

FOREWORD

Traditional Western historiography divided History (and Prehistory) in successive periods and subperiods, separated by time intervals that constitute what was collectively dubbed as *Transitions*. In other words, the *continuum* of History was divided; this would seemingly entail that there was a rupture that followed a long period of continuity. But, in fact, this apparent rupture is nothing more than a slow process of historical change – one that oftentimes spans the entirety of a century or even of a millennium. History and Archaeology are fields that can identify signs and spaces, materialities and territories, elements that herald the ensuing cultural change – *Worlds of Transition* – which express the flow of the historical process. It was precisely this subject – these *Worlds of Transition* – that was at the heart of this specific Session of the *Genius Loci* International Congress.

There were a great number of contributions submitted to be part of the Session; papers which cover a wide range of subjects in many fields of knowledge, framed in various geographies and in numerous chronologies – the products of which are now compiled and published in this very section.

The first two papers present a brief synthesis of the issues associated with the “world of death”. The first of the two discourses on the issue of peninsular necropolises, from the 5th to the 8th centuries C.E., demonstrating the continuity of previous practices, a reflection of mental assumptions associated with the pagan world, along with a gradual imposition of new conceptions and symbologies of Christian origin and the insertion of objects associated with the accoutrements and adornments of the so-called “barbarian” peoples. The second paper concerns the High Mediaeval Period, specifically the process that was the *Reconquista* in the southern region of the Douro river between the 8th and 11th centuries, based on the analysis of the sepulchres excavated within the rocks and its position in the context of the dynamics of the occupation of the aforementioned territory.

The third study is framed in “historical anthropology” and approaches, in a reflective manner, the practices related to devotion, embodied by the *alminhas* (small wayside shrines, oftentimes containing images depicted in tilework, dedicated to/

representing/invoking the souls in Purgatory), placed on streets, roads and near church altars in Portugal. Grounded on a comparative analysis, the essay conjugates historical and ethnographical sources to further explore the issues of rituals and cults associated with the souls in Purgatory.

The fourth paper is of a wholly different nature; it concerns the fields of Art History and Historiography. “Romane *vs* Romanesque. A invenção de uma nomenclatura” addresses the issues of the invention, of the later adequacy and adaptation of the term “românico” in the studies of these fields.

The remaining four studies delve into subjects related to archaeology, architecture and urbanism, in broad terms, from Antiquity to the Modern Age. Following a diachronic perspective, we present most recent data on the topography and history of Mértola in Late Antiquity, between the second half of the 5th century and the 6th and 7th centuries. This is followed by another study that addresses the architectural transformation of cities during the Manueline period as a result of the globalisation that ensued, itself a product of the Age of Discovery. Of particular interest for the historical understanding of Porto’s urbanism is the portrait of yet another emblematic building in the city, the “Palácio de Cristal Portuense”, which was destroyed in the middle of the 20th century. With this contribution we attempt to provide answers to several questions related to the period of its construction and its destruction, as well as its influences and respective legacy. The final study addresses, in a critical manner, the issue of “binary space effect” and its role in the creation of a real context of comprehension of the traditional urban space. To this end, it focuses on the theoretical problems concerning the different conceptions of space, resulting from the interaction between architecture and society throughout time.

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