

Chapter 6 - Portuguese Museums under the *Estado Novo* - Specialised Museums

6.1 The *Museu Monográfico de Conímbriga* (Monographic Museum of Conímbriga)

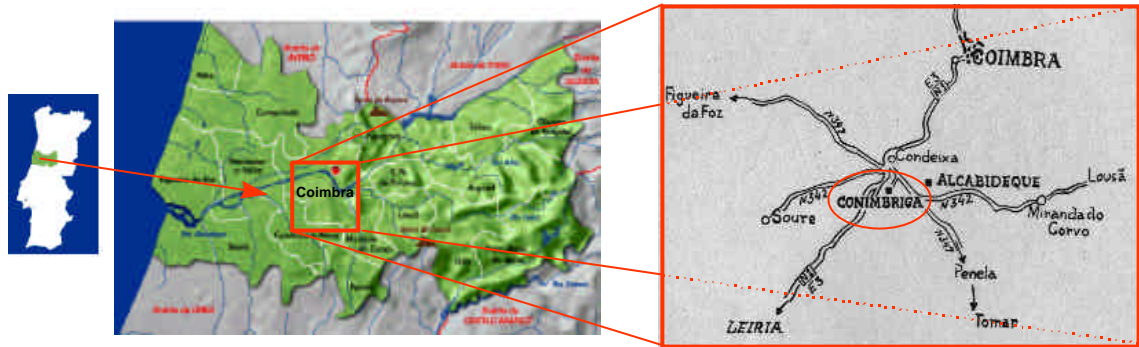


Fig. 30. Location of Conímbriga

Long before a museum existed in Conímbriga,⁵⁴⁹ the place was already very well known as an important Roman archaeological site. There are references to the importance of the site dating from the beginning of this century,⁵⁵⁰ but the scientific research and systematic excavations only began in the 1930s with Virgílio Correia.⁵⁵¹ Correia initiated an era of intense research and archaeological excavations in the site and published several papers and articles about his work.⁵⁵² These actions had official support of the University of Coimbra that received money from the

⁵⁴⁹ Conímbriga is located near Condeixa, a small city in the area of Coimbra.

⁵⁵⁰ For example AZEVEDO, Pedro – "Miscellanea", in *AP*, XIII, 1908, p.10-37. Newspapers also had some eventual information on Conímbriga; as an example see the *Diário de Notícias*, issue of 1907/02/23.

⁵⁵¹ Before systematic excavation some exploratory research was undertaken. CORREIA, Virgílio - "Conímbriga. A camada pré-romana da cidade (Notas de uma exploração de dez dias em Condeixa-a-Velha)", in *O Archeologo Português*, XX, Lisboa, 1916, p.252-264;

⁵⁵² See CORREIA, Virgílio – *Notícia do "oppidum" e das escavações nele realizadas*, Coimbra, Imprensa de Coimbra Ld^a, 1936. Virgílio Correia also published articles in a local newspaper called *Diário de Coimbra* (see issues of 1939/01/06, 1939/08/21 and 1940/01/29). Also of interest CORREIA, Virgílio - "Conímbriga Visigótica", in *O Instituto*, 90, number 5, 1936, p.410-415 and CORREIA, Virgílio - "Las mas recientes escavaciones romanas de interes en Portugal. La ciudad de Conimbriga", in *Archivo Español de Arqueologia*, Madrid, 1940-41, p.257-267. A complete collection of Correia's papers on Conímbriga (1909 to 1944) was published under the *II Congresso Nacional de Arqueologia* (28 Setembro a 4 de Outubro), Coimbra, Biblioteca Geral da Universidade, 1970.

Junta de Educação Nacional, which was a central department.⁵⁵³ One of the most important consequences of this activity was the public and official acknowledgement of the importance of the site. In 1937 the government decided that Conímbriga was to have a proper access and ordered that a new road should be built, linking to the main national road passing by.⁵⁵⁴ The recognition of Conímbriga as a national monument had its public demonstration in 1948, when an issue of the *Boletim* published by DGEMN was dedicated to Conímbriga.⁵⁵⁵

The first ideas about a museum to Conímbriga came from Virgílio Correia, who thought that the museum should imitate a house or a section of the ruins.⁵⁵⁶ This was not the solution supported by Bairrão Oleiro - the first director of the museum - who always thought that the museum should be a place of research, where all facilities needed for a scientific excavation of the site could be gathered. For this purpose he argued that the museum should include accommodation for researchers, laboratories, vast reserves, a coffee shop and, obviously, exhibition rooms. The museum would be a school of Roman archaeology opened both to Portuguese and to foreign students. Oleiro wanted the museum to provide both theoretical and practical experience in the field of Roman archaeology; in other words, the museum would produce scientific work, from the excavation to the publication of papers and other scientific results. This plan for the museum was based on the experience he had at the site during the late 1940s and was also due to the work he had done abroad, especially in Spain where he studied Roman archaeology.⁵⁵⁷

The decision to build the museum was taken due to the importance of the findings of the campaigns Vergílio Correia and others undertook in the mid-1950s, and to a circumstantial

⁵⁵³ *Ruínas Romanas de Conímbriga. Museu Monográfico*, Lisboa, DGEMN, Ministério das Obras Públicas, 1962, p.4-5.

⁵⁵⁴ Decree 27:967 (1937/08/18).

⁵⁵⁵ *Ruínas de Conímbriga*, Lisboa, Boletim da DGEMN, number 52-53, June-September 1948. In the 1960s another issue about Conímbriga was published: *Boletim* da DGEMN, number 116, June 1964.

⁵⁵⁶ This information was given by J. M. Bairrão Oleiro, who was the first director of the museum of Conímbriga and was familiar with the site since the 1940s. See Appendix for synopsis of interview.

⁵⁵⁷ Bairrão Oleiro travelled through Europe and gathered information on Greek and Roman site's museums. The museums he used as examples were the ones of Pompeii, Ostia and especially the one of Ampurias, as this one was a school museum. He went to Spain in 1949 with a scholarship from the Institute of High Culture (*Instituto de Alta Cultura*) to study roman archaeology, as Portugal had, at that time, no specialists in that field. In 1950 he wrote an extended report to the IAC where he presented his ideas for a museum in Conímbriga. In 1952 Bairrão Oleiro published a paper on Conímbriga (OLEIRO, Bairrão - "Conímbriga e alguns dos seus problemas", in *Humanitas*, IV, Coimbra, 1952, p.32-42) .

episode, involving Bairrão Oleiro. At that time, the Minister of Public Works (*Obras Públicas*) was Arantes de Oliveira, who had been born in Condeixa. He knew Conímbriga very well and exerted some influence on the central government in order to increase the financial support to the excavations.⁵⁵⁸ Knowing about one of his visits to Condeixa and Conímbriga, Bairrão Oleiro asked the Minister to visit the site with him, so that he could explain the difficulties and the problems of Conímbriga. The Minister accepted and Bairrão Oleiro was therefore able to present him the major questions that he thought should be urgently solved. After the activity of Virgílio Correia the site had been under the responsibility of the DGEMN a situation that, in Oleiro's opinion, had brought many difficulties: nobody was really responsible for anything and holes (made by people looking for coins and other treasures) were being dug in private fields. He believed that these fields should be integrated to the site and kept under protection. Furthermore, the objects from the site were dispersed by different museums. The Minister asked for a complete report and Bairrão Oleiro committed himself to that task. His final text included the ideas and suggestions he had for the museum of Conímbriga.

But the decision to build the museum was postponed until the end of the 1950s,⁵⁵⁹ and only in the early 1960s did the museum become a reality. The government decided that a museum was to be built but the process of defining the project was complex. Different ministries had different opinions on the subject and the project became an issue of political dispute. The Ministry of Tourism had decisive influence and, under his pressure, the project suffered several changes; the small coffee shop, for instance, was transformed into a restaurant.⁵⁶⁰ Nevertheless, and according to the original plan, the museum had exhibition areas, laboratories and vast reserves.⁵⁶¹ The decree⁵⁶² that gave legal and formal existence to the museum determined that it would be called *Museu Monográfico de Conímbriga* and that the personnel would be a director-curator,

⁵⁵⁸ *Ruínas Romanas de Conímbriga. Museu Monográfico*, Lisboa, DGEMN, Ministério das Obras Públicas, 1962, p.4-5.

⁵⁵⁹ In 1960 a newspaper (*Século*, issue of 1960/03/18) published an article about the future museum, predicting that it would be ready in that year, and that an hotel was to be built near the site. The total budget announced was of 800.000\$00.

⁵⁶⁰ João Couto remarked that someone had ruined the ideas of Bairrão Oleiro: instead of a museum with a small coffee shop the building was a large restaurant with a tiny museum adjacent... See Appendix for synopsis of interview with Bairrão Oleiro.

⁵⁶¹ The idea of having rooms for external researchers was not accepted in this initial phase, because of a strict budget (information given by Adília Alarcão; see appendix for synopsis of interview).

two assistant-curators (*Preparador* or *Colector*⁵⁶³), two guards and three general assistants.⁵⁶⁴ This staff had to care not only for the museum but also for the archaeological site. This museum was a peculiar one, as its acquisition policy was confined to the adjacent archaeological site. Until then, no other Portuguese museum had had such character.



Fig. 31. Aerial photograph of *Conímbriga*, taken from Northeast.

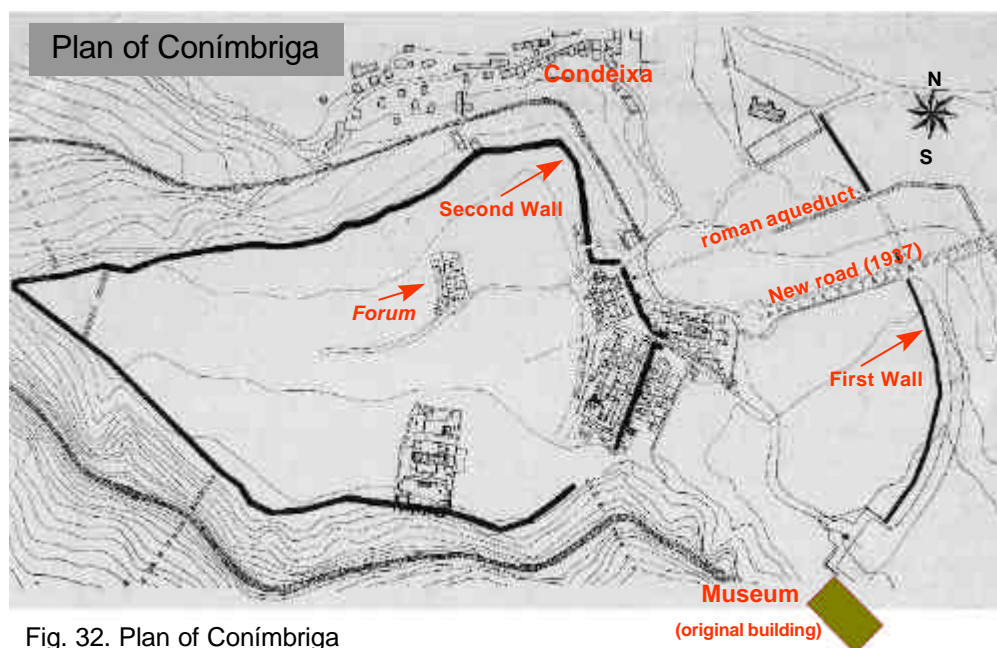


Fig. 32. Plan of *Conímbriga*

⁵⁶² Decree 44:349 (1962/05/14). Also decree 44:346 (same date) which determined the necessary authorisation from the Ministry of Finances to establish an annual budget for the new museum.

⁵⁶³ The word used in the decree was *Preparador*; Adília Alarcão prefers the word *Colector*. See appendix for synopsis of interview.

⁵⁶⁴ The salaries were, respectively: 3.600\$00, 2.00\$00, 1.400\$00, 1.150\$00, per month.

The establishment of the new museum was reported in national newspapers.⁵⁶⁵ They celebrated the modernity of the museum⁵⁶⁶ and the quality of the facilities. The museum is described as a multi-use building including three exhibition rooms, reserves, a vast working room, laboratory, dark room, residence of the guard and coffee shop. This complex was built in an area that had previously been checked for archaeological remains.⁵⁶⁷ The museum was not exactly what his director (Bairrão Oleiro) had in mind and really wanted, but the need for a museum in Conímbriga was officially recognised and this certainty was the first and essential fact for further possible improvements. The Portuguese state was finally committed to the project. The idea of having an archaeological site of national, and international, importance, pleased the Portuguese political power.

Bairrão Oleiro's close collaborators were Adília Alarcão and Jorge Alarcão, who had been attending his classes at the University of Coimbra. Bairrão Oleiro wanted the museum to work in a professional basis, so he invited his two young collaborators to study abroad in order to learn conservation methods and techniques.⁵⁶⁸ As a result the MMC rapidly became an advisor to the museums in Portugal, in the fields of conservation and restoration of ceramics, and metallic and wooden objects. The museum was also able to gather local support and some local people became skilled archaeological artists and active collaborators with the museum. These successes contributed to the progressive transformation of the museum into the school-museum Bairrão Oleiro wanted.

One of the first tasks the museum was confronted with was the urgent need to prevent private excavations in fields around the official site. In order to do that, the museum decided, with backup from the central government, to buy the area considered essential to the protection of the whole site. This action, along with the collaboration with a French mission that in the mid-1960s participated in the excavation of the Roman *Forum*, transformed Conímbriga into an internationally recognised major Roman archaeological site. The museum was the necessary

⁵⁶⁵ For example *A Voz*, issue of 1962/08/03; *Diário de Lisboa*, issue of 1962/08/16, with photographs; *Diário de Notícias*, issue of 1962/08/12.

⁵⁶⁶ *Diário de Lisboa*, quoted above.

⁵⁶⁷ See appendix, synopsis of interview with Bairrão Oleiro

⁵⁶⁸ The Gulbenkian Foundation helped the museum with two scholarships so Adília e Jorge Alarcão could go to the UK and study there. This Foundation also gave a substantial amount to the installation of the laboratory.

support for those campaigns, as the excavated archaeological material included thousands of ceramic fragments and other objects.⁵⁶⁹ The collaboration with the French also resulted in a sentiment of "brotherhood" between those who worked in Conímbriga, based on the long hours of intense field work. As a result, an Association of the Friends of the Museum was then created. It still exists today. In 1963 a booklet was published about the museum and the archaeological site. This booklet was republished several times in many different languages.⁵⁷⁰

In these first years of existence the museum was rarely criticised. One of the few examples is reported in a newspaper of Coimbra,⁵⁷¹ which remarked that tourists visiting the site observed herbs growing on the alleys in front of the main entrance of the museum. The newspaper gives a piece of advice to the museum's responsible, suggesting that the alleys and pathways should be cleaned. In 1964 another newspaper⁵⁷² stated that the museum was still under a process of organisation. Conímbriga was *the* national Roman site and, the archaeological 'jewel of the crown' of the regime and the public interest was therefore very evident.

Bairrão Oleiro remained as director of the museum until 1967, when he accepted administrative responsibilities at the DGESBA, in Lisboa. Adília Alarcão became the new director. She decided that it was time for the museum to change: she had the opportunity to accomplish some of the original plans for the museum that had never been accomplished due to political interference - such as, the construction of accommodation for external researchers.⁵⁷³ In Oleiro's own words, Adília Alarcão was better prepared than himself for the task of directing the museum. In fact the changes she accomplished improved the operation of the museum. From the late 1960s to the middle 1970s, the original building experienced several changes. New exhibition rooms, new reserves and other areas became available, independent access was provided to the

⁵⁶⁹ This information is confirmed by both interviews, with Bairrão Oleiro and Adília Alarcão. See also OLEIRO, J. M. Bairrão and ÉTIENNE, Robert - "Les résultats de la première campagne de fouilles franco-portugaises a Conimbriga", in *Comptes-rendus des séances de l'année 1965*, Paris, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 1966, p.442-451.

⁵⁷⁰ *Conímbriga. Roteiro do Museu e das Ruínas*, Coimbra, 1963.

⁵⁷¹ *Diário de Coimbra*, issue of 1963/10/12.

⁵⁷² *Jornal de Turismo*, issue of May 1964.

⁵⁷³ Bairrão Oleiro reeferes that sometimes he used to stay overnight in the museum, working and writing. See Appendix for synopsis of interview.

museum and coffee shop and an auditorium was built.⁵⁷⁴ At this time the environmental control of the stores was an issue. The stores were too humid and the isolation of the walls and a system of air conditioned solved this problem. Another important change occurred in the design of the museum's displays. Adília Alarcão organised two different visit paths, one about the site of Conímbriga and the other about the roman professions. The first one had four main subjects: the *Forum*, houses, gardens and religion; the second one, using the small objects excavated, showed the main Roman professions that had once existed in Conímbriga. These two exhibitions were intended to be developed in order to be useful to the thousands of school children that visited the museum annually.⁵⁷⁵

The site of Conímbriga became internationally known, especially because of the mosaic floors.⁵⁷⁶ At a national level it was one of the 'jewels of the crown' of the *Estado Novo*. In fact the extension of the site, the well preserved architectonic structures, the quantity and quality of very well preserved mosaics and the variety of archaeological material, made Conímbriga the most important national Roman site for many years. The existence of a museum (and the quality of the laboratory work done there) helped to ennoble Conímbriga and transformed it in a symbol of what the *Estado Novo* had done for the national archaeology.

⁵⁷⁴ The museum had to be closed to public visits during several years (from 1976 to 1985).

⁵⁷⁵ A newspaper (*A Capital*, issue of 1970/04/20) published an article affirming that in 1970 more than four thousand students visited the museum. Nevertheless, the same article referred that it was intolerable that the teachers let the children walk on the ruins and the mosaic floors. Bairrão Oleiro also comments on this mater, criticising teachers that do not prepare the visit with proper care and prefer to chat to each other instead of guiding the groups of students (see appendix for synopsis of interview).

⁵⁷⁶ As examples, see the following articles: PINHEIRO, Fernando M. - "Una Città Romana in Portugallo. Conimbriga", in *Le vie del Mondo*, Milan, XXIX, 2, 1967, pages 145 to 156; LEONARD, Henry K. - "The Rebirth of an Ancient Roman City in Portugal", in *The New York Times*, issue of Sunday, March the 23th, 1969: "Wonder and frustration... superb, almost perfect, mosaic floors. But it will take many more years to complete the work. And that is where the frustration comes in. It is difficult not to kneel and sweep away the covering sand and dirt so as to be the first person in 1.500 years to see the whole floor."

6.2 The *Museu Nacional de Etnologia* (National Museum of Ethnology)

The development of the MNE began in the late 1950s when Jorge Dias⁵⁷⁷ gathered a small team of researchers (Viegas Guerreiro and Margot Dias) and formed the "Mission of Ethnic Minorities of the Portuguese Overseas Territories" (*Missão das Minorias Étnicas do Ultramar Português*). One of the results of their work was a temporary exhibition about the *Macondes* (from Mozambique) where the objects they had gathered were presented to the public. The success of this exhibition is a symbolic mark of the beginning of the process that would result in the establishment of the MNE. In this exhibition the scientific principles that would rule the activity of the future museum of ethnology were already present. From Jorge Dias' point of view, the aesthetic value of the objects was not the main interest of the exhibition. On the contrary, the object was considered important not for itself but for the human activity behind it; the exhibition was not about objects, it was about people.

The first institution that can be considered as a runner of the MNE was the Museum of Ethnology (*Museu de Etnologia*). It was established as a school museum and was part of the Superior Institute of Overseas Studies (*Instituto Superior de Estudos Ultramarinos*) that was directly dependent on the Department of Overseas Research (*Junta de Inverstigação do Ultramar*). As a consequence, this museum had no institutional link with the government department in charge of other national museums, and this circumstance would produce some political and institutional difficulties. In fact, the government department responsible for the national museums did not approve this new museum that was out of its institutional reach and could therefore escape its control.⁵⁷⁸ Nevertheless, with the support of the Minister Silva Cunha, the museum survived.⁵⁷⁹

Another very important step for the organisation of the museum was taken in 1962, when the *Junta de Investigação do Ultramar* decided to form a team of researchers who would have

⁵⁷⁷ Jorge Dias was an anthropologist who studied for his PhD in Germany (the thematic of which was *Volkskunde*); after his return to Portugal he developed the Centre of Studies of Ethnology (*Centro de Estudos de Etnologia*) at the University of Porto, in 1947. See OLIVEIRA, Ernesto Veiga de - "O Museu de Etnologia", in *II Encontro de Museu de Países e Comunidades de Língua Portuguesa*, ICOM, Palácio Nacional de Mafra, 1989, p.55-68.

⁵⁷⁸ See appendix for synopsis of the interview with Benjamim Pereira. In his opinion João de Almeida, who was in charge of the national museums, made consistent efforts to invalidate the project of the museum.

⁵⁷⁹ Interview with Benjamim Pereira. He points out that the arguments of Jorge Dias about his ideas for the museum had a partial support of the Minister.

the task of selecting material for the museum. Jorge Dias was in charge of that team and invited his three colleagues and friends Ernesto Veiga de Oliveira, Fernando Galhano and Benjamim Pereira to work with him. This group of four ethnologists would be the core staff of the museum. The project of Jorge Dias gathered the agreement of his three collaborators and the plan of the museum could finally be realised. Jorge Dias wanted a museum about mankind and not a museum about the Portuguese overseas territories, which was the desire of the regime. His concept of a museum rejected all colonialist approaches⁵⁸⁰ and consequently was not what the regime wanted. Dias's first step was to convince the political power that it was absurd to build a museum about the overseas domains which neglected the European territory. The second step, and the hardest one, was for his team to enlarge the field of research of the museum so as to include all aspects of human activity, paying no attention to the geographical limits of the Portuguese colonies. The acquisition of the collection known as the "Victor Bandeira collection" was the final step.⁵⁸¹ Despite some bitter and politically influenced criticisms on this acquisition, the museum possessed a collection that was the material proof of its universality.⁵⁸²

The name of the museum and its status were changed in 1965, when a decree renamed it Museum of Overseas Ethnology (*Museu de Etnologia do Ultramar*). Nevertheless, as Jorge Dias was the director, he was able to maintain the original international orientation of the institution represented by a decade (1965-1975) of intense research work and important acquisitions. As Benjamim Pereira points out, the acquisition policy of the museum was based on the fundamental principles that objects should be representative of a typology and not gathered only because of their aesthetic value.⁵⁸³ In the Museum of Ethnology the task of gathering material evidence of human activity was no longer the random activity of the previous ethnographic Portuguese

⁵⁸⁰ Tony Bennett uses the concepts of "sites of discovery" (the colonies) and "sites of gathering" (the main land). These concepts would fit the will of the *Estado Novo* but not the project of Jorge Dias - see BENNETT, Tony – *op.cit.*, p.210-211.

⁵⁸¹ Interview with Benjamim Pereira.

⁵⁸² Benjamim Pereira describes this period in the early sixties as a very violent time, in terms of political manoeuvres. As he remarks, the regime was not very pleased with the new museum and some political influences were used with the clear intention of changing the project of Jorge Dias. He gives a significant example: when he wanted to dedicate a text "to the memory of Jorge Dias, who made the Museum of Ethnology possible" (*à memória de Jorge Dias a quem se fica a dever o Museu de Etnologia*) the official censorship reduced it to "to the memory of Jorge Dias".

⁵⁸³ Interview with Benjamim Pereira.

collectors.⁵⁸⁴ One of the intentions of the museum was to gather enough material to form a picture of the Portuguese traditional material evidence of the middle of the century. Some of the options concerning acquisitions did not gather official support, and the team of the museum had to find other sources of financial help.⁵⁸⁵

All this effort and research work resulted in a major temporary exhibition called "Peoples and Cultures" (*Povos e Culturas*) that opened to the public in 1972. The spirit of the museum was finally transformed in a public event that presented, to a large audience, the intentions of the institution. The vision of the world the exhibition presented was not a colonialist one, according to the project Jorge Dias had always proposed. The exhibition presented objects as results of human will, art or necessity. The exhibition displayed material culture in such a way it was possible to infer that no human society was considered "superior" or "inferior", thus the official colonialist view over the overseas territories was expressly denied. In the early 1970s the political ambience in Portugal was favourable to such presentation of anti-colonialism: the war in Africa lasted for a decade (and was seen by an important part of the population as a pointless effort) and the death of Salazar in 1968 had made the country hope for some changes. This exhibition showed that another view over mankind was possible and endorsed by reputed scientists. Jorge Dias died in 1973, the year that followed the exhibition. A new director was appointed to the museum, Ernesto Veiga de Oliveira, who maintained his predecessor's orientation, keeping the museum outside the political domination of the regime.

Another important activity of the museum was the organisation of a library of related books and scientific journals.⁵⁸⁶ The number of book acquisitions during 1959 is huge (five hundred and forty nine). This was the year of the great temporary exhibition about the *Macondes*. The financial capacity for such huge acquisition demonstrates that the team of Jorge Dias was committed to the task of building a new museum, representative of a new perspective in the Portuguese ethnology. In 1965, the year of the official and legal institutionalisation of the museum,

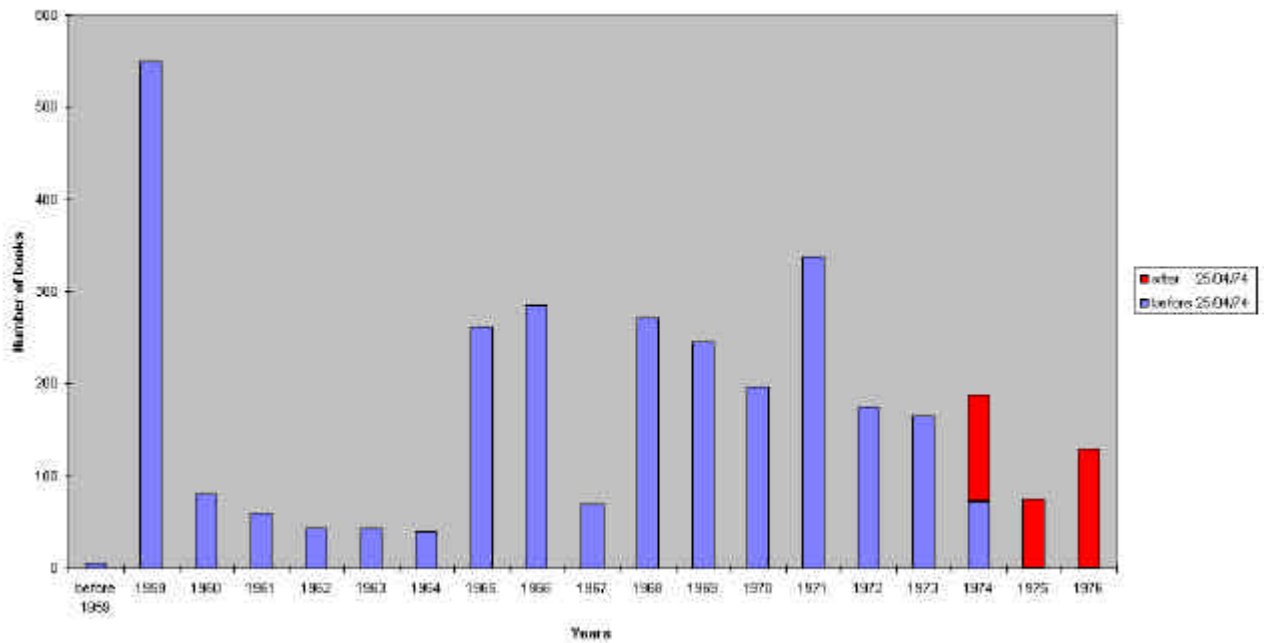
⁵⁸⁴ Benjamim Pereira gives two examples: on one hand the collections gathered by Leite de Vasconcelos, that can hardly be considered as scientifically representative; on the other hand the work of Fernando Galhano who used to identify the main types and the regional variants of a specific object before collecting specimens to the museum.

⁵⁸⁵ Benjamim Pereira refers that this task was a very hard one. They had to face not only the lack of money but also the political disapproval of his projects.

the number of acquisition increased again. The graph below shows the evolution of the acquisitions:

Fig. 33

Acquisition of books



The revolution of 25 April 1974 slowed down the process of installing the museum in a new building. During the previous ten years the museum survived in several different locations, with all kinds of problems in terms of facilities. The new building, that was ready in April 1974, only lacked the inside equipment to receive the collections. The revolution hindered the administrative action of approving that final step, and that delayed the transfer to the new building. There was also a financial problem: the budget was not enough even to maintain the objects in good environmental conditions. The only solution to keep the museum open was to prepare a temporary exhibition on "Modernism and African Art" (*O modernismo e a arte africana*). For the year that followed the museum was partially open due to this exhibition, but it was obvious that the situation could not be maintained. Finally, the museum was closed to the public in 1975 and was only reopened in 1985. All these problems were difficult to accept to the

⁵⁸⁶ In 1967 it was decided that all books belonging to the library, that depended on the "Centre of Cultural Anthropology Studies" (*Centro de Estudos de Antropologia Cultural*), should be registered in a special record book. The oldest record dates from 1941, but until 1959 the number of books acquired is insignificant (six).

members of the team that had started the museum in the early 1960s.⁵⁸⁷ Benjamim Pereira comments that it is hard to admit the fact that the museum, which had made a stand against the regime of the *Estado Novo*, almost ended after the revolution, due to lack of support. After the end of the *Estado Novo*, the museum, instead of affirming its importance and being able to develop its project, remained abandoned for a decade.

The case of the Museum of Ethnology is important, because the *Estado Novo* created it as an institution with a clear ideological intention but was never capable of maintaining it under its power. The Museum 'escaped' the ideological and political influence of the regime. Due to the determination and firm intention of its founders, the project of the museum was out of control, at least from an official perspective. All attempts to bring it back under domination of the regime were pointless because the team that had brought it into existence always found the necessary (even if temporary) support inside the regime to proceed with their original project.⁵⁸⁸ The official project of a colonialist museum, devoted to proclaim the importance of Portugal in the Overseas Territories and considering the native peoples as "primitive" (very interesting, but primitive) never had a chance with Jorge Dias and his team. That project was absolutely coherent with the ideological propaganda the regime wanted to support. It is important to consider that in the early 1960s the war in the colonies (especially in Guiné, Angola and Mozambique) was about to begin. The *Estado Novo* made all efforts to diminish the importance of that conflict and to emphasise the civilising role of Portugal in all the overseas territories. This museum would have been an important piece in that policy, had the official project been accomplished. The presence of the word "Overseas" (*Ultramarino* or *Ultramar*) in the designation of the museum and in the name of the department it depended on is of some importance. That word was officially removed from the name of the museum at the suggestion of its director, Veiga de Oliveira, after the revolution of 1974.

⁵⁸⁷ Benjamim Pereira refers to these years as a "grey period". He regrets that Veiga de Oliveira could not see the museum reopened to the public before his death.

⁵⁸⁸ The first time the museum was referred as one of the *Estado Novo*'s museums, Benjamim Pereira strongly rejected that assertion. The museum, he said, began its existence under the *Estado Novo*, but was never a museum of the regime.