

UNIVERSITATEA „VALAHIA” DIN TÂRGOVIȘTE
João Paulo Pereira de Freitas Coroado

Doctor Honoris Causa

The Award of the Title of Doctor Honoris Causa
Illustrissimo ac Excellentissimo Domino Professori
João Paulo Pereira de Freitas Coroado,
President of Polytechnic University of Tomar and KreativEU -
Knowledge & Creativity European University Alliance

Doctor Honoris Causa João Paulo Pereira de Freitas Coroado

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I. Introduction

In the name of the enduring pursuit of wisdom and the noble tradition of honoring those whose intellect and deeds illuminate the path of knowledge, **Valahia University of Târgoviște**, through its **Rector** and **Academic Senate**, hereby proposes the conferral of the title **Doctor Honoris Causa** upon **Professor João Paulo Pereira de Freitas Coroado, President of Polytechnic University of Tomar (IPT)**. This solemn distinction is offered in recognition of his eminent and unwavering contributions to the advancement of interdisciplinary research in cultural heritage, the science of sustainable materials, and the governance of higher education at national and European level. Over the course of more than three decades, Professor Coroado has exemplified a rare union of scientific precision, cultural stewardship, and institutional foresight - qualities most worthy of the highest academic honor our university may bestow.

II. Academic Background and Scientific Formation

Professor Coroado's academic journey began with a **Bachelor Degree in Geology** from the **University of Coimbra** in **1990**, followed by a **Master's degree in Geochemistry** from the **University of Aveiro** in **1995**. He earned his **Doctorate in Geosciences** from the same institution in **2001**, with a dissertation titled "*Ceramic Properties of Clays from the Aveiro and Tomar Lithostratigraphic Units*". This early work laid the foundation for a career dedicated to the scientific study of natural and cultural materials.

III. Academic and Institutional Leadership

Since joining the **IPT** in 1990, Professor Coroado has held every academic rank, culminating in his appointment as **President of the university in 2019**. His previous roles include Vice-President (2015–2019), Director of the School of Technology, and Director of the Department of Conservation and Restoration. He has also served on IPT's General, Scientific, and Pedagogical Councils, contributing to the strategic development of the institution and the advancement of interdisciplinary education.

IV. Interdisciplinary Contributions to Cultural Heritage

Professor Coroado's most significant scientific legacy lies in his **interdisciplinary approach to cultural heritage conservation**. His research integrates **geosciences, archaeometry, chemistry, microbiology, and materials engineering** to investigate and preserve historical artifacts and built heritage.

His work has addressed a wide range of heritage materials - from 15th- and 16th-century Portuguese paintings and baroque wooden sculptures, to Roman mortars, medieval tiles, and Moroccan Zellij ceramics. Through advanced analytical techniques such as SEM-EDS, μ -XRD, Raman spectroscopy, and synchrotron micro-XRF, he has contributed to the understanding of material composition, degradation mechanisms, and historical manufacturing techniques.

Notable projects include:

The **TACELO project**, focused on the conservation of monumental terracotta sculptures in the Monastery of Alcobaça.

The **AZULEJAR project**, addressing the conservation of Portuguese azulejo tile coatings.

Studies on invisible ground layers in early Portuguese painting, which have reshaped conservation approaches and art historical interpretation.

The microbiological assessment of the **Unfinished Sacristy of the Convent of Christ in Tomar**, integrating biological sciences into heritage diagnostics.

These contributions have had a direct impact on **museum practices, restoration methodologies, and heritage policy**, both in Portugal and internationally.

V. Innovation in Sustainable Materials and Environmental Heritage

Professor Coroado has also been a pioneer in the **development of sustainable construction materials**, particularly through the **valorization of industrial and organic waste**. His research on eggshells, seashells, and brewing by-products as alternative sources for lime and ceramics has been published in leading journals such as *Materials and Structures* and *Waste and Biomass Valorization*.

His work on limecrete under fire conditions, thermal insulation in ceramic bricks, and eco-efficient mortars demonstrates a commitment to environmental sustainability, bridging the gap between heritage conservation and green innovation.

Moreover, his involvement in the **HYDROARID project**, which assessed groundwater resources and saline intrusion in Cape Verde, reflects his broader concern for environmental resilience and resource management in vulnerable cultural landscapes.

VI. International Collaboration and Scientific Recognition

Professor Coroado's research has been conducted in collaboration with institutions across **Portugal, Spain, Morocco, Tunisia, and Colombia**, contributing to a **global dialogue on heritage science**. His work has been published in high-impact journals such as:

Journal of Analytical Atomic Spectrometry

Microscopy and Microanalysis

Applied Clay Science

Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports and many more.

These publications reflect both the **scientific excellence** and **international relevance** of his research.

VII. European Leadership and Strategic Vision

In addition to his national and scientific achievements, Professor João Paulo Coroado has demonstrated exemplary leadership at the European level as **President of KreativEU**, a transnational alliance of higher education institutions committed to fostering innovation, creativity, and cultural sustainability across Europe to which both Polytechnic University of Tomar (The Lead Partner) and Valahia University of Targoviste (The Initiator Partner) belong. Under his presidency, KreativEU has become a dynamic platform for interdisciplinary collaboration, integrating arts,

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sciences, and technology to address contemporary societal challenges. His strategic vision has strengthened the alliance's capacity to promote eco-cultural heritage as a driver of social cohesion and economic development, while enhancing the international visibility of the 11 member institutions and more than 100 associated partners. Professor Coroado's role in shaping KreativEU reflects his enduring commitment to building bridges between disciplines, institutions, and nations in pursuit of shared cultural and educational goals.

VIII. Conclusion

Professor João Paulo Pereira de Freitas Coroado is a scholar of exceptional merit whose work exemplifies the values of **intellectual rigor, interdisciplinary innovation, and cultural stewardship**. His contributions have advanced the scientific foundations of heritage conservation, promoted sustainable practices, and strengthened academic institutions.

In recognition of his distinguished career and enduring impact on science, culture, and education, it is with great honor that we propose the conferral of the title **Doctor Honoris Causa of Valahia University of Targoviste** upon **Professor João Paulo Coroado**.

Rector,

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Eng. Ioan Corneliu SĂLIȘTEANU

Doctor Honoris Causa João Paulo Pereira de Freitas Coroado

Curriculum Vitae João Paulo Pereira de Freitas Coroado

IDENTIFICAÇÃO PESSOAL

Nome completo

João Paulo Pereira de Freitas Coroado

NOMES DE CITAÇÃO

Coroado, João

IDENTIFICADORES DE AUTOR

Ciência ID

EE18-AE33-AAEF

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Google Scholar ID

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Scopus Author Id

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WEBSITES

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CIÊNCIA ID



**Laudatio in honour of Professor João Paulo Pereira de Freitas Coroado
on the occasion of the conferral of the honorary title of Doctor Honoris
Causa of Valahia University of Târgoviște**



Magnificent President of the Senate, Esteemed Rectors and Presidents, Honourable Members of the Senate, Respected Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is both a privilege and a delight to present before you today the illustrious figure of **Professor João Paulo Pereira de Freitas Coroado**, whose academic career, scholarly contributions, and service to higher education exemplify the very finest traditions of our university and the KreativEU Alliance.

Professor Coroado received his initial academic formation at the University of Coimbra, where he graduated in geology. He subsequently pursued his master's studies in geochemistry at the University of Aveiro, and in 2001 was awarded the doctorate in geosciences with a dissertation of originality and significance entitled **“The Ceramic Properties of the Clays of the Lithostratigraphic Units ‘Aveiro Clays’ and ‘Tomar Clays’.”** From the outset, his intellectual interests intertwined the sciences of the earth with the preservation of cultural heritage, a vision that has guided his distinguished career.

His professional path has been inseparably bound to the Polytechnic Institute of Tomar, where he commenced as monitor in 1990, rose through the ranks of assistant, adjunct professor, and full professor, and since 2019 has held the highest dignity of

the institution as its President. His service has been continuous and exemplary: Director of the Department of Conservation and Restoration, member of the Statutory Committee, of the Pedagogical Council, of the General Council, of the Board of Administration, and ultimately Vice-President before assuming the Presidency. Few careers manifest so complete a dedication to the flourishing of a single institution.

But his reputation extends far beyond administrative service. Professor Coroado has been the driving force of an extraordinary number of national and international research projects, whose very titles testify to their breadth and ambition. Among them may be named TACELO, devoted to the conservation of the monumental terracotta sculptures of the Monastery of Alcobaça; AZ-MED, tracing the provenance of medieval Portuguese tile; projects on the eco-efficient regulation of indoor air quality; the multidisciplinary reassessment of museological paradigms through the sculptural oeuvre of Soares dos Reis; studies of rupestrian painting in Portugal, Spain, and Colombia; investigations into historic mortars, medieval glass, and votive deposits of the Iron Age. The cumulative result is a body of research that has immeasurably enriched both the sciences of conservation and the cultural patrimony of Portugal. His scholarly contributions, disseminated through respected international journals and collective volumes, testify to an intellectual vocation shaped by rigour, originality, and a profound sense of cultural responsibility. They illuminate not only the materials and techniques of past centuries but also the ethical and methodological imperatives of the present age.

Equally significant are his contributions as coordinator to projects of international scope: the exploration of ground layers in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century panel paintings at the University of Lisbon; the application of spectroscopic techniques to Portuguese faience at the Department of Physics; the conservation strategies for the celebrated azulejo heritage of Porto, in collaboration with colleagues from the Basque Country; and the pioneering risk management programme devised for the Directorate-General of Archives in Portugal, in association with the University of Alcalá de Henares in Spain.

In multidisciplinary settings, inquiries of remarkable breadth and originality have been undertaken. Among these endeavours may be noted the compositional and typological study of Roman ceramic materials, pursued at the University of Aveiro; the reconstitution of Lisbon's ancient river quays at Cais das Colunas, where archaeology and heritage conservation are interwoven; and the design of ceramic coatings for urban contexts of high historical density. Each of these investigations illustrates the capacity of Professor Coroado to inspire work that unites the scientific with the cultural, the empirical with the historical.

Nor is his scholarship confined to the recovery of the past. With notable foresight, Professor Coroado has also advanced studies on the reuse of natural resources and industrial by-products, demonstrating how knowledge of ancient materials may be applied to contemporary challenges of sustainability, environmental stewardship, and the responsible preservation of heritage structures. In doing so, he has

exemplified the principle that research into cultural artefacts is not a retreat into antiquarianism, but a vital contribution to the dialogue between past and future.

The corpus of his published work thus represents a synthesis of tradition and innovation, where scientific analysis and humanistic insight converge. It has brought distinction not only to his own institution but also to the wider community of European and international scholarship. For these reasons, his name may justly be inscribed among those whose learning constitutes a *lumen scientiae* and whose example provides guidance for generations to come.

At the same time, Professor Coroadó has emerged as a leader of European vision, presiding not only over his national institution but also over the European University Alliance KreativEU, whose mission is to foster knowledge and creativity across borders, to unite universities in common cause, and to inspire a generation of scholars to think beyond the confines of their own traditions.

A further and most distinguished facet of Professor Coroadó's academic career resides in his unwavering devotion to the cultivation of new generations of scholars. The measure of a true academic is not only the corpus of one's own writings but also the intellectual flourishing of those entrusted to one's care. In this respect, he has fulfilled the noblest traditions of the *magisterium*. When a young scholar encounters Professor Coroadó, the very first question posed will not concern titles or affiliations, but rather what the scholar has read, and more importantly, what they have contributed to the field through publication. For Professor Coroadó, intellectual curiosity and scholarly output are the true measures of academic worth.

Through these undertakings, Professor Coroadó has not only fostered the individual growth of his students but also forged enduring intellectual networks across Portugal and beyond, exemplifying the European vocation of scholarship. His role as mentor and co-creator of knowledge attests to a rare academic generosity, whereby authority is exercised not in the spirit of possession, but in the transmission of wisdom. In this he stands firmly within the venerable lineage of those who, since the medieval origins of the university, have held that the true measure of *scientia* is its capacity to be shared and renewed.

Thus, his career is adorned not only by publications and research projects of distinction, but also by the living legacy of disciples who continue to extend his vision. This dual service—to knowledge and to persons—renders Professor Coroadó eminently worthy of the highest academic honours that may be bestowed.

Cultural heritage, in its truest sense, as Prof. Coroadó has professed, is less a fixed monument than a river whose currents carry the sediment of heritage, imagination, and identities. Within the framework of the KreativEU Alliance, this river is navigated collectively, tracing pathways that link the whispers of the past with the questions of the present. It is here that the alliance acts as both vessel and compass, guiding the delicate exchange between tangible artefacts, artistic expression, and the ephemeral traces of lived experience, all while nurturing the fertile ground in which new ideas may take root.

The flow of this river has been shaped in quiet but decisive ways, guided by those who first imagined the course, whose early foresight set the banks and determined the contours along which collaboration might flourish. From these origins, the alliance has grown into a confluence where scholarship, pedagogy, and creativity meet—interweaving disciplinary currents in ways that allow heritage not merely to endure, but to animate the present and illuminate the paths toward the future. The Alliance, under its current stewardship, exemplifies how leadership in cultural initiatives need not be ostentatious to be transformative; it is a matter of harmonizing energies and intentions across space and time.

In this shared endeavor, cultural heritage becomes both medium and message: a dialogue between the weight of history and the buoyancy of aspiration. Each project, each collaboration, resonates like a chord within a broader symphony, connecting local knowledge to continental imagination, material traces to intellectual innovation, and memory to action. The river of heritage, sustained and steered with care, continues to carry forward the alliance's purpose—to ensure that learning, creativity, and culture are inseparable companions, and that the currents they form are ever rich, deep, and generous in the possibilities they offer.

It is within this space that the practice of research and conservation finds its highest purpose. Scientific methods and material analysis, when guided by curiosity and imagination, do more than secure objects: they illuminate stories, connect communities, and reframe the ways in which societies perceive themselves. Culture and heritage thus emerge as instruments of creation as much as preservation, forming a continuum where knowledge, memory, and vision intersect. In cultivating these intersections, the work of those devoted to heritage transforms the past into a medium for reflection, creativity, and hope.

In conferring upon Professor João Paulo Pereira de Freitas Coroado today the honorary title of **Doctor Honoris Causa**, Valahia University of Târgoviște not only honours a distinguished scholar, a visionary leader, and a dedicated servant of higher education, but also proclaims its own commitment to the ideals of international collaboration, of cultural stewardship, and of academic excellence.

Professor Coroado, by your presence among us and by your lifelong labours, you have strengthened the bonds between our nations and advanced the cause of knowledge and culture. It is with gratitude, admiration, and respect that we welcome you into the fellowship of our university.

Prof. Dr. Hab. Silviu Miloiu

Valahia University of Târgoviște

**A Contribution for the Doctor Honoris Causa Academic Title Awarding to
Prof. Doutor João Paulo Pereira de Freitas Coroado**



On November 3, 1963, João Paulo Pereira de Freitas Coroado was born in Coimbra, the first of three brothers. After a childhood and youth always connected to sports and nature, which somehow influenced his academic career, he enrolled in a geology degree at the University of Coimbra, which he completed in 1990.

His natural curiosity for the intersections between science and the real-world led him to pursue his academic studies in the University of Aveiro, namely a Master, completed in 1994, in which he studied the application of geochemical techniques to the study and provenance of archaeological ceramic materials, and a PhD degree, for which he presented, in 2001, a dissertation entitled “Contribution to the Study of the Geochemical Correlation between Chalcolithic Pottery from the Zêzere Valley and the Clays of Tomar.”

This research work took place in parallel with his academic career, that began at the Polytechnic Institute of Tomar in 1991, in the Department of Art, Archaeology; and Restoration, developing an interest in studying ceramic materials in the context of art and archaeology.

As a docent, visiting and associate professor, he has also taught at the University of Cape Verde in the field of Museography and Cultural Heritage, where he offered the course Landscape and Natural Territory; at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil, in the field of Landscape Archaeology; as well as at several universities in Spain, Italy, and France in related areas.

With regard to his main area of scientific research, he has focused on developing research projects in the field of materials science, particularly on designing mortars compatible with heritage preservation, as well as studying the physical and chemical characteristics of materials for conservation purposes. His contributions in this field

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have been widely recognized by his peers, leading to numerous invitations to join inter-university and multidisciplinary research teams.

Throughout his scientific career, João Coroado has co-authored numerous publications and articles in reputed international journals. His extensive list of national and international publications demonstrates his solid engagement with materials science applied to Conservation and Restoration which has granted him the respect of his peers.

In addition to his academic and scientific work, João Coroado also made his mark institutionally in terms of organizational management.

In 2003, he became Head of the Department of Conservation and Restoration at the Tomar Higher School of Technology (ESTT), where he played a key role in modernizing the laboratories and promoting the internationalization of the degree program in Conservation and Restoration. Furthermore, João Coroado, throughout this period, was involved in the supervision and co-supervision of a number of Doctoral students, as well as in the coordination of outstanding research projects, such as “TACELO - studies for the conservation of the monumental terracotta sculptures of the Alcobaça Monastery”.

In 2010, he took up the position of director of the Tomar Higher Technical School (ESTT), where he undertook the mission of promoting research at the intersection of the technology, the arts, and the humanities, while also fostering the dissemination of these skills at regional, national, and international levels.

In 2015, he was appointed Vice-President of IPT, where he continued his previous work and played a leading role in establishing two Research and Development Units: Technology, Restoration and Enhancement of the Arts (TECHN&ART) and the Smart Cities Research Centre (Ci2), both approved and funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology.

In 2019, he was elected President of the Polytechnic Institute of Tomar. Building on the experience gained in previous positions, João Coroado introduced a series of reforms that ultimately transformed the Polytechnic Institute of Tomar into the current Polytechnic University of Tomar.

Alongside his academic, scientific, and professional career, his commitment to responding to the needs of the local community and his remarkable contribution to the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals stand out.

The promotion of initiatives fostering community engagement and regional integration have intensified. Cooperation agreements with local governments, as well as with intermunicipal entities and business associations, are reinforced with the aim of exploring opportunities for technology and knowledge transfer and for the development of research projects across a wide range of scientific fields.

In particular, projects focused on cultural heritage and regional development have been actively encouraged and supported during his presidency, ensuring that

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IPT acted as an effective driver of economic and social growth, both within its region of influence and at the national level.

Taking all of the above into consideration, João Coroados's commitment to sustainability and heritage preservation becomes evident.

Moreover, his ability to anticipate challenges and lead crucial changes has also been demonstrated, notably in spearheading the creation of the KreativEU University Alliance.

Crucial initiatives such as this, along with those previously mentioned have enabled IPT releasing itself from the peripheral, small-town higher education institution that it held for many years to becoming a Higher Education Institution operating on an international level, committed to its mission of democratizing the access to knowledge in a pluralistic environment where several European traditions interact and negotiate, with the purpose of preserving and disseminating European Union's humanist values.

Prof . Dr. Eugénio Pina de Almeida,
Polytechnic University of Tomar

**A Contribution for the Doctor Honoris Causa Academic Title Awarding to
Prof. João Paulo Pereira De Freitas Coroado**



Presently the President of the Polytechnic University of Tomar (IPT), João Coroado has been connected to this Higher Education Institution for more than 30 years. Holder of a BA degree in Geology, awarded by the University of Coimbra in 1990 (Portugal), along with an MA degree in Geochemistry and a PhD degree in Geosciences both awarded by the University of Aveiro (Portugal), in 1994 and 2001 respectively, he made a name for himself in the field of Conservation and Restoration, which ultimately, would link him to the preservation of cultural goods.

Regarding his scientific achievements, he has been engaged in Research Projects funded by the Operational Programme for Science, Technology and Innovation (POCTI), resulting from the European Regional Development Fund, in the domain of the Materials Science with the aim of developing mortars compatible with heritage preservation while also looking into the physical and-chemical characterization of materials with view to their conservation. The recognition of his expertise by his peers has led to invitations to integrate inter-university and multidisciplinary research teams. A case in point is the project “ A Multidisciplinary approach to the anchoring, alterability and conservation of Soares dos Reis' geomaterial sculptural work: reassessment of museological paradigms and creation of value for changing societies through cultural heritage” (2018-2021), a joint venture funded by the

Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology and led by the Portuguese Catholic University in collaboration with the University of Aveiro and the University of Minho. Additionally, one other domain that has claimed much of his attention is indoor air quality control given its connection to building materials preservation.

Nevertheless, two of projects of the most notorious studies in which he was involved were “TACELO - Studies for the Conservation of Monumental Terracotta Sculptures from Alcobaça Monastery (2011-2014)” and the technical study involving the materials characterization of the 1920 sculpture representing Our Lady of Fátima, which is in the Chapel of the Apparitions in Fátima (Portugal), and that led to an exclusive and short stay of the sculpture at IPT’s Conservation and Restoration Laboratory in 2013. Thus, a demonstration of the Shrine of Fátima and the Portuguese Episcopal Conference’s trust in the scientific team chosen by João Coroado to lead this process and of which he was the Principal Researcher. Moreover, João Coroado’s role was also central, as the Director of the Tomar’s School of Technology, one of IPT’s schools, in establishing the cooperation protocol with the Shrine of Fátima. An achievement that results from his expertise and credibility as the responsible for a Conservation and Restoration laboratory of international reference.

Throughout his scientific career, João Coroado has co-authored several publications and articles in reputed international journals. Of the many possibilities available, emphasis will be placed on the list that follows:

Ferraz, E., Gamelas, J.A.F., Coroado, J. *et al.* (2019). Recycling Waste Seashells to Produce Calcitic Lime: Characterization and Wet Slaking Reactivity. *Waste Biomass Valor* **10**, 2397–2414

Ferraz, E., Gamelas, J.A.F., Coroado, J. *et al.* (2018). Eggshell waste to produce building lime: calcium oxide reactivity, industrial, environmental and economic implications. *Mater Struct* **51**, 115.

Chaves, R. C., Lima, A., Coroado, J. *et al.* (2017). Medieval and early modern ceramics from Azemmour (Morocco) - Textural, mineralogical and chemical analysis. *Journal of Archaeological Science Reports*, **21**, 1152–1162.

Cachim, P. B., Morais, M. M., Coroado, J., Lopes, N., & Velosa, A. L. (2011). Behaviour of limecrete under fire conditions. *Fire and Materials*, **36**(4), 288–296.

Coroado, J., Paiva, H., Velosa, A., & Ferreira, V. M. (2010). Characterization of Renders, Joint Mortars, and Adobes from Traditional Constructions in Aveiro (Portugal). *International Journal of Architectural Heritage*, **4**(2), 102–114.

Coroado, J., Marques, J., Gomes, C., & Rocha, F. (2005). Propiedades cerámicas de las arcillas de la cantera de Asseiceira (Tomar, Portugal). *Materiales de Construcción*, **55**(279), 5–16.

His extensive list of publications, both national and international, is thus demonstrative of his solid engagement with materials science applied to Conservation and Restoration which has granted him the respect of his peers.

João Coroado has also excelled as an education manager. Starting in 2003, he was the Director of IPT's Department of Conservation and Restoration, a position he occupied till 2010 when he became de Director of Tomar's School of Technology. In 2015 he was nominated IPT's Vice-President and in 2019 he was elected President of the Polytechnic University of Tomar. Invested with the experience gained in previous educational management positions, João Coroado initiates several changes which would lead to the upgrade of IPT from a Polytechnic Institute to a Polytechnic University. These changes were made manifest in the pioneering of the digital transformation of the Polytechnic University of Tomar by implementing **online learning platforms**, establishing a **Laboratory for Pedagogical Innovation and Distance Education (LIED)** which was responsible for integrating **technology-enhanced teaching methods** and assisting in the development of remote learning infrastructures.

He was also successful in expanding IPT's global reach and in fostering an interdisciplinary approach to learning. This was accomplished by establishing international partnerships – the most prominent example being the KreativEU consortium – by promoting student and faculty mobility programs and by increasing the number of joint degree programs with foreign institutions. Furthermore, he broke down traditional academic silos by encouraging interdisciplinary research and collaborative projects, a process that was propelled by the **foundation of two Research and Development Units**, namely the Centre for Technology, Restoration and Arts Enhancement (TECHN&ART) and the Smart Cities Research Centre (Ci2), while hosting a Management Unit of the Geosciences Centre (CEGEO) of the University of Coimbra all of which are funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology, which functions as an endorsement of the quality and excellence of the research being developed there.

Under João Coroado's leadership IPT's mission and linkage with **sustainable development goals** and **the needs of the local community** where affirmed. The promotion of initiatives involving **community engagement** and **regional integration** have grown stronger. Cooperation protocols amidst Medio-Tejo region's local governments as well as with intermunicipal entities, local non-governmental agencies, such as ADIRN - Association for the Integrated Development of Northern Ribatejo -- and entrepreneurial associations like NERSANT- Business association of the Santarém region, are reinforced with the aim of exploring transfer of knowledge opportunities and partnerships leading to future internship placements. Furthermore, projects focused on cultural heritage and regional development, such as *PAPER TRAILS: Post-industrial histories, technical memories and art practices in Tomar*; *MURARTE: Documentation of the Riachos Murals with a view to their Sustainable Preservation*, and *Conservation and Creativity: Cultural heritage in transformation*, to mention but a few, were encouraged and supported under his presidency, thus ensuring that IPT acts as a catalyst for effective economic and social growth in the Tomar region.

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Having all of what has been mentioned in consideration, João Coroados's compromise with sustainability and concern for heritage preservation becomes clear. Moreover, his capacity to anticipate challenges and to lead crucial changes has also been demonstrated, namely in heading a process for the creation of the KreativEU University Alliance. Crucial changes such as this and the ones already mentioned have led to IPT releasing itself from the peripheral, small-town higher education institution that it held for many years to becoming a Higher Education Institution operating on an international level, committed to its mission of democratizing the access to knowledge in a plural environment where several European traditions dialogue and negotiate with the purpose of preserving and disseminating European Union's humanist values.

Prof. Dr. Hermínia Sol

Polytechnic University of Tomar

Contribution to Laudatio in honour of Professor João Paulo Pereira de Freitas Coroado on the occasion of the conferral of the honorary title of Doctor Honoris Causa of Valahia University of Târgoviște



Professor João Paulo Pereira de Freitas Coroado, President of the Polytechnic Institute of Tomar, Portugal, and President of the European University Alliance KreativEU, is renowned both in his native land and far beyond its borders as one of the foremost authorities in the field of cultural heritage. He stands as a distinguished figure of brilliance, a consummate academic, and an eminent strategist attuned to the contemporary currents of museology and cultural heritage studies.

Professor Coroado commenced his academic formation at the University of Coimbra, Faculty of Science and Technology, Portugal, where he defended a bachelor's thesis in geology (1990), followed by a master's thesis in geochemistry at the University of Aveiro, Department of Geosciences (1995). Both endeavours were closely tied to Portugal's cultural patrimony and inspired him to pursue an original doctoral investigation entitled *"The Ceramic Properties of the Clays of the Lithostratigraphic Units 'Aveiro Clays' and 'Tomar Clays',"* successfully completed in 2001 at the University of Aveiro.

His academic career was launched in the early 1990s at the Polytechnic Institute of Tomar, where he first served as assistant, rising steadily through the academic ranks to associate professor in 1999 and full professor in 2002. Alongside his teaching and research, Professor Coroado revealed remarkable managerial acumen and a spirit of academic initiative, holding numerous positions of responsibility within the institution. Among these were Director of the Department of Conservation and Restoration (2003–2010), member of the Statutory Committee (2008–2009),

member of the General Council (2009–2013), member of the Pedagogical Council (2003–2014), Director of the Organic Unit (2010–2015), and member of the Board of Administration (2015–2019). Between 2015 and 2019, he served as Vice-President of the Institute, and since 2019 he has held its highest office as President.

Beyond his academic and administrative responsibilities, Professor Coroado has distinguished himself through the development and implementation of an impressive array of research projects, which demonstrate his vision as a scholar, his capacity as a manager, and his leadership as the head of both national and international teams. Among the most significant of recent years may be cited:

TACELO – Studies for the conservation of monumental terracotta sculptures of the Alcobaça Monastery (2011–2014),

AZ-MED – Medieval tile in Portugal: a provenance study (2012–2015),

Indoor air quality regulation through eco-efficient mortars (2018–2020),

A multidisciplinary approach to the alteration, susceptibility, and conservation of the sculptural geomaterial oeuvre of Soares dos Reis: reassessing museological paradigms and creating societal value through Cultural Heritage (2018–2021).

No less remarkable is his scientific production, which impresses both by its multidisciplinary breadth and by its practical applicability to the conservation and restoration of cultural artefacts in ceramic, glass, stone, and other materials. His academic achievements once again confirm his stature as an outstanding researcher, a project leader of vision, and a valued member of versatile research teams.

In view of the professional merits here set forth, it is my considered conviction that Professor João Paulo Pereira de Freitas Coroado is most eminently deserving of the honorary title of **Doctor Honoris Causa** of Valahia University of Târgoviște. By bestowing this distinction, the University publicly acknowledges and celebrates his scholarly accomplishments. We are deeply honoured to welcome him into our academic community.

VIVANT PROFESSORES! VIVAT ACADEMIA!

Prof. Dr. Hab. Sergiu Musteață

Valahia University of Târgoviște

Acceptance Speech

Magnificent Rector Ioan Corneliu Sălișteanu, Honourable Rectors, Presidents, Vice-Chancellors, Professors, Distinguished Participants, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the Magnificent Rector Ioan Corneliu Sălișteanu for his warm welcome, and to the Senate of Valahia University of Târgoviște for bestowing upon me the distinguished title of Doctor Honoris Causa. This is a deep honour, and I am fully aware that it would not have been possible without the collaboration and support of all those with whom I have had the privilege to work, and learn from, throughout my academic journey.

By training, I am a geologist, and my research has been always focused on clays and clay-based materials. Yet, by a fortunate twist of fate, although my initial ambition was to work in the industry, I was invited, when I finished my BA degree, to temporarily replace a Professor from the University of Coimbra who was beginning a sabbatical and was a professor also at Polytechnic Institute of Tomar. This six-month agreement with this professor led me to stay at the Polytechnic Institute of Tomar, where I began working with archaeological ceramics and teaching in the field of Conservation and Restoration. A program I would later come to as the principal Professor and then as the Head of the Department... and Here I am, today!

Over time, my involvement in conservation and restoration has evolved into a broader engagement with culture and memory studies, enriched by my fondness for local traditions, of which folklore has always held a special place. Among the projects I valued most, I would like to highlight the creation of the Research and Development Unit TECHN&ART at the Polytechnic Institute of Tomar, as well as the European University Alliance - KreativEU. On this occasion, I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed to these initiatives and to their success.

This distinction is not only a recognition of past achievements but also a call to future responsibility. Our mission as academics is not merely to preserve knowledge, but to foster inclusiveness, dialogue, and innovation, deepening our understanding of the cultures that shape our identities and history. In this spirit, allow me to share a necessary reflection that has guided my involvement in these and other projects: the last purpose of our, as a University Alliance, efforts must be to promote a better understanding of our cultures.

There are several traits that distinguish homo sapiens from other beings, even from those closest to us in taxonomic terms. Among all our peculiarities, we are the only beings, within our system, who dynamically interconnect the past, in the shape of culture and memory, with the present, which is life and the things that surround us, and with the future, which is the dream. This idea is well expressed in

Confessions, in the Book XI, Chapter XX, by Aurelius Augustine of Hippo (Saint Augustine) (354–430).

To dream is to engage in the projection of tomorrow: as the Portuguese poet and scientist Rómulo de Carvalho, under the pseudonym António Gedeão (1905–1997), wrote:

“(...) dreams drive life,
And (...) whenever human beings dream
The world leaps forward....”

Human beings are about the future, about planning, about ambition, about anticipating joy and suffering. Thus, this is more than fleeting opportunism, genetic memory, and far more than the instinct that essentially governs the animal kingdom. Living without dreams, without ideas, without will or curiosity, living without a sense of the future, even if utopian, condemns us merely to survive, to await the end enduring the endless repetition of identical days. It condemns us to sadness, and often, to resentment.

The present and the future of human beings are supported by the cultural map, nourished by memory, which interlinks the “body of resources inherited from the past”. These are embodied in our Cultural Heritage through interventions, documents or integrated material or immaterial anthropic expressions, implemented in the past and translated into our cultural diversity.

This Culture, of Cultures made of Cultures, in a fractal relationship, also referred to as the “fingerprint of God”, bears witness to and expresses values, habits and traditions that take shape in knowledge, beliefs, rites, laws, codes, customs and all other capacities. These, in turn, encompass art, literature, lifestyles and the ways of living together, acquired as individuals belonging to a... human society.

The mission of researchers in the study of Humankind is to search for missing links and reconstruct the supposed ways of living of past cultures from fragmentary evidence circumscribed to their material remains, as well as to establish relationship between the available set of data and the contemporary practices of societies that have experienced prolonged isolation and, as a result, have developed unique traditions and societal structures that differ significantly from those of more interconnected societies. This idea is grounded in the principle of natural causes, or actualism, that is, the use of the complete comparative model, formulated in the 18th century by James Hutton (1726–1797), which is still regarded as the method of greatest heuristic value for the study and understanding of the history of the Earth, despite the epistemological disagreements between the theories of Catastrophism, defended by Georges Cuvier (1769–1832), and that of Uniformitarianism, advanced by Charles Lyell (1797–1875).

The development of technological means of observation and recording made possible, through that principle, to confirm the theory of continental drift proposed by Alfred Wegener (1880–1930). This is now referred to as the theory of plate

tectonics, following the studies led in the 1960s, notably those of Harry Hess (1906–1969) and Robert Dietz (1914–1995) on seafloor spreading and further confirmed by Frederic Vine (1939–2024) and Drummond Matthews (1931–1997) through the mapping of magnetic stripe patterns on the floor of the Atlantic Ocean, which matched the reversals in the Earth’s magnetic field symmetrically along the rift.

Yet, despite the many scientific advancements facilitated by technological developments, one of humanity’s greatest achievements, after the emergence of consciousness, is trust. To have overcome the issues related to fear and suspicion of others—as mechanisms of self-defence and as shapers of closed, self-sufficient cultural identities, is a sign of an evolved, vibrant society, and rests above all on the bonds that unite peoples. Culture, expressed in heritage and memory, particularly in the preservation of identities shaped by what is unique, by what is shared, and by the duty not to forget, strengthens the bonds of tolerance and creativity, which form the foundation of a more realized citizenship and of collective well-being.

The history of European culture is rooted in dynamics that have favoured, above all, the parallel global flows of peoples rather than meridional ones. This effect is understood through the consideration of environmental, geographic and protein-related factors, which reflect similar thermal gradients and broad, low-altitude corridors that facilitated mobility, leaving their mark on shared cultural influences. In this context, the cultural diversity of these peoples reveals many close identity and heritage bonds, far beyond the effects of “political-administrative” borders or ideological obsessions, which filter and flatten cultures into propaganda formats, constructing and imposing standardised cultures far removed from the freedoms of creation and participation.

The values of both scholarly and popular cultures are materialised in the plurality of symbolic, artistic and heritage manifestations, embracing traditions as well as contemporary creations, within a continuous collective creative process in which we are, and should all, be involved.

Hence, brilliance is than the successive application of knowledge and of the intrinsic, symbiotic memory or heritage of diverse influences and eras, connecting tangible and intangible heritage in a collective creative process embodied by one or more protagonists. From this process arise the great advances in the history of humanity, whether scientific and technological or humanistic and artistic. A striking demonstration of this fact was captured by the photographer Benjamin Couprie at the 1927 Solvay Conference, which brought together 29 scientists whose brilliance that is, creativity and innovation applied to available knowledge enabled advances later distinguished with Nobel Prizes in the fields of chemistry and physics. These prizes, in effect, represent some of the greatest achievements of humanity in science and technology.

However, the most enriching cultural differences, and those that should form part of the multicultural wealth of Europe, are found in those spaces most constrained by barriers or natural physical bottlenecks, which restrict flows and, by

their retention effect, benefit from less cultural homogenisation and a longer temporal preservation of both intangible and material identity elements. These, in turn, allow for a deeper understanding of our history. That is, of our collective memory.

The recognition and importance of preserving and valuing cultural diversity, culture and education are enshrined in an extensive list of declarations and manifestos and expressed in various documents issued by prominent global organisations such as the UN, UNESCO and the European Council, among others.

The safeguarding of universal cultural wealth, sustained by major scientific, technological, artistic and humanistic advances, which embody and mark decisive moments and achievements in the world, is the outcome of a heritage grounded in cultural diversity, as well as of the stimuli arising from the transdisciplinary integration of cultures, the arts and heritage as fields that promote creativity and innovation, but also from opportunities and from deliberate, dedicated practice.

Yet safeguarding our cultural and natural heritage, besides being a social responsibility, is a calling incumbent upon us all. To preserve our past in the present allows us to reflect upon and debate the future we wish to shape, and the collective responsibility we bear as participatory, open and creative democracies. Such an aspiration is only possible through the active engagement of citizens, within an open and democratic environment of discussion, in which well-founded constructive criticism becomes the praxis of mutual understanding.

Every human society fosters its cohesion based on “common activities and projects, but also on shared values, which constitute other aspects of the will to live together. Over time, these material and spiritual bonds are enriched and become, in the collective and individual memory, the cultural heritage of a people”, as Jacques Delors (1925–2023) and others wrote in the Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (1996).

Human development cannot be understood or achieved without recognising the role of cultural creation, in close connection with education, training, research and science, within an environment of humanistic and technological symbiosis. What distinguishes development from backwardness is culture, education, and rigour. In other words, the capacity to learn and to apply knowledge in new situations.

For this reason, investment in education must be a priority. More enlightened citizens are capable of publicly expressing both their individual and collective interests, fostering behaviours that are more organised, cooperative, and far-reaching. This idea is intrinsic to the imagination of democratic societies.

However, contemporary societies tend to organise themselves around actions and decisions that meet immediate needs. This tendency is closely linked to the logic of the consumer society, as analysed by Gilles Lipovetsky, particularly in his 1983 book *Les temps hypermodernes*, but also throughout his extensive bibliography. In this perspective, the present is valued over both the past and the future, and collective as well as individual decisions are often guided by impulses, momentary desires, and the

search for instant gratification, an expression of emotional rather than rational thinking as the dominant force in human choices, as observed by Daniel Kahneman, Nobel Prize laureate in Economics in 2002, in his 2011 book *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. This is reflected in social, political, and economic practices that prioritise the short term, often to the detriment of more enduring or meaningful cultural constructions.

This immediacy contributes to the dilution of specific cultural effects, as culture comes to be consumed as a product, losing its identity and historical character. Traditions, values, and local narratives are often replaced by global and ephemeral trends, promoted by mass media, social networks, and globally operating markets. Culture thus becomes homogeneous, fragmented and superficial, hindering the preservation of authentic cultural expressions and the construction of a solid collective memory.

The idea of “technological and digital distractions made possible through the electric plug”, as Neil Postman pointedly observed in his 1985 book *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, indelibly reiterates that cultural discourse has become more trivial and inconsequential, rendering available information simplistic, unsubstantial, ahistorical and devoid of context, transmitted from the perspective of entertainment and the pursuit of spectacle. Likewise, the thought of Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979) in his 1964 work *One-Dimensional Man*, the reflections of Zygmunt Bauman (1925–2017), especially his concept of liquid modernity, and Guy Debord (1931–1994) with his theory of the society of the spectacle, among others, demonstrate that immediacy not only impoverishes culture but also constrains social transformation.

These dynamics generate societies marked by volatility and symbolic emptiness, where consumption not only shapes behaviour, but also redefines the very sense of belonging and of social construction. The individual is at once freer and more vulnerable, living in a world of infinite choices but lacking the deep roots that sustain identity. This leads to the erosion of specific cultural effects, that is, the collective memory of each territory, whether through the weakening of intergenerational transmission of languages, rituals, art or architecture, or through their replacement by a global culture, often unnoticed by individuals and communities, and without the time for adaptation. Such a process depersonalises territories and behaviours, rendering them inadequate to local natural contexts, which had long been symbiotically harmonised through the anthropisation of landscapes.

If on the one hand, the paradox of the information overload that we experience, most often poorly substantiated and insufficiently grounded, generates noise, fosters demagogic and populist opinion, and encourages passivity of intervention.

On the other hand, artificial intelligence (AI), by democratising access to information and facilitating the cross-referencing and processing of data, constitutes a promising pedagogical tool. Its potential is evident in the personalisation of teaching, the support it provides for interdisciplinary research, and the acceleration

of the production of useful, contextualised knowledge. Moreover, AI can identify patterns, predict trends, and propose innovative solutions to complex problems, playing a relevant role in inclusion by adapting content to different audiences and promoting equity in access to education and information.

Nevertheless, its use raises significant concerns, as it may intensify the informational spectacle, induce cognitive dependency, and reinforce opinion bubbles fuelled by algorithms that privilege attention and immediate engagement over depth. Such dynamics carry the risk of “light” cultural homogenisation, insofar as they favour popular and global content at the expense of diversity and cultural specificity.

It is important to emphasise that the automation of knowledge production may weaken critical reflection and intellectual autonomy. For AI to become a true ally of education and science, its use must be accompanied by solid training, grounded in ethical and pedagogical principles, ensuring a balance between technological innovation and social responsibility. At the same time, it is essential to acknowledge that the information generated by AI systems results from the processing of vast datasets, often guided by statistical models that privilege median tendencies and dominant patterns. This process, while effective in generalisation, tends to marginalise outliers and reduce the capacity to anticipate rare, high-impact events frequently described as “black swans”, as observed in the extensive work of Nassim Taleb, particularly in his 2007 book *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*.

Thus, the pedagogical and scientific use of AI must be accompanied by critical awareness of its epistemological limitations and of the risks inherent in excessive reliance on the automation of knowledge production.

I believe that the responsibility incumbent upon academia, and upon all of us in the higher education of our students, in the production of useful knowledge, skills and competences, and in the capacity to mediate between academic and common language, is fundamental to narrowing perceptual gaps and to fostering a better understanding of the relevance of science and culture for the holistic formation of the individual and for the exercise of active, conscious and responsible citizenship.

The perspectives and concerns set out here are indelibly inscribed in the broader project of KreativEU – Knowledge & Creative European University. This project is the outcome of the intense sharing of vision by all the partners who today integrate this Alliance, whose primary aim is to recognise the potential of creativity and innovation resulting from the diversity of Europe’s cultural heritage in the activities of education, research and knowledge transfer inherent in the universality of university studies. I believe that the strategic and structural cooperation embodied in the vision of KreativEU is one of the pillars for promoting cohesion and inclusion, as well as the pursuit of concepts, methods, and innovative solutions that may contribute to a more sustainable and harmonious future.

Doctor Honoris Causa João Paulo Pereira de Freitas Coroado

Magnificent Rector Ioan Corneliu Sălișteanu, Honourable Rectors, Presidents, Vice-Chancellor, Professors, Distinguished Participants, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

I would like to emphasise once again the honour I feel in being awarded this title. This distinction represents the effort of all of those who, whether directly or indirectly, contributed to this celebration that has brought us together in this Universitatea Valahia of Târgoviște Great Hall, as we build on the legacy of those who came before us.

Finally, let me to express my gratitude to my family, my colleagues, my students, and to all of those who, whether openly or anonymously, have contributed to the meaning that this honourable and honorary title holds for me.

Pe 30 septembrie 2025 la Universitatea Valahia din Târgoviște.

Prof. Dr. João Paulo Pereira de Freitas Coroado,

President of Polytechnic University of Tomar

President of KreativEU - Knowledge & Creativity European University Alliance



UNIVERSITAS STUDIORUM VALACHIAE TERGOVISTENSIS DACOROMANIAE

Nos,

Magnificus Rector, una cum communitate academica, atque in totius Senatus
Universitatis consensu, ad omnium, quos interest, iustam notitiam praesentium tenore hac
diplomate constituimus et confirmamus

Dominum

JOAO PAULO PEREIRA DE FREITAS COROADO

Professorem Eminentissimum et Rectorem in Instituto Polytechnico Tomarensi,
Lusitaniae, Praesidem Aliae Europaeae Universitatum KREATIVEu, virum eximiae eruditionis ac meritorum
in campo scientiarum, innovationis atque cooperationis internationalis,

titulum

DOCTOR HONORIS CAUSA

solemni et perpetuo iure tribuimus, creavimus, pronuntiavimus, declaravimus et
hoc laudabile et honorificum decretum sigillo universitatis munitum, nostraque subscriptione firmatum, dari curavimus.
Haec dignitas summo cum honore confertur, in signum publicae laudis, aestimationis atque gratitudinis.



Magister Senatus,

Prof. Aggr. Univ. Claudia GILIA

Claudia Gilia

Magnificus Rector,

Prof. Aggr. Univ. Ioan-Corneliu SĂLIȘTEANU

Ioan-Corneliu Sălișteanu

Datum
Tergovistae Urbis
Die XXX mensis Septembris A.D. MMXXV

Doctor Honoris Causa



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