

Heritage Time Capsule (HTC) Project



DISCOVERERS REPORT

- By Professor Harry G Poulos, Senior Consultant, Tetra Tech Coffey
- Individual, Honorary Life, Member of Australian Geomechanics Society
- Date - 6 November 2024

HTC CONTRIBUTION

- SOME PIECES OF MY JOURNEY - From my Initial Commitments to my Current Situation, Autobiography of Past President Pedro Pinto (5 volumes), <https://htc.issmge.org/contributions/past-presidents/ps-seco-e-pinto-portugal>



WHY THIS CONTRIBUTION CAUGHT MY ATTENTION?

- I was invited by the author to write a foreword to the 5 volumes.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE CONTRIBUTION

(published in ISSMGE Bulletin, Vol 18, Issue 3, September 2024, page 27, <https://www.issmge.org/publications/issmge-bulletin/vol-18-issue-3-september-2024>)

Heritage Time Capsule (HTC) Project



Biographies of important geotechnical figures are few and far between. Autobiographies of such figures are even more rare. Therefore, this present offering by Pedro Seco e Pinto, is a welcome addition to this very small body of literature. In the Autobiography, Pedro has provided us with a remarkably detailed and interesting history of his evolution from a schoolboy to one of the world's leading geotechnical personalities. The level of detail can be judged by the fact that the memoir is composed of five volumes, which are as follows:

1. From his initial commitments to his current situation.
2. Participation in conferences and meetings.
3. Touring lectures and international seminars.
4. Engineering projects.
5. Selected papers.

THE MOST INTERESTING PART OF THIS CONTRIBUTION

During his Presidency of the International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (ISSMGE) in the period 2005-2009, Pedro initiated the ISSMGE Bulletin, and set up the Society's own journal, the International Journal of Geotechnical Case Histories. The Bulletin celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Society was a particularly important historical document, as it set out in some detail the history of the Society to the year 2011. A notable feature of Pedro's career is his commitment to promoting geotechnical activities in developing countries. Volume 3 of his memoir, sets out a remarkable catalogue of visits and lectures to 21 countries that he delivered or organized over a period of 13 years, from 2006 to 2019.

We use reason to develop a theory, and then judge this theory by undertaking experiments which provide empirical evidence to support or refute this theory. Pedro's memoir amply demonstrates the application of this dual philosophical approach in his work, and how the theories developed by reason and confirmed by experiment, can be applied to solve real-world problems. It is not only Pedro's knowledge of philosophy, and its application, that is impressive, but also his knowledge of literature and poetry, in multiple languages. He particularly delights in quoting relevant pieces of poetry to illustrate and bring home the points he makes during his lectures.

Readers of Pedro's memoir cannot but be impressed by the broad range of projects, research topics, geographical adventures, and literary and philosophical musings that it offers. It reflects a life that has clearly been both diverse and stimulating, one that has been of great service to his profession, and one that has engendered a remarkable number of friendships around the world. Long may he continue to contribute his talents to his family, friends, and to the geotechnical profession.