of small landowners of the sub region Cima Corgo, represented by the *Teimas* family and their fight against both the difficult natural conditions and interests of major landowners and companies. The books also allow understanding of the heroic efforts to construct terraces, resulting in a unique landscape and wine with high environmental and aesthetic quality, which is now recognized as Cultural World Heritage (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1046>).

In the Douro, there is still a lack of connection between landscape (cultural and natural values) and its economic potential. This has resulted in restrictions to both wine and tourism investments, as well as access difficulties because of the steep terrain slopes and lack of good communication routes (Bianchi-de-Aguiar, 2000). Conversely, the Wine, Gastronomy and Cultural Touring are strategic Portuguese tourism products and important in the multifunctional development of rural regions, including wine districts (<http://www.turismodeportugal.pt>). It also lacks investment in more diverse tourism, including cultural itineraries to exploit enotourism and rural tourism that is frequently multifaceted (Kastenholz, 2010). In fact, using literary texts and authors to guide physical and/or virtual wandering among the vineyards and River Douro and its tributaries, it is possible to offer compelling and innovative experiences of well-being and learning that could increase tourist demand and pleasure for visiting the Douro region.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Tourism itineraries presented here are drawn from literary excerpts collected and sorted in a GIS database, as part of the project LITSCAPE.PT, Atlas of the Literary Landscapes of Continental Portugal (<http://paisagensliterarias.ielt.org/>). This project focuses on literary works concerning Portuguese landscapes from the XIX century to the present. The selected literary excerpts reflect a particular approach to landscapes, namely landscape character and socio-economic systems, both important in the understanding of a specific landscape (Cavaco, 1994; Amin and Thrift, 1994; Massey and Jets, 1995; Cosgrove, 1998; Antrop, 2005; Alumäe *et al.*, 2003; Urbanc, 2007; Gaspar, 1993).

The project LITSCAPE.PT involves three levels of collaborators: a) readers that compile and classify the excerpts; b) researchers, who contribute to the compilation process, supervise the readings and are responsible for *ecocritical* analysis – the *ecocriticism* (Rueckert, 1978) or *ecopoetics* (Hölderlin, Heidegger, *in* Peters and Irwin, 2002; Pineda Muñoz, 2004; Tchouang-Tseu, *in* Graziani, 2006). This is the theoretical base of the project, whose main objective is to achieve a bigger reader commitment to the environment by using an interdisciplinary framework between science, philosophy and art to analyse the landscapes represented in literary texts (Buell, 1999); c) “web designers”, involved in the implementation and maintenance of databases and the interactive website of literary landscapes. Selected excerpts are recorded in a database, geo-referenced and linked with territorial descriptors (relief, land use, heritage components, socio-economic activities and ecological components).

To construct tourist itineraries, specific tasks and conditions are necessary, namely the improvement of a landscape diagnosis involving material and immaterial dimensions to create a tailor-made product including: a) time - the structure of the itinerary should be flexible; b) target - a differentiated and organized trip; c) specific requirements – individual motivation or specific routes. Also important are territorial, social and economic conditions, namely the existence of: a) territorial coherence and contiguity; b) cooperative networks between social actors, companies and official agencies. Both exist in the Douro, where even the last must be reinforced, not only to highlight tourism initiatives, but to preserve particular landmarks (namely the terraces) and landscape diversity, which are threatened by new mechanised systems and requirements of global markets (Lavrador, 2011).

¹ These itineraries can be implemented separately or in conjugation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The two itineraries offer different experiences for those who want to better understand the construction, variety and evolution of the Douro landscapes. In fact, the novels used in the itinerary preparation are complementary as they explore different sub regions (Lower Corgo/ Upper Corgo) with particular landscape character and different environments: river/water/boats and hills/vineyards/villages/cellars/*quintas* (large estates). The cultural itinerary “Route of the *rabelos* boats”² is based on the renamed novel of Alves Redol, “Porto Manso” (Redol, 1946), which evokes the harshness of the work of River Douro’s boatmen transporting Port wine barrels. The book recalls the Douro River before dam construction, a very stormy river and the main regional transportation. Navigation was between Cachão da Valeira³ and Vila Nova de Gaia/Oporto, the exporting centre of the *vinho fino*, branded Porto, the universally renowned name of this remarkable Portuguese wine. Moral and religious values can be identified through this fictional work, which highlights economic interests and social conflicts. The role of technology and innovation can also be understood. With railway construction and arrival of the train, people changed in response to contact with new values from the city of Oporto and from those who entered Douro from beyond the Portuguese frontiers. With the arrival of the train and the progressive abandonment of river transport, landscape and its perception also changed: new sounds, new perspectives of looking, less movement of people and boats on the river, abandonment of riverside harbors recently renovated with new functions. The proposed itinerary unfolds 42km along the left side of the Douro River (Fig.1), between the city of Peso da Régua and the riverside village of Porto Manso (parish of Ribadouro, Baião). At all stops excerpts should be read which depict visit locations in order to compare: past landscapes with the present, different ways of life of the local population, local symbols and costumes still present or having disappeared.

The cultural itinerary “Route of Port Wine” is based on the renamed novel of Alves Redol, “Horizonte Cerrado” (Redol, 1949). This conjures places, rural practices and costumes associated with vineyards in the Upper Corgo, the more terraced and dryer sub region of the Douro Valley and major Porto Wine production terrain. The novel’s family protagonists live in the village of Rio Torto, close to S. João da Pesqueira (parish centre) in the left merge of the Douro River, where the proposed itinerary begins. The novel reports particularities of landscape, vineyards and grape varieties and indicates work in the vineyard throughout the year (armhole, pruning, harvest, treading grapes, etc.) that could be used to exploit this cultural route. The book also refers patrimonial values, material (churches, *quintas*, in particular Roeda, Romaneira and Malheiro in the right merge of the Douro River) and material interest to enrich the visit (fairs and religious festivals, working songs, carnival traditions, etc.). Other particulars of the life and jobs of those who work in the vineyards are mentioned in the novel, for example, the fact that pruning in Rio Torto was done by men (*samartinheiros*) who came from a distance of 55km from the village of Mesão Frio, downstream of the city of Peso da Régua. Further activities referred to by the author as important leisure hobbies or working tricks for inhabitants and visitors, can be implemented in tourism itineraries, namely: a) hunting rabbit or turtledove in the villages of Alto das Montanhas, Caedo and Cruz de Ventozelo; b) riding across paths and hills; c) rides on bullock carts. The proposed itinerary unfolds 47km (Fig.2) beginning in the village of Rio Torto and ending in the city of Peso da Régua. All stops and proposed activities should be followed by reading the inspiring novel excerpt in order to discover and better recognize landscape particularities, local activities and population ways of life from a century ago, and look to understand their evolution.

CONCLUSIONS;

Collaboration in the project *Atlas of Literary Landscapes of Continental Portugal* developed in the IELT, FSCH, New University of Lisbon, allows a space for reflection centred on literature and landscapes. Excerpts of literary novels are compiled and classified in GIS project databases. Within the project framework, as per examples presented here, are cultural itineraries aimed at constructing a (Eno)Tourism Guide. They are inspired and drawn from two realistic novels of Alves Redol – “Horizonte Cerrado” and “Porto Manso” and give a historical picture of the Douro Region. These novels illustrate local lifestyles, landscape values, particulars and difficulties of the lives of small landowners and boat owners, specifics of vineyard cultivation and the Port wine trade during the first half of the XX century. Through these itineraries, tourists and visitors can increase their knowledge of the region’s history, experience the terrain and perceive landscapes using different means of transport, understand vineyard construction and other heritage values, taste wines and traditional gastronomy. These experiences are important to: increase respect for the Douro region; promote more awareness in attitudes and behaviors in defense of aesthetic quality and landscape sustainability; preserve landmarks and protect regional identity; and better promote the wines from this exceptional region in the global market (Lavrador, 2011).

² *Rabelo* – Is the name of a type of boat adapted to the River Douro navigation and used in the Porto wine transportation, before the railway and the roads are developed in the region.

³ Cachão da Valeira – rocky outcrop of the eastern side of the Upper Corgo subregion, which prevented the progression of the boats upstream, until its removal, in the reign of Queen Maria I.

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Figure 1- The itinerary: “Route of the *Rabelos* boats”, Douro (Portugal)

Figure 1- L’itinéraire: “Route des bateaux *Rabelos*”, Douro (Portugal)

1. **Peso da Régua** – maps landscape information and excerpts provided to tourists/visitors.
2. **Samodães** – exercise of landscape reading, landscape technical interpretations and taste in *Aqua Pura* Douro Valley.
3. **Resende/River Park (Porto de Rei)** – A boat ride and/or experience River Park equipment (beach, piscine, picnic area, coffee shop).
4. **Caldas de Aregos** – visit new village attractions (spa, marine, terrace restaurant).
5. **Paço** – remark of the landscape differences in the Lower Corgo sub region, namely the most accurate presence of the forest and granite, and its implication for the local economy, including boat construction.
6. **Porto Antigo and Porto Manso** – histories about skippers and their social role, other ancient river jobs, costumes and traditions at the beginning of the XX century.
7. **Mosteirô (railway station)** - role of the train as an agent of change.



Figure 2- The itinerary: “Route of Port Wine”, Douro (Portugal)

Figure 2- L’itinéraire: “Route du Vin du Port”, Douro (Portugal)

1. **Rio Torto** – Experience in the vineyards, with climbing and landscape enjoyment from the highest point of a hill. Maps of the itinerary and landscape information should be provided to tourists/visitors as well as literary excerpts for reading.
2. **São João da Pesqueira** – visit to the village and discovering its rich patrimony: churches, main houses, Jewish houses, etc.
3. **Ervedosa do Douro** – exercise of landscape reading and its confrontation with author descriptions based on excerpts that mentioned the existence of fields of rye in the region during the first half of the XX century. This exercise should be supported by technical interpretation.
4. **Cruz de Ventozelo** – riding or oxcart ride (for those who stay more than a day in the region, it could be add a hunting experience).
5. **Pinhão** – Visit the museum and railway station, visit local cellars and Port Wine shops and taste a traditional meal.
6. **Alijó** – Technical visits to the Quinta da Romaneira, including cellars with wine tastings and a walk in the vineyards.
7. **Peso da Régua** – Douro River boat ride.