

Chronicle of the VIII Railway History Congress pre-meeting “Na Ibéria ferroviária: arquitectura, materiais e usos para um registo patrimonial”

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The *I Workshop on Railway Heritage. Na Ibéria ferroviária: arquitetura, materiais e usos para um registo patrimonial* (Portugal), on 13-14 June 2019. It was a pre-meeting ahead of the Session *Methodology and tools for a railway heritage inventory*, included in the *VIII Congreso de Historia Ferroviaria* promoted by the Asociación Ibérica de Historia Ferroviaria (*ASHIF*) in conjunction with ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, Universidade de Évora and Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

By addressing the systematization methodologies and management strategies from a holistic perspective, this workshop aimed to (re)start an international debate on the inventory of the railway heritage and its management. Among other points, the conceptual, geographical, artistic, educational, administrative and business aspects were approached. The subjects discussed gained more importance because the year 2021 has now been declared to be the “European Year of Rail Transport”. It is expected that research, preservation and cultural valorisation of the railway heritage will be promoted. There exists an obvious need for more agile and updated inventories, along with more effective management strategies to properly value and activate the railway heritage as a resource.

This chronicle starts in November 2018, with the call for this scientific workshop. Ana Cardoso de Matos (Universidad de Évora), Domingo Cuéllar (Universidad Rey Juan Carlos), Aurora Martínez-Corral (Universitat Politècnica de Valencia) and Hugo Silva Pereira (Universidade Nova de Lisboa) were the organizers of the workshop; the Museu Nacional Ferroviário of Portugal offered technical and logistical support, and the municipal chamber of Entroncamento sponsored the event.

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The workshop was conceived as an open multidisciplinary space to share experiences and review methodologies and tools for a critical process of research on railway architecture. The meeting aimed to reflect upon the study of the railway heritage and its management by putting together and debating the methodological proposals of each participant in their own disciplines. The researchers were supposed to contribute with their own work to the conceptualization of notions about the railway heritage and its functionality; to approach methodological proposals for the definition of criteria for inventorying, conservation, dissemination and research of heritage assets, to share various models of railway inventory. In short, being a multidisciplinary meeting, the workshop sought to build bridges between various disciplines all of them carrying out the analysis and management of the railway heritage. In the long term, the challenge was to form an open intergenerational research group, focusing on the systematization of the study on railway heritage.

Prior to the meeting, researchers selected by their abstract proposed previously, had to present their work between February and May with a common structure: working hypothesis, methodology, sources, content development and results. This common structure would aim to link concepts and perspectives during the event. In the end, the workshop in Entroncamento gathered nine proposals with participants from Portugal, Spain, Brazil and Germany. Those proposals were divided in two subject areas: *Record and inventory*, and *Management strategies*.

Instead of presenting each full paper at once, they were divided in three sessions: aim and objectives, methodological proposals and expected results. Proposals lasted 15 minutes each, and the above-mentioned structure allowed to focus the discussion on specific topics, fostering the relationship between researchers and heritage administrators as part of the event.

The sessions started on 13 June with the opening remark, and were attended by organizers, researchers and representatives of the hosting institutions. These last ones were represented by Ana Fontes, Director of the Museu Nacional ferroviário, who gave the welcoming speech (Figure 1).

Figure 1.
Opening session and welcoming of the museum Director.



Figure 2.
Meeting with the Head and members of the municipal chamber of
Entroncamento.



The 1st working session of the morning was dedicated to present the research projects and studies' objectives, along with the sources used. The discussion in the subject area of management comprised sociocultural and educational dimensions of railway heritage, the art's role as a tool for heritage study and dissemination, and the solutions of railway's architecture reuse. On another hand, in the subject area of inventory initiatives, the design of tabs, the use of sources, software, participative solutions and the adequacy of international preservation criteria were discussed.

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Around midday, it was possible to meet the representatives of the Municipal Chamber and thank them for their support in the development of the workshop (Figure 2). The origin of the city of Entroncamento is linked to the development of the Portuguese railway net. This explains the huge interest of the Municipal Chamber in the research, preservation, restoration and dissemination projects, such as the one proposed in the old railway workers' residences that the workshop assistants had the opportunity to visit on the event's last day.

After lunch, the attendees visited the installations of the National Railway Museum in Entroncamento. The visit resulted in useful debates around the railway heritage, its authenticity and restoration strategies.

Work methodologies related to the various proposals presented were discussed in the afternoon once the museum visit was over. A wealth of ideas about perspectives that are close to the knowledge of the industrial heritage were also addressed.

The outcomes of the researches were showcased on the second day of the workshop. The debate that arose at this session was the richest one and eased to compose a global image of a problem that should be treated in an interdisciplinary way. There was some constructive feedback, highlighting the viability of the projects and the possibilities of putting them into practice. There was also some debate surrounding specific conceptual aspects of the railway heritage: How can we understand a railway facility as a whole? What are the implications of managing a heritage, which cannot be understood from an isolated perspective? What tools could we use to pull together different points of view into the railway management? Besides that, the attendees could prove the importance of teamwork to enrich the different projects. They strengthen the disciplinary perspective for the development of an appropriate management of the railway heritage.

Finally, in the afternoon, participants visited the railway neighbourhoods of the city, guided by the researcher Carlos Manuel Barbosa Ferreira and members of the *Association of Friends of the Railway of Entroncamento*. It was possible to rediscover the importance of the railway of Entroncamento, and to identify new possible solutions to the installation of the railway industry and its new facilities.

At the end of the *I Workshop on Railway Heritage. Na Ibéria ferroviária: arquitetura, materiais e usos para um registo patrimonial*, some conclusions were reached. In the current context, the deliberated deinstallation of the railway facilities marks a challenge in the preservation of material and non-material assets. This subject should be treated as an interdisciplinary matter, assuming different perspectives and methodologies that enable their integration in specific models for railway heritage management. The fact of calling the existing formula into question contributes to building new solutions that are capable of encompassing new tools and perspectives

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not aligned with the own characteristics of the railway heritage. The inventory should be – without question – adjusted to the most recent heritage sensitivities. It is important to overcome the current dichotomy of asset-monument, and to assist the sociotechnical system of the railway infrastructure as a whole. Likewise, it is crucial to systematize the criteria at the earliest convenience in order to transform this process into an accessible and open tool for the registration of the heritage by using specific software.

As mentioned before, this workshop was part of the *VIII Congreso de Historia Ferroviaria* that was supposed to have been held in Portugal in October 2020. However, the congress was postponed to 2021 due to the covid-19 pandemic, and will take place on 27-29 October 2021 instead. This coincides with the anniversaries of the railway net in Portugal (165th) and in Spain (173rd). It was within this new context that this monographic for TST was organized, with the purpose of disseminating the works and methodologies shared by researchers and railway heritage administrators during the workshop.

The agenda for the Congress Session “*Methodology and tools for a railway heritage inventory*” was also redesigned, including a second edition of the workshop which will be held during the 2nd quarter of 2021. The next edition of the *II Workshop se patrimonio ferroviario* will be held online, with the aim of continuing with the debate about systematization methodologies for the inventory of the railway architectural heritage and heritage management strategies.

We encourage you to participate in the next event!