

Poster/Short Communication

THE ANATOMICAL MUSEUM PEDRO ARA

CARLOS SANCHEZ CARPIO
Museo Anatómico Buenos Aires
F.C.M., Universidad Nacional de Cordoba, AR

SUMMARY

The contribute is aimed to shed light on the history of the Anatomical Museum Pedro Ara since his foundation in 1878. Particularly, it describes the activity of Pedro Ara in preparing the anatomical specimens, which constitute the original collection of the Museum.

On September 27th, 1877, the Faculty of Medical Sciences was established in the National University of Córdoba and Dr. Weyenberg was named its first Dean already being Professor of Anatomy and Histology. The Anatomical Museum Pedro Ara was founded in 1878 with the aim of teaching anatomy: it had a skeleton provided by the National College of Monserrat with nine preparations; some bones were made in the Chair, and other skeleton was obtained from the Cemetery Saint Jerome; there was an anatomical atlas with nine sheets.

During the first 30 years of its life, the Museum was installed in Old San Roque Hospital where it had an anatomical theater, a laboratory and domestic offices. An inventory dating December 1892 recorded that the museum was supplied with a collection of 80 pieces, including bones and anatomical preparations.

During the years 1924-1928, Rector Prof. Dr. Leon S. Morra took advantage of the trip made in 1925 by Drs. G. Martinez and M.

Key words: Pedro Ara – Anatomical collection – Anatomy teaching in Cordoba

Aliaga, entrusting the task of interviewing in Spain some relevance anatomist who could be hired for our School of Medicine.

In Seville they attended an exhibition of anatomical preparations of the young author Professor Pedro Ara Sarria, who was already shining with sharp objects.

Dr. Ara accepted to be recruited and to sign the contract, subscribed by the University authorities, thanks to the diligent process printed by the Rector Morra.

Prof. Ara began working in Córdoba in that same year, and soon his eminent experience and quality technical anatomical methods resulted in excellent and finished pieces, used as first didactical and scientific tools for the creation of a Museum. As for his teaching complicated preparation methods, and for his efforts in encouraging vocational skills of youngers in Anatomy, the professor was shown as a master. The activity developed by Prof. Ara is laudable and his work was made with a very refined technique.

The Anatomical Museum is full of teaching pieces produced with the intention of preserving exactly the shape and real characteristics of the human organs. His anatomical work was done with high expectations, but at the same time with humility - his objective was not to draw esthetic performances, but to express the exact nature of the human body. In 1928-1929, he paraffined the "old man head", an old beggar died at the door of the University Hospital, currently part of the exposition at the Museum.

Pedro Ara paraffined the body of the beautiful daughter of Professor in Hygiene, Dr. Loza, taking into account the beautiful appearance and clean lines of her body without causing any mutilation. For a few months the body of the white maiden was on the marble, and then it was moved to a sealed ballot box with a glass on its top. Nobody knows who started calling her the "Sleeping Beauty"; for only two years the body sculpture was exposed at the Museum and then it was buried in a cemetery.

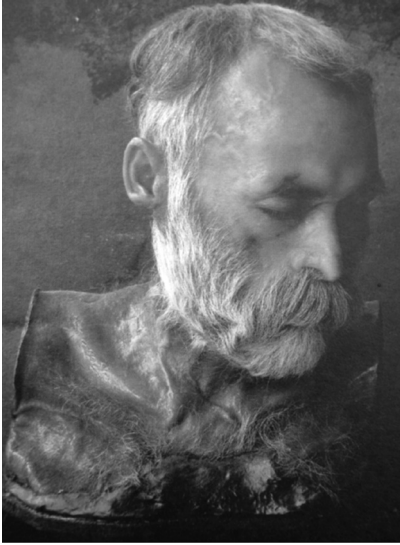


Fig. 1. "Old man Head" Paraffin by Prof. Dr. Pedro Ara between 1928-1929. It is said that the old man was a beggar who frequented the clinics and died nearby the Hospital.



Fig. 2. The body of the daughter of Dr. Loza, known as "The Sleeping Beauty"

In 1932, Prof. Dr. Umberto Fracassi, who served continuously from 1933 to 1955, took over the Chair and the museum. He worked with Ms. Maria Luisa Leon Gasser, an excellent anatomical trainer.

By 1933 the Museum was prepared and enriched with many other valuable anatomical specimens and obtained the collaboration of Professor Fracassi. During this period (1962), the Museum was hosted in a well suited room, located in the National University Hospital. In 1955, Prof. R. Angel Suarez, a student of Ara and Fracassi managed the construction of a new building, on a adjacent land of the National University Hospital neighbor to the north side and Rio Primero (Suquía). In 1962 the new building, called as "the Anatomical Institute of Córdoba", opened with the adequate fa-

cilities for Pedro Ara Museum and the Chair of Normal Anatomy. The implementation of preparations collection continued and boost peaked in 1972, when it was reached 1100 preparations.

In 1969, Prof. Ángel Suárez died and R. took over the direction of the Institute and Museum: the Prof. E. Jiménez Román (1969), Prof. Oscar Antonio (1971), Prof. Olivares (1973), Prof. Dr. César Ignacio Aranega (1987), and since 2010 Professor Dr. Carlos Sanchez Carpio.

The role of the museum is very important in consideration also of the increasing significance of the historico-medical culture for the college and university students training and for a wider non-specialized community. Furthermore, national and international tourism benefits from museological scientific contributions through visits and activities adequately projected and realized. The Museum also provides facilities for the development of practical classes and graduate degree in various specialties.

Correspondence should be addressed to:

Museo Anatómico Buenos Aires: museoara@fcm.unc.edu.ar