

## BETWEEN PLACE AND MEANING: DECODING THE COSTA JÚNIOR HOUSE (LEIRIA, PORTUGAL)

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### **Abstract**

As an artistic expression, architecture conveys cultural drivers that communicate with the community in which it is located, and with which it may desire to stimulate reactions. At a time of strong political and social instability, architects Ernesto Korrodi and Augusto Romão adopted a traditionalist programme for designing the Costa Júnior house (Leiria, Portugal) in 1918, expressing ideals of republicanism and nationalism to the surrounding community. Therefore, the Costa Júnior house is explored in order to question the process through which architecture transmits cultural drivers, which the local community receives, interprets and assimilates. Considering the architects, the ordering party and the historical context inherent to this project, this article analyses its architectural programme, questioning its dual nature, as both a calculated social construction and a space deliberately instrumentalised to express cultural drivers.

### **Keywords**

Architecture; traditionalism; Republicanism; nationalism; community.

## **Resumo**

Enquanto expressão artística, a arquitetura veicula vetores culturais que comunicam com a comunidade em que se insere e junto da qual pode pretender estimular reações. Em 1918, numa época de forte instabilidade política e social, os arquitetos Ernesto Korrodi e Augusto Romão adotaram um programa tradicionalista na concepção da casa Costa Júnior (Leiria, Portugal), expressando ideais de republicanismo e nacionalismo junto da comunidade leiriense. Assim, a casa Costa Júnior é explorada de modo a questionar o processo através do qual a arquitetura transmite vetores culturais, que a comunidade local recebe, interpreta e assimila. Considerando os arquitetos, o encomendante e o contexto histórico inerente a este projeto, este artigo analisa o seu programa arquitetónico, questionando a sua dupla natureza, quer como construção socialmente calculada, quer como espaço deliberadamente instrumentalizado para exprimir vetores culturais.

## **Palavras-chave**

Arquitetura; tradicionalismo; republicanismo; nacionalismo; comunidade.

## **Introduction**

Designed to reflect the aesthetic inclinations of those who conceive it and to satisfy the needs of those who inhabit it, architecture expresses cultural values. Like any other form of expression, it starts with an emitter to reach a receiver. Because it is publicly and daily perceived in the place for which it was designed, architecture first reaches the local community. From this premise, this article questions whether the Costa Júnior house operated as an expression of cultural drivers specific to its time (1918), deliberately emitted by its architects (Ernesto Korrodi and Augusto Romão) and its ordering party (António da Costa Júnior), to be received by the community in which it was built (Leiria, Portugal).

Although studies on Augusto Romão are scarce, there is already significant knowledge about Ernesto Korrodi. The work of Lucília da Costa (1997), for example, positions him as one of the most important architects of his generation, fully in line with the architectural trends and practices of his time. In his design for the Costa Júnior house, there are indications of the intent to project culturally significant vectors. However, it remains unclear how these transit between the house, as the emitter, and the local community, as the receiver. The first objective of

this article is understanding the process by which cultural features are projected through architecture to the local community, which has found little expression in the specialised literature.

Designed in 1918, the Costa Júnior house was built at the end of the First World War, a particularly difficult period for the young Portuguese Republic, which was facing great instability. It was in this context that Korrodi and Romão opted for a traditionalist design. The desire to reposition Portugal's relevance in Europe prompted calls for revivalism. But the adoption of historicist and traditional architectural grammars, at the time embodied in the search for the true 'Portuguese house' ('*casa portuguesa*'), cannot be understood only in light of political and erudite programmes. In the case of the Costa Júnior house, such a strategy would exclude most of the recipients of its cultural properties: the poor, ruralised and illiterate local community. Therefore, this article also seeks to define the programme adopted for the Costa Júnior house, by clarifying its aesthetic grammars and then focusing on the cultural drivers that these grammars would project to the local community, within that historical context.

To this end, just the façades of the building will be analysed, because they were the only part accessible to the local community. Likewise, features of the bourgeois single-family house of the early 20th century that relate to family rather than community life will not be analysed, such as the renewed taste for the comfort of family intimacy or the tendency to extend the exterior decoration into the interior of the dwelling.

### **The context, the architects and the ordering party**

The turn of the 20th century was accompanied in Portugal by relative social optimism, which peaked with the establishment of the Republic in 1910, only to decline with the First World War. Alongside demographic and industrial underdevelopment, this period was marked by an intense political debate that pitted the bourgeoisie, already consolidated in its social and economic power, against an increasingly organised and demanding proletariat. However, the country remained predominantly rural, subject to mass emigration, and overshadowed by poverty and political instability. The republican revolution took place in Lisbon and Porto, with little collaboration from the rest of the country, where the

population remained ideologically conservative and even monarchist. During the 1910s, economic crises were followed by political crises, which worsened when Portugal entered into the First World War. Social unrest settled in, with a wave of strikes in 1917 and 1918, as well as armed struggles, arrests and persecutions, an upheaval accompanied by great political instability, as attested by the four legislative elections that took place until the end of the decade (Marques 1972; Pinto and Fernandes 2010).

In Leiria, despite some previous industrial development, the signs of progress were still weak at the beginning of the 20th century, with the urban space remaining closely dependent on the rural and agricultural world (Filipe and Serrão 1991; Mendes 1991). The First Republic's commitment to public education was slow to bear fruit. In 1915, only 661 people had completed primary school in the whole region (RP 1919), with half of the city's inhabitants unable to read or write (Sousa 2005: 34). Emigration, the only way to escape hunger and unemployment, accentuated the national decline in population (Margarido 1988). By 1910, around 10,000 people had emigrated from the region, at a time when only 4,000 people inhabited Leiria, the district capital (Sousa 2005: 31). In the second decade of the 20th century, Leiria's population remained ruralised, illiterate and forced to emigrate to escape poverty.

In that time, the 1918's Costa Júnior project was signed by the architect firm Korrodi & Romão. It is unclear what role each of them, Korrodi and Romão, played in the Costa Júnior project. Born in Zurich, Switzerland, Ernesto Korrodi (1870-1944) settled in Leiria in 1893, four years after arriving in Portugal, to teach drawing at the local industrial school, of which he would later become director (Costa 1997). Despite his training as a sculptor, decorator and draughtsman, he was essentially a self-taught architect. In the city, he is best known for the dedicated restoration of Leiria Castle, a pioneering project he authored. However, he left extensive architectural work throughout the country, particularly abundant in single-family homes and build-to-rent properties. Korrodi was a two-time winner of the prestigious Valmor Prize (1910 and 1917), originally intended to recognise architectural projects with a «classical structure» and a «genuinely Portuguese» style (Pedreirinho 2018: 97).

Less well known, Augusto Romão (1881-1925) was born in Leiria, where most of his architectural work is located. He was a pupil of Korrodi at the city's industrial school, where he was taught stonemasonry

from the age of seven. In 1898, he was still listed as a builder, although from 1899 onwards he presented his own architectural projects to the municipality. It is then estimated that he too was a self-taught architect. It is not known when Korrodi and Romão established their partnership, although in 1919, the year after the Costa Júnior project, a newspaper article reported the dissolution of the firm Korrodi & Romão, while an advertisement appeared publicising Augusto Romão's new firm (Rodrigues 2018).

In the years leading up to the Costa Júnior project, Korrodi gravitated towards the traditionalist aesthetic grammar (Costa 1997), closer to the Costa Júnior project. Romão's aesthetics seem to have always revolved around Art Nouveau (Rodrigues 2018). Because the Costa Júnior project follows a more traditionalist aesthetic, and not so much Art Nouveau, it is estimated that Korrodi's contribution would have been more preponderant. Korrodi's works reveal great sobriety, although eclectically articulated with different stylistic tendencies, even the most modern ones. As a subscriber to various national and international publications (Costa 1997), Korrodi must have been well aware of these trending styles. Romão's ideological affinities are unknown. Korrodi, on the other hand, was an outspoken republican who applied for Portuguese naturalisation only after the Republic was established in Portugal, in 1910. He fought hard for republican ideals, such as the right to Sunday rest and the project to erect a monument to the Marquis of Pombal (Costa 1997), an icon to the republican movement<sup>(1)</sup>.

Information on António da Costa Júnior (1869-†), the ordering party, is scarce. Korrodi and Romão described him in 1918 as a «property owner» in the work licence for the construction of the house (AMLRA 1918). This description's lack of epithets suggests that the ordering party was not another individual by the name of António da Costa Júnior (1872-1931), at the time a doctor and a member of parliament for the Republic (MOSCA n.d.).

António da Costa Júnior, the ordering party, was born in Leiria to a tailor (ADLRA 1869). In 1893, at the age of 23, he married Gertrudes da Conceição Marques, the daughter of a shoemaker (ADLRA 1893).

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(1) For more on the life and work of Ernesto Korrodi and Augusto Romão, particularly the impact of so-called self-taught architects in the Portuguese context at the beginning of the 20th century, see Costa 1997, Moleirinho 2020 and Rodrigues 2018.

The following year, their daughter, Dulce, was born. A cross added to the baptismal record suggests that the child lived a short time. In this register, Costa Júnior is referred to as a «clerk» (ADLRA 1894). As a clerk, he would have worked in public administration, courts, registry offices or companies, drafting official documents such as certificates, property registers, wills or financial statements. Such documents would have required good handwriting, knowledge of grammar and spelling, as well as familiarity with legal and administrative terminology. When he commissioned the house from Ernesto Korrodi and Augusto Romão in 1918, António da Costa Júnior would have been 48 years old and was already known as a «property owner». The title, which applied to individuals who owned significant property, also indicated a certain economic power and social status.

Economic and political constraints marked the country's daily life in the decades leading up to the project. However, Leiria experienced a certain amount of development. This growth was driven by commerce and public administration, sectors that already employed one in every thirty inhabitants of the city by 1855. Local actions of the so-called Regeneration further contributed to the economic growth and social complexity of Leiria. By 1890, liberal professionals, civil servants and army officers stood out in a population of less than 4,000 inhabitants (Margarido 1988; Azevedo 2013). Within these social and economic conditions, emerged a wealthy, educated and mostly republican bourgeoisie, of which Korrodi and Romão are themselves examples. From the son of a tailor to a clerk, then from a clerk to a property owner, Costa Júnior's biographical career also seems to be shaped by social ascension.

### **The archaeology of the project's architecture**

The archaeology of architecture applied to the Costa Júnior house in 2015 revealed that the building largely retained its original 1918 design, with exterior walls of stone and interior areas divided by wooden partitions. The partitions were leaning against each other and the exterior walls, so stratigraphically the house emerged from two constructive actions: the raising of exterior walls, followed by the placing of interior partitions (Ginja 2016). Seemingly resulting from a single construction project, the entire building consists of a basement, ground floor and

attic. However, the descriptive document of the project, submitted by the firm Korrodi & Romão, clearly states that it was a rebuilding of «only the upper floor and attic», within «the actual area of the current ruin», remaining after a house fire (AMLRA 1918).

Two previous building permits (AMLRA 1913 and AMLRA 1914) submitted by António da Costa Júnior to the municipality for minor alterations to the *façade*, show that the house was aesthetically simpler before the Korrodi and Romão project. The *façade*, which had a single plane without ornamentation, was topped by a plain frieze and a full platband. The openings, which were quadrilateral on both floors of the building, had unadorned frames. The 1914 licence also shows the new gate opening in a round arch. This gate, which remained in place until the 2015 restoration, demonstrates that the Korrodi and Romão project effectively built on top of Costa Júnior's original house, or what was left of it.

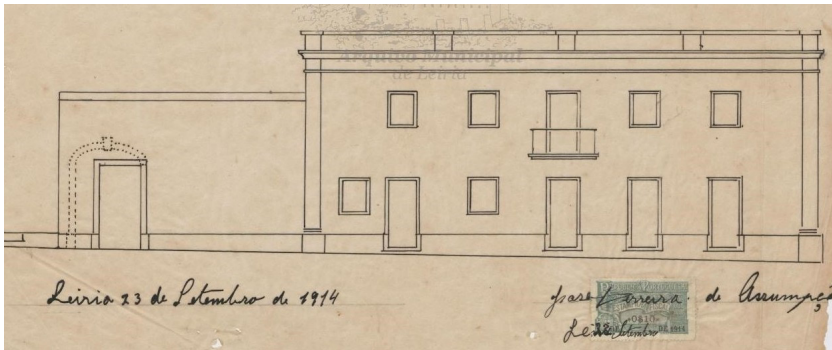


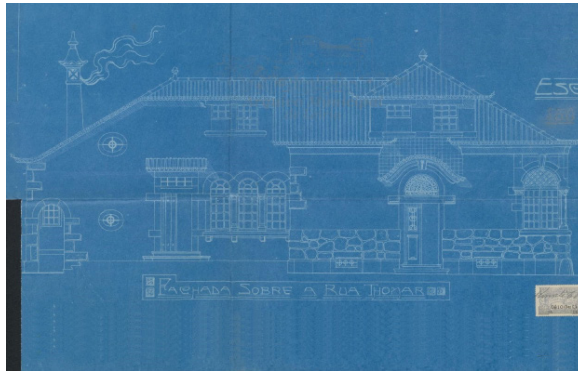
Figure 1 – António da Costa Júnior's house, before the Korrodi and Romão project (1914). Source: Leiria Municipal Archive (Arquivo Municipal de Leiria).

Korrodi and Romão conceived a different project, eclectic with historicist references. António da Costa Júnior's new house now had a ground floor for the most distinct compartments, as well as attic spaces for storage and servants' accommodation. On the *façades*, the planes multiplied, accentuated by the dramatic slopes of the roof, as well as the eaves, staircases, balconies and covered balconies. On the main *façade*, facing the street, the round arches in the passageways stood out, as did the Doric columns on both a covered balcony and a tripartite arched window. Identical elements were present on the rear *façade*, facing the



River Lis. This side featured a covered balcony, with round arches and three centred arches supported by Doric columns, accompanied by a balcony opening, with iron railings and a bas-relief with floral motifs.

True to the eclectic and revivalist taste of the time, Korrodi freely incorporated architectural elements from other eras into his designs, such as arches, columns and corbels. He often mixed elements from different eras in the same project. For example, in the so-called D. Chica palace in Braga, perhaps his most exuberant project, he mixed elements inspired by classical, Gothic, Mozarabic and Renaissance architecture. In the descriptive document for the Costa Júnior house, however, Korrodi and Romão indicated that they had confined themselves to «the characteristic forms of 18th century regional architecture» (AMLR 1918).



Figures 2 and 3 – Korrodi and Romão’s project for António da Costa Júnior’s house (1918). Source: Leiria Municipal Archive (Arquivo Municipal de Leiria).



Close to the Costa Júnior house, the Sanctuary of Nossa Senhora da Encarnação chapel dominated the entire region at the time, from a landscape and devotional point of view. Worshipping the patron saint of Leiria, it enjoyed immense popularity at the beginning of the 20th century, with its architectural complex visible throughout much of the city and the region. It was therefore well known to Korrodi and Romão, as well as the entire population of Leiria. Built over two earlier temples, the first dating back at least to the reign of King João I (r. 1385-1433), the sanctuary was completed in 1628, and the staircase leading to it in 1773 (Larcher 1904; Matos 1955; Costa 1988). The chapel is preceded by a galilee, open to the surroundings through round arches on Doric columns, a scheme very similar to the one adopted by Korrodi and Romão in the Costa Júnior project. Although the chronology of the galilee is unknown, it adjoins the chapel. Being later than the 1628 chapel and with a recurved pediment, the galilee could date back to the 18th century, a detail that Korrodi, an expert interpreter of the architecture from other eras, would be able to deduce.

### **Traditionalism, nationalism and republicanism**

Korrodi left a considerable legacy from the early 20th century, consisting of domestic dwelling projects, affiliated with the traditionalist programme of the so-called 'Portuguese house'. However, his traditionalism often appeared during this period in conjunction with Art Nouveau, essentially used in decoration. Ironwork with whiplash effects, glass in abundance, floral motifs carved in stone, and plant motifs printed on tiles, are all materials, techniques and decorations that abound in both works by Korrodi and Romão, denoting an appetite for modernity and no particular aversion to imported fashions.

Precisely called Modern Style, Art Nouveau, with its strong commitment to ornamentation, emerged in the last decade of the 19th century. During the transition to the 20th century, it gained rapid and marked notoriety in France and Belgium, arriving in Portugal as early as 1905, where it lasted well into the 1920s (Pevsner 1975; Silva 2020). In Portugal, where «no one (...) was qualified to understand» the new trend (Rio-Carvalho 1970: 251), Art Nouveau manifested itself only occasionally, almost always articulated in an eclectic nationalist nature that drew on traditional architecture (Silva 2020).

Like Korrodi's work during this period, the single-family dwellings designed in Portugal at the beginning of the 20th century eclectically mixed tendencies «with a sometimes picturesque taste» (Ramos 2010: 203). Eclecticism can be at least partially justified by the rapid changes taking place in the balance between private and public life, intimacy and social projection, and comfort and ostentation. This style also never ceased to operate in the field of architects' and ordering parties' desires. Alongside the new republican regime in Portugal, adopting the latest stylistic fashions showed progressiveness, projecting an avant-garde and innovative image onto the architect and the ordering party. Embracing aesthetics that were still little popularised also demonstrated financial success and investment capacity, contributing to an image of exclusivity and social prestige. However, the extent to which Korrodi, Romão and Costa Júnior sought to project these characteristics through their project is unknown. The only elements that could be ascribed to the Art Nouveau aesthetic, a small lintel with sculpted flowers and a panel of patterned tiles, reveal too much moderation in the use of this trend.

On the contrary, the Costa Júnior house is part of a search for traditional models, prioritising picturesque architecture, typical of the so-called 'Portuguese house'. Consolidated by the 1910s, after Ricardo Severo's pioneering architectural experiment and its reception (Backheuser 2006), the prototype of the 'Portuguese house' developed through hybridism between vernacular architecture and styles from the past (Ramos 2010). This traditionalism was channelled into a «national ruralist» ideology (Rosmaninho 2002-2003: 241), seeking to «give national form to traditionalist architecture (...) to adapt to modern life», as was advertised at the time (Anon. 1916: 10). As in other countries, Portuguese nationalist movements had been seduced since the end of the 19th century by the possibility of a national architectural prototype. This 'Portuguese house' was based on regionalisms as much as on the rejection of foreignisms. There was «no need to look abroad for architectural motifs» when «so many interesting ones» could be «collected in our country», declared a popular magazine in 1915 (Anon. 1915: 170). In 1918, the year of the Costa Júnior project, Raul Lino, a strong advocate for the 'Portuguese house' (despite the superficial appropriation of his work), warned against internationalism, and what he considered to be modern architecture's lack of adaptation to the environment. «Barbarism of modern constructions», he wrote, attested to the «absolute corruption of

national taste» (Lino 1918: 20). The return to the traditional and regional origins of Portuguese architecture was a patriotic attitude which, in the rhythm of the new Portuguese Republic, took poverty and ruralism as a promise of national regeneration (Ramos 2020).

During the First Portuguese Republic, lacking solid popular support, the emphasis on a common past helped to promote social cohesion and legitimise the regime. In addition to monuments and historical figures, the cultural continuity and ancestral customs of the purest and most genuine rural life were also idealised to define the new national identity. «Bringing back to life» the «traditionalist constructions» of the countryside was an «act of patriotism», said a magazine in 1914 (Collares 1914: 29). «Last outbreak of Romanticism» (Lino 1970: 205), the 'Portuguese house' was a factor of authenticity (Ramos 2020), emphasising the rural people as the true nation. The real reflection of rurality was irrelevant, as long as the inspiration was national (Rosmaninho 2002-2003).

If the countryside best preserved its regional character (Lino 1918), that was where the 'Portuguese house' should look for its references. The result was an amalgamation of forms, appropriated from the manor house and vernacular architecture (Silva 1997). The porch leading to the main door «should be so developed that it becomes indispensable» (Lino 1918: 44). The «beautiful angled window», with columns in the corner, was adopted by those who sought to «form a truly Portuguese architecture» (Collares 1914: 31). And the eaves, that «sweet line of the old roofs», were the source of all the «grace that the silhouette of the Portuguese house has» (Lino 1929: 35, 43).

Widely publicised at the time, these features were all incorporated into the Costa Júnior house. The small porch leading to the front door, which Korrodi used in several of his designs, appeared in a 1911 magazine publication of a house described as seeking «moulds and general lines of the Portuguese house», proving the owner's «great patriotic love» (Anon. 1911: 185). The balcony with an angled window, also used by Korrodi in 1915 for the Bouhon mansion (Covilhã), had been featured in the press in 1912 through the project for the João Vaz house (Oeiras), by Nicola Bigaglia, dubbed «Portuguese by heart» (Collares 1912: 37). A project by Edmundo Tavares was published in 1916, entitled «Portuguese House», containing animated eaves articulated with tile panels (Anon. 1916), just as Korrodi had used in the Leal house (Coimbrão) of 1907. Even the tripartite windows, separated by columns and topped by arches,

which Korrodi had used in 1910 for António Macieira's house (Lisbon), appeared in another project by Edmundo Tavares, «The Portuguese House», published in 1915 (Anon. 1915).

Sharing architectural strategies with many other projects affiliated with the 'Portuguese house', the Costa Júnior house appealed directly to traditionalism, although more invoked than literal. At a particularly challenging time for Portugal, struggling with the consequences of the First World War and the political instability of the First Republic, the adoption of traditional paradigms could evoke feelings of historical continuity and community belonging. Traditionalism could thus contribute to promoting a cohesive national identity, capable of resisting the attacks from those who opposed the new and weakened regime. To the extent that the promotion of a strong and independent nation responded to the Portuguese people's desire for true autonomy and freedom, the traditionalism of the Costa Júnior house seems to have aligned with the defence of the Portuguese Republic, easily readable by the more educated part of the local community, such as the bourgeoisie and the ordering party himself. How much of this cultural meaning would reach the rest of the community, poor and illiterate, remains a challenge for the decoding of the Costa Júnior house.

### **Cultural meaning and the local community**

Claiming to be inspired by the regional architecture of the 18th century, Korrodi and Romão distanced the Costa Júnior project from the Baroque curved lines dominating the first half of the century. Favouring the architectonic sobriety of the second half of that century, they called upon the architectural spirit devised by the Marquis of Pombal after the 1755 Lisbon earthquake. If early 20th century Portuguese republicanism saw Pombal as a champion «of secularisation, liberalism and social 'equalisation'» (Torgal 1984: 141), then the Costa Júnior house aligned with Pombaline ideals of urban and political regeneration, as much as with temporal, liberal and republican aesthetics. Korrodi and Romão also describe the project as affiliated with regional architecture. However, rather than drawing inspiration from erudite regional models, which also existed in the city and region of Leiria, they adopted features that were part of a popular regionalism. At the time, José de Figueiredo, for example,

suggested that modern architects should look for «what is typically ours (...) in regional dwellings», where «the nationalists (...) should draw their main source of inspiration» (1908: 38). Symptomatically, the Costa Júnior house was endowed with the aesthetic prophesied by the traditionalism of the 'Portuguese house', added by the balconies of a pilgrimage shrine of popular regional devotion.



Figures 4 and 5 – partial view of the Costa Júnior house (top) and partial view of the Sanctuary of Nossa Senhora da Encarnação (down).

Considering works of art can be perceived by its community through an active process of interpretation and attribution of meanings (Husserl 1982; Graham 2001), the perception of a building is as real as the building itself. In this sense, the experience of architecture is a phenomenon that consists of the psychological perception of community members, unconsciously formed from environmental stimuli (Husserl 1982; Castello 2010; Nanay 2016). The meaning of a building like the Costa Júnior house was not, as such, an intrinsic and immutable characteristic. Instead, it was a product moulded by its architectural stimuli, perceived by those who would come in contact with it, the Leiria community. Establishing art not as a distant and subjective abstraction, but as an expression intrinsically linked to the common world, its materiality would carry universal qualities, enabling the establishment of emotional and intellectual connections (Dewey 1934; Adorno 2002). This experiential character of art transforms everyday elements into stimuli that point to deeper meanings, allowing the community to reinterpret its own experiences through the aesthetic object. Korrodi and Romão would thus act as mediators between their personal experience and the community. Their creative process would not be purely spontaneous, but organised and intentional. Confronted with the political, economic and social challenges that surrounded them at the time, they would have selected and transformed their experience, rationally and intuitively reinterpreted by the Leiria community that share the same challenges.

From the articulation between architectural elements and the social needs they seek to fulfil emerges a unity that transcends the mere functionality of buildings (Brandi 1967; Carbonara 2012). In this sense, the Costa Júnior house would not just be a physical building, but a symbolic system responding to the cultural, political and social demands of the ordering party, as well as the entire Leiria community. Architectural elements express social and cultural concepts, just as verbalised words express mental meanings. This dialogue transcends the utilitarian, providing symbolic dimension that integrated a building into the collective structure of meanings shared by the community. The community understood the imprinted meanings as a result of conventions known by all through socialisation processes (Brandi 1967; Bourdieu 1972; Sparshott 1982; Bonnewitz 1997; Martine 2007; Manguel 2020), such as the Leiria community would understand the elements inspired by a popular religious sanctuary imprinted in the Costa Júnior house.

By activating a specific set of dispositions, architectural production is deeply linked to the expectations that shape social interactions. Architecture influences the behaviour and perceptions of those who experienced it, positioning itself as a cultural manifestation that reflects social conditions, while simultaneously shaping them. Korrodi and Romão created the Costa Júnior house with reminiscences of traditionalism and religiosity. They decided against using a clerical reference, represented through buildings associated with canonical authority, such as the city's Cathedral. Instead, they looked for religious references in a modest local sanctuary, linked to a spiritual experience that was deeply rooted in the region's popular culture. In an environment of deep crisis, they may have tried to promote the reception of republican values, still foreign to the community, by associating them with deeply familiar patterns. In this context, Korrodi and Romão would have produced a Costa Júnior house seeking to provoke specific reactions in the Leiria community, with whom they interacted deliberately and strategically. Both the Costa Júnior house and its communal reception are rooted in wider contextual conditions that interconnect the architects, the community and the republican crisis.

### **Final remarks**

Compared to his previous home, António da Costa Júnior's new house reveals the ordering party's clear intention to gain notoriety. This is evident in two ways: (1) hiring the firm of a famous architect, twice honoured with the prestigious Valmor prize; (2) the aesthetic apparatus of the project, which is far more complex than his former house. The hypothetical quest for notoriety is aligned with Costa Júnior's possible social ascension, which can be deduced from the consecutively more prominent titles he was honoured with throughout his life.

But the codification of the Costa Júnior house cannot be understood solely as a social ambition, which would be more easily reflected in a modern project with an Art Nouveau grammar, or in a revivalist project of styles associated with great moments in Portuguese history, such as neo-Manueline or neo-Baroque. On the other hand, the Costa Júnior house adopted the sobriety and the claimed modest traditionalism of the 'Portuguese house'. It seems that emphasising traditional elements



could foster a sense of patriotism and national pride. In a context of post-war and political instability, these elements would promote the idea of resistance against external influences and unite different social segments around a common identity. Analysing this house along with other architectural projects for single-family dwellings of the time, therefore, requires a consideration that goes beyond mere stylistic diagnosis.

If we accept that architecture, with its shapes, colours and proportions, can operate in the community in which it is located as an artistically conceived image, then the Costa Júnior house can be understood, not only through academically considered prescriptions, but also as an expression of desires rooted in everyday experiences. John Dewey argued that, in his fight against the environmental imbalances of everyday life, the artist sought to produce works that would establish a new balance. The reaction of the artist's community to his work, in turn, constituted an act of creation. This creation demanded an understanding from the community that was only possible by living through experiences comparable to those of the artist. The selection of traditionalist elements for the Costa Júnior house, projecting republican and nationalist ideals, may therefore derive from Korrodi and Romão's confrontation with the political and social imbalances experienced in the context of the country's crisis. Furthermore, the ordering party and the community's perception of those ideals would be strengthened if they had experienced the same imbalances. The republicanism and nationalism of Korrodi and Romão's project could then be understood as a response to the architects' need to rebalance the values of a regime Korrodi defended, but which was in crisis. At the same time, this project also would address the needs of the ordering party and the community of Leiria, searching for security in the aftermath of war and the instability of the country's power structures.

Symbolically encoded in artefacts, the production of material culture, such as architecture, presupposes a prior perception of its effects on the world and society. Cultural production takes place according to expectations, objectively organised as a strategy to motivate reactions. If so, Ernesto Korrodi and Augusto Romão would have provided the Costa Júnior house with environmental stimuli to deliberately achieve reactions from the local community. As well as the artist's reaction to environmental conditions, cultural production also depends, therefore, on the social context of the local community that perceived it. At the time, within Leiria's mostly ruralised, impoverished and illiterate community,

the Costa Júnior house would not transmit cultural vectors only to the ordering party and bourgeois and educated elite, it would more easily project ideas of republicanism and nationalism through a traditionalist grammar to all local community.

The perception of this building would be as real to its community as the building itself. The relationship that a given community maintains with a familiar place comes from psychological perceptions, reached by environmental stimuli. Therefore, the symbolic meaning of a building for its community is not an intrinsic characteristic of the building, but the result of a projection. Symbolically charged with nationalist and republican drivers, the Costa Júnior house could unite the physical and individual place, projecting stimuli through the community's psychological perception. Like art in general, the Costa Júnior house would articulate environmental stimuli and psychological perceptions. As with all architecture, it would, therefore, lie somewhere between place and meaning.

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