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# RECOVERED VOICES, NEWFOUND QUESTIONS

FAMILY ARCHIVES AND  
HISTORICAL RESEARCH

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## PERSONAL AND FAMILY FONDS AT THE ARCHIVE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA

**ABSTRACT:** This article aims at disseminating the existing personal and family fonds at the Archive of the University of Coimbra (AUC), unveiling some of their characteristics and trying to understand the reason why they are there, while seeking to demonstrate the importance of these fonds as sources of information for research to the knowledge of producers and the institutions related to them, in order to enable the construction of the cultural, social and economic memory of the places they belonged to (i.e., the construction of the production context of the fond).

**Keywords:** personal and family fonds; Archive of the University of Coimbra

**RESUMO:** Este artigo pretende dar a conhecer os fundos pessoais e familiares existentes no Arquivo da Universidade de Coimbra (AUC), revelar algumas das suas características, tentar entender as razões para aí se encontrarem, enquanto procuramos evidenciar a importância destes fundos como fontes de informação para a investigação, para o conhecimento dos produtores e das instituições por onde passaram, para permitir a construção da memória cultural, social e económica dos locais a que pertenceram, isto é, do contexto de produção do fundo.

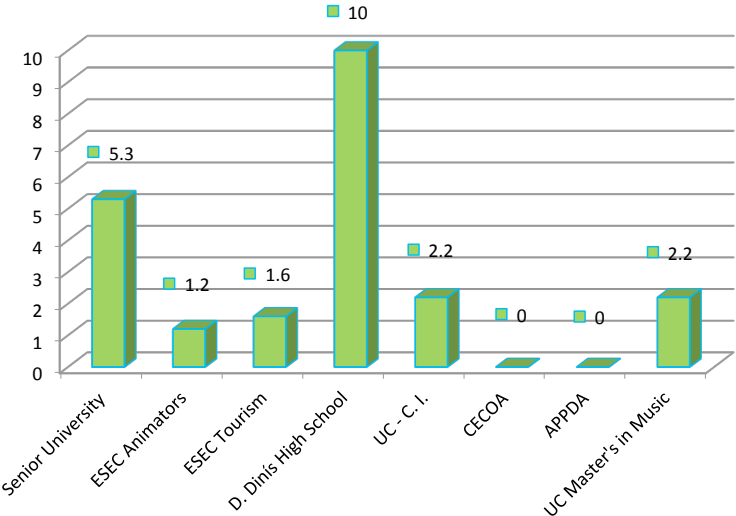
**Palavras-chave:** fundos pessoais e familiares; Arquivo da Universidade de Coimbra

### Introduction

Let us begin by clarifying the concept of personal or family fond. According to the Guidelines for Archival Description (ODA, Portugal. DGARQ, 2007: 302), it consists of a group of archival documents, regardless of their shape or format, organically produced and/or accrued and used by a person, family [...], in the course of their activities and duties". It is also convenient to ascertain

the degree of importance that the so-called common citizens assign to these archives, how they rank in their priorities, and what is their need to have them organized and bequeathed for posterity. When lacking systematic and more reliable data, at the Archive of the University of Coimbra (hereafter AUC) we usually conduct a small, unassuming poll whenever we welcome organized visits to our facilities. Therefore, regardless of whether they are comprised of students from high schools (10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> grades, mostly within the scope of the discipline of History), vocational training courses, graduate degrees, Master’s degrees, post-graduate degrees, and even universities for the elderly, we put forward a simple and direct “tease”: “Who of you has a personal archive?” The data obtained from the latest visits is compiled in the following graph.

**Percentage of visitors with a personal archive**



**Graph 1.** Percentage of visitors who state having a personal archive.

As shown, the results are just short of disheartening for an archivist, with an expressive mean of only 2,1%. This rule does not seem to be influenced by the level of schooling, only slightly by age (reflected in the answers of the students from the universities for the elderly). Those who displayed more awareness of the role of these archives were the History students, in the

Humanities, who confirmed the need to constantly resort to documentation for their studies. Most of the respondents — a mean percentage over 97% — did not display to grasp the importance of the personal archive, both for them and for future generations. This generalized “neglect” in preserving and conveying personal and family life documents probably is one of the causes which contributes to a reduced number of archives of this type entrusted to the AUC, proving that few, and generally only tardily, awake to the existence and the importance of preserving their personal archive. Only some — although extremely rare — are aware that the documents in their archive attest to their life’s journey, namely their roots, genesis, experiences, academic and professional background, hobbies, existence and functioning of the institutions which were part of their lives, preferences, relationships, etc., all materialized in the documents produced and received throughout someone’s existence. This late awareness is made worse by inadequate selection criteria, more or less explicitly, as demonstrated both by the limited documentation we get and the description instruments created (although very scarcely) by fond producers.

## **Personal and family fonds at the Archive of the University of Coimbra**

The personal and family fonds at the AUC reflect the aforementioned scarcity, being quite inexpressive when compared to those of other groups (Graph 2), representing a sparse 4,8% of the fonds (525) at the AUC.

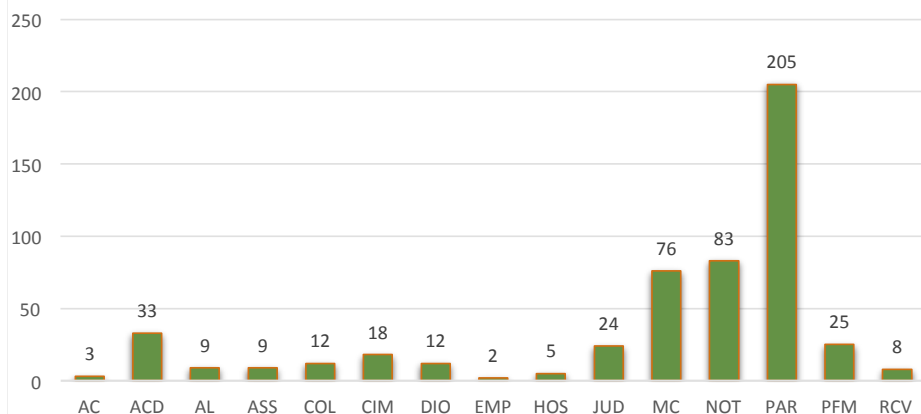
To a great extent, they are also scarce in terms of the number of installation units, as shown in Graph 3.

As shown above, only the Jardim de Vilhena (JV) fond consists of more than fifty installation units (i.u.) — an expressive 481 i.u.; the remaining fonds are comprised of a scarce number of units, 9,9 on average. Of the 25 fonds<sup>1</sup>

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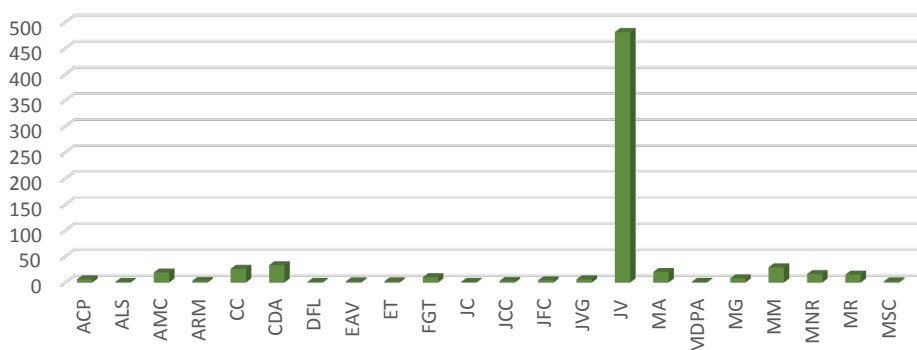
<sup>1</sup> In the fonds guide of the AUC, only 24 fonds belonging to this group are described, since the 25<sup>th</sup> was recently identified and its study published in *BAUC* vol. 30 (newsletter of the AUC).

## Distribution of AUC funds per group



**Graph 2.** Distribution of AUC funds per group<sup>2</sup>.

## Installation units per fund



**Graph 3.** Number of installation units per fund<sup>3</sup>.

The guide is published as PAIVA (2015) and is also available digitally at: [http://www.uc.pt/auc/fundos/2015\\_GuiaFundos](http://www.uc.pt/auc/fundos/2015_GuiaFundos).

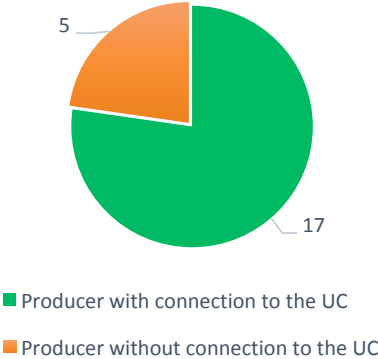
The description of each fund may also be accessed through the Archeevo front-office archival app, on the AUC website at <http://pesquisa.auc.uc.pt/>.

<sup>2</sup> Codes of fond groups at the AUC: AC — Central Administration; ACD — Decentralised Central Administration; AL — Local Administration; ASS — Associations; COL — Collections; CIM — Brotherhoods and Charities; DIO — Diocesan; EMP — Companies; ELU — Schools, High Schools and Universities; HOS — Hospitals; JUD — Judicial; MC — Monastic; NOT — Notary; PAR — Parochial; PFM — Personal and Family; RCV — Civil Registry.

<sup>3</sup> Codes for personal and family funds at the AUC which share the reference PT/AUC/PFM/: ACP — Alberto Cupertino Pessoa; ALS — António Luís de Seabra; AMC — Albino

comprised in the group of personal and family funds, with reference code PT/AUC/PFM, there are 22 funds which include contemporary documentation — regarding which we express our opinion — that is distributed throughout 689 installation units. Despite the aforementioned scarcity of funds, in light of what was produced and received by the producer, most of them are of great informative relevance, given the uniqueness of each fund and, often enough, given the unprecedented nature of the information it holds. Unaware of the reason which determined the inclusion of most of these funds into the AUC — given the heterogeneity of the information we find here — I decided to start by investigating a possible connection between the producer and the University of Coimbra (UC), since it could establish a hypothetical motivation.

### Connection between the fund producer and the UC



**Graph 4.** Distribution of personal and family funds at the AUC, according to the connection between the producers and the University of Coimbra (UC).

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Maria Cordeiro; ARM — António da Rocha Madahil; CC — Counts of Cunha; CDA — House and Duchy of Aveiro; DFL — D. Francisco de Lemos; EAV — Elisa Augusta Vilarés; ET — Eusébio Tamagnini; FGT — Francisco Gomes Teixeira; JC — Joaquim de Carvalho; JCC — Júlio da Costa Cabral; JFC — José Feliciano de Castilho; JVG — José Martins Vicente Gonçalves; JV — Jardim de Vilhena; MA — Marquis of Angeja; MDPA — Miguel Dias Pessoa Amorim; MG — Majorat of Garridos; MM — Mário Monteiro; MNR — Mário Nogueira Ramos; MR — Mário Ramos; MSC — Margarida Santos Coelho.



Unsurprisingly, we observe that over 77% of these fonds were produced by people who, at a certain point in their personal story, were connected to the UC, regardless of being students, professors, non-teaching staff, heads of organizational units or scientific departments, or chancellors<sup>4</sup>. Within the group of fonds whose producer shows seemingly no relationship with the UC (corresponding to 23% of the total), there is a fond which stands out, belonging to the owner of a teaching institution in Coimbra — Colégio Alexandre Herculano — which was certainly created with the desire to preserve the memory of the institution she founded<sup>5</sup>; and another fond belonging to a private individual<sup>6</sup>, whose motivation is yet to be determined. The three remaining fonds belong to people or families who were deprived of their noble titles and respective assets, as a result of confiscation laws, and their archives were integrated into the *Arquivos dos Próprios Nacionais*, having as the immediate transfer source the Treasury Departments of the district they belonged to. We do not discard the possible connection between a member of these noble families and the UC; however, that was certainly not the reason that motivated the inclusion of the fond in the AUC. These last fonds are essentially comprised of documentation pertaining to the creation of assets, and property and financial management of movable and immovable assets. Therefore, most volumes pertain to measurements and delimitations, generally speaking, classified by toponymic criteria, and are a source of privileged information for studies on local memory, property transactions, social and economic activities, cultures and land use, as well as on regional and local history and respective institutions.

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<sup>4</sup> There are several fonds belonging to chancellors of the University of Coimbra, but also of the University of Porto, as is the case with the following fond: Francisco Gomes Teixeira (1886-1924), reference code: PT/AUC/PFM/FGT, book number: VI-3<sup>a</sup>E-5-4-1 to 10.

<sup>5</sup> Fond: Margarida Santos Coelho (1924-1979), reference code: PT/AUC/PFM/MSC. Given the scope and content, we assume that an archival study of the documentation may reveal the actual fond producer, while the current holder will become the donor. If this hypothesis is confirmed, the title must be changed, in order to foster the recovery of information.

<sup>6</sup> Fond: Miguel Dias Pessoa Amorim (1907-1923), reference code: PT/AUC/PFM/MDPA, book number: VI-3<sup>a</sup>D-1-4-2.

The fonds of renowned figures connected to the academic life of the UC, largely present, are excellent indirect, but pertinent, sources of in-depth knowledge on this institution which, in March 2018, completed 727 years of existence. Among these fonds abound essays, scientific notes, dissertations, monographs, caricatures, notebooks, photographs, textbooks, bibliography lists, student identification cards, records of problems in several scientific areas, transcribed documents, diplomas and certificates, separate prints, correspondence, among many other series. Besides personal information pertaining to each individual, these series contain relevant information regarding course syllabi, introductions to scientific contents, new courses and chairs, and endless information which, all together, recreates the development of knowledge in the UC and the country, as well as the life journey of the producers and of the people involved in the actions recorded. Written correspondence, so characteristic of these fonds, takes on particular relevance given the wealth of information it contains, uncovering personal and professional relationships which frequently reveal as much about people as their actions. Furthermore, correspondence, when occurring between great figures of science and culture, or of different nationalities, greatly unveils the cooperation between peers, and the respective exchange of knowledge and references to research sources, as well as the influences felt in the academic community, where new research lines, innovative techniques, and methodologies emerged and inspired the development of academic and scientific careers. These aspects are overtly noticeable in the fonds of university professors, such as the mathematician and politician Francisco Gomes Teixeira<sup>7</sup>,

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<sup>7</sup> Fond title: Francisco Gomes Teixeira (1886-1924); reference code: PT/AUC/PFM/FGT; book number: VI-3<sup>a</sup>E-5-4-1 to 10. He completed his academic education at the University of Coimbra, where he also began his career as a professor. He continued his professional career at the University of Porto, where he would become chancellor. Throughout his life he received several awards from the Royal Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences of Madrid, and the Binoux Award from the Academy of Sciences of France. He was distinguished with Honorary Doctorates from the Universities of Central Madrid, Toulouse and Santiago do Chile.



the distinguished astronomer Manuel dos Reis<sup>8</sup>, or the philosopher Joaquim de Carvalho<sup>9</sup>, to cite just three examples.

Regarding personal relationships, the correspondence genuinely unveils the individual, stripped of social constraints. Produced without vice, without any intention of being disclosed except to its recipients, the correspondence expresses convictions, affections, ideologies, desires, tastes, wills, ways of being, problem-solving strategies, concerns, motivations, beliefs and many other sides which often are hidden even from those closest. It is precisely this which the personal correspondence in the fond of António da Rocha Madahil uncovers<sup>10</sup>, a distinguished scholar who was the first curator of the AUC, between 1932 and 1953.

Other fonds reveal important family relationships, as is the case with the fond of *Dom* Francisco de Melo<sup>11</sup>, whose correspondence shows the close relationship with his brother, while unveiling unknown and highly relevant facets of the Marquis of Pombal, with whom both maintained a professional relationship and friendship. Furthermore, it uncovers aspects pertaining to

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<sup>8</sup> Fond title: Manuel dos Reis (1919-1983); reference code: PT/AUC/PFM/MR; book number: VI-3<sup>a</sup> Section-11-1. At the UC, he had a prominent academic and professional career, holding leadership positions at the Astronomic Observatory and the Mathematics Section of the FCTUC (Faculty of Sciences and Technology of the UC), and directing several scientific publications in the field. He was also a distinguished member of various cultural, national and international, institutions connected to the study of astronomy.

<sup>9</sup> Fond title: Joaquim de Carvalho (1921-1955); reference code: PT/AUC/PFM/JC; book number: VI-1<sup>a</sup>-D-4B-2-25. He was a prominent professor of the history of philosophy, pedagogy and ideas. He was distinguished with Honorary Doctorates from the Universities of Salamanca, Montpellier, and Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>10</sup> Fond title: António da Rocha Madahil; (production dates: 1906-1989; accrual dates: 1893-1969); reference code: PT/AUC/PFM/ARM; book number: VI-3<sup>a</sup>E-4B-2-22 to 24. He completed his studies at the University of Coimbra and held positions in several city institutions, namely: the José Falcão High School, the General Library of the University of Coimbra, the Archive and the Art Museum of the University of Coimbra, and the Machado de Castro Museum. He was the director of the Public Library and of the District Archive of Braga, and of the Municipal Museum of Ílhavo (maritime ethnography), which he also founded. He participated in several reference publications and was a member of prominent cultural and humanitarian institutions.

<sup>11</sup> Fond title: D. Francisco de Lemos (1775-1819); reference code: PT/AUC/PFM/DFL. He took office as chancellor of the UC in 1770, bearing witness to the reform implemented by the Marquis of Pombal. Authored by Ana Maria Leitão Bandeira, senior official of the AUC, the study of this fond and the transcription of most of the letters from his brother, João Pereira Ramos de Azeredo Coutinho, will be published in AUC's Newsletter no. XXX, in 2017.

the functioning of several institutions, at the time the fond producer was chancellor.

The documentation of these archives reveals curious sides of academic life; such is the case of the fond of Mário Nogueira Ramos<sup>12</sup>, where we find documents pertaining to the trips of the *Orfeão* and the *Tuna Académica* (choirs) of the UC; or the testimony of the academic strike of 1907 (March to April), organized by students who became known as the “Intransigentes”<sup>13</sup>, through a group photograph found in the fond of Mário Monteiro<sup>14</sup>.

Diplomatic correspondence between countries is also an added value of these fonds. A particularly prominent example is the fond of the counts of Cunha<sup>15</sup>; the positions they held determining the production of memories, drafts of treaties and conventions which provide us with documents to study the diplomatic relationships between Portugal and European nations at the time of kings João V and José I, as well as the history of the former Portuguese territories overseas in the eighteenth century.

The archive of Doctor António Luís de Seabra<sup>16</sup> comprises the original manuscript of the Portuguese Civil Code, which was approved by Charter Law on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1867 and remained in force for over a century, and demonstrates the performance of the duties he was charged with, but also the early days of

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<sup>12</sup> Fond title: Mário Nogueira Ramos (1729-1958); reference code: PT/AUC/PFM/MNR, book number: VI-3<sup>a</sup>-1-5-2 to VI-3<sup>a</sup>-1-5-17. He held, among others, the position of royal deputy prosecutor, in Tábua, and the position of mayor of Góis.

<sup>13</sup> This academic movement fought for the pedagogical, cultural, intellectual and political reform of the University of Coimbra, and became a nation-wide fight against the country's governance.

<sup>14</sup> Fond title: Mário Monteiro (1800-1900); reference code: PT/AUC/PFM/MM, book number: VI-3<sup>a</sup>D-5-5-1 to VI-3<sup>a</sup>D-5-5-29. He graduated in 1908 from the Faculty of Law of the University of Coimbra. He practiced law and devoted his spare time to writing poetry, novels and plays. His advocacy of certain political ideals led to his exile in Brazil.

<sup>15</sup> Fond title: Condes da Cunha (1648-1906); reference code: PT/AUC/PFM/CC, book number: VI-1<sup>a</sup>-D-4B-2-25. The counts held distinguished positions, namely as magistrates, diplomats, the govern of Portuguese colonies, as well as military positions. The fond was purchased in 1952, with funds granted by the Ministry of National Education.

<sup>16</sup> Fond title: António Luís de Seabra (1855-1856); reference code: PT/AUC/PFM/ALS, book number: V-3.<sup>a</sup>-safe no. 12. He graduated in Law from the University of Coimbra, and held many prominent positions, namely chancellor of the University of Coimbra (1866-1868), magistrate at the court of appeal in Porto and at the supreme court, deputy of the courts, minister of justice and ecclesiastic affairs, chairman of the chamber of deputies, among others.

the laws which regulated private affairs, and the evolution of Law in Portugal, a subject of the utmost relevance.

There are fonds which, probably due to lack of archival treatment, consist of documents belonging to its producer, but also of documents seemingly belonging to institutions where the producer held management positions. A striking example is the fond of Albino Maria Cordeiro<sup>17</sup>, which comprises documents pertaining to his personal and family life, with several series regarding property and financial management, the creation of assets, academic education, duties and positions held, among others. Nevertheless, it also comprises an expressive number of documents pertaining to the foundation, management and administration of the Charity of Penela, of which he was ombudsman. Undoubtedly, this fond encompasses documents which unveil the existence of said charity institution, namely through the provision of Queen Maria in favor of the Charity of Penela (Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Penela), dated 1780. The significant time gap between the date of the royal provision and the period of time during which Doctor Albino Maria Cordeiro was in charge of the institution (1901-1915) plainly exclude the possibility of the document being connected to any act associated to the producer of this fond.

## **Conclusion**

The brief analysis of the existing personal and family fonds at the AUC shows, quite expressively, that the main factor which determined the inclusion of the fonds in the AUC was the connection of the producer to the UC, regardless of whether the relationship was that of student, professor, chancellor, or any of the aforementioned. Said evidence results from the fact that the producers

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<sup>17</sup> Fond title: Albino Maria Cordeiro (1554-1986); reference code: PT/AUC/PFM/AMC, book number: current III-1<sup>a</sup> D-7-2-1 to 19. He attended the Faculty of Law of the University of Coimbra, where he completed a Bachelor's Degree, proceeding then to practice law where he lived.

were connected to the *alma mater Conimbricensis*<sup>18</sup>, although not all fonds comprise documents which prove the presence at the university.

Therefore, these fonds are first and foremost an indirect source of information on the UC, as well as on the duties and activities of the teaching and student bodies throughout its existence. In other cases, they mirror, if indirectly, the influence of the UC on the education of renowned figures of Portuguese society and their distribution throughout different territories, namely, the former Portuguese colonies.

Moreover, these fonds are an invaluable source of information on some families of high economic and social standing, thus unveiling a significant part of local memories, as well as the economic and social history of the time.

Although sparse and regrettably fragmented, these fonds — far from being devoid of any interest beyond the aforementioned — shed new light on other existing information as far as the related documentation in the fonds goes, adding information capable of inspiring new approaches and new knowledge.

We conclude as we started — with a brief reference to those who visit us. Upon ending the presentation which introduces the visit to our facilities, over 97% of visitors, who in the beginning were unaware that they possessed heritage unknown to them — their own personal archive — feel richer and better acquainted with its potential value. And we do not let our visitors leave without calling upon them to keep said heritage properly identified, organized and structured, in order to expedite the recovery of information and preserve the relationships between the document and the action which determined it, for the purpose of unveiling the context in which the document was produced.

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<sup>18</sup> An expression used profusely among scholars, since time immemorial, to designate the University of Coimbra.

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