

FOREWORD

This section, titled «Vias, Paisagens e Territórios» («Paths, Landscapes and Territories») and part of the *Genius Loci* International Congress, aims to delve into one of the subjects that was extensively discussed by Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida. The author's thesis, concerning *Vias Medievais em Portugal* (Mediaeval Paths in Portugal), presented in 1968 and partially published in 1973, was one of the first studies concerning reviewing, critical discussion and presentation of the social and artistic significance of roads and bridges, still clearly focused on the vastness of the period that were the Middle Ages.

While Ferreira de Almeida pointed to the necessity of broadening the scope of the research well beyond the limits of Classical Antiquity, a period viewed as the stronghold of knowledge concerning construction and technical information on infrastructures of terrestrial communication, new perspectives on the importance of not only of the channels of circulation in their archaeological and economical reach, but also in the social, artistic and anthropological fields arose in Europe and in the United States of America alike.

John Brinckerhoff Jackson, one of the most important researchers in this field, articulated, through the fields of Geography, of History of Art and of Architecture, concepts and perspectives converging on roads and their role in the territory that, in addition, contributed to the reinterpretation of the idea of landscape and its appropriation and use as artistic support. His concept of «**hodography**» which evokes not only the road, but the act of walking, has placed the road at the centre of a discussion that focuses on the sense of place – a concept particularly touched upon by Jackson in his «**As estradas também parte da paisagem**». Albeit apart, Ferreira de Almeida and Jackson shared the same goal: to bring roads, trails, bridges – in essence, all manner of paths – to their rightful place among other elements within heritage sciences.

Within the Portuguese scientific community, the approaches to roads are either yet of little substance or they tend to focus on the already established issues addressed by archaeology or economic history. However, they raise several questions of a

phenomenological nature that seep into the world of roads, travel, landscape and territory, and give way to more extensive discussions on the notions of place, art, urban and urbanism, practices and architecture – as this section’s array of essays shall illustrate. The aforementioned papers are centred on several main objectives – to expound on to the materiality of the circulation channels, to question the practices in them or highlight the transforming nature of their role.

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