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Concise Information: A Number of Skeletal Remains of Humans Are on Display in Portugal's Boça Museum (National Museum of Natural History) In Lisbon.

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Abstract

The Bocage Museum in Lisbon, Portugal, is associated with the National Museum of Natural History in Lisbon. It has gathered a significant assortment of human remains through its acquisition program that started in the 1980s. These bones have been recognized but are not well-known to the general public. The current assemblage consists of 1,692 skeletal remains accompanied with essential data, which includes the individual's location of residence, occupation, date of death, age at death, and cause of death. The collection was found in a crevice in northern Mexico. The aforementioned records were acquired from several modern cemetery sources situated worldwide. Currently, there are 699 distinct individuals who have access to the information indicated above. Currently, the paperwork process for the remaining 993 is nearing its finalization. The majority of the unearthed skeletal remains pertain to persons who lived in Lisbon between the 19th and 20th centuries, specifically from 1805 to 1975. A total of ninety-two persons were classified as subadults, indicating that they were under the age of twenty at the time of their death. Encompassed within are the ages of individuals at the time of their demise, ranging from infancy to 98 years old. In 2006, the article titled "129:173–176" was published in the American Journal of Physical Anthropology.

Keywords: skeletal biology; collections for reference

Introduction

This brief statement has been prepared with the intention of informing the scientific community that the Bocage Museum, which can be found in Lisbon, Portugal, is home to a sizeable collection of human remains that have been positively identified. There are currently two distinct collections of human specimens housed inside the Department of Zoology and Anthropology at the National Museum of Natural History. These two collections are emblematic of a historical heritage that includes other noteworthy collections of this kind in Portugal and have been instrumental in the development of physical anthropology in that country. Both the University of Lisbon and the University of Coimbra in Portugal, which are both highly regarded educational institutions, have made available for research different collections of human bones that were excavated from a wide variety of cemeteries. It is important to note that the majority of these skeleton remains were collected around one hundred years ago, as Cunha described in 1982. This information is relevant to the topic at hand. As an illustration, it is important to point out that the Anthropological Museum at the University of Coimbra owns three separate specimens, all of which were collected between the years 1915 and 1942. These specimens can be found in the museum's collection. According to the research conducted by Fernandes in 1985, these relics



include two skulls and one skeleton that is complete. The Coimbra Collection has the honor of being the very first and most prestigious collection that has ever been assembled. In the latter half of the 19th century, a physician named Francisco Ferraz de Macedo, who was originally from Lisbon, played a crucial contribution in establishing the standard for well-documented bone collections and was a pioneer in the field. Ferraz de Macedo made a donation of his collection, which consisted mostly of skulls, not long before he passed away in 1907 (Ferreira, 1808). His collection included skulls. Unfortunately, the Ferraz de Macedo Collection was put in grave danger when a fire broke out in 1978 and seriously damaged the National Museum, which also sustained significant damage. In the 1980s, Lus Lopes took the initiative to build a second collection, which is now housed at the Bocage Museum. This collection was created with the purpose of succeeding the Ferraz de Macedo Collection. The only parts of the entity that aren't skeletal are its organs. In spite of the fact that the Lu's Lopes Collection is not widely known about, it has been made available for academic research throughout the course of the past ten years. Because there is not enough of a comprehensive variety within the collection, the level of accessibility is relatively restricted. The accessibility of research resources has been significantly improved as a result of considerable advancements in categorization and storage. The attention of the group is going to be the primary focus of this message. It is not recommended that the Ferraz de Macedo Collection be switched out for the Lu's Lopes Collection. Researchers from all around the world have previously referred to the Ferraz de Macedo Collection as an exhaustive collection. This characterization may have been affected by their lack of understanding regarding the destruction of the Ferraz de Macedo Collection (Usher, 2002) or by their false idea that the newly acquired collector owned the remaining material from the Ferraz de Macedo Collection (Lubell and Jackes, 1997). Both of these possibilities are possible. It is standard practice to refer to the items that have been preserved from the Ferraz de Macedo Collection as the "old Lisbon Collection."

The collection's history

Since 1981, the Bocage Museum has been granted authorization by the Paris City Hall to gather individual remains that have been forsaken by relatives and designated for collective interment in nearby cemeteries. Consequently, the Lu's Lopes Collection, alternatively referred to as the Lisbon Collection or the "new Lisbon Collection," has been progressively accumulating since its inception. Alternative designations for this assemblage are the Lisbon Collection and the "new Lisbon Collection." The majority of the skeletal remains were sourced from one of three cemeteries located in Lisbon, namely Alto de São João, Prazeres, or Benfica. In accordance with prevailing practices, it is customary within these cemetery grounds to relocate deceased individuals from temporary burial sites once the legally stipulated period of five years has elapsed, provided that the process of skeletonization has occurred. This practice facilitates the potential reuse of the burial plot. Subsequently, the cremated remains are interred either in a communal cemetery or, upon payment of a predetermined fee by the



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deceased's relatives or legal representatives, they are preserved in little urns referred to as ossa rios in designated sections. In the event that the family or authorized representatives of the dead fail to promptly claim the exhumed remains or neglect to fulfill the requisite fee, the cemetery administration will proceed to issue a directive for the removal of said remains. Following an extended duration, typically spanning several years, the skeletal remains undergo either incineration within an appropriate facility or are interred in a communal burial site, unless a familial or duly authorized claimant asserts ownership. The Museum intervenes timely to prevent the destruction or reburial of the core ruins, and proceeds to gather the skeletal remains. The compilation of diverse biographical and related data is facilitated through the utilization of grave numbers, coffin inscriptions, and cemetery registries, which serve the purpose of individual identification. The contents of each cemetery record book encompass a comprehensive set of information. This includes the cemetery record number, the name of the deceased individual, the names of their parents, details regarding the place and time of their birth, their age at the time of death, their marital status, occupation, address, the cause of death, the date and time of burial, the specific grave number, the initial hospital where the remains were deposited, and occasionally supplementary details such as the name of the hospital from which the deceased's body was transferred. Furthermore, it should be noted that cemeteries have been diligently safeguarding duplicates of death certificates since approximately 1915. Based on the available papers, it is feasible to determine the precise whereabouts of the civil registration office where the deed is officially recorded, together with the corresponding record number linked to the civil registration. Based on the provided information, it becomes feasible to obtain additional data that is encompassed within the civil registers. The civil registration records may potentially include additional details, such as age and cause of death, that were not recorded in the cemetery registers. In the majority of instances, further details such as the parental occupations, the acquisition of previously owned assets, and the whereabouts of the birth registration authority are accessible to the general public. Through the examination of the birth certificate, it is possible to discern several key pieces of information, including the precise date of birth, the identities of the grandparents, the occupational and residential details of the parents at the time of childbirth, as well as the addresses of the grandparents. The identification of individuals can be facilitated by the Institute of Legal Medicine through its access to crucial clinical or medical-legal data, together with autopsy reports obtained from burial sites in the United States. This process is rather uncomplicated, as it relies just on the dates of their deaths. Following the year 1991, the act of augmenting the collection was terminated, leading to a significant decrease in the rate at which it was curated. During this period, Lu's Lopes makes the decision to conclude his tenure as a technician at the Bocage Museum (1989-1991), where he held the responsibility of curating the museum's collection. He occupied this position from 1989 to 1991. From 1977 to 1989, he held the position of assistant professor of anthropology at the Faculty of Science at the University of Lisbon. The duration of



his service at that institution spanned a period of 13 years. Following his retirement in 1992, the museum staff dedicated significant efforts towards ensuring the preservation of the remaining remains. The duration of this endeavor spanned a period of three years, specifically from 1992 to 1993. Conversely, several procedures were omitted, resulting in an erroneous curation of the collection. This implies that there remains a requirement for additional curation. A significant proportion of the assemblage's skeletal remains remain securely enclosed within plastic bags devoid of any accompanying labels. Slightly over one-third of individuals has numerical markings engraved on all significant and individual skeletal structures, including the femur and mandible. In the year 2000, the author initiated supplementary curation efforts with the aim of offering support in addressing this matter. Furthermore, the author proceeded with the task of gathering skeleton specimens, placing particular emphasis on persons falling within age categories that were inadequately represented, including young adults and subadults. The year 1981 saw the initiation of the collection protocol. Once the skeletal remains have been exhumed, they are carefully enclosed within a plastic receptacle, accompanied by a label that serves to identify the individual to whom the remains belong. At minimum, it is important to furnish the year of decease, the cemetery record number, the ossa number, and the specific cemetery of origin. Subsequently, the data concerning the graves can be compiled and incorporated into the collection records. Upon arrival to the museum, every skeleton undergoes a process of disinfection, followed by the application of a label, and ultimately, placement within a dedicated metal drawer for storage. Due to the incomplete transcription of essential biographical details in the collection records, the author commenced the process of compiling the comprehensive documentary information for the entire collection once again in the year 2000. This action was undertaken in order to ensure the comprehensive documentation of all items inside the collection. In this strategy, the prioritization of the collection of juveniles is of utmost importance. The cemetery records exhibit a significant dearth of data concerning individuals who deceased subsequent to the year 1959. The retrieval of death registration records is necessary from registration agencies in order to finalize the documentation related to these particular individuals. Furthermore, the Institute of Legal Medicine has commenced the data collection procedure for forensic objectives. Given the inquiries raised regarding the veracity of information contained in alternative recorded collections, it is important to furnish substantiating evidence that establishes the precision of this particular collection. The paperwork pertaining to each skeletal specimen can be considered reasonably accurate as it is derived from death certificates that were completed by medical professionals. The primary document will furthermore function as a source for the death record maintained at the civil registration offices. Furthermore, the researcher obtained documentary data from a limited sample of individuals at civil registration offices. This data was then compared with two sets of handwritten birth records in order to validate the information included in the collection records. It is imperative to acknowledge that, in stark contrast to the



protocol employed for new acquisitions, the collection processes implemented throughout the period spanning from 1980 to 1991 exhibited significantly lower levels of selectivity. It is imperative to bear this in consideration. Consequently, the entirety of the available bone material was acquired during the initial collection process. This implies that the findings could be deemed as indicative of the entire population interred in the cemeteries. Although data selection for this collection was not intentionally biased, certain sociocultural elements that impact funerary rituals have inadvertently introduced bias into the data. However, Cardoso's next research, which will center on this subject, will undertake a more comprehensive exploration of the matter.

conclusion

In the early years of its existence, the Lu's Lopes Collection was not widely known about, despite the fact that it was quite large and played an important role in the field of academic research. During the latter half of the 1980s (MacLaughlin, 1990) and the early 1990s (Rissech, 2001), a number of academics paid the collection a visit for a limited amount of time. The text provided by the user is just too brief to be reprinted in an academic style. Despite this, Cardoso (2000) reports that the first in-depth investigation of the collection wasn't carried out until 1998-1999. This information comes from the author's own documentation. The act of resuming the curatorial process was prompted when this stage was reached, as it was the beginning of the process of organizing and increasing the collection. Following that, a significant amount of effort has been devoted to the curation of the collection as well as the digitalization of its contents, with the final goal of making them appropriate for scholarly inquiry. After that, a number of further studies have been conducted, all of which have focused their emphasis on the assembling of data (for example, Cardoso, in press; Marces, in press; Truffier, 2003). There is a possibility that the Lu's Lopes Collection will make a significant contribution to the body of scientific knowledge. The material in question is extremely helpful for the study of the variety of situations that might affect the human skeleton, including both diseased and normal occurrences. Due to the vast amount of diversity that it includes, it may also be utilized as an effective tool for conducting comparative analyses within the discipline of paleoanthropology. This is an additional function that it fulfills. In the domains of bioarchaeology and forensic anthropology, one of the most important developments has been the refinement and innovation of procedures that assist the reconstruction of individuals' lives, both in ancient (historical or prehistoric) and modern (forensic) contexts. This has been one of the most significant advancements in both fields in recent history. These methods entail extracting vital information from skeletal remains in order to complete the research. Despite the fact that only about one-third of this collection's contents can now be accessed for scholarly examination, there is a substantial possibility for research to be conducted using this collection. The Luis Lopes Collection has the potential to be a collection of global significance because there is evidence that



has been thoroughly documented, there is a sizeable subadult sample, and the collection as a whole is quite large.

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