

WEB OF KNOWLEDGE

A LOOK INTO THE PAST,
EMBRACING THE FUTURE

Editors

Sara Albuquerque

Teresa Ferreira

Maria de Fátima Nunes

Ana Cardoso de Matos

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Web of Knowledge | A Look into the Past, Embracing the Future

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Sara Albuquerque, Teresa Ferreira, Maria de Fátima Nunes, Ana Cardoso de Matos & António Candeias

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Table of contents

<i>Preface</i>	VI
<i>Conference opening paper</i>	
Fields of Rome. Lusitania, the Mediterranean connectivity, the Roman Empire and the loss of knowledge. <i>A. Carneiro</i>	8
School objects and their contribution to dance education <i>J. Fernandes</i>	12
Cecchetti Diagram: A new present <i>V. Nascimento</i>	16
Understanding a nation's culture through the magazine <i>A Construção Moderna</i> <i>S. Aleixo & P. S. Faustino</i>	20
1920's economic housing in the magazine <i>A Arquitectura Portuguesa</i> <i>S. Aleixo & A. Brancas</i>	24
Mediation to access cultural heritage information: Portugal and Brazil (2006-2016) <i>L. C. Borges, C.V. Freitas, P. Almeida & S. Cardoso</i>	28
Law change and public discussion: from C-section to natural birth in Brazil, a case study <i>R. Queiroz, R. Boschi & J. F. Erdelyi</i>	32
Science et Vie and the Genesis of the Space Race <i>Luís Pereira, Isabel Malaquias & Vítor Bonifácio</i>	36
Under giants: technical challenges and scientific accuracy in exhibits <i>M. G. Soler; M. F. Nunes & M.M. Lopes</i>	40
Digital information and communication technologies: culturalism, literacy, and empowerment in pedagogical practices and in teachers' training of elementary education <i>G. Carneiro, P. Vieira & L. Pesce</i>	45
Building Knowledge from the heart. History of Emotions contribute for History of Education. The love for science in Teachers of High School San Isidro (1835-1900) <i>M. Zozaya-Montes</i>	48
Notes about the history, architecture, and heritage in the railway station of Almería (1892-2017) <i>D. Cuellar & A. Martinez-Corral</i>	52
Philosophical consequences from the Turing Test Undecidability <i>P. Castro</i>	56
IoT, user's information and ethics or who ate my data? <i>K. Luz & C. Gottschalg-Duque</i>	60
The Portuguese schools of engineers in Lisbon and Porto: continuity and discontinuity of the models and the creation of the national and international networks <i>Ana Cardoso de Matos & Maria da Luz Sampaio</i>	65
The legacy of Fotokemika factory as analog photographic world heritage <i>Nevena Ilic, Ana Cardoso de Matos & Teresa Ferreira</i>	70
Photographic ex-votos. Preservation questions on image collections in religious buildings <i>M. Trindade, A. Nogueira Alves, P. Simões Rodrigues & T. Ferreira</i>	74

Memory recaptured in a small community – Preserving retouched photographic negatives, discussing visual culture <i>Catarina Cortes Pereira, Laura Castro, Carolina Barata & Margarita San Andrés</i>	78
ARCAer Project. Conservation and analysis of antique ensembles of reliquaries. <i>Diana Cunha, Alexandre Nobre Pais, Carolina Barata, Nuno Camarneiro, António Candeias, Teresa Ferreira & Sara Valadas</i>	82
Sculpture, archaeology and museums: contemporary transfigurations and mediations <i>S. Navarro</i>	87
Epistemologies of Invisibility: body and art, and the writing of research <i>S. Passos</i>	91
Intervening in the built heritage: a critical analysis of intervention guidelines at the Hotel da Oliveira in Guimarães <i>L. F. Ghignatti</i>	95
Two seismological approaches to the Benavente earthquake (1909): from the network of citizens to the network of instruments <i>J. Ferreira</i>	100
The Botanic Garden of the University of Coimbra as a Complex Information System <i>A. M. D. Silva, M. B. Marques, M. T. Gonçalves & A. C. Gouveia</i>	105
Cabinet of Curiosities – Pickstone’s Ways of Knowing and the Natural History of Climate Change Exhibition in Portugal and Spain <i>N. N. Melo</i>	109
Looking to the future in 17 th and 18 th century Portugal: Luís Serrão Pimentel, his descendants and their library <i>A. F. Conde</i>	113
The building up of an azulejoteca and a digital database on azulejos <i>M. A. Antunes, J. M. Mimoso, M. L. Esteves & A. N. Pais</i>	117
Backstage of a new archaeology – ‘Invisible’ institutions in the 60s <i>C. Martins</i>	121
Translation and Visibility in scientific communication in multilingual context <i>M. Passini</i>	125
Analytical and microbiological study of two 19th century ambrotypes <i>M. Nunes, C. Miguel, A. T. Caldeira & T. Ferreira</i>	129
Damages caused by pressure sensitive tapes on paper artwork from the early 20th century <i>A. Machado, E. Vieira, G. Fuente, P. Rodrigues & T. Ferreira</i>	134
FBAUL Virtual Print Room <i>Alberto Faria</i>	138
Unveiling the simulacri corpus sanctae. The case study of Saint Aurelius Martyr (Oporto, Portugal) <i>J. Palmeirão, T. Ferreira, J. F. Afonso & E. Vieira</i>	141
Working in a global network. History and Digital Humanities seminars between UCLM & CSIC (Spain) <i>F. Fernández Izquierdo, F.J. Moreno Díaz del Campo & D. Martín López</i>	145
Teenagers Living Lab in Alvalade neighbourhood, Lisbon. A network for co-creating knowledge on spatial needs <i>Solipa Batista, C. Smaniotto Costa, I. Almeida & M. Menezes</i>	149
Authors' Addresses	152

Preface

The International Multidisciplinary Congress - *Web of Knowledge: A look into the Past, embracing the Future* was held by IHC-CEHFCi, HERCULES Laboratory and CIDEHUS, University of Évora and took place in Évora, Portugal, from 17 to 19 May 2018.¹

The Congress brought together researchers and scientists from different backgrounds intersecting the Exact Sciences with the Social Sciences revealing the visible and invisible networks. By fostering the exchange of knowledge and experiences in the study of the past, the Congress laid the framework for the present day science on which to map the future *Web of Knowledge*.

A high-quality scientific programme was prepared, joining together experts from different fields covering a wide range of topics from Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities to Science and Technology. As a result of the quality of the panels and debates, the Organizing Committee decided to publish a digital and open access volume with blind peer-reviewed papers. This volume publishes a total of thirty-five contributions which reflect the innovative and multidisciplinary research occurring at the moment in different fields of knowledge, promoting visibility and networks of knowledge.

Sara Albuquerque, Teresa Ferreira, Maria de Fátima Nunes, Ana Cardoso de Matos & António Candeias (eds.). 2019

¹ <http://www.wok.uevora.pt/>

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Understanding a nation's culture through the magazine *A Construção Moderna*

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PhD by Oxford Brookes University (UK); researcher (CHAM-SLHI, FCSH-UNL and IHC); Professor (DArq, Évora University, Portugal)

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ABSTRACT: The study of the most relevant periodic magazines of the 20th century is a significant project carried out by the project RIC - *Revistas de Ideias e Cultura* (Magazines of Ideas and Culture), with the challenging aim of providing access to the entire collections of the most significant Portuguese dedicated publications. Acknowledged by the editorial board as an important source of ideas and culture, the architecture team is dedicated to exploring concepts, understand modern perceptions and expressions of the art of designing and building, and identify technical developments in the construction of our architectural legacy. The first Portuguese magazine dedicated to architecture, *A Construção Moderna*, is the starting project, at a work in progress stage, this paper addresses the project, the magazine significance and the research methodology design.

1. THE RIC PROJECT

The project RIC - *Revistas de Ideias e Cultura* – (Magazines of Ideas and Culture) aims to provide access to complete collections of periodic publications of the 20th century that discussed ideas and cultural issues. To achieve this aim, a judicious selection of the most relevant has been conducted. The online database, with easy access to search complete collections through specific indexes (<http://www.ric.slhi.pt/>) has been considered of great value to research. In addition, the *Magasin* offers further relevant documents related to each one of the magazines. The open access to the most relevant Portuguese cultural and architectural movements' magazines from the 20th century offers the possibility to study them, which may induce new research interests.

A Construção Moderna (Fig. 1), the first architecture magazine selected by the RIC, is the first publication dedicated to architecture in Portugal, printed between 1900 and 1919. Providing opinion articles on issues such as architecture, construction, arts, history, materials, engineering and cultural events, the study of these contents can shed some light on the modern ideas that shaped the socio-cultural atmosphere of an era (Mesquita, 2011). Other historically important magazines were published in the first half of the 20th century, such as: *A Architectura Portuguesa* (1908-1929); *Arquitectura* (1927-1936); *Arquitectura Portuguesa, cerâmica e edificação – Reunidas* (1936-1951); and *Revista Oficial do Sindicato Nacional dos Arquitectos* (1936-1942).



Figure 1. Front page. In *A Construção Moderna*, Year 1, 1900.

The team aims to display the architectural research potential of the developed tool, which may support new research questions and contribute to developing further knowledge on culture and architecture in Portugal, in the 20th century.

2. A CONSTRUÇÃO MODERNA

The magazine *A Construção Moderna* was issued between February 1st, 1900 (Fig. 2) and July 25th, 1919, and published every two weeks in a total of 542 issues. The magazine's editorial board was composed by: the typographer Nuno Colares (1850-1928), the engineer José Maria Mello de Mattos (1856-1915) and the architect Rosendo Garcia de Araújo Carvalheira (1864-1919), which reveals an understanding of the link between technical and artistic knowledge in construction in the 1900's (Mesquita, 2011). *A Construção Moderna* has been acknowledged as a pioneer experience and a significant contribution to the architectural culture at the beginning of the modernity (Nunes, 2011).

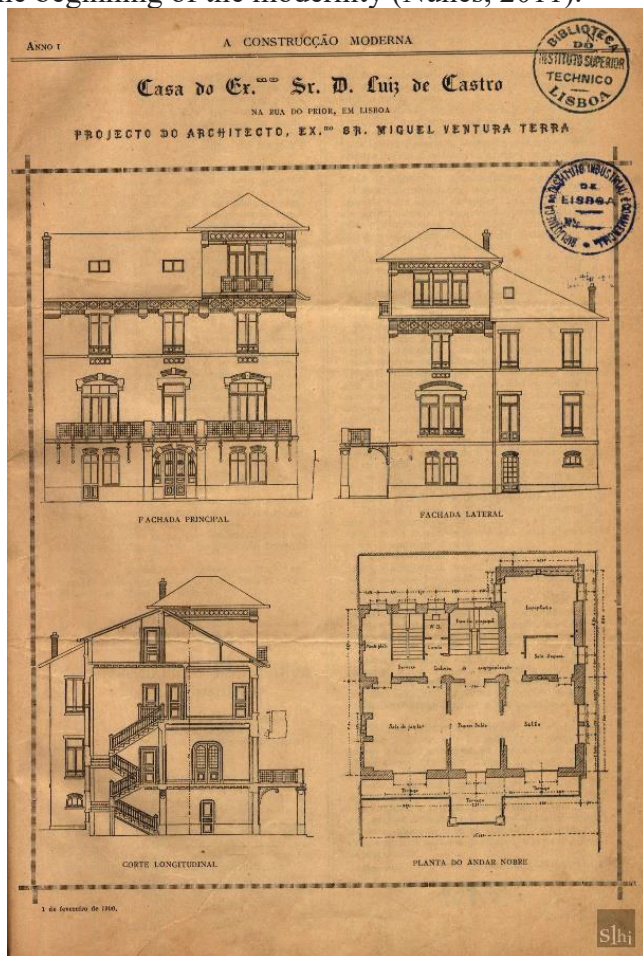


Figure 2. The first architecture project to be published. In *A Construção Moderna*, February 1900, n.º1, p. 1.

In its first issue the editorial team clearly stated their aims: to fill a gap in the dissemination of art and techniques in the construction field, opened to international events by addressing aesthetic, technical and scientific knowledge; by disseminating works of art; by promoting the multidisciplinary debates in times of transformation imposed by industrial civilization; by contributing to the definition of competences and attributions of the various professional groups linked to construction; and finally by considering decorative arts relevant to modern times.

A Construção Moderna addressed multidisciplinary discussions regarding not just construction and decorative arts (Fig. 3), but also a wide range of themes, from fine arts and architecture history, sanitary and hygienic needs, and technical developments, from transportation to electrical novelties. This brought to the interested professionals a range of new materials and construction systems that were being developed in Portugal and abroad. Finally, it informed the readers about conferences and exhibitions related to modern construction. These are the reasons why Nunes (2011) has considered that the magazine *A Construção Moderna* introduced in Portugal the modern architecture.



Figure 3. An article of applied arts. In *A Construção Moderna*, March 1903, n.º89, p. 36.

3. WORK IN PROGRESS

The main objective of this project is to make publicly available this important part of Portuguese culture by creating an accessible and intuitive way to use a large database, enabling the correlation of information within each magazine and with other subject magazines included in *RIC* project, and already available (such as the magazine *A Águia*, available in http://ric.slhi.pt/A_Aguia/revista).

The aim to provide access to the scanned magazines' pages but also to a search engine online requires an extensive work of reading, identification and contextualization of the themes addressed in the

published articles. The gathered information from each magazine, as part of the database, allows the correlation between each one of the existing indexes. This creates the possibility to create maps of ideas, history and culture of the century in study and particular of the architecture development at the time.

3.1. Methodology

Following the *RIC* guidelines, the qualitative methodology designed for *A Construção Moderna* (Fig. 4) follows a sequential order: to thoroughly read each issue, identifying the main topics, and the writing of a brief description of the topic(s) presented in each article. The database provides six fields: authors, subjects, concepts, quoted names, quoted works and, finally, geographical locations (Fig. 5). All this information is to be confirmed in the second reading of each article, with special attention given to the subjects and concepts, as they derive from the central theme. The biographical information on the authors is checked in the Dictionary of Portuguese architects written by Pedreirinho (2017). After this identification, the gathered data is inserted in the database fields, in a dedicated record for every single article. Finally, all the information is analysed and reviewed by the architecture team of the *RIC* project.

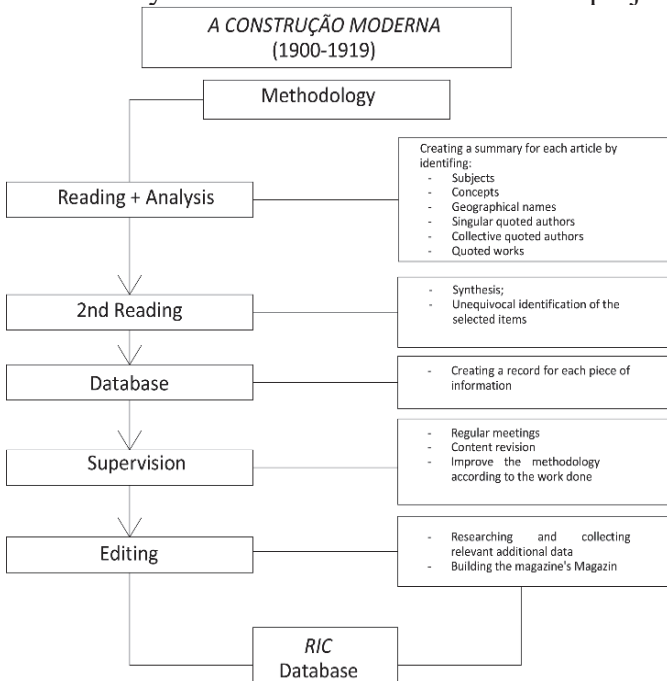


Figure 4. *A Construção Moderna*: methodology designed according to *RIC* guidelines.

3.2. Preliminary findings

The ongoing work is starting to highlight a group of recurrent topics in the issues read so far (170 in a total of 542), such as architecture projects, technical discussions related to construction and urban infrastructures, and arts, such as applied arts, literary works, theatre and international exhibitions.

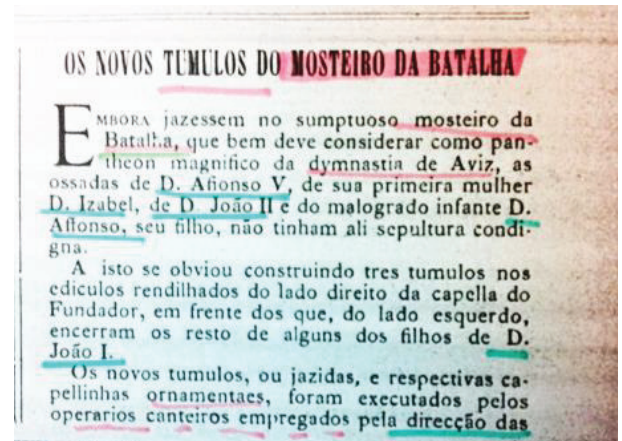
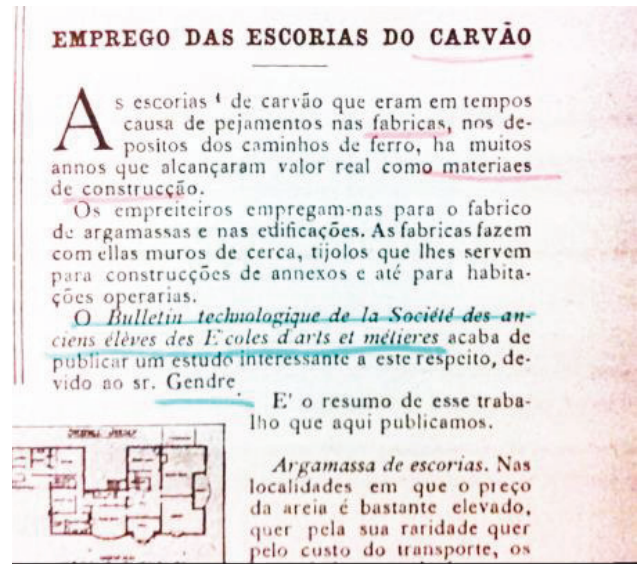


Figure 5. A qualitative approach to the magazine contents. In *A Construção Moderna*. Top image: September 1902, n.º70, p. 117; Bottom image: October 1902, n.º73, p. 132.

In the magazine *A Construção Moderna*, articles about architecture published what is now considered historic references, regarding new programs and typologies, in addition to domestic architecture. They also published projects for public buildings such as commercial and finance houses (warehouses, banking buildings, cafes, Fig. 6), healthcare facilities (hospitals, sanatoriums, asylums), school buildings and industrial schools, leisure spaces (theatres, casinos) and industrial facilities (manufacturing units). Technical articles disseminated knowledge that contributed to the material and technical progress of the country, introducing new materials and construction processes. Urbanism, promoted in

opinion articles, regarding hygiene and health in the public space, expressing the problems faced in the daily life. Articles on applied Arts, discussed the Academism, Art Nouveau, Gothic Revival and Eclecticism. The debate on monumental heritage and its safeguard has been found to be present in several issues (Fig. 7) offering an international perspective on the topic. The legislation was another subject published in this magazine namely by discussing Building Regulations.



Figure 6 Architecture and construction themes: private house. In *A Construcção Moderna*, March 1903, n.º 90, pp. 43.

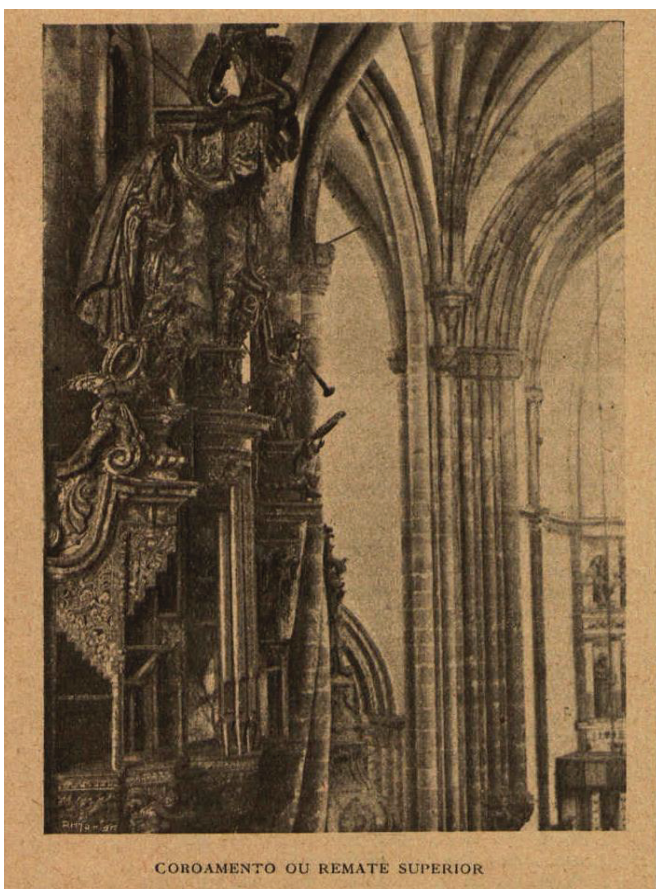


Figure 7. Heritage and safeguard discussions. In *A Construcção Moderna*, August 1902, n.º 68, p. LIII.

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Due to the fact that the first architecture magazine in Portugal was *A Construcção Moderna*, it will be the first to be made available on RIC's website. The publishing of technical and cultural content at the beginning of the 20th century has been recognized as of cultural relevance in broad spreading knowledge on construction practices while simultaneously aiming to end the national isolation regarding the developed European scene (Mesquita, 2011).

The online access to these records, along with a search engine that provides tools to question the database, will contribute for a thorough understanding of the subjects and concepts discussed in this magazine. Although *A Construcção Moderna* is already considered an indispensable source of knowledge for the study of the early 20th century architecture and construction issues, the availability of this tool will undoubtedly unveil new lines of inquiry, new research questions and it will, consequently, contribute to future research on culture and architecture in Portugal.

5. NOTES

The editorial board for the magazine *A Construcção Moderna* is composed by the director of the RIC and curator Luís Andrade; published by *Seminário Livre de História das Ideias* and *Fundação Mário Soares*; edited by the architecture team with Sofia Aleixo and Luís Andrade; with executive edition by Pedro Lisboa; and the descriptors Sofia Aleixo and Patrícia Faustino.

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