

## HISTORICAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Nurses in Portugal during Nightingale's time

*Enfermeiros em Portugal no tempo de Nightingale*  
*Enfermeros en Portugal en tiempos de Nightingale*

Paulo Joaquim Pina Queirós<sup>1,2</sup>
 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1817-612X>
Blanca Espina-Jerez<sup>3</sup>
 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9961-072X>
Nuno Miguel do Amaral Gouveia  
Couceiro da Costa<sup>4</sup>
 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6942-7673>
Patrícia Domínguez-Isabel<sup>3</sup>
 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6894-2270>
Aliete Cunha Oliveira<sup>1,2</sup>
 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8399-8619>
Sagrario Gómez-Cantarino<sup>3</sup>
 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9640-0409>
<sup>1</sup> Nursing School of Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal<sup>2</sup> Health Sciences Research Unit: Nursing (UICISA: E), Nursing School of Coimbra (ESENFC), Coimbra, Portugal<sup>3</sup> Universidad de Castilla la Mancha (UCLM), Toledo, Spain<sup>4</sup> Coimbra Hospital and University Center, Coimbra, Portugal

## Corresponding author

Paulo Joaquim Pina Queirós

E-mail: [pauloqueiros@esenfc.pt](mailto:pauloqueiros@esenfc.pt)

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## Abstract

**Context:** In the 19th century, we witnessed hospital modernization, the affirmation of medical science, and the exponential development of nurses' activities.

**Objective:** To know the activity of nurses in the Nightingale century.

**Methodology:** Historical with analysis and explanation of a past accessed through the examination of its marks and mental representation. Considering not a simple narrative, but a description, as much as possible explanatory.

**Results:** Transformation throughout the century, of the activity of nurses, visible in the space conquered in hospital structures, in the creation of teaching, in a slow movement towards full professionalization.

**Conclusion:** In the Nightingale century, a continuation of professionalization and disciplinary knowledge, which is the origin of nursing as a profession and knowledge discipline.

**Keywords:** history of nursing; schools, nursing; nurses; nursing

## Resumo

**Contexto:** No século XIX assistimos à modernização hospitalar, à afirmação da ciência médica, e ao desenvolvimento exponencial da atividade dos enfermeiros.

**Objetivo:** Contribuir para o conhecimento dos enfermeiros, em Portugal, no século de Nightingale.

**Metodologia:** Histórica com análise e explicação de um passado acedido através do exame das suas marcas e da sua representação mental. Considerando não uma simples narrativa, mas uma descrição, tanto quanto possível explicativa.

**Resultados:** Transformação ao longo de todo o século, da atividade dos enfermeiros, visível no espaço conquistado nas estruturas hospitalares, na criação do ensino, num movimento lento em direção à plena profissionalização.

**Conclusão:** No século de Nightingale, um contínuo de profissionalização e disciplinar dos saberes, que está na origem da enfermagem como profissão e disciplina de conhecimento.

**Palavras-chave:** história da enfermagem; escolas de enfermagem; enfermeiros; enfermagem

## Resumen

**Contexto:** En el siglo XIX se asiste a la modernización hospitalaria, la afirmación de la ciencia médica y el desarrollo exponencial de la actividad enfermera.

**Objetivo:** Conocer la actividad de las enfermeras en el siglo Nightingale.

**Metodología:** Histórica con análisis y explicación de un pasado al que se accede mediante el examen de sus marcas y representación mental. No se considera una simple narración, sino una descripción lo más explicativa posible.

**Resultados:** A lo largo del siglo se produjo una transformación de la actividad enfermera, visible en el espacio de las estructuras hospitalarias, la creación de la docencia y en un lento movimiento hacia la plena profesionalización.

**Conclusión:** En el siglo de Nightingale, se inicia una continua profesionalización y disciplina de saberes, que es el origen de la enfermería como profesión y disciplina del conocimiento.

**Palabras clave:** historia de la enfermería; escuelas de enfermería; enfermeros; enfermería



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## Introduction

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a key century for nurses. Caring activities, which had been carried out for centuries, expanded, gained space, and acquired importance within the different modes of care delivery. The long-standing signs of proto-professionalization were reinforced, and nursing professionalization gained momentum towards its full implementation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 19<sup>th</sup> century was also Florence Nightingale's century (1820-1910), during which the foundations for modern nursing were laid in a movement Nightingale was part of as one of its key protagonists. Much has been written about Nightingale, her merits, her undeniable contribution, and her role as an accelerator of nursing professionalization. Nevertheless, emphasis must also be placed on her leadership skills, her sense of mission established within Protestant Anglicanism, her knowledge, her perception of the need to lobby for the profession's affirmation and visibility, and her understanding of the indispensability of nurses' qualification, which materialized in the creation of the St. Thomas Training School for Nurses in London. In addition to Nightingale, it is also relevant to learn about the nurses of her time.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was the century of positivism, hygienism, experimental methods in medicine, and modernization of hospital structures and practices. "In the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, most Portuguese hospitals ... were for poor people, they were assistance institutions" (Lopes, 2019, p. 160). Hospitals were the places where "...the poor went to seek shelter to heal" (Lopes, 2019, p. 160). Regarding the transformation of hospitals, Maria Antónia Lopes refers that "Rather than shelter, today we look for treatment, the experts' knowledge, the cure." (Lopes, 2019, p. 160). With hospital modernization and the scientific momentum in medical sciences, "the domestic functions the nursing staff performed until then became insufficient and did not allow them to properly assist physicians in the new therapies" (Silva, 2014, p. 64). Thus, it became clear how "the lack of preparation of male and female nurses worried the physicians of the most important hospitals in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century." (Lopes, 2019, p. 168). It was observed that "... the lay staff working in the wards was unable to keep up with the technical and scientific advances characterizing the 19<sup>th</sup> century." (Silva, 2014, p.63). Furthermore, the historical evidence demonstrates that "before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were no hospital nurses from religious orders or congregations in Portugal, nurse friars in hospitals were residual and hospitals escaped religious control" (Lopes, 2019, p. 155). The staffing and training of qualified nurses to meet the new challenges included the discussion between the religious and secular models.

Scientific trips to several European countries and reading foreign, mainly French, medical journals provided Portuguese clinicians with arguments against religious nursing and in favor of secular nursing staff. They also realized the advantages of creating nursing schools and the benefits that scientific training would bring to their assistants,

which convinced them that this would be the only way to improve health care in hospitals. Thus, they advocated for the opening of [nursing] schools, basing themselves on the *Assistance Publique* schools in Paris, which served as models to the first attempts to train nursing staff in Portugal (Silva, 2014, p. 73).

The present study aims to go through some of the available historical sources and contribute to the knowledge of nurses in Portugal during Nightingale's century, thus answering the research question: What can one objectively know about nurses in Portugal, during Nightingale's century?

The steps of the historical method include identifying some of the available primary sources, analyzing, reading, and selecting relevant information, extracting significant data, disseminating it, and building a synthesis for scientific dissemination.

## Methodology

The present study was carried out using the historical method, which guided the analysis and explanation of the past by examining its marks and resulting mental representations. It considered that historiographic production is not a simple narrative, but constitutes a description as much explanatory as possible, where "the History-lived has disappeared, but is re-presented by the History-written" (Mattoso, 2020, p. 20), bearing in mind that: "In writing history, a representation is built which is a replica of what happened" (Mattoso, 2020, p. 19).

This study searched for primary sources, and focused on exploring the Yearbooks of the University of Coimbra (*Anuários da Universidade de Coimbra*, University of Coimbra, n.d.), the Logbooks of Sessions of the Houses of Representatives of the Portuguese Constitutional Monarchy (*Assembleia da República*, n.d.), and António Augusto Costa Simões' books *A minha Administração dos Hospitais da Universidade. Uma gerencia de 15 anos, sob a reforma de 1870* (My Administration of the University Hospitals – a 15-year management under the 1870 reform, Simões, 1888), and *Hospitais Extranjeros de Construção Moderna. Allemã, Belgas, Suisso, Italianos e Hespanhoes* (Foreign Hospitals of Modern Design - German, Belgian, Swiss, Italian and Spanish, Simões, 1901), both published by the University of Coimbra Press and available at the General Library of the University of Coimbra. Seventy-three Yearbooks of the University of Coimbra are available digitally, ranging from 1866/67 to 1955/56, with interruptions in some academic years. The Logbooks of Sessions of the Houses of Representatives of the Portuguese Constitutional Monarchy for the six chambers that functioned during the period of the Constitutional Monarchy are available on the website of the *Assembleia da República* (Portuguese Parliament). Taking advantage of the online availability of these primary sources, this study used descriptors to locate relevant data, namely: *enfermagem*; *escola de enfermagem*; *serviços de enfermagem*; *enfermeiro(s)*; *enfermeira(s)*; *parteira* (nurs-

ing; nursing school; nursing services; male and female nurse/s; midwife). Moreover, the syntheses of previous research studies already published, in which this study's authors participated as authors and co-authors, were also used as sources. These sources provided support for the background to complete, deepen and contextualize the data collected from the primary sources. Lastly, a descriptive and analytical synthesis with an overall view was produced.

## Results and discussion

By Nightingale's time (1820-1910), nurses had long been caring for the sick, the poor, the widows, and the abandoned in shelters, hospitals, and *leprosaria*. Since very early times, nurses were among the staff of the Hospitals of the University of Coimbra (HUC). Between 1779 and 1797, in the HUC, "the staff list allows its characterization into four groups: the professionals concerned with the treatment of the body; the healers of the soul; services/amenities providers; and security" (Queirós et al., 2020, p. 7). Clearly between the continuity of medieval practices, characterized by the presence of male bloodletter nurses and female cook nurses and the absence of in-house physicians, and the dawn of modernity, materialized through nurse differentiation, with the emergence of delivery nurses and ward assistants, the HUC care program treated the body and soul (Queirós et al., 2020).

### Logbooks of Sessions of the Houses of the Constitutional Monarchy

The analysis of the Logbooks of Sessions of the Houses of Representatives of the Portuguese Constitutional Monarchy, for 1821-1822, reveals health occupations and professions undergoing processes of reconfiguration. The descriptors used in the search "showed only individual and masculine references. There was no reference to nursing, only to male nurses" (Queirós et al., 2018, p. 10). This period was characterized by the persistence of earlier professions, such as the bloodletters, who were no longer the *clistereiros* (who administered clisters) from the Middle Ages but were undergoing the evolution from minor surgery surgeons to surgeons" (Queirós et al., 2018, p.10). These professionals coexisted with midwives, who received training, were certified, and whose practice was regulated, and also with hygiene, organization, qualification, and safety concerns (Queirós et al., 2018).

The nurse's activities appear described in the 1821-1822 logbooks as the care and monitoring of patients. Unlike midwives, nurses were not explicitly identified as health workers, had no formal training, and were not examined or certified (Queirós et al., 2018). During this period, nurses' professional differentiation process was still in its early stages, while midwives had taken the lead (Queirós et al., 2017).

Approaching the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the analysis of the logbooks of the sessions of the various chambers allows highlighting several aspects. In 1880, the representatives were interested in nurses' working conditions, equal re-

tirement conditions between naval and land-based nurses, the need for nurses at the Lisbon Lazaretto (Pereira et al., 2017a), and the organization of the nursing military staff into two different groups, nurses and nursing assistants (Queirós et al., 2017a, p. 162). The search descriptors *enfermeiros* (male nurse/nurses) used in the 1883 logbooks pointed to the "need to hire staff either for the S. José Hospital or due to the typhoid fever epidemic and the lack of naval nurses" (Pereira et al., 2017b, p. 37). In 1885, references were made to the training of physicians as head teachers for nurses' schools, and the entry to the 2<sup>nd</sup> class nurse category being subject to practice and examinations. In the military sector, there was a clear hierarchization of nursing (Queirós et al., 2017b, p. 54). Analyzing the 1893 logbooks, it is clear that "nurses still had precarious working conditions, with low salaries compared to other professionals . . . a laborious work whose only future was poverty" (Pereira et al., 2017, p. 38). In 1896, "the reorganization of the overseas health services accounts for nurses, problematizes the Sisters Hospitalers, [and] gives an account of stretcher-bearers" (Queirós et al., 2016a, p. 243). Issues regarding the nursing discipline, with the specific training for overseas, and professionalism, with the embryonic stage of nursing career, functions, and salaries, were also mentioned (Queirós et al., 2016a). Stretcher-bearers were trained overseas, while nurses were trained in Lisbon (Queirós et al., 2016b).

When analyzing the logbooks between 1900 and 1910, extensive references to military nursing emerge, with relevant information about the *Escola Prática de Enfermeiros Navais* (Practical School of Naval Nurses) and the conditions for nurses' training at the *Hospital Colonial* (Colonial Hospital). At the time, military nursing had higher levels of hierarchization than civilian nursing (Queirós et al., 2019). Additionally, there are also references to the religious dispute expressed in Father Reyman's controversial actions, and the questioning of the presence of the S. Filipe de Nery Brothers at the *Hospitais Civis* (Civilian Hospitals) of Lisbon (Queirós et al., 2019). Moreover, references were made to the benefits of nurses' specialization in the area of alienated patients, the impediment of male nurses to work with alienated women, and the fact that patients were escaping from the facilities due to the lack of nurses (Queirós et al., 2019).

### Two books by António Augusto Costa Simões

Costa Simões, born in 1819 and died in 1903, was a physician, professor at the University of Coimbra, and administrator of the HUC. He introduced experimental teaching into Portuguese medicine, identified the need to qualify hospital staff, and, in 1881, created the first nursing school in Portugal, precisely in Coimbra. To accomplish his goals, he traveled throughout Europe to learn about the most modern developments. Following the hygienist movement, he was concerned with the organization and functionality of hospital spaces.

The reading and analysis of Costa Simões' book *Hospitais Extranjeros de Construção Moderna. Allemães, Belgas, Suisso, Italianos e Hespanhoes*, published in 1901, allows identifying the institutions he visited with references to

nurses (Table 1), from which the following analysis topics were selected: i) hospital spaces, nurses' rooms, and

residences; ii) male and female nurse staffing; iii) male and female nurse training; iv) Sisters of Charity.

**Table 1**

*Institutions visited by Costa Simões with references to nurses*

Country	Hospital	Visit date	Inauguration date	References to male/female nurses
Germany	Hamburg Hospital, in Eppendorf	July 1891	1887	Yes
	Frederick Hospital, in Berlin Park	1891	1874	Yes
	D'Urban Hospital, in Berlin	July 1891	1890	Yes
	Koch Institute Hospital, in Berlin	June 1891	Under advanced construction in 1891	Yes
Belgium	Brussels Military Hospital	1891	1888	Yes
	Anvers Circular Ward Hospital	July 1891	1883	Yes
	Mons Hospital	1891	1875	Yes
Switzerland	Berne Hospital or Island Hospital	a)	1885	Yes
	Aarau Hospital, Canton of Aargau	a)	1887	Yes
Italy	New Rome Hospital, Umberto 1° Polyclinic	a)	Project 1888 Four pavilions were built in 1894	Yes
	Saint Andrea Hospital in Genoa	a)	Statutes 1896	Yes
Spain	Madrid Military Hospital, in Carabanchel	a)	Building order issued in 1889	Yes
	La Princesa Hospital, in Madrid	August 1891	Order to build in 1852	No
	Rubio Hospital, in Madrid	1891	Restored in 1880	Yes

*Note.* a) Countries visited in 1865 and 1878, information was requested about these new hospitals.

*i) Hospital spaces, nurses' rooms, and residences*

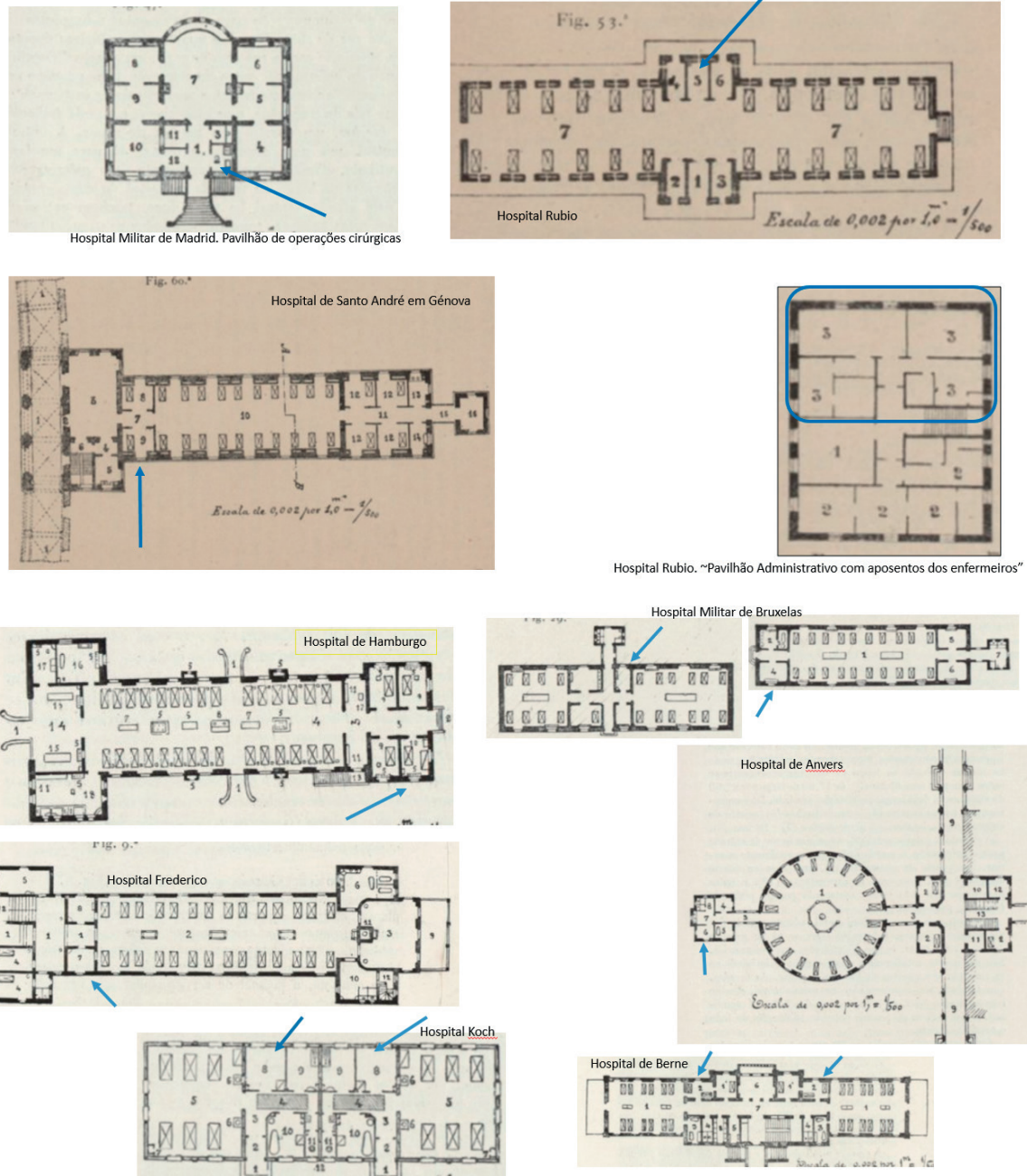
In the description of the spaces and from the observation of the maps available in the aforementioned book (Figure 1), it is possible to understand that the nurses' rooms were well integrated into the wards of the Frederick Hospital, D'Urban Hospital, Koch Institute Hospital, and Brussels Military Hospital, with references to a nurse's room with a small surveillance gap and a nurse's room with a small *tisanaria* (ward kitchen) stove; in the Anvers Circular Ward Hospital, Mons Hospital, and Berne Hospital, the nurse's room had surveillance openings to the ward and the isolation room; in the Aarau Hospital, there were two rooms with surveillance gaps; the New Rome Hospital had a nurse's room with a small *tisanaria* stove and two nurse's rooms designated as *guardias*; the Madrid Military Hospital had two nurse's rooms next to the ward with

small stoves for heating medicines, and nurse's rooms in the alienated and the hydrotherapy wards; there were also nurse's rooms in the Rubio Hospital in Madrid and Saint Andrea Hospital in Genoa. At the Military Hospital in Brussels, there was a nurses' garden next to the nurses' residences and a latrine for their use; in Rome, there was a female nurse's house; and at the Rubio Hospital, in Madrid, the nurses' dormitory and other quarters occupied the administrative services pavilion.

Therefore, male and female nurses were well integrated into the hospital space, with rooms adjacent to or inside the wards, and living spaces within hospitals' perimeters. The rooms within the wards were used to accommodate the nurses, keep watch, and provide support with the *tisanaria* (to heat food and medicines), and were possibly a combination of bedroom and workroom.

**Figure 1**

*Nurse's rooms in the wards. Adapted from Simões, 1901*



*ii) Male and female nurse staffing*

In his book, Costa Simões makes special reference to the staffing of the Military Hospital in Brussels, the Saint Andrea Hospital in Genoa, and the Hamburg Hospital. He calculates the nurse-to-patient ratio in the Hamburg and Brussels Hospitals, and, in the latter, he adds other caregivers and the Sisters of Charity to the nurses. He then compares his findings with what he foresees for the HUC.

The difference between what he found in the hospitals mentioned and what he foresees is considerable. Costa Simões notes that the Hamburg Hospital had servants who assisted the nurses, but their number was undetermined. The information on the Saint Andrea Hospital significantly reveals a pyramid-like career structure, with nurses, assistant nurses, and head nurses subordinated to a *Suore Infermiere* (Table 2).

**Table 2***Male and female nurse staffing mentioned by Costa Simões, 1901*

Institution	Staffing
Hamburg Hospital	1 nurse for 10 patients
Hospitals of the University of Coimbra	1 nurse for 40-50 patients
Brussels Military Hospital	1 nurse (and other auxiliary staff) for 4.58 patients
	1 nurse (and other auxiliary staff) + Sisters of Charity for 3.97 patients
Saint Andrea Hospital in Genoa	18 nurses
	6 assistant nurses
	3 head nurses
	Under a <i>Suore Infermiere</i>

*iii) Male and female nurse training*

Regarding the Rubio Hospital in Madrid, Costa Simões provides important information about the nurses' teams' work and education and proceeds with the religious discussion. Among the staff, he identifies female nurses as deserving special attention. He points out that the nursing work was done by female students, divided into two groups, 8 interns and 24 externs. The interns manage the externs' work, who were divided into two teams of 12 students working in two shifts, from 8 am to 1 pm and from 1 pm to 8 pm. The interns were also assigned in shifts to different services such as "wards, operating rooms, kitchens, laundry, linen, etc." (Simões, 1901, p. 278). The female nurse with the highest rank had the designation of *Superiora* and authority over all the others. Externs did not receive any payment, only the free education, which allowed them to obtain the nurses' diploma after two years. On the other hand, interns "apart from the same free education, received rations, clothing and the right to be treated free of charge for their illnesses" (Simões, 1901, p. 283). These nurses

as a result of the theoretical and practical education they receive in nurses' school and the different hospital services, are awarded, at the end of the two-year training, with a certificate or diploma of this course, which qualifies them for a way of life and a profession in the true sense of the word. (Simões, 1901, p.278)

Costa Simões also mentions the care these "staff members" had with their personal hygiene, whose daily baths were mandatory. Costa Simões was part of the contemporary movement for reforming hospital facilities, care practices, and staff training, with hygienist principles being expressed in simple things such as the change from black to white of nurses' coats in the HUC which occurred during this period as documented in the photo archive of the Nursing School of Coimbra.

*iv) The Sisters of Charity*

This book mentions the Sisters of Charity at the Berne Hospital, Saint Andrea Hospital, Anvers Hospital, Mons Hospital, and Brussels Military Hospital, a sample of their presence in different European hospitals, with highlight to the presence of a *Suore Infermiere* in Genoa, whose

functions are now identified as supervision/management. However, the situation in Portugal was very different. Costa Simões, clearly states, as observed in the analysis of his second book, that: "There would be no reason for a school of nurses to [...] replace the Sisters of Charity in Coimbra, where this order has never operated" (Simões, 1888, p.333). Maria Antónia Lopes also points out that: "when in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many physicians opposed religious nursing in hospitals, they were not fighting against its reintroduction, but against its introduction, which was a complete novelty in our country" (Lopes, 2019, p. 55).

Costa Simões' references to the Sisters of Charity in his book *Hospitais Estrangeiros de Construção Moderna* mainly identify the houses, buildings, and gardens occupied by the Sisters inside the hospital perimeters. He also mentions, regarding the Berne Hospital, a big room, better suited for a patients' canteen and recreation room, instead of being "destined only for the benefit of the Sisters of Charity" (Simões, 1901, p.165).

Among the references to the Rubio Hospital in Madrid, it was found that intern nurses followed a regime of religious practices, such as morning and evening prayers. These religious practices "do not affect their freedom to leave whenever they want, nor are they controlled by any ecclesiastical authority. They merely comply with the regulations under the superintendence of the medical director" (Simões, 1901, p. 278-9).

In a footnote, Costa Simões clarified that these religious practices at the Rubio Hospital, in Madrid, were reminiscent of those in the Hospital of Lyon (France) where the nurses wore a habit, similar to the habit of some religious orders, had choir service and other practices slightly broader than those at the Rubio Hospital but were still directed by the chaplain without subordination to any religious order. He also adds that, in Marseille, it was decided that the Sisters of Charity were to be replaced by secular nurses, even though they were subjected to the same regime as in Lyon. Costa Simões concludes that religious practices persisted in this hospital due to the demands of its benefactors, stating that: "for an optimum nursing service there is no need for such claims, for such practices of sanctimoniousness" (Simões, 1901, p. 279). The book *A minha Administração dos Hospitais da Univer-*

*cidade. Uma gerencia de 15 annos, sob a reforma de 1870*, by Costa Simões, published by the Coimbra University Press, in 1888, contains the following significant information: Since 1877 or 1878, in Paris, nursing schools were created to train staff from outside religious orders and replace the Sisters of Charity who worked in hospitals (Simões, 1888). In 1860, Nightingale opened the Training School in England. In October 1881, due to Costa Simões' initiative, the first school for nurses was opened at the HUC, followed by others in Lisbon (1886) and Porto (1887), all of them short-lived. Simões stated that:

My initiative to create this school, in the Hospitals of the University, was aimed at improving the education of male and female nurses and qualifying the institution's female servants with the basic notions of primary education to be able to apply for the nursing staff vacancies, due to the lack of qualified staff in the locality. (Simões, 1888, p. 333)

The nurses' school of the HUC had a single subject on nursing care and three preparatory subjects: primary education, Portuguese language, and French translation. While the need for primary education and Portuguese language knowledge can be easily understood, translation of the French language was also required so that the students could read the manuals Costa Simões brought from France. Due to the candidates' low qualifications, the training of the nurses' school of the HUC had to be more limited, when compared to the seven subjects taught at the Salpêtrière, Bicêtre, and Charity hospital schools in 1886 (Simões, 1888).

The subject of nursing care had a strong practical component, close to patients' bedsides, dealing with the procedures to clean paralytics, dress the shirts of rheumatic patients, carry invalids in arms, move cachectic patients to open-air beds, give general baths to invalids, external applications to patients, dress the several surgical wounds, and care for pregnant women and newborns (Simões, 1888).

Considering the difficulties with the French language, a Guide for Nurses was translated and published, consisting of elementary notions of human anatomy, general notions of physiology, dressings, bandages, some minor surgical operations, and general knowledge of medical and pharmaceutical matters.

In this publication, besides practical notions of ward services, [there were] instructions provided to all staff regarding the qualities that nurses should have and their duties to the patients, their subordinates, their colleagues, the head nurses, and the ward directors. (Simões, 1888, p. 335-6)

To understand the ideology behind Costa Simões' initiative, one must understand that "it is not enough for a doctor to prescribe a well-defined treatment, a skilled nurse must know how to administer it; it is not enough to order well, it is key to know how to obey well" (Simões, 1888, p. 337). Later on, he mentions his recommendation to fellow teacher physicians at the nurses' school:

However, they should warn that the service of one who treats the sick is far from being worthily rewarded when one does one's duty religiously;

for no reward can ever repay the good services of a diligent nurse. (Simões, 1888, p. 338)

### Yearbooks of the University of Coimbra

The Yearbooks of the University of Coimbra (Universidade de Coimbra, n.d.), for the periods 1896-97 and 1926-27, mention male and female nurses and midwives in the HUC and its annexes. Of a total of 104 recognizable names, some surnames coincide, which suggests the existence of family networks. The functions are defined and organized hierarchically, indicating the existence of an established career, always under physicians' supervision. Hospitals are where nurses learn and are trained, which in this period focused mainly on practical skills. The officialization of the nursing school of the HUC, in May 1919, is mentioned in the yearbooks, indicating the university faculty members connected to the school and nurse training. Some designations are mentioned, which, in the meantime, have disappeared, such as bath nurses and massage nurses, as well as references to military nurses. There is no record of religious nurses at the HUC, as they did not exist. Nurses were considered to be auxiliary staff and not clinical staff. The head male nurse held a privileged position, with salary differentiation. Women were paid less than men (Queirós et al., 2020).

### Conclusion

During Nightingale's century (1820-1910), a major impulse was given to the movement for the transformation of male and female nurses' activities and occupations, towards their professionalization. It became clear the acceleration of the structuring of nursing functions and categories, the dimension of nursing professionalization as opposed to the Sisters of Charity, the nurses' physical occupation of hospital spaces, well integrated into the inpatient units, and accommodation within the hospitals' perimeters, and the beginning of nurses' formal education in nursing schools all over Europe and in Portugal.

Nightingale is part of this movement. Motivated by the explicit mandate of British Anglicanism, she plays a driving role, which radiated from England, spreading across Europe by imitation and the demand to respond to existing needs. In France, with strong influence in Portugal, the models of secular nursing for both sexes, distant from Nightingale's proposals, had significant weight at that time. The positivist movement, the affirmation of science in all spheres of life, including health, and the need to modernize care structures and spaces made training and the presence of more qualified staff essential to the operation of modern hospitals as treatment institutions. Thus, the acceleration of nursing professionalization accompanied the positivist movement in the sciences. Nursing only really came into being in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century/ beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, before there was the practice, the action, the men and women, male and female nurses, but no professional collective. This had not yet a sufficiently strong expression to give rise to the word that would translate it - nursing.

Nightingale's century witnessed a nursing professionalization and knowledge continuum that gave birth to nursing as a profession and a discipline of knowledge. This study contributes to clarifying the nursing professionalization process in Portugal, and the influences of Nightingale and positivist-related nursing.

### Author contributions

Conceptualization: Queirós, P. J., Oliveira, A. C.

Data curation: Queirós, P. J., Espina-Jerez, B.

Methodology: Queirós, P. J., Domínguez-Isabel, P.

Writing - original draft: Queirós, P. J., Espina-Jerez, B., Costa, N. M., Domínguez-Isabel, P.

Writing - review, and editing: Queirós, P. J., Espina-Jerez, B., Gómez-Cantarino, S.

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