

ARCHEOLOGICAL HERITAGE AND CULTURAL RESOURCES IN BRAZIL

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Summary

This entry deals with archeological heritage and cultural resources in Brazil, beginning with a historical background. Archeology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are described. The protection of archeological resources in a historical perspective deals with bills and laws regarding heritage and preservation. Prehistoric issues explored include the discussions about early humans in Brazil and Amazonian settlement. In the historical resources section, Jesuit Missions, maroons, and the Canudos rebellion are dealt with referring to the literature on these subjects. Protection and conservation of archeological resources are related to the society at large. Archeological resources and education describe two examples and assesses some recent trends. The entry ends with a reassessment of archeology and sustainable development, stressing the challenges and perspectives ahead.

1. Archeological Heritage in Brazil: Historical Background

The history, key subjects and archeological resource management in Brazil must be understood within the context of its complex geography and historical development.

Brazil is a large country (8 511 965 square kilometers), and its Atlantic coastline reaches 7408 km. Almost the entire country has a tropical or semi-tropical climate: in the north there is the heavily wooded Amazon Basin covering half the country; the northeast region is semi-arid scrubland; a large savannah, or *serrado* area stretches to the south; and semi-tropical vegetation exists from São Paulo State in the south up to the Pampa in Rio Grande do Sul State.

During the colonial period (1500-1822), there are few references in the written sources to archeological sites. The evidence provided by such documents, including drawings and paintings, must be interpreted with reference to their social context, as they are generally biased against native Americans, Africans and poor people. The Brazilian Empire (1822-1889) witnessed the beginning of archeological activities, when Peter Wilhelm Lund came to the country, in 1825, and established a paleontological laboratory in Lagoa Santa, a village in Minas Gerais Province, where he found human and animal fossils. Between 1834 and 1844 Lund surveyed some eight hundred caves and collected a great deal of material, especially extinct fauna. Later, the Imperial Museum in Rio de Janeiro was active in archeological research, thanks to C. Wiener and his pioneering studies of lithic material, in the 1870s. The Canadian Charles Friedrich Hartt, Ferreira Penna and Barbosa Rodrigues explored the Amazon Basin, from the 1870s to the 1890s. C. Rath studied shell middens, known by the tupi name *sambaqui*, while the Museum director, Ladislau Neto was the first Brazilian to explicitly write about archeology as such. Archeology was also carried out in the context of the Brazilian Geographical and Historical Institute and its journal, “Revista do IHGB”, published regularly on archeological matters. All these activities were due in no small degree to Emperor Peter the Second and his enlightened approach to scholarship. Isolated research was carried out also in the South of the country, published from the 1870s in Germany and in Rio Grande do Sul Province.

The early republican period (1889-1920s) witnessed a weakening of archeological scholarship in the country. During the nineteenth century the scholars dealing with archeology were in touch with what was going on in the international academic world. Ladislau Neto regularly exchanged letters with the leading French intellectual Ernst Renan and the contacts with foreign experts were deemed as important. The shift of the cultural center of Brazil from the Court in Rio de Janeiro to the new coffee producing élite in São Paulo helps to explain the new inward looking aspects of archeology, even though paradoxically the field was dominated by foreigners. Museum directors were now the main actors, like the Swiss Emil Goeldi at Belém, when he was in charge of the Museu Paraense (later named after him “Museu Emílio Goeldi”) and Hermann von Ihering, Director of the Paulista Museum, in São Paulo, from 1895 to 1916. Von Ihering was out of touch with modern research abroad, as he opposed the idea that shell mounds were evidence of prehistoric human settlements. T. Sampaio, another leading scholar in the 1910s and early 1920s, contrary to what academics were proposing abroad, believed wholeheartedly that rock scratches should be interpreted as hieroglyphic writing.

Between the 1920s and the 1940s important changes occurred in Brazil: political, social and cultural upheavals. Modernism and, later, fascist and communist ideas led to the emergence of “the people” in intellectual discourse. Accordingly, this period saw two new developments: the beginning of the study of artifact collections and the publication

of the first archeological manuals. A. Costa and F. Barata produced several handbooks in those years, and the Argentine Antonio Serrano studied collections of artifacts and thus established a whole new field of research within Brazilian archeology.

The inception of university research (1950s-1964) is related to Brazil's longest period of democracy (1945-1964). Academic archeology was established by the leading humanist Paulo Duarte. Due to his friendship with Paul Rivet, Director of the Musée de l'Homme, Paris, France, Duarte created the Prehistory Commission at São Paulo State University in 1952. Duarte pushed for legal protection of the Brazilian heritage, and as a result of his efforts the Brazilian Congress enacted a federal law (3537/57, approved as law 3924 in 1961) protecting archeological sites. To this day, it is still the only explicit federal law on the protection of archeological heritage.

The military period (1964-1985) changed the situation. The project of scholarly archeology as proposed by Duarte was opposed by the new authorities who used the lack of funds to undermine his efforts. At the same time, the Americans Clifford Evans and Betty Meggers were able to set up a National Program of archeological Research, known by its acronym PRONAPA. The Program was sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, and by Brazilian institutions, like the National Research Council (CNPq). In the period between 1965 and 1971 PRONAPA trained Brazilian practitioners and carried out surveys and excavations throughout the country, with few resulting publications. Duarte, on the other hand, was expelled from the University of São Paulo in 1969 and the Institute of Prehistory he created was subjected to restrictions. Archeology suffered a lot at that time, as a result of authoritarian trends inside the profession. However, democracy (1985 onwards) favored the flourishing of archeological interest and freedom led to the development of a variety of new activities regarding archeological resources. Interpretive books have been published, as well as a greater number of articles in scholarly journals, for the first time not only in Brazil but also abroad.

From the nineteenth century, Brazilian identity has been linked to archeological heritage. In the Court in Rio de Janeiro, Romantic nationalism was grounded on the idealization of natives and archeology played a role. After an eclipse in the beginning of the twentieth century, prehistoric and historic archeological heritage contributed to forging Brazilian identity. An overview of different archeological sites, heritage and identity is dealt with in section 3.

2. The protection of archeological resources in Brazil in historical perspective

Archeological resources have been the subject of several bills, the first of them in 1920, when the Brazilian Society for the Fine Arts, or “Sociedade Brasileira de Belas Artes”, through its then president, Bruno Lobo asked the keeper of classical antiquities of the National Museum, Alberto Childe to prepare a bill regarding the protection of the national artistic heritage. Childe's proposal treated mostly of the archeological sites and defended the nationalization of these cultural resources. The bill stated that “archeological remains, buildings, sites, caves, cemeteries, shell middens are considered national assets and are to be owned only by each state of the Union”. The proposal was not taken into consideration by the Congress, dominated as it was by representatives not

interested in nationalization of private property even if it was aimed at preserving of archeological resources.

In 1923 again there was a proposal regarding the subject, this time by a representative from Pernambuco, Luiz Cedro. During the debates in the Congress, Cedro referred to archeological remains and their importance to building the historical identity of the country. In 1925 another bill was proposed, but this time the prehistoric remains were considered worthy of attention only when art was expressed. Only in 1930, the bill 230 by the representative José Wanderly de Araújo Pinto was explicit about the protection of archeological resources, but it was never to be approved. Outside the parliament discussions continued, despite the lack of proper laws regarding archeological resources. Raimundo Lopes in 1935 published a comprehensive and innovative study on cultural resources, and some of his suggestions are worth mentioning:

- to keep cultural monuments in their original shape;
- to reconstruct the original natural and cultural environment;
- to forbid the economic exploitation of shell middens;
- to set up educational programs;
- to register Native cemeteries;
- to preserve sites and Indians alike;
- to cooperate with religious authorities on Church heritage, and
- to publicize archeological sites, among other topics.

In 1936 a bill was prepared by the leading intellectual, Mário de Andrade, regarding archeological and ethnological resources, split into four categories: artifacts, monuments, landscapes and folklore. It included pottery, lithics, cemeteries, shell middens, rock art, caves, as well as a variety of natural resources, like rivers, fauna, caves and even traditional paths. In January 1937 it established the Brazilian Heritage, “Serviço Histórico e Artístico Nacional”, aiming at protecting, preserving and publicizing the heritage. The bill 511/36, originally proposed by Mário de Andrade, was being discussed in the Congress in November 1937 when a coup closed the parliament. Soon afterwards, still in November, president Vargas, now as a dictator, published the bill as a decree, “decreto-lei n. 25/37”. A new Penal Code was also issued, in 1940, for the first time punishing the destruction of cultural resources, including archeological ones. From 1940, Brazilian Heritage established a register of protected sites and archeological collections. The decree 25/37 is still in force. In 1948, in Paraná State a law was passed protecting Spanish and Jesuit settlements, with a protected surrounding area of one hundred hectares, resulting in the later establishment of the heritage Parks of Vila Rica, Santo Inácio and Ciudad Real. Several judges and other officials were also trying to protect shell middens in different areas of the country.

The Commission for prehistory, established in 1952 by Paulo Duarte, aimed at protecting archeological sites, shell middens and others. The commission was headed by Duarte and comprised Helbert Baldus and Egon Schaden, leading anthropologists, among others. Duarte and the commission prepared a draft law regarding archeological resources. It was approved by the Congress in 1961 as Law 3924/61, and remains in force as the only explicit federal law on archeological heritage. The Law deals with “archeological and prehistoric monuments” and establishes that they are protected by

the law and should be preserved; they are to be controlled by the State and are not subjected to the general rules of private property. Archeological sites in general, like shell middens, mounds, and any ancient human settlement as established by experts, are considered monuments. It is thus forbidden to destroy the sites, explicitly it is not allowed to make any economic use of ancient remains. The sites are considered as property of the Federal State. The Law also mentions archeological excavations and the necessary registration of sites, controlled by Brazilian Heritage. A report by the archeologist and the necessary arrangements relating to the housing of the archeological material is also mentioned. The export of archeological resources must be authorized by Brazilian Heritage. In the 1960s and 1970s, several scholars, like Duarte in São Paulo and Fathr Rohr in Santa Catarina tried to use the law to protect shell middens, but Brazil was under military rule and it was not easy to enforce the law.

The restoration of civilian rule in 1985 led to a growing activity of State assemblies and Town councils, free to legislate on a wide range of subjects, not least resource management. Several states introduced legislation protecting archeological sites and establishing state registers of monuments and archeological collections. This has been particularly the case of states with strong archeological activities, like São Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul. Town councils also introduced legislation to that effect, and several municipal administrations introduced town Heritage offices. Urban archeology has thus been developing and there has been a sprout of interest in archeological resources. A new primary school syllabus, introduced in the 1990s, emphasized the importance of learning from the local reality, so that the town became the starting point for understanding social life. In this context, archeology can play a special role, enabling school children to know that their town was inhabited by natives, in prehistoric times. Furthermore, material evidence from the historic period has also been used to show that the picture given by documents is biased and that blacks, natives, people of mixed complexion, immigrants, migrants and poor people in general, usually under-represented in official documents, left material evidence now recovered by archeology. Local primary school textbooks are now introducing archeological evidence in order to give the children a more complex view of the past, enabling them to better understand present-day contradictions in society.

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Biographical Sketch

Pedro Paulo A. Funari graduated in history (in 1981) from the University of São Paulo, Brazil, obtained from the same university a master's degree in social anthropology (1985), and a PhD in archeology (1990). He has worked as lecturer in the São Paulo State University (UNESP) from 1986 to 1992, and from 1992 he has worked at the Campinas State University (UNICAMP), where he was given his professorship in 1996. He is a research associate of Illinois State University, in USA, and Barcelona University, in Spain. He has also worked in archeological research in several other countries, notably in Britain and Italy.

Professor Funari has published several papers on subjects such as the archeology of historical societies, ancient history, classical philology, settlement patterns, and in general on archeological theory. He has authored several books, some of them published in U.K. and Spain, and co-authored *Historical archeology, Back from the edge* (London and New York, Routledge, 1999). He participated in the UNESCO Aswan meeting on the Use of Water, in 1999, in Egypt. He is acting secretary of the World archeological Congress since 2002, and senior South American representative in the same world body from 1994.

He is a member of various national and international organizations, including the World archeological Congress, Society for Historical archeology, European Association of archeologists, Brazilian archeological Association, and Brazilian Anthropological Association, among others. As a social activist he participated in several campaigns in Brazil and abroad to foster public archeology and engaged scholarship.