Team building Activity (09/04/18)
Medieval Porto With A Passionate Historian
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The City of Porto

The history of Porto dates back to around 300 BC with Proto-Celtic and Celtic people being the first known inhabitants. Ruins of that period have been discovered in several areas. During the Roman occupation of the Iberian Peninsula the city developed as an important commercial port, primarily in the trade between *Olissipona* (Lisbon) and *Bracara Augusta* (Braga).

Porto fell under the control of the Moors during the invasion of the Iberian Peninsula in 711. In 868, Vímara Peres, an Asturian count from Gallaecia, and a vassal of the King of Asturias, Léon and Galicia, Alfonso III, was sent to reconquer and secure the lands from the Moors. This included the area from the Minho to the Douro River: the settlement of *Portus Cale* and the area that is known as Vila Nova de Gaia. Portus Cale, later referred to as Portucale, was the origin for the modern name of Portugal. In 868, Count Vímara Peres established the County of Portugal (*Condado de Portucale / Condado Portucalense*) after reconquering the region north of Douro.

In 1387, Porto was the site of the marriage of John I of Portugal and Philippa of Lancaster, daughter of John of Gaunt; this symbolized a long-standing military alliance between Portugal and England. In the 14th and the 15th centuries, Porto's shipyards contributed to the development of Portuguese shipbuilding. It was also from the port of Porto that, in 1415, Prince Henry the Navigator (son of John, the First) embarked on the conquest of Ceuta, in northern Morocco. This expedition was followed by navigation and exploration along the western coast of Africa, initiating the Portuguese Age of Discovery.

Wine produced in the Douro valley, was already in the 13th century transported to Porto by boats). In 1703, the Methuen Treaty established the trade relations between Portugal and England. In 1717, a first English trading post was established in Porto. The production of Port Wine then gradually passed into the hands of a few English firms. To counter this English dominance, Prime Minister Marquis of Pombal established a Portuguese factory receiving the monopoly of the wines from the Douro valley. He demarcated the region for production of port, to ensure the wine's quality; this was the first attempt to control wine quality and production in Europe.
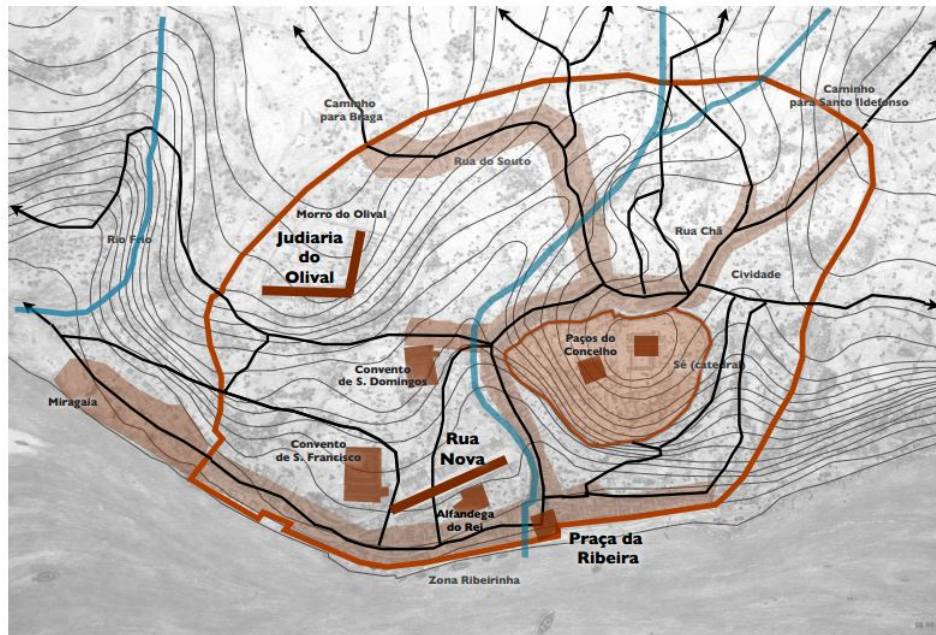
Between 1732 and 1763, Italian architect Nicolau Nasoni designed a baroque church with a tower that became its architectural and visual icon: the Torre dos Clérigos (Clerics' Tower). During the 18th and 19th centuries the city became an important industrial center and saw its size and population increase.

The invasion of the Napoleonic troops in Portugal under Marshall Soult also brought war to the city of Porto. On 29 March 1809, as the population fled from the advancing French troops and tried to cross the river Douro over the *Ponte das Barcas* (a pontoon bridge), the bridge collapsed under the weight. This event is still remembered by a plate at the Ponte D. Luis I. The French army was rooted out of Porto by Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington, when his Anglo-Portuguese Army crossed the Douro river from the Mosteiro da Serra do Pilar (a former convent) in a brilliant daylight coup de main, using wine barges to transport the troops, so outflanking the French Army.

On 24 August 1820, a liberal revolution occurred, quickly spreading without resistance to the rest of the country. In 1822, a liberal constitution was accepted, partly through the efforts of the liberal assembly of Porto (Junta do Porto). When Miguel I of Portugal took the Portuguese throne in 1828, he rejected this constitution and reigned as an absolutist monarch. A Civil War was then fought from 1828 to 1834 between those supporting Constitutionalism, and those opposed to this change, keen on near-absolutism and led by D. Miguel. Porto rebelled again and had to undergo a siege of eighteen months between 1832 and 1833 by the absolutist army. Porto is also called "Cidade

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Invicta" (English: Unvanquished City) after successfully resisting this siege. After the abdication of King Miguel, the liberal constitution was re-established.

Known as the city of bridges, Porto built its first permanent bridge, the *Ponte das Barcas* (a pontoon bridge), in 1806. Three years later, it collapsed under the weight of thousands of fugitives from the French Invasions during the Peninsular War, causing the death of many people. It was replaced by the Ponte D. Maria II, usually known as *Ponte Pênsil* (suspended bridge), built between 1841–43; only its supporting pylons have remained.

The *Ponte D. Maria*, a railway bridge, was inaugurated on 4 November of that same year; it was considered a feat of wrought iron engineering and was designed by Gustave Eiffel, notable for his Parisian tower. The later Ponte Dom Luís I replaced the aforementioned Ponte Pênsil. This last bridge was made by Teophile Seyrig, a former partner of Eiffel. Seyrig won a governmental competition that took place in 1879. Building began in 1881 and the bridge was opened to the public on 31 October 1886.

A higher learning institution in nautical sciences (Aula de Náutica, 1762) and a stock exchange (Bolsa do Porto, 1834) were established in the city, but were discontinued later.

Unrest by Republicans led to the first revolt against the monarchy in Porto on 31 January 1891. This resulted ultimately in the overthrow of the monarchy and proclamation of the republic by the 5 October 1910 revolution.

On 19 January 1919, forces favorable to the restoration of the Monarchy launched in Porto a counter-revolution known as Monarchy of the North. During this time, Porto was the capital of the restored kingdom, as the movement was contained to the north. The monarchy was deposed less than a month later and no other monarchist revolution in Portugal happened again.

The historic center of Porto was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1996. The World Heritage Site is defined in two concentric zones; the "Protected area", and within it the "Classified area". The Classified area comprises the medieval borough located inside the 14th-century gothic wall.