



The Museum and Library of Pedagogy: a grand experimental showcase of popular science (Montevideo / Uruguay, 1889...) ¹

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Abstract

The Museum of Pedagogy of Uruguay was founded in Montevideo in 1889, paired with a Library of Pedagogy in a project that sought international dialog. Its functions included practical training for primary school teachers with laboratories and instruments that could test practices, disseminate pedagogical ideas and exhibit artifacts that could help form ideal models for schools. The Museum also helped the sale of these artifacts. Alberto Gómez Ruano (1858-1923), its first director, had a fundamental role in the creation of the Institutos Nacionales: Museo y Archivo Histórico Municipal, of the Servicio Meteorológico of Uruguay and of the Biblioteca y Museo Pedagógicos, a state apparatus dedicated to science and modernization. Like similar institutions of this kind, the museum served as a channel for connections with other countries, promoting the exchange of items for the collections, information about management and organization, visits, arrangements for the exhibition and the sale of artifacts.

Keywords: Museum of Pedagogy. Circulation of pedagogical ideas. Material school culture. José Pedro Varela Pedagogical Museum.

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Resumo

O Museu Pedagógico do Uruguai foi fundado em Montevideu em 1889, formando par com a Biblioteca Pedagógica num projeto que buscou interlocução internacional. Agregou em suas funções uma espécie de formação prática de professores primários com laboratórios e instrumentos que permitissem ensaios de práticas, divulgação de ideias pedagógicas e exposição de artefatos que ajudassem a construir socialmente um modelo ideal de escola, bem como apoiava sua comercialização. Alberto Gómez Ruano (1858-1923), seu primeiro diretor, teria tido atuação fundamental na criação dos Institutos Nacionales: Museo y Archivo Histórico Municipal, do Servicio Meteorológico de Uruguay e da Biblioteca y Museo Pedagógicos, um aparato estatal com base científica e modernizadora. A exemplo de congêneres, este museu funcionou como canal de conexão com outros países, promovendo troca de peças para os acervos, de informações sobre gerenciamento e organização, visitas, arranjos para a exposição e comercialização de artefatos.

Palavras-chave: Museu Pedagógico. Circulação de ideias pedagógicas. Cultura material escolar. Museu Pedagógico José Pedro Varela.

Resumen

El Museo Pedagógico de Uruguay fue fundado en Montevideo en 1889, formando pareja con la Biblioteca Pedagógica en un proyecto que buscaba el diálogo internacional. Añadió en sus funciones una especie de formación práctica de profesores de primaria con laboratorios e instrumentos que permitieron experimentaciones de prácticas, difusión de ideas pedagógicas y exhibición de artefactos que ayudaran a construir socialmente un modelo ideal de escuela, así como apoyaba su comercialización. Alberto Gómez Ruano (1858-1923), su primer director, habría tenido un papel fundamental en la creación de los Institutos Nacionales: Museo y Archivo Histórico Municipal, del Servicio Meteorológico de Uruguay y de la Biblioteca y Museo Pedagógicos, un aparato estatal basado en la ciencia y la modernización. Al igual que sus congêneres, este museo funcionó como un canal de comunicación con otros países, promoviendo el intercambio de piezas para las colecciones, información sobre gestión y organización, visitas, arreglos para la exposición y comercialización de artefactos.

Palabras clave: Museo Pedagógico. Circulación de ideas pedagógicas. Cultura material escolar. Museo Pedagógico José Pedro Varela.

A bit of context

The El Museo y Biblioteca Pedagógicos de Montevideo, is a permanent exhibition. of books, publications and general primary and special educational material, created by the Uruguay government to present the progress made in the country in this direction through official competition and by the private initiative, as well as those made abroad by authorities, and the most qualified corporations and specialists. (Gómez Ruano, 1894, p.1)

This quote is an explanatory note that is found stamped in various documents that compose narratives about the Museum of Pedagogy and, as we can see, announces its international connections. Even if it mirrors descriptions located in other sources with references to other countries, the studies that we have accumulated reveal that it is impossible to identify a fixed concept and function for pedagogy museums, whether in their conception, or during their operations. It is certainly possible to find many points of convergence among these institutions that mark a generation of institutions of this nature, but there are characteristics that differentiate them, and their functions often changed or were “revised” to meet new demands. It is in this context that we address what is currently called the Museo y Biblioteca José Pedro Varela², created in Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay, in 1889 and which is still operating. It is an institution with its own life, but it is articulated to the needs and demands of education in the country and was established through an inspiration and partnership with similar institutions.

In the “Manuel général de l’instruction primaire”, by Ferdinand Buisson published in 1878 Angel García del Dujo affirms that: “All countries that are zealous for the progress of education now have national museums for primary education” (*apud* GARCÍA del DUJO, 1985, p. 41). We highlight this as an important reference that gains strength in the pedagogical discourse that had a significant role in the materialization of projects for schooling in childhood in various countries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Referring to Spain, Agustín Escolano Benito characterizes pedagogy museums as “among the institutions that have most contributed to the modernization of our education in contemporary times” (*in* GARCÍA del DUJO, 1985, p. 11). Gómez Ruano knew how to use this type of argument, as can be seen in a letter of April 1899 in which, by sending a budget proposal for a spending project for the nation, presented the institution as “a valuable workshop for the country and the only one of its kind in all of Latin America, as qualified by Mr. Buisson, Mr. Compayré, Dr. Berra, etc.” (Memoria Descriptiva Extracto³, 18 de abril de 1899, s.n.p.). This line of discourse would be used repeatedly.

Despite the optimism about the role that these museums would perform, their creation was debated and defended and their establishment often took place during pedagogical exhibitions and conferences, thus requiring caution, as Manuel Bartolomé Cossío warned, presented in the analysis of Ángel García del Dujo of the Museo Pedagógico Nacional da Espanha:

² The two institutions, the museum and library, are now administratively separate although they share the same building. The first is called the “Museu Pedagógico José Pedro Varela”, and the second the “Biblioteca Pedagógica Central Mtro. Sebastián Morey Otero”.

³ Since the reference is quite long, we abbreviated it in the body of the text; the complete form is found at the end.

The danger that this line contained, however, was grave, the attribution of a supreme and decisive power to the material means of education. M. B. Cossío would properly call this excessive veneration pedagogical fetishism⁴. (GARCÍA del DUJO, 1985, p. 43)

Even if Cossío's argument focuses on the issue of school hygiene, which was a prominent issue at world fairs and education congresses of the time, it is possible to make an analogy with the pedagogical museums. In the warning, Cossío offers indications of the construction of a state bureaucratic apparatus that would contribute to homogenizing and normalizing school practices. The organization of pedagogical libraries, which keep models of school designs and furniture in their archives, legislation from other countries, as well as statistical data, and which organize conferences and courses for teachers are elements that characterize these institutions in most countries and that in a certain way assured the circulation of information and the establishment of countries of reference, or, as took place in Uruguay, the creation of its own model so that, to be conceived, a museum would need to be inspired by another and take from it the best or most viable examples.

To expand the scope of the reading and insert the pedagogical museum of which we are concerned here in a broader context, we present a chart that lists pedagogy museums created between 1850 and 1906 that was compiled by Ángel García del Dujo.

Table 1 - Pedagogy Museums created between 1850 and 1906⁵

City	Nation	Year	City	Nation	Year
Stuttgart	Germany	1851	Gotha	Germany	1889
Hamburg	Germany	1855	Montevideo	Uruguay	1889
Toronto	Canada	1857	Bozen	Austria-Hungry	1889
London	England	1857	Prague	Austria-Hungry	1890
St. Petersburg	Russia	1864	Kiel	Germany	1890
Leipzig	Germany	1865	Breslan	Germany	1891
Vienna	Austria-Hungry	1872	Hildesheim	Germany	1891
Rome	Italy	1874	London	England	1892
Zurich	Switzerland	1875	Wolfenbüttel	Germany	1892
Munich	Germany	1875	Hanover	Germany	1892
Berlin	Germany	1875	Bamberg	Germany	1896
Donauwoerth	Germany	1876	Posen	Germany	1897
Berlin	Germany	1877	Rixdorf	Germany	1897
Magdebourg	Germany	1877	Hamburg	Germany	1897
Budapest	Austria-Hungry	1877	Laibach	Austria-Hungry	1898

⁴ In the footnote (number 39) that accompanied this analysis, the author informed that "There are various works in which Cossío denounces this defect" and indicates the consultation of "*El maestro, la escuela y el material de enseñanza*", written by Cossío (Madrid, R. Rojas, 1906).

⁵ We reproduced this chart in other studies based on the text of Kazumi Munakata and Katya M. Z. Braghini, entitled "Fontes para a história da educação dos sentidos, numa abordagem transnacional" (2014), mentioned in the references. In the preparation of this article we gained access to the book by Ángel García del Dujo, located in the Biblioteca da Faculdade de Educação da Universidade de Ilhas Baleares, Spain, which allowed adjusting spelling and dates. We also sought a source indicated by García del Dujo, the entry for *Musées Pédagogiques*, written by Maurice Pellissin, which is found in the *Nouveau dictionnaire de pédagogie et d'Instruction Primaire*, organized by Ferdinand Buisson (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1911, pp. 1367-1376). We consulted the printed version of the dictionary, available at the Biblioteca Pedagógica Central Mtro. Sebastián Morey Otero, which is in the same building as the Museu Pedagógico José Pedro Varela, in Montevideo, and the online version, available at <http://www.inrp.fr/edition-electronique/lodel/dictionnaire-ferdinand-buisson/document.php?id=3241>.

Amsterdam	Holland	1877	Belgrade	Yugoslavia	1898
Tokyo	Japan	1878	New York	USA	1900
Bern	Switzerland	1878	Oldembourg	Germany	1900
Paris	France	1879	Francfort-sur-le-Main	Germany	1900
Brussels	Belgium	1880	Cologne	Germany	1901
Palermo	Italy	1880	Agram	Austria-Hungry	1901
Regensbourg	Germany	1880	Lausanne	Switzerland	1901
Washington	USA	1881	Christiania	Norway	1901
Genes	Italy	1881	Bremen	Germany	1902
Konigsberg	Germany	1881	Vienna	Austria-Hungry	1903
Augsbourg	Germany	1881	Kolberg	Germany	1904
Graz	Austria-Hungry	1882	Stade	Germany	1904
Rio de Janeiro	Brazil	1883	Straubing	Germany	1904
Lisbon	Portugal	1883	Dresden	Germany	1904
Madrid	Spain	1884	Danzig	Germany	1904
Fribourg	Switzerland	1884	Soffa	Bulgaria	1905
Copenhagen	Dienmark	1887	Athens	Greece	1905
Neuchâtel	Switzerland	1887	Lucerne	Switzerland	1905
Aarhus	Denmark	1887	Saint Louis	USA	1905
Buenos Aires	Argentina	1888	Gleiwitz	Germany	1905
Innsbruck	Austria-Hungry	1888	Potsdam	Germany	1905
Rostock	Germany	1888	Dresden	Germany	1905
Jena	Germany	1889	Wurzbourg	Germany	1905

Source⁶: García del Dujo, Ángel. *Museo Pedagógico Nacional (1882-1941): teoría educativa y desarrollo histórico*. Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1985, pp. 179-181. Pellisson, Maurice. *Musées Pédagogiques*. In: F. Buisson, *Nouveau dictionnaire de pédagogie et d'Instruction Primaire*. Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1911, pp. 1367-1376.

In countries commonly presented in the literature in the field as references, such as France and England, the pedagogy museums emerged with inspiration from the World's Fairs or exhibitions linked to pedagogical or similar conferences, and from them inherited a significant portion of their archives. But in others, as is the case of Uruguay, the justification for the creation was constructed with other arguments, although the initial materials in the collection also came from a World's Fair. In 1888, Alberto Gómez Ruano, who would be named director of the Museum, visited various countries in Europe and “by indication of the National Inspector of Primary Instruction [of Uruguay], Don Jacobo A. Varela”, included “in the program of his trip [...] the study of the organization of a Pedagogical Museum and of a Special Library for the Teachers College”. Gómez Ruano ended his speech by proposing the creation of both establishments, “without requiring any compensation for this” (ACEVEDO, 1929, p. 138). He would become the honorary director for 10 years, after which he began to receive regular remuneration. The creation of the Museum and the Library were part of a political project for Uruguayan education, initially led by José Pedro Varela (1845-1879). Upon his death, his brother Jacobo A. Varela (1841-1900) took on the task of implementing the institution. However, in the

⁶ According to a note by the author, the source of this chart was the work “Die ausländischen Schulmuseen”, by Max Hübner (Germany: Breslau, 1906. Recogido por M. Pellisson, « Musées Pédagogiques », en F. Buisson, *Nouveau dictionnaire de pédagogie et d'Instruction Primaire*. Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1911, pp. 1367-1376). García del Dujo warns that, comparing the data from this chart with those of other sources, some variations are found in the dates, which may be attributed to the fact that some register the data of creation and others the date they entered operation (García del Dujo, 1985, p. 181).

Memorias Descriptivas that compose its documental archives, we found indications that Alberto Gómez Ruano proclaimed himself as its creator and director. Here is the passage:

By the initiative of its current Director, Dn. Alberto Gómez Ruano, the Executive Branch decreed on 5 January 1889 the creation of the Museo y Biblioteca Pedagógicos, dedicating for this purpose one of the largest and best located buildings that is national property in the city of Montevideo, and commissioned Sr. Gómez Ruano, in an honorary character, to organize and direct the Institution.
(Memoria Descriptiva, 17 de mayo de 1901, p. 1.)

As mentioned, the credit to Alberto Gómez Ruano as creator is reaffirmed in the documentation that composes the museum's memoirs, which was largely written by the director himself, who led the institution since its founding, and remained there for 30 years. In one of the few texts located until now that serves as a type of minibiography, written by Raúl Montero Bustamante, we find a description of the Museum, highlighted as the main work of Alberto Gómez Ruano:

El Museo y Biblioteca Pedagógicos, an official institution created and found selflessly by him in 1889, was his master work. He conceived it as **a large experimental showcase of popular science**, with a copious circulating library, which grouped the best works of human ingenuity, and a technical and didactic library that contains work related to education and its various disciplines, and complemented this bibliographic archives with vast rooms for displaying the objective material of education to place it at the reach of teachers, school masters, students and the merely curious. School furniture and materials, wall plaques, anatomical pieces, zoological and botanical collections, small displays of the physical and natural sciences, plastic models for teaching drawing, an exhibition of educational methods and material related to manual school work, demonstrations of problems of school hygiene, relics of educational history, evocation of methods and systems of the school of the past, were all joined, classified, coordinated and presented for objective and experimental study, so that teachers and schools can have practical courses on the living model. (Montero Bustamante, 1955, pp. 313-314 – emphasis ours).

To execute these ideas, the Uruguayan institution would have among its functions⁷:

1. To make available original articles of school furniture and teaching materials, from both Uruguay and abroad, to allow access by school administrators, teachers and specialists in the manufacturing of these types of objects.
2. Provide teaching materials for the purpose of studies, especially to student teachers living⁸ in the complex that houses the Museum.
3. Through periodic conferences, promote new knowledge about teaching methods.

⁷ Source: Memoria Descriptiva del Museo y Biblioteca Pedagógicos. Montevideo, 17 de mayo de 1901, pp. 2-7. Carpeta n° 47. Caja 42.

⁸ Reference to the student teachers who lived on the upper floor of the complex that also housed the Museum, Library and Teachers College.

4. Popularize pedagogical strategies that favor the progress of schools.
5. Present the most recent models of school material sent by manufacturers as donations, whenever they contain the didactic and hygienic conditions recommended to substitute with improvements those in use. The Museum should also provide information about prices and sales conditions of these materials, including books.
6. Support in the country the preparation of pedagogical literature, as well as the creation of new branches of industries related to public schools. For this purpose, the opening of competitions and exhibitions was called for:

Inviting teachers, authors and editors of didactic books and teaching methods to enter their work in competition, as well as doctors and hygienists, engineers, architects and builders of models and plans for school buildings, and manufacturers who create supplies, collections of furniture and equipment for schools. (Memoria Descriptiva, 17 May 1901, p. 3)

7. Provide material for the representation of the country in exhibits in Uruguay and abroad.
8. Support the quarterly publication of a magazine entitled

Anales del Museo Pedagógico de Montevideo, with the purpose of adding illustrations to the lectures and courses given in the Sala de Actos Públicos at the Institution, biographies, productions and autographs of educationists and personalities who have contributed to the development of education; models, views and plans of school buildings; monographs of furniture and general material, bibliographies of pedagogical works and of school texts, etc. (Memoria Descriptiva, 17 de mayo de 1901, p. 5)

9. Contribute to the improvement of schools from the perspective of hygiene, by constructing, in a space destined for this purpose in the museum, models of school tables-benches, of improved lighting and ventilation for classrooms, as well as their best localization, and other aspects related to the health of teachers and students. This item would also contemplate teaching about the proper use and conservation of blackboards (*pizarras*), paper, books, ink, maps, and posters, among other items.

10. Contribute to promoting, in all social classes, the importance of popular education, “showing in an objective manner all of the studies and work found in Uruguay and abroad, by school authorities, defenders of education, specialists and industrialists”. (Memoria Descriptiva ..., 17 May 1901, p. 6.)

In terms of the internal organization, at the beginning of the twentieth century the museum was composed of various sections: *the section of national products; the section of kindergartens and manual work; the geography section; the school hygiene section; galleries; the encyclopedia section; the history section; the archeology section; the iconographic section; the meteorological observatory; the pedagogic library (composed of two sections: one theoretical – with publications from Uruguay and abroad about pedagogical material – and another didactic – with books of texts already used or in use in schools in the country and abroad); the catalog section; the reading and work room; the public conference room; the photographic laboratory; and a workshop.*

The data presented until here offer revealing indications that, at least in the early twentieth century, the Museum was used in numerous strategies to link actions of the state with what was “most advanced” abroad, especially concerning primary education. It would also

popularize teaching and promote actions by the state. The sections that most directly performed these functions were the *galleries, pedagogical library, the catalog section; the public conference room; the photographic library and the workshop.*

Exchanges and Connections

In addition to the data already indicated, concerning international relations, the Museo y Biblioteca Pedagógicos had a type of advisory board – originally formed by those known as “miembros corresponsales” – who kept the director of the institution up to date about advances related to primary and special education in their countries of residence. To do so, the advisors drafted works about the field, sent monographs, statistics, and other documents, which would be read in the museum’s public conference room. They also sent books, publications, blueprints, and photographs of school buildings and educational material, which would be presented at the institution.

The advisory board should strive to demonstrate to authors, publishers, manufacturers, and merchants the advantages that, as a permanent exhibition that is free of charge, the Museo y Biblioteca Pedagógicos offers them, whenever they send to it, as a donation, their work, catalogs, books and didactic publications, models reduced to the natural size of the furniture, school equipment and supplies. (Memoria Descriptiva..., 17 de mayo de 1901, p. 7.)

In a quite broad range of action, Gómez Ruano mobilized Uruguayan representatives who worked in other countries, as could be seen in letters exchanged in 1896 with Sebastián Cahn, who was then the Consul of Uruguay in Germany, from whom he requested brochures, books and examples of objects of German public schools. Another indication of the exchanges and partnerships is the receipt of magazines and catalogs, donations, and letters. In a document from 1900 we find data about the reception of the following magazines:

Monitor de la Educación Común (Buenos Aires)
Boletín de Enseñanza y de Administración Escolar (La Plata)
Boletín de las Escuelas Primarias (San José de Costa Rica)
La Educación (Buenos Aires)
Journal of Education (Boston)
Revista del Instituto Paraguayo (Asunción)
Memorias y Revista de la Sociedad Científica Antonio Alzade (México)
El Ateneo (Lima).
(Memoria Descriptiva... , 19 de marzo de 1901, p. 7-8.)

For the same year there is a registration of the receipt of catalogs⁹ from different countries:

⁹ Although most of these were catalogs of products manufactured by companies, catalogs from institutions were also received.

Table 2 – Country of origin and number of catalogs received

Country of origin	Quantity
France	317
USA	188
Germany	145
England	109
Uruguay	45
Spain	41
Argentina	29
Brazil	20
Austria	15
Switzerland	14
Colombia	09
Peru	03
Ecuador	09
Total catalogs	937

Source: Memoria Descriptiva... , 19 de marzo de 1901, p. 6.

The Musuem Directors also made efforts, verbally or by correspondence, in both Uruguay and abroad, to receive donations. Some of those considered “truly valuable” are registered in the *Memorias de 1900*. We highlight some names of importers and exporters, merchants and public authorities located in these letters:

Sres. Monroeg Hnos., de Paris / France;
 Sr. Dn. Federico Casalia, Uruguay;
 Sres. Zubillaga y Beramendi, Uruguay;
 Sr. Dn. Luis Aboal, Uruguay;
 Sr. Teniente Coronel Dn. Manuel O. Chrisly, Uruguay;
 Sres Salvo Hnos, Uruguay;
 Sr. Pedro L. Fernández, Uruguay;
 Sr. Ingeniero Dn. Felix Auger, Uruguay;
 George Philip & Son, Londres / England;
 D. Appleton y Cia, Buenos Aires / Argentina;
 D. Appleton y Cia, Nueva York / USA;
 Hachette y Cia, de Paris / France;
 Molteni y Cia, Paris / France;
 Dn. Manuel A. Ponce, Secretaría de la Inspección General de Instrucción Pública de Chile;
 Blanzzy Poure et Cie, Paris / France;
 Suzanne, Havez y Cie, Paris / France;
 Mr. Henry Sabin, Superintendent of Public Education, Iowa, USA;
 Dn. Carlos Prince de Lima, Peru;
 Gauthier Villars et Fils, Paris / France;
 Biblioteca Nacional de Rio de Janeiro, Brazil;
 Education Department, de Londres, England;
 Dr. Antonio da Cunha Barbosa, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil;
 O Pedagogium, Rio de Janeiro / Brazil;
 Poulenc Frères, Paris / France;
 Legación del Uruguay en Chile;
 Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia;

Dn. Sebastián Cahn, Consul of Uruguay in Frankfurt;
J. J. Pérez, de Bogotá / Colombia;
Ministry of the Interior of Switzerland;
Smithsonian Institute of Washington, USA;
(Memoria Descriptiva 19 de marzo de 1901, p. 15)

Among its actions, the Board also maintained correspondence with people and institutions in Uruguay and abroad. These include “book sellers, publishers and manufacturers of school furniture and the most renowned general educational materials from Europe and America” (Memoria Descriptiva ..., 19 de marzo de 1901, p. 4).

The Museum also had the function to serve as a faithful custodian and exhibitor of objects used in Uruguayan public schools. This function was established by Resolution 16 August 1889, which determined that

The Equipment Warehouse should deliver to the Museum, in duplicate, an example of each one of the textbooks, for daily use, school furniture, equipment, etc. Etc., which are currently used in public schools, as well as those that they purchase in the future for these purposes, and which will be delivered to the Warehouse Office (Memoria Descriptiva ... Montevideo, 27 de enero de 1897, s.n.p.)

In addition to the exhibition to the public and the public affirmation of a school project, this initiative added the objective of facilitating the representation of the primary Uruguayan public school when invited to participate in international exhibitions.

The Museum and Library of Pedagogy of Montevideo as a reference

If on one hand, as the information presented has revealed, inspiration from abroad accompanied the creation and consolidation of the Museo y Biblioteca Pedagógicas em Montevideo, on the other, the institution was also considered a model and inspiration for countries like Argentina and Chile. As registered by Gómez Ruano, in 1906, Dr. Carlos R. Gallardo, an officially commissioned engineer of the Ministry of Public Instruction of Argentina was on a mission to “study the plan and organization of our Pedagogy Museum to implement on this base the Museo y Biblioteca Pedagógicas Argentino, which has just been installed in Buenos Aires” (Memoria Descriptiva. Montevideo., 26 de diciembre de 1906, pp. 11.). This fact gained repercussions in the local press, and the 1906 report included part of a news item published in the newspaper “El Siglo”, of Montevideú. As registered by Gómez Ruano, Carlos Gallardo

The way that the Museum is established is amazing, from its advances in relation to foreign museums, the unity that guides its admirable scientific plan and the organization that its director and founder has instilled in it. (Memoria Descriptiva... Montevideo., 26 de diciembre de 1906, p. 13)

In the following year then director of the Biblioteca y Museo Pedagógicos de Buenos Aires, Prof. Pascual Guaglianone, visited the Uruguayan museum, having been “commissioned by the Ministry of Public Instruction of Argentina to study the plan and organization of the Workshop that I have the honor to direct.” (Memoria Descriptiva ... Montevideo, 1907, page unknown.).

There is also a record that the recently founded Museo de Educación Nacional da República do Chile, had adopted the institutional plan of the Uruguay museum. The Teachers College of Columbia University of New York had also requested a monographic description of the Uruguayan institution.

In a quite ingenious communication, which would help to promote the museum internationally, Gómez Ruano informed that

In late 1905 the undersigned received a letter from Prof. Max Hübner, Director of the Museum of Pedagogy of Breslau, Germany, which requested the description of the Museum of Pedagogy of Montevideo, with the purpose of using it in a report that he would write about pedagogy museums in the world. (Memoria Descriptiva Montevideo., 26 de diciembre de 1906, p. 14)

This was the study “Die ausländischen Schulmuseen », by Max Hübner, which according to information located from this source, and in the book of Ángel García del Dujo (1985, p. 181), was published in Breslau, Germany in 1906. Max Hübner, who had been the director of the museum of Breslau, which was founded in Germany in 1891, sent copies¹⁰ of the voluminous 400 page study written in German, to the Museo Pedagógico do Uruguai (Memoria Descriptiva Montevideo, 26 de diciembre de 1906, p. 14). In a letter of 9 March 1907, Gómez Ruano informed Ferdinand Hirt, of Breslau, about the transmission, through the Banco Español del Rio de la Plata, of a payment of 39 marks for the 12 volumes of the work of Max Hübner received by the Uruguayan institution. The support for the preparation of this work, the purchase of issues and its promotion are some of the strategies used by Gómez Ruano to give visibility to the museum. Here is an example of how he used the work of Max Hübner:

All of the countries of Europe and North America are represented in the book [by Hübner] by the museums that exist in each one of them. South America is only represented by the Museo Pedagógico de Montevideo, that of Bueno Aires and of Brazil. Japan also has a chapter dedicated to its notable Museum of Tokyo.

The author dedicated various pages to each Museum; to that of Buenos Aires he dedicated three, four to that of Brazil and eight to that of Montevideo, which clearly indicates the interest that our national Museum has deserved and the importance it has gained because there are few European museums that are given such extensive treatment as is ours. (Memoria Descriptiva... Montevideo, 26 de diciembre de 1906, p. 15)

Final considerations

A first glance at the Museo y Biblioteca Pedagógicos indicates the scientific emphasis that was sought for Uruguayan primary education. It also identified that the library and museum performed specific functions and that, in addition to seeking models of excellence to follow, sought to construct a national identity to be promoted by the museum archives.

¹⁰ There is an indication that Gómez Ruano would send a copy to Uruguay’s Minister of Supply, accompanying the Memoria do Museo y Biblioteca Pedagógicos of 1906.

The connection with the industrial and commercial sectors also stands out, and the Museum's interactions with these sectors. No less important is the role of the popularization of science, especially its practical applicability. As an example we can mention the undertaking of experiments in the "school hygiene section" with systems of gas lighting, which received support from the Compañía del Gas of Montevideo, which provided the devices free of charge for demonstration. The intention was to present this experiment at the International Hygiene Exhibition, held in Montevideo, in which the Museo y Biblioteca Pedagógicos earned a medal. (Memória Descritiva Montevideo, 19 de enero de 1907, s.n.p.)

In this context it is possible to see the Museum as both an educational and cultural facility and a commercial one. In a passage in the *Memórias do Museo* from 1900, the author affirmed that generous donations had been made by

people who were convinced that this Institution is a permanent exhibition of high value to the commercial interests of all those who send items that have an immediate relation with primary schools and teaching, with the goal of being exhibited in [the Museum].

This explains why the correspondence had been active, as indicated by the following summary.

Notes and letters sent 324

Notes and letters received..... 269.

(Memoria Descritiva Montevideo. 19 de marzo de 1901, p. 2)

If on one hand the path of research that led to this article clearly revealed that Gómez Ruano maintained a relation with importers-exporters and merchants, particularly European ones, and especially Maison Deyrolle, on the other, he "discussed" the project and the issues of pedagogical museums with Latin American peers. This strategy deserves further investigations.

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