

PREAMBLE

In 2016, the journal *Ciências da Terra - Earth Sciences Journal* celebrated 40 years of existence. The first issue, entitled *Dinossáurios Eocretácicos de Lagosteiros*, was written by the founder of the magazine, Prof. Doctor Miguel Telles Antunes. That issue marked the beginning of the publication of a journal that, on account of the quality of its published works, was able to gain a reputation in the Geosciences community, particularly in the areas of Stratigraphy and Palaeontology.

The quality of published papers in scientific journals is, of course, dependent on the portfolio of submitted works, but it is also measured by the number of times that they are downloaded, read, and cited. Today, the tendency to “measure” the quality of papers is inseparable from whether they are published in indexed journals and the impact factor of those journals. Although peer review has always existed in *Ciências da Terra*, there is another set of conditions that must be met to allow its indexation. Non-commercial journals, as is the case of *Ciências da Terra*, generally struggle compared with commercial journals, because the latter are almost all indexed in high-level databases (e.g., ISI Thomson, Scopus), making them more attractive to authors. In addition, non-commercial journals published in hard-copy form have very high costs and no economies of scale. Furthermore, commercial journals have professional management and editorial staff whose jobs are dedicated to those journals, which means that the submission, review, and publishing process is much quicker compared with non-commercial journals and thus scrupulous compliance with regularity and publishing date can be achieved. These are real constraints on the survival of non-commercial journals.

The three-year gap between the previous issue #18 and the current issue #19 is due to several constraints. The major setback was the passing of our colleague and friend João Pais, the former Chief Editor of *Ciências da Terra*, a position traditionally occupied by the President of the Earth Sciences Department of the Faculty of Science and Technology of the Universidade NOVA de Lisboa (FCT/UNL). With the aim to develop strength from adversity, allowing us to be able to do more and better, a number of modifications have been planned and developed for the journal. Some structural and procedural changes have been made based on the main objective, which is the indexing of *Ciências da Terra* in the main reference databases, namely, Scielo, Scopus, and Web of Science, along with implementing all the improvements necessary for such an integration.

Therefore, although this issue of *Ciências da Terra* is still a transitional one and does not yet comply with one of the major criteria, which is peer review (at least two scientific reviewers per article), a considerable number of modifications have been implemented, which can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The journal, which will be renamed *Ciências da Terra – Earth Sciences Journal*, has been integrated into the NOVA.ID.FCT Publishing House, becoming the first periodical in its portfolio. As the journal is not intended to be an “institutional” publication, it was withdrawn from the direct editorial action of the Earth Sciences Department. Because *Ciências da Terra – Earth Sciences Journal* is a non-commercial journal, it needs to be supported directly or indirectly by an institution linked to the NOVA University of Lisbon.

- 2) The Editorial Board and the Scientific Committee will be substantially enlarged, with the participation of colleagues experienced in publishing and peer review in prestigious journals as well as leading national and international researchers from other universities and research institutions. By issue #20, these boards will have been confirmed and set up.

3) The entire editorial process, from the submission to publishing of papers, will be completely reformulated using an open-source online platform (OJS from PKP), and the publishing in electronic format will be under Open Access. As far as copyright is concerned, the journal articles will be published under the Creative Commons Attribution Licence (CC BY). All friendly practices used in scientific journals, namely the use of colours for colour-blind readers will be used and the most used ways of dissemination and personal archiving of papers.

4) This issue will be the last to be printed on paper, with the journal becoming fully electronic (online). Also, the journal will move from an annual to a six-monthly publication schedule.

5) The *Ciências da Terra – Earth Sciences Journal* has a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) attributed by CrossRef, which ensures its permanent availability and access to its published papers through the Internet. It is intended, retroactively, to attribute single DOIs to the approximately 250 scientific articles published so far in the journal.

6) The *Ciências da Terra – Earth Sciences Journal* is already indexed in some publication and science indexes, but not yet in those that most authors use. Therefore, we appeal to the entire geoscientific community for their generosity in submitting high-quality papers to ensure the journal's standard for the first few issues until its inclusion in the index databases. After this objective is attained, we are certain that the growing reputation of *Ciências da Terra – Earth Science Journal* will encourage further authors to publish their research in the journal.

7) Each issue of *Ciências da Terra – Earth Science Journal* will contain several sections. The first and main section will contain full scientific articles. The second section will contain short articles (see in detail the instructions for authors for the respective sections). Short articles cover the following: a) Papers resulting from the presentation of doctoral theses whose authors, in possible co-authorship with their supervisor(s), want to publish their preliminary results and findings quickly and concisely; b) short essays; c) book reviews by invitation; and d) following tradition, there may be an Obituary section, referring to geoscience personalities who have distinguished themselves in Portugal (the country of origin of the journal) or internationally, or to foreign geoscientists who have contributed important geological knowledge about Portugal. This special section may have contributions written in Portuguese.

8) As the submitted papers are accepted for publication throughout the production period of each new issue of *Ciências da Terra – Earth Sciences Journal* (completed and closed by the end of each semester), they will be able to be immediately publicly accessible as a digital author's version once uploaded to the journal website.

9) The quality of written English, the only language for publishing papers in the articles section, is a basic condition, and, for this purpose, there will always be a third reviewer appointed by the editorial board.

10) It is of strategic importance that the period between paper submission and online publishing of the author's version does not exceed, on average, two months. This is one of the objectives we intend to achieve through to the journal's integration into the main indexation databases and, obviously, after this objective is attained.

11) We also intend to update the graphical and diagrammatic aspects of the papers, modernizing these with respect to the new publication objectives of the journal as outlined above.

12) There is also both a need and desire to innovate and keep up to date regarding the ways in which papers are presented in the twenty-first century; namely, the ability to publish articles with raw data attachments as well as interactive materials in digital format, such as audio presentations, videos, 3D models, databases, and Google Earth files.

However, the reformulating of strategies and the renewing of procedures as indicated in this issue are not restricted to the serial version of the journal (with ISSNs and e-ISSNs). Traditionally, *Ciências da Terra* has published special issues (with ISBNs), consisting of monographs or proceedings of meetings organized under the auspices of the Earth Sciences Department of FCT NOVA. In this regard, we intend to implement a new format for the “Special Issues”, which will be called *Ciências da Terra Procedia*. We hope that the new format will lead to an improvement in both the quality and quantity of these issues through the following mechanisms:

1) *Ciências da Terra Procedia* will be dedicated to the publishing of extended abstracts, short papers, or full papers of scientific meetings in the broad geosciences field (geology, geological engineering, lithosphere geophysics) taking place anywhere in the world.

2) Each volume will comply with the criteria of accuracy and peer review. Paper submission will comply with the format of the serial version of the journal, including the use of the OJS platform, where full details on how the submission will work can be found.

3) Each paper will also have a DOI, and each volume will be submitted to Scopus and the ISI Conference Proceedings for indexing.

In addition to providing a high profile for the scientific works presented at international meetings, at a low cost, the *Ciências da Terra Procedia* will complement and help maintain the publishing of the *Ciências da Terra – Earth Sciences Journal*.

It is expected that this significant renewal of the *Ciências da Terra - Earth Sciences Journal* and *Procedia* will contribute to a wider dissemination of science in general and of geosciences in particular. Traditionally and culturally, there is a privileged connection to the Portuguese-speaking world, and also with geoscientists from the Latin American world; Portugal’s integration into the European Union exactly three decades ago brings the EU as a main objective regarding collaborators and thematic collaborations. But ultimately, as is the main mission of any periodical publication, the goal is the development of high-quality work to satisfy our readers. If they are satisfied, the authors themselves will have achieved one of their main purposes, which is to communicate science to society and to disperse the results of their work throughout the research community.

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