

History and perspectives of the Museum of Archeology e Ethnology of USP (1964-2011)

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THE YEAR 2010 is an important milestone in the history of the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (*Museu de Arqueologia e Etnologia* - MAE) of the University of São Paulo (USP). With effect from December 24 this year (Resolutions No. 5900 and No. 5901), the MAE, along with the other statutory Museums of the University, will become an autonomous academic unit such as the Faculties, Schools and Institutes. It will no longer be related to and/or dependent on a single Provost's office, as had been the case hitherto, and may operate like the other units, choosing its pathways and being represented in the Central Councils of the University. From 2010, thanks to efforts of the current Dean, the Federal Prosecutor's Office and the MAE itself, the Museum has also been ensured the possibility of being transferred, in 2013, to new facilities suitable for a University Museum of its relevance, with large exhibit halls, classrooms, research laboratories, spaces suitable for a library the size of MAE's and technical reserves capable of properly protecting the archaeological and ethnographic heritage in its custody.

The path trodden by our Museum at the University was neither short nor easy. Getting to this point required much joint effort by both its faculty and non-faculty members, coupled with the decisive role of some of the institution's directors, the support of the central bodies of the University at crucial times, and the indispensable bond between the four statutory Museums of USP: besides the MAE, the Museum of Zoology, the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Paulista Museum.

The history of MAE started in the 1960s, when it was created - initially under the name of Museum of Art and Archeology, on July 24, 1964. The creation of this museum was the result of the efforts of Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho within representatives of official entities and museums in Italy, which led to the donation to the University of São Paulo of a valuable Classical Archeology collection (536 items) (Simões de Paula, 1965, p.15).



Work in a research laboratory

Subsequently, in 1965 and 1966, other institutional donations (Museums of Nicosia, in Cyprus, and Conimbriga, in Portugal) (Bezerra de Menezes, 1965b, p.30) or private donations were added to that first center. In those early years, the need to give the Museum a line of action that promoted a better knowledge of Brazilian society and guided the potential of the institution towards offering this contribution to the University, led its then Director, Prof. Ulpiano Toledo Bezerra de Menezes, to coordinate the institutional goals around our three legacies: the European, American and African heritages. Thus, through purchase, private donations or loans, Egyptian and Middle Eastern collections, pre-Columbian and Brazilian archeological collections as well as African and Afro-Brazilian ethnographic collections were added to the initial set of Classical and Mediterranean Archeology collections. Research followed the expansion of the collection, focusing on new areas: black Africa, Pre-Columbian America, and Brazil. In 1972, with the approval of the new General Bylaws of USP (Decree No. 52906 of March 27, 1972), the Museum was renamed Museum of Archeology and Ethnology, thus reflecting the expansion of the initial objectives of the foundation of the MAA and that still today characterizes its vocation: the formation, expansion and preservation of archeological and ethnographic collections, and from them the development of activities related to research, teaching and extension of services to the community in areas that are key for an anthropological understanding of Brazilian people, deepened through the study of their cultural heritage.



Storage of collections.

These are still defined as:

- Mediterranean and Middle Eastern Heritage, understood in its broadest sense, based on the Greco-Roman culture, its roots in the Middle East - Egypt and Mesopotamia - and its areas of expansion;
- African Heritage, researched from African cultures, with the objective of understanding and capturing the contribution of the African people to the formation of Brazilian culture;
- American Heritage, researched from the cultures that developed in the American continent, mainly those related to South and Central America.²

To consolidate this project, the MAE conducted field and laboratory research in the country and abroad, thus increasing its collections, which today total approximately one million items.

Since its creation the MAA - and later the MAE - has occupied 'borrowed' spaces: initially in the central building of the Dean's Office (now also known as the "Old Dean's Office") and then in the History and Geography Building (currently named after Prof. Eurípedes Paula Simões). In 1979 the MAE, its collections, library, faculty and staff were transferred to Building D of Crusp, occupying the 5th and 6th floors, together with the Institute of Prehistory (3rd and 4th floors) and the Institute of Brazilian Studies (ground, first and second

floors). In fact, at that time it was not possible, for technical reasons, to accommodate our massive library on the building and bring most of the collection: the library was housed in one of the “Colmeias” (Hives) in the residential area of the USP Residential Complex (*Conjunto Residencial da USP - Crusp*), and until 1988 the collection remained in the History and Geography building, as well as in a technical reserve area of the Department of Anthropology (FFLCH) that housed the Plínio Ayrosa collection. Divided and operating in areas that were both precarious and unsuitable for an institution that was called a museum, the MAE continued to operate, grow and offer its contribution to the University.

Going back to the early years of the MAE, special mention should be made of the launch, in 1965, of an art and archeology journal - *Dédalo* - which was the voice of the research conducted by the Museum and was published until 1990. According to the director responsible for the journal, Prof. Ulpiano Bezerra de Menezes, its goal was to help stimulate, develop and communicate studies in various fields of Archeology and History of the Arts in general.

Within the Brazilian context, away from sources, lacking means of research, hampered by the incipient and totally disoriented phase of these disciplines among us, we could not intend to achieve the level of originality and depth of similar publications in other countries. By that we do not mean that our scope is sheer scientific vulgarization. Even when this limit cannot be crossed - which will certainly often happen - our effort should focus on transforming this *journal*, first and foremost, into an instrument of research at the university level, in short, a *working instrument*. (Hence the frequency at which we will address certain methodological problems such as bibliography, presentation of museums, undergraduate research, etc.). (Bezerra de Menezes, 1965a: 9).

Another very important initiative by the MAE in the late 1960s and early 1970s, in the person of its director, the aforementioned Prof. Ulpiano, was the establishment, within the Graduate Program in Anthropology of the FFLCH³, of two areas of concentration in Archeology: Brazilian Archeology and Mediterranean and Middle Eastern Archeology. This was the seed of an independent Graduate Program in Archeology - as we shall see later - responsible for graduating dozens of archeologists who currently work in the four corners of Brazil. The inclusion of Archeology in Graduate programs at the University depended on the willingness to integrate various professors who were already working in the research and teaching of Archeology at the University, but in separate units: initially, faculty members not only from the MAE but also from the Paulista Museum and the Institute of Prehistory were accredited as such in these areas of concentration.

Until 1982, the four University Museums defined by the 1972 General Bylaws of the University (Chapter III, Article 9) operated without a statute, collegiate bodies and a legal structure that would allow them to enhance and maximize the knowledge they produced. It was precisely on January 8, 1982, through Resolution No. 2342⁴ that a statute for the four Museums was ap-

proved, providing for a general internal structure and at least one Administrative Council that supplied a broader decision-making forum and where the goals of the Museums could be further discussed by their various sectors.

The 1980s was thus marked at the MAE by an advance in its legal statute, but also by important experiments in its different sectors; by the consolidation of research areas linked to the collections by hiring researchers; by the consolidation of the graduate program in Archeology, a process that led to the creation in 1989 of an interdepartmental program, the heir of the areas of concentration in Archeology of the Anthropology Program; by the organization of an exhibit of its collections on the 5th floor of Crusp; and by the establishment of an educational service linked to the exhibits.

In 1989, in the wake of the establishment of a new framework for the University resulting from the reform of the statute enacted in October 1988, a movement emerged seeking to reorganize research and the archeological and ethnographic collections of USP. By decision of the Dean's Office, a commission was established, headed by the then director of the Institute of Prehistory, Prof. José Jobson de Andrade Arruda, to consider the possibility of recreating a Museum of Archeology and Ethnology at another level. Among the issues considered were the "uncomfortable existence, at the University of São Paulo, of duplications and overlapping of Bodies and activities in the areas of Archeology and Ethnology"; the fact that "the archeological and ethnographic collection of the University was scattered over several Museums and Institutions"; and that "these scattering and duplications applied also to libraries, equipment, publications, human resources and budget allocations";⁵ and also that there was an unnecessary overlapping of research activities and work programs in these areas. A new MAE was therefore born at that time, by initiative of Dean José Goldemberg, who based his decision on the report of the Commission headed by Prof. Jobson. That time around, Resolution No. 3560 gathered under the name "Museum of Archeology and Ethnology", the Institute of Prehistory, the archaeological and ethnographic component of the Paulista Museum, the Plínio Ayrosa collection at the Department of Anthropology of the FFLCH, and the then Museum of Archeology and Ethnology.

Each of the institutions brought together to form the new MAE had a unique importance and a history of their own. The Paulista Museum, whose history and collection date back to the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century had been conducting, since the 1940s, cutting-edge ethnological and archeological research in the State of São Paulo. In 1972, a Regional Archeology Center had already been established in Piraju, in the interior of São Paulo, which lent support to the Paranapanema Project (Morais, 2006). This center was also incorporated into the new Museum of Archeology and Ethnology. The Brazilian, pre-Columbian and European prehistoric collection of the Paulista Museum brought to the new institution, especially the collections of ceramic

and lithic materials, opened up important perspectives for curatorial studies of these materials and has since contributed significantly to projects developed by the Museum by undergraduate and graduate students. Experienced researchers who had been working for long in Brazilian prehistoric archeology at the Paulista Museum also joined the new museum. The Paulista Museum also had a long track record in the field of ethnology, bringing to the new institution not only researchers, but also an invaluable Brazilian ethnographic collection. As for the incorporation into the new MAE of the Institute of Prehistory created by Paulo Duarte in 1962 (Decree No. 41222 of December 17), the new institution absorbed research on sites of groups of fishermen-collectors, hunters-collectors and horticulturalists that were being conducted on archeological sites in the state of São Paulo and other states; this research had produced a representative collection of regional prehistoric occupation. A professor and an active group of young researchers in the areas of Brazilian Archeology and Museology also joined the new MAE. In turn, the Plínio Ayrosa collection also became part of the ethnographic collections of the new MAE through Resolution No. 3560. This collection was preserved at the Department of Anthropology of the FFLCH and totaled 4,000 items initially put together by Prof. Plínio Ayrosa, a professor of ethnography and Tupi-Guarani language, and later through donations and harvesting. This whole collection was added to the ethnographic collections brought from the Paulista Museum and those of the former MAE (Dorta & Cury, 2000, p.26).

The birth of the new MAE practically coincided with the statutory changes in the University museums: Article 6 of the USP statute of 1988 defined, as Integration Bodies, Museums, Specialized Institutes and Support Centers, all with a focus on intersectoral interest.⁶ The goal as those proposed by faculty members from Units and Departments related to their objectives. The policy of integration between museums and representative units defined by them, as well as the establishment of operating rules and customer service would fall under the Coordination of Museums chaired by the Provost for Culture and University Extension, with the directors of the Museums and an equivalent number of related Teaching and Research Units as members. The statute of USP also provided for an Advisory Council for the museums, a collegiate body whose composition would be defined in their respective Bylaws.

The merger of the various archeological and ethnographic collections from USP and of professors and researchers into a single institution represented, looking from afar, an enhancement of the possibilities of research, teaching and cultural diffusion. Under the name of Museum of Archeology and Ethnology, not only the collections, but also the staff, researchers and faculty of these institutions were brought together. Exchange of experiences and joint work led to the growth of the institution and to the better definition of its objectives and goals. Added to this is the fact that a number of faculty members and research-

ers were already working in an integrated way through the Graduate Program in Archaeology. The museographic exhibit of the collections has gained a lot in consistency and complexity thanks to the grouping of the collections; the library has become a large specialized library that provides significant service nationwide. In turn, the merger of several institutions, including the institutional disappearance of one them (Institute of Prehistory), has imposed unthinkable challenges on the staff that began to work together. Challenges relating to the operation of the institution, exhibit methods, teaching, research and many other practices to which each institution had become accustomed.

Initially, the new institution was established in Building D of Crusp, but now incorporates the floors previously occupied by the Institute of Prehistory. The discussion about a new space for the MAE that could house at the same time the technical reserves still located in the History and Geography building and in the Department of Anthropology, as well as research laboratories that met the needs of faculty members and researchers, an exhibit area that in tune the museographic requirements and the library became the concern of working groups addressing the new logistical requirements imposed by the merger. It was in this context, in which the needs created by Resolution No. 3560 and the best ways to meet them were still under discussion, that in May 1993, Building D of Crusp was surprised by an invasion of students driven by the attempt to recover the original role of the building as housing for students. The MAE was then suddenly, within just a month, moved to its current location on the capital's campus, an area with several buildings, recently vacated by FUNDUSP.

Despite the trauma represented by this unforeseen, totally unplanned move to deteriorated buildings with no conditions to house a Museum, the ex-post evaluation shows that the institutional commitment of the staff at the time - not without enormous, often personal sacrifices - allowed the institution to organize itself, so that it could continue to offer its contribution to the University.

This joint effort of institutional commitment was responsible for many important steps taken by the MAE since 1993 to consolidate itself as a research, teaching and extension institution in the areas of archeology, ethnology and applied museology.

In the field of research, special mention should be made of the qualification of several of its researchers, who at the time did not have a doctorate, and the opening of new areas of archeological, ethnological and museological research. Research into the various collections, now gathered in one single space, aiming to their classification and conservation as well as to their exhibit, gained equally differentiated contours. The structuring of spaces for laboratories was also of great importance to allow the integration of researchers and graduate students, who then began to attend the institution more frequently. Likewise, the structuring of a space for the library and its permanent increase enabled completing an important research infrastructure. In the area of teaching, a key step was the creation of a teaching career in the Museums in 1997, thanks to the

support of Prof. Avansi Adilson de Abreu (then director of the MAE) to a very old claim of researchers from all four statutory Museums of the University.⁷ A new Statute (Resolution No. 4363 of April 2, 1997)⁸ that better structured the Museums by establishing decision-making collegiate bodies and specific sectors to streamline research, teaching and extension, as well as the treatment of collections, enabled taking another step towards consolidating the presence of the MAE at the University. From that moment on, all University researchers were able to take an open competitive exam for admission into the teaching career and also to further their career by taking other competitive exams: for “livre docência”^{TN} and full professorship. In the area of teaching, it is also crucial to mention here the initiatives undertaken by some researchers in the 1990s, along with other University bodies, to enable the MAE to accredit undergraduate disciplines. As an Integration Body since the 1988 statute, the MAE had to ensure the support of related departments that accepted our disciplines, as well as the indispensable support of the Office of the Provost for Undergraduate Studies, also created by that statute. This task depended on a lot of energy by some of the MAE researchers, but once the obstacles were overcome it was possible to define the acronyms of several elective undergraduate disciplines, thus creating a grid of its own and bringing to the Museum students from all corners of USP. Many efforts - in the area of teaching - also focused on including and maintaining the Graduate Program in Archeology at a level of national recognition. This effort gained momentum in 2004, with the full autonomy of the Program in relation to the FFLCH, and its final transfer to the MAE.

In the area of extension, fueled by research in applied Museology the MAE initially organized a long-term exhibit at its headquarters, opened in 1995. At the same time, in all these years since 1993, the institution has been involved in numerous temporary exhibits, whether on the capital campus or outside it, in São Paulo and other cities throughout Brazil. The Educational Service also followed the implementation of these exhibits, alongside a busy agenda of actions for the scientific dissemination of the knowledge produced at the Museum and also by promoting publications to support its activities.

In 1991 the new MAE started the institutional publication of the Journal of the Museum of Archeology and Ethnology (*Revista do Museu de Arqueologia e Etnologia* - RevMAE), which replaced the journals of the former MAE, of the Institute of Prehistory and of the Paulista Museum (*Dédalo*, Journal of Prehistory and Journal of the Paulista Museum) and whose objectives were and are the publication of papers in Archeology, Ethnology and Museology, with an emphasis on Africa, South America, the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

^{TN} Many Brazilian universities still accept the institution of “livre docência” – an adaptation of the German “privatdozent”. In the past, “livre docência” was a mechanism to ensure academic quality; today it is most often a mechanism to avoid the doctoral degree requirement for admission and promotion

In 2005 the MAE was appointed faithful custodian of the Archeology and Ethnology collections of the defunct Banco Santos Cultural Institute. The arrival of these items at the MSA mobilized the entire curatorial staff and part of the teaching staff of the Museum. It required planning the accommodation of more than 3,500 items as well as cataloging, classifying and making them available to researchers and to the organization of exhibits. As we write this article, it appears that most of them will be definitely incorporated into the MAE collections, enriching it and opening up new lines of research and knowledge dissemination.

Starting from the twenty-first century, there have been numerous fronts on which the MAE has worked and continues to work. Today we have a museum with a graduate program coordinated with research lines that cover all institutional vocations: archeology, ethnology and applied museology. This Graduate Program is the first and most robust educational center for archeologists in Brazil, and has been a fundamental reference in the development of professionals in this area for at least the past fifteen years. The implementation of a second Graduate Program in Museology, in this case an inter-unit program, but headquartered at the MAE, has already been submitted to the Dean's Office. Our alumni work in universities and academic institutions all over Brazil. Regarding undergraduate courses, the internal discussion about the creation of a BA program in Archeology is about to be concluded as we write this article, and should then be submitted to the evaluation of the competent bodies of the University.

As for the activities related to the exhibit of the rich collection of the MAE, new long lasting projects to restructure long-term exhibits in the current and future headquarters are already well underway. Projects for temporary exhibits are also implemented on a permanent basis.

In the case of research, this has been systematically coordinated around regimental laboratories that work with the financial support of agencies like FAPESP and CNPq and are fundamental spaces for knowledge production, bringing together faculty and students at all levels of education around common themes. In turn, several MAE professors participate actively in the newly regulated research centers at the University, which promote interdisciplinarity in the production of scientific knowledge. In addition to the laboratories and participation in university research centers, the MAE continues to maintain and upgrade the Mario Neme Center for Environmental Archeology, in Piraju, today an outpost of the Museum in the interior of São Paulo and an important center of research and knowledge in the state, offering support to nearby state Universities and acting as a disseminating agent of knowledge for secondary education institutions in the region. The MAE has had an equally important role through its faculty members in associations that bring together researchers in archeology and ethnology, both in Brazil and abroad. Additionally, we have

numerous agreements in Brazil and of international cooperation with academic institutions to develop teaching and research. Furthermore, our professors of Brazilian archeology and our alumni develop research projects in archeological rescue, which are part of the action of archeology in the process of rescuing the national archeological heritage threatened by environmental impact. Accordingly, the MAE also plays a decisive role that reaffirms its profile as an educational institution that develops cadres of professors and researchers, since these projects have sought to encompass research in master's, doctoral and undergraduate programs.

Our research and teaching infrastructure also includes the library, specialized in the research areas of the MAE, which, because of its continuous growth, especially in the last two decades, caters not only to our University but also to national research centers in the areas of action of the MAE. It is worth remembering that the journal of the Museum of Archeology and Ethnology has been published annually, with exemplary frequency, since 1991. Furthermore, it has issued a number of supplements with publications of monographs, annals of congresses and symposia, and other scientific meetings, and which has just published its tenth issue.

Today one can say that the MAE, as a university museum, is facing important challenges along the path on which the institution can establish itself as a true Unit of USP. We now have - from the statutory and regulatory changes introduced at the University with regard to its Museums - the possibility of developing a Statute that will allow us to make decisions aimed to develop our potential for research, teaching and extension: its implementation in the Unit should entail a major investment of energy in the coming months and will involve the construction of a new organizational structure, new internal flows, and last but not least, the development of a viable target plan for the coming years. Another area of work concerns managing the new demands for physical space: within approximately two years we will have a new building that will house the institution, allowing the full development of its potential. This will also be a great challenge, as it will require planning not only the organization of collections for the change of address but also the detailed occupation and operation of the new areas.

The MAE is optimistic in relation to this new scenario, as we know that with the support we have had from the University, we will be able to fulfill the old dreams of the forefathers of the various institutions that have made up the Museum of Archeology and Ethnology since 1989.

Notes

- 1 The authors have worked at the MAE since 1970, and therefore have been involved in the history of the institution since then. Thus, this article cannot but be the result of a personal perception of the path trodden by the MAE. Even so, we have tried to be as objective as possible, including dates, articles consulted and University legislation.
- 2 Vocation represented in its collection and explained in the document creating the new MAE/USP in 1989, contained in numerous documents such as annual institutional reports, suggested evaluation criteria for the CERT/USP, various requests made to the central bodies of USP and organizational charts of the institution.
- 3 Note that the graduate program at the University of São Paulo was formalized precisely in 1972, from the Statute implemented by Decree No. 52906 of March 27, 1972. Visit leginf.uspnet@usp.br.
- 4 Official State Gazette of January 9, 1982.
- 5 Text taken from Resolution No. 3560 of August 11, 1989; visit www.leginf.uspnet.usp.br.
- 6 Visit www.leginf.uspnet.usp.br.
- 7 About the situation of the faculty in the Museums before 1997, see Brandão & Costa (2007).
- 8 It should be said that all four statutory Museums had their new bylaws implemented at that time (www.leginf.uspnet.usp.br).

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ABSTRACT – The intention of this paper is to present a brief history of the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology of the University of São Paulo. Our aim is to register some of the most important moments of this Museum, since its creation back in 1964 up to 2010, when it achieved its administrative and academic autonomy among all the other Schools, Institutes and Faculties of the University.

KEYWORDS: University Museums, Research and Teaching in Museums, History of USP.

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