

Editorial: Farewell as Editor in Chief of “Materiales de Construcción” Journal

Dear readers, authors, reviewers and everyone who in one way or another has been and is involved with *Materiales de Construcción*.

I'm writing this editorial as the journal's now former Editor-in-Chief. It's my farewell to the position although not to *Materiales de Construcción*, for I still sit on the Editorial Board and I know that I'll always be associated with the journal as it continues to grow.

Now is the time for me to look back to mid-1996 when at the urging of my dear friend Professor Tomás Vázquez I supervised the publication of the year's last two issues. As the journal was then in a rather precarious state, completing those two issues was quite a challenge. I also remember my enthusiasm when I assumed the responsibility, which never overwhelmed me: on the contrary, I was delighted. Tomás was close by to help out at first, along with Tere Solesio, erstwhile Editorial Board Secretary, as well as other colleagues and friends - Maruchi, Ramón, Rosa, Jorge, Pimpina...

Although the early years were anything but easy, one of Tomás's initiatives happily bore fruit in 1998, when *Materiales de Construcción* was accepted by the Science Citation Index (as it was then known) for listing in Journal Citation Reports (JCR). Our first impact factor (IF) was 0.025. I remember it well! for I remember jumping madly with joy in the Eduardo Torroja Institute's corridors when Tere and I heard the news (through Editorial Board member M^a Ángeles Vicente at the CSIC's Natural and Agrobiological Resources Institute at Salamanca). We could hardly believe it... a JCR listing was a momentous feat back then and *Materiales de Construcción* was the first CSIC journal to be awarded one. It was a determinant that opened the door to a crucial new era for the journal, posing new objectives. One was to maintain the listing and the other to raise the IF, both since met thanks to the support received from many quarters.

I'm very satisfied with the changes made in the journal in these 23-plus years that I've been at the helm. It's been a long journey but the time and effort devoted have been generously rewarded by countless joys and satisfactions. We've always worked closely

with the Spanish National Research Council's (CSIC) Publications Department (renamed 'Editorial CSIC' in recent years). I remember meeting with Wifredo Rincón, Miguel Ángel Puig Samper and Ramón Rodríguez among others to (often unsuccessfully) request administrative reinforcement. And meeting as well with Instituto Eduardo Torroja directors (requesting more staff and resources for the journal, likewise with scant success...). Journal management has receptively assumed all the corporate changes specified by the CSIC: changes in the cover, interiors, institution of digital publication only in open access format with the elimination of the printed version... And we've even gone one step further, for since 2014 rather than publishing nearly all articles bilingually (in Spanish and English) we've made *Materiales de Construcción* an English-only journal, recognising that language's predominance in science and technology. The work all this has entailed has not been just my own by any means, for many others have shouldered more than their fair share: Mar Alonso, Board Secretary for many years now, other Editorial and Advisory Board members and people at the Eduardo Torroja Institute such as Amparo, M^a Rosa, Raúl, Eduardo... (whose positions, as they've retired, have not been filled, leaving fewer and fewer staff to perform the administrative tasks associated with the Institute's journals). Margaret Clark's supervision of the comprehensibility of the English in the articles published, in turn, has been instrumental to consolidating the quality of the issues released.

As I step down I feel gratified to be able to say that the journal is very well positioned among Editorial CSIC's publications. *Materiales de Construcción* ranks among the top 30 in its field (Construction and Building Technology), has been uninterruptedly listed in WoS-JCR since 1998, is the CSIC's only Q2 journal, has a higher impact factor than other of the Council's publications and was recently acknowledged as the most outstanding Spanish journal of the 396 that bear the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology's (FECYT) seal of scientific and editorial quality. A word is also in order about the journal's internationalisation, for over 80 % of

the articles received and nearly 50 % of the ones published are by non-Spanish authors. *Materiales de Construcción* also enjoys a significant presence in Spanish universities and technical schools, for as one of the few Spanish journals awarded a high academic score by the National Quality Assessment and Accreditation Agency (ANECA) and the National Research Assessment Commission (CNEAI) it is a distinctive reference for Spanish researchers in those institutions. I should add that filling the issues with quality research has long ceased to be a challenge. On the contrary, as a highly ranked journal *Materiales de Construcción* attracts hosts of articles (here I would like to express my special gratitude to our reviewers, whose contribution is essential to the journal’s scientific-technical quality), enabling us to publish only the best and most innovative scientific and technological papers. By way of indication, the rejection rate in recent years has ranged from 70 % to 80 %. In other words, quantity breeds quality. Over the years we’ve enhanced the journal’s visibility in national and international scientific domains. For instance, at the Thirteenth International Congress on the Chemistry of Cement (Madrid, 2011) I coordinated a seminar in which editors of the major international journals in the field participated. And I’ve formed part of prize juries for the best scientific paper in major national and international specialist congresses which awards were the publication (after review process) in *Materiales de Construcción*.

I could hardly bid farewell as Editor-in-Chief of *Materiales de Construcción* without expressing my very special thanks to three people: Prof. Tomás Vázquez, my mentor and friend, former

Editor-in-Chief, for his affectionate support whenever I needed it; Tere Solesio for her friendship all these years and her collaboration and effort in my first few years as Editor-in-Chief; and Mar Alonso for her work, friendship and complicit cooperation over the 18 years she’s served as journal secretary. She has now assumed the head position. I take this opportunity to congratulate Mar most heartily for this appointment and wish her every success. I know she is amply qualified for the new responsibilities she has so enthusiastically assumed. She in turn knows that I’ll be at her side for whatever she may need from me.

I conclude this editorial saying that for me heading *Materiales de Construcción* has been one of the most rewarding and inspirational of my professional activities and one that helped me cope with some difficult personal situations. I take my leave truly gratified by the experience and with the peace of mind of knowing that the journal will continue to course upward in this new period under Dr Mar Alonso’s competent leadership.

See you soon!

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Editor-in-Chief of “*Materiales de Construcción*”
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