

COLECTION OF ANTHROPOLOGY 'FERRAZ DE MACEDO'

The Ferraz de Macedo Collection was donated in 1907 to the Zoological section of the Museum by physician and anthropologist Francisco Ferraz de Macedo (1845-1907). The collection has more than 1,000 skulls and several dozens of skeletons from Lisbon cemeteries. It was the first Portuguese collection of identified skeletons.

Ferraz de Macedo graduated in pharmacy in 1867 and he received his PhD in Medicine by the Faculty of Medicine (Rio de Janeiro), five years later. At least since 1874, he dedicate himself to Anthropology, conducting research on osteometry, anthropometry and criminology. He served as director of the anthropometric and photographic services at the State Bureau of Criminal Investigation until the end of his life.



The detail and rigorous description of skull morphology of the lay Portuguese lead him to the conclusion, in opposition to Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909) theory, that the morphology of criminal and non-criminal crania were alike. Ferraz de Macedo realizes that it was not possible to classify different criminals by cranial capacity alone. The innovative use of new measurement technics and statistical analysis gives Ferraz de Macedo a central role in the history of Anthropology and Criminology in Portugal.

From the original collection 30 skulls and the book of craniometric measurements that is on display have remained, after the 1978 fire, The Museum has another anthropology collection – 1700 identified skeletons from Lisbon cemeteries, one of the largest and better documented in the world –, initiated by Luis Lopes in 1981 and later by Hugo Cardoso.