

**RESEARCH INTERNSHIP IN HISTORY: REPORTING THE EXPERIENCE OF  
SCANNING OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS****O ESTÁGIO DE PESQUISA EM HISTÓRIA: RELATANDO A EXPERIÊNCIA DA  
DIGITALIZAÇÃO DE DOCUMENTOS OFICIAIS****LA PASANTÍA DE INVESTIGACIÓN EN HISTORIA: RELATANDO LA EXPERIENCIA  
DE LA DIGITALIZACIÓN DE DOCUMENTOS OFICIALES**

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The historian work is principally done with source analyze, and can be in different types like newspapers, magazines, reports, books, pictures and official documents. These documents can be lay in public or personal archive, however, with so many technological advances is common find this documents in virtual media. The goal of this work is to discuss the importance of work as a trainee in History's research area and the handling with historical's sources. In the stage, performed by two students from the history course of UFTM on Uberaba City Council, MG, Brazil, in the period October/2014 to April/2014, scanning books of Acts and transforming in digital documents was one of the main activities. The stage is driven by two professors of History Course and supervised by the Director of Documentation and Research Board. The article discussed the importance of this not mandatory stage for the academic training to futures historians. The stage enables the trainee to development of skills and competencies acquired during the graduation so, can develop the professional practices and enables the trainee to act in several areas linked with History.

**Descriptors:** Data sources; Internships; History.

O trabalho do historiador é dado principalmente pela análise de fontes que podem ser de diversos tipos, como jornais, revistas, relatos, livros, imagens e documentos oficiais. Esses documentos podem ser armazenados em arquivos públicos ou pessoais, no entanto, com o avanço da tecnologia vem se tornando comum encontrar fontes em meios virtuais. O presente trabalho tem por objetivo apresentar e discutir a importância do estágio na área de pesquisa em História e do manuseio de fontes históricas. No estágio realizado por duas alunas do curso de história da UFTM na Câmara Municipal de Uberaba no período de Outubro/2013 à Abril/2014, a digitalização dos livros de atas e veiculação digital desses documentos é uma das principais atividades. O estágio é orientado por dois professores do curso de História e supervisionado pela Diretora de Documentação e Pesquisa da Câmara. O artigo discuti a importância desse estágio, de caráter não obrigatório, para a formação acadêmica do historiador, sendo que esta atividade propicia o desenvolvimento de habilidades e competências adquiridas durante a formação, assim, desenvolve as práticas profissionais e capacita para atuar em diversas áreas do seu campo.

**Descritores:** Fontes de dados; Estágios; História.

El trabajo del historiador en su mayoría ocurre por el análisis de fuentes que pueden ser de diversos tipos, tales como periódicos, revistas, informes, libros, fotos y documentos oficiales. Estos documentos pueden ser almacenados en archivos públicos o particulares, sin embargo, con el avance de la tecnología es cada vez más común encontrar fuentes en medios virtuales. Este trabajo tiene como objetivo presentar y discutir la importancia de las pasantías en el campo de la investigación de la historia y el manejo de las fuentes históricas. En la pasantía de dos alumnas del curso de historia de la UFTM en la Cámara Municipal de Uberaba, MG, Brasil, entre los meses de octubre de 2013 hasta abril de 2014. El escaneo de los libros de actas y la transmisión digital de estos documentos es una de las principales actividades. La práctica es conducida por dos profesores del curso de Historia y supervisada por la Directora del Departamento Documentación e Investigación. El artículo discute la importancia de esta pasantía no obligatoria, para la formación académica de historiador. La práctica permite el desarrollo de habilidades y competencias adquiridas durante la formación, de este modo mejora el ejercicio profesional y permite actuar en diversas áreas de su campo.

**Descriptor:** Fuentes de datos; Pasantías; Historia.

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## INTRODUCTION

With the creation and organization of the Annales school in 1929<sup>1</sup>, various concepts and historiographical practices were reconsidered and extended. Among these concepts, it is the concept of historical source. What is it or what can be considered a source for the historian's work?

According to Marc Bloch<sup>2</sup>, everything man touches can be considered a trace. Documents such as minutes of meetings of a legislative house may be important historical sources because, through questioning and analysis of official meetings, one can understand how a society is politically organized over time.

Minutes are taken as official records, but contain what certain political order of the time selected or chosen. The minutes of the City Council of Uberaba, as well as all sources of historians - letters, notebooks, books, among others - are human constructions in his time. By analyzing each historical source, one should take into account the context, the place, the objective of creating such a source and its author, and who analyzes it. So, despite the minutes be considered "official" sources, its importance as historical source will depend on these variables. "So, for the historian, the document reaches value by the social web that surrounds it and for what it reveals of an era and a society in a wider way<sup>3</sup>.

As the importance of source does not depend on a professional only, the historian's work is also to make these as sources accessible to the work and the interpretation of other researchers.

The Living Memory Project performs a work that is to make historical sources more accessible to all. This is an extracurricular internship project conducted at the Department of Research and Documentation of the City Council of Uberaba by two students, one of the 5th and the other of the 7th period of history course at the Federal University of Triangulo Mineiro (UFTM), under the

guidance of two professors of history course and supervised by the Director of the Department.

For the interns, it is extremely important to work with documentary sources during graduation, for the set of theory, practice and experience that they benefit currently, will facilitate handling and historical vision to work in any historian operating area. Thus, this paper aims to present and discuss the importance of internship in research in History and handling of historical sources.

## METHOD

The article approaches an internship experience report conducted at the City Council of Uberaba in the Department of Research and Documentation with work load of 20 hours per week. The internship has the maximum period of performance of two years for each student and, after that period ends, a new selection is performed.

To perform the scan job of the minutes of legislative meetings of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, the following instruments are used: gloves, masks and brushes to avoid damaging the sources; folding machine scanner, computer, and for storage of data 1 Terabyte external HD.

Each minute contains about 400 pages, scanned one by one and then allocated in an online server and at the following address: <http://www.camarauberaba.mg.gov.br/memoriaviva/atas.aspx><sup>4</sup>.

This paper refers to the activities conducted during the period from October 2013 to April 2014.

## RESULTS

The work gives trainees the experience of direct contact with the sources, which can sometimes be difficult for the historian because of some barriers, such as distance or cost of field research. The main result of the work is the possibility to provide ease and accessibility to the research work in history, not being necessary for the

researcher to travel or move to the location/file where the minutes books are.

By making the source easy accessible to researchers, it is possible for historians from other states or cities to study the history of Uberaba and/or legislative action of that region. Another positive aspect is the preservation of the original document, since scanning the minutes reduces the number of manual queries, which reduces the wear of the pages of books and possible accidents during consultations. It is important to note that this work was done so that no harm or would happen to the document. For this, appropriate gloves are used for handling, displacement and storage of the minutes in an appropriate location.

The internship can be performed at any time of course because it is not mandatory. For those interested in the internship, an edict is opened to select two students to do the job. The selection process has three stages: written test with randomly selected subject, interview and CV analysis. The first and second place are the first to take the internship, in case of one of the two leaves the internship before the time limit of two years, the other students from the third position of the selection process are called.

The Living Memory Project was created in 2010 through an agreement and support signed between the City Council of Uberaba and the history course of UFTM, offering research opportunities to undergraduate students of that course. The internship period is at most two years; however, this paper refers to the period of activities from October 2013 to April 2014.

Among the works is the digitization of minutes and other documents such as photos, editing and recording 1 minute videos for Council TV entitled History in 1 minute, presentation of articles and papers on the history of the City Council and the city of Uberaba. In this article, however, the focus is working with the official sources.

Historians in training learn, during graduation, theories related to the use of sources, however, the practice is necessary

and often missing. The training program enables putting all this knowledge into practice, even in training.

In the Living Memory Project internship, besides putting into action some theories, the intern comes in contact with the researcher's work object, the sources, whether they are documentary (minutes), or even oral, from people who have long worked or used to work in the City Council. These sources are taken close to the people, so that they can learn, know and research the history of Uberaba. Thus, the internship makes it possible to improve the knowledge in research and reflect on the role of the historian as a historical subject in society.

## DISCUSSION

Analyzing and examining the traces left by man in time is a practice achieved after the creation of the Annales School in 1929<sup>1</sup>. March Bloch, who belongs to this generation, presents a letter of research of historical sources, and this includes among many others: letters, newspapers, photographs, sculptures, paintings, photos, books and documents<sup>2,5</sup>. All of them were built by someone for some purpose, evident or not, so they should be worked cautiously, building the fact, or the period, in its various aspects, getting, thus, different visions and versions of them.

Facts can be interpreted in different ways, according to each historian. This happens because the construction and interpretation of sources depend on knowledge, training, references and objectives of each professional, but they always seek to recreate the fact as close as possible of that they imagine being the real.

With the advancement in technology since the eighteenth century, one thinks of faster and more efficient media and means of transportation that reach the largest number of people and places. The information currently travels miles in seconds due to communication tools such as television, but mostly the Internet. Considering this need for communication of man, the technique to microfilm through photography was created at the 1930s. This

technique was pioneered for salvation and preservation of documents in digital format; today the most widely used technique is scanning<sup>6</sup>.

Law No. 5433 of 8 May 1968<sup>7</sup> regulates the microfilming of documents in Brazil. According to Art. 2nd, "*Documents with historical value should not be eliminated, and may be filed at a place of the department holder thereof.*" This law is important for documents considered valuable to historical research are not dropped. The regulation of filming technique enables, in this regard, the reduction of large files and helps maintaining and increasing historical collections in Brazil.

Scanning activity allows the durability of the document avoiding human contact with the paper; for example, it can reduce wear or possible accidents that could damage the document. Other factors may influence the loss of the document, such as incorrect storage, humidity, lighting, temperature, fungi and bacteria<sup>8</sup>. So, if several researchers need the same source it is not necessary that they all handle it; they can query it in digital format.

In addition, scanning and making historical documents available via Internet makes the source a free material that several researchers can consult without bureaucratic requirements or other setbacks. In addition, the source becomes "democratic", that is, not only historians have access to it, but researchers from other fields or citizens who have an interest to study the history of the city itself or society in which they live.

Appropriation of such technologies allows the historian enhance and promote their work. Official documents, reports, records, scanned images can be found scanned, or in other formats, on websites and databases available on the Internet for the study of researchers worldwide. Contact of historian with new communication tools shows how this professional keeps updated to use information technologies in favor of his work, which breaks the idea of the historian as an old fashioned being living in

dusty basements analyzing yellowish paper sheets.

However, as Almeida pointed<sup>9</sup>, the use of digital sources is not yet widespread, due to lack of rules and methodologies for their use which can cause fear by some historians. Also according to the author, the formulation of standards is only possible as these sources are used<sup>9</sup>. That is, the scan job contributes to the promotion and the development of methods of their use.

Easy access to official documents such as Minutes of the legislature is directly linked to the formation and consolidation of a collective memory about the political and cultural background of a given society, so there is need for the man to "understand about his existence and past relationships for the construction of a new reality<sup>8</sup>".

The practice of digitization of historical documents in Brazil is held in different states in different institutions and areas of knowledge besides History, such as: Librarianship and Archiving. Some of the major collections for this kind of work are the National Library, National Library of Digital Museum, Public Domain, São Paulo State Archive and the National Library of Portugal<sup>10</sup>.

Other works are also conducted in this area in other institutions, such as the students' work at the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE), for example, which was directed to the digitization of documents relating to Guaianases Printmaking Workshop, "an important artistic movement from Pernambuco that happened from 1974 to 1995, and whose collection is currently under the responsibility of the Department of Theory of Art UFPE<sup>11</sup>".

## CONCLUSION

The internship enables the development of skills and competencies acquired during training, thus stressing the trainee's experience with large professional practices, able to act freely in various areas of their knowledge. During this project the trainee learns, among other activities, to handle correctly an official document, the

use of gloves, the storage location and attention when handling the minutes that are critical for better conservation of them.

For four hours a day, through the historical sources of the City Council of Uberaba, which are available there, the History intern relives the political, social and cultural memory of Uberaba society and still share this information to meet all those who seek to know, relive or research and work the political past of the city. This is important, because the internet tool approaches the researcher of its source, regardless of where he is or the purpose of the research.

The availability of information on the Living Memory Project website is not restricted the Minutes of the Council meetings, but also histories of councilors, news that circulated in the periodicals of the time, among others. All this causes that everybody, without distinction, has free access to the political past of the city.

This internship makes us realize the importance of the role of the historian, since the rescue and construction of a history that, most of the times, had been forgotten and lost by the population enables them to understand their experience at the present. Habits, culture and individuality of each society is examined by the historian through his work object. There are many sources, but each one speaks in a different way and tells different stories, that when told, make the traces and the memory of Uberaba citizens.

This work can contribute to the study of art and regional culture and the importance of these movements to form certain societies, providing important sources for the historian's work.

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**CONTRIBUTIONS**

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